

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command Representative, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI); Record of Decision for Military Training in the Marianas****Introduction**

The Department of Defense (DOD) through Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Marianas (COMNAVMARIANAS), as the designated USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI, pursuant to Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C 4332 (2) (C), and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality that implement NEPA procedures, 40 CFR Parts 1500–1508, hereby announces its decision to continue to use suitable DOD controlled lands in the Mariana Islands to support various specific military training activities to ensure the readiness of U.S. forces tasked with fulfilling regional readiness and operational contingency missions.

The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (USCINCPAC) is responsible for an area comprising 105 million square miles (272 million square kilometers [km²]). The force structure assigned to USCINCPAC is comprised of approximately 100,000 personnel in all of the military services. These military forces include active duty, national guard and reserve organizations stationed on Guam, multi-service forces assigned to the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Okinawa. Forces permanently assigned to Guam, deployed forces in transit to the Western Pacific and Indian oceans, and forces tasked by USCINCPAC to participate in large-scale joint or combined exercises training in the Mariana Islands. The large exercises are designed for each military service to sustain its skills as part of a larger multi-service force. Primary training management responsibility is assigned to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Marianas (COMNAVMARIANAS) as the USCINCPAC Representative. Commander, 36 Air Base Wing (36 ABW), headquartered at Andersen Air Force Base on Guam, is also responsible for training management and support, which includes the strategic and tactical movement of exercise personnel and equipment.

Record of Decision

This Record of Decision (ROD) addresses the continued use of suitable DoD-controlled lands in the Mariana Islands to support various training

activities in a manner that maximizes the use of available training lands giving consideration to environment impacts. This decision ensures the military readiness of the multi-service forces by providing varying terrain for field training, amphibious landings, supporting airfields, amphibious craft and helicopter landing zones, parachute drop zones, live-fire small-arms weapons ranges, and underwater demolition sites. The lands used for specific training activities support day-to-day training requirements, as well as the more infrequent larger-scale exercises. The environmental impacts of activities have been fully evaluated in the Marianas Training Plan (MTP) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The areas controlled by COMNAVMARIANAS include military bases on Guam (Waterfront Annex, Ordnance Annex, and two Communications Annexes), the Military Lease Area (MLA) on Tinian, and Farallon de Medinilla (FDM), where the leased island and a three-mile safety radius comprise Navy Training Range 7201. Commander, 36 ABW, manages training lands at Andersen Air Force Base including its Main Base, Northwest Field, and Andersen South. The EIS also evaluated a few smaller nonmilitary properties on Guam, Tinian, and Rota presently used for specific training functions or proposed for new activities with the express permission of the landowners.

The training lands available for training and applicable to this ROD include the entire island of FDM (206 acres [83 hectares] of leased land); 15,844 acres (6590 hectares) comprising the MLA on Tinian; 18,100 acres (7,341 hectares) on Navy bases on Guam, and 17,534 acres (7,100 hectares) of Air Force property on Guam.

Process

USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI analyzed the potential impacts caused by multi-service military training activities in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as required by NEPA. Military training and support activities were evaluated on three islands in CNMI—Farallon de Medinilla (FDM), Tinian and Rota—and the Territory of Guam.

The Notice of Intent to develop the EIS was published in the Pacific Daily News on November 18, 19 and 20, 1995, and the **Federal Register** on November 28, 1995. Public scoping meetings were conducted on Tinian, Rota, and Guam in December 1995. Two iterations of the Draft EIS (DEIS) were distributed to federal, state, and local government agencies, elected officials, community

groups and business associations, and interested persons in January 1997 and June 1998. During the 45-day review period, oral and written comments were received from between 25 to 30 correspondents. After public notification was provided in the Pacific Daily News and Marianas Variety, USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI conducted eight public hearings on Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Guam to receive additional comments during March 1997. The responses to all public comments were incorporated into the Final EIS (FEIS) which was distributed to the public on June 11, 1999 for a 30-day review period and written responses were provided to seven correspondents with comments regarding the preferred alternative and mitigation measures.

Alternatives Considered

Four training land use alternatives represent a spectrum of training possibilities: conducting no training; reducing existing training land uses; taking no (new) action; and increasing training activities and sites to encompass all of the training requirements that are identified in the U.S. Pacific Command's "Marianas Training Plan" (MTP). The result of the evaluation is a fifth alternative, the Preferred Training Land Use Alternative for the Mariana Islands, which retains ongoing training activities and sites, and adds a few of the new training requirements in the MTP to maximize training land value or to eliminate training deficiencies. The alternatives were based on the need to maintain a high level of operational readiness and joint service operation capabilities among units stationed and operating in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean.

No Training Land Use Alternative

Land areas presently in use would no longer be used for training. This alternative could be selected for a portion of a training area if it were necessary to protect biological or cultural resources or to ensure public safety by totally restricting access. The No Training Land Use Alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative but is not the preferred alternative since it fails to meet the purpose and need for the proposed action.

Reduced Training Land Use Alternative

Land areas presently in use would be used by fewer personnel or for less intensive training activities. Selection of this alternative was evaluated against ongoing training activities, which comprise about 90 percent of the evaluated training land uses. The EIS

did not determine that there were any environmental impacts of ongoing activities that require reducing training on FDM, the MLA and Guam's military bases as the preferred alternative.

No New Training Land Use Alternative

The "No Action Alternative" for this EIS can also be defined as a "no new action," "ongoing training" or "continuing action" alternative. Training activities within existing sites, existing mitigation measures and training constraints would continue to be performed unchanged.

Maximum Training Land Use Alternative

This alternative would include all of the training activities and training sites that were identified in the MTP, as well as expand or introduce new activities and sites. This alternative proposed expanding range training on FDM by incorporating ground artillery, mortar, and anti-tank rocket firing. On Tinian, this alternative proposed additional landing beaches in the MLA and the development of live-fire weapons ranges and training structures. On Guam, this alternative proposed additional landing beaches and underwater demolition sites at Waterfront Annex, live-fire weapons training ranges modifications at Waterfront Annex, and new weapons range development at Ordnance Annex. Andersen Air Force Base training activities would remain unchanged, but a new, permanent location would be selected for ongoing rapid runway repair training.

Preferred Training Land Use Alternative

The selected alternative is the result of analyzing potential environmental impacts. This alternative encompasses a mitigated/constrained set of ongoing training activities and the adoption of a few, but not all, of the new training initiatives to offset some existing training area deficiencies. FDM (Navy Range 7201) will continue to be used for naval and aerial bombardment. Training frequency and amounts of munitions to be expended on an annual basis have been determined. Impact areas have been modified to protect migratory seabird colonies, and Micronesian megapode habitat enhancement is underway on Sarigan Island as compensatory mitigation.

The MLA on Tinian will continue to be a major field maneuver area, with two beaches suitable for landings by landing craft air-cushioned (LCAC) and additional beaches suitable for small inflatable raiding craft. North Field runways will continue to be used for airborne and airmobile exercises. The

shared use of Tinian's municipal airport and harbor continue for exercise support activities planned in concert with civilian and commercial requirements. Live-fire training will be limited to Training in the Urban Environment (TRUE) scenarios using a World War II structure. Logistic activities will continue to be conducted by Naval Special Warfare (NSW) units on Rota to support its special boat team training activities that are conducted between Guam and FDM.

Full use of Navy and Air Force bases on Guam will continue. The existing live-fire ranges on Orote Peninsula will be modified as proposed in the EIS to provide a fire-and-maneuver capability and stress course. A sniper range and jungle trail range will be constructed in the Ordnance Annex. Additional sites for underwater demolition training, established offshore of Dadi Beach and at the Agat Drop Zone, will be used to ease the frequency of underwater demolition training presently conducted in and near the mouth of Apra Harbor.

Training Constraints

Limitations to training activities to avoid generating significant impacts have been established by COMNAVMARIANAS and Commander, 36 ABW within certain portions of training areas on FDM, Tinian, and Guam. These constraints will continue to be used as the primary means to protect endangered and threatened species and areas of cultural significance from impacts caused by military personnel and equipment being introduced into training areas by landing craft and amphibious vehicles, aircraft, and vehicles for subsequent maneuver, range training, and bivouacs. Constraints are also established to ensure the safety of personnel in or near active training areas. The constraints—No Wildlife Disturbance (NWD), No Cultural Resource Disturbance (NCRD), and No Training (NT)—will be published in training orders, directives, and exercise plans as maps and overlays and distributed to the units responsible for day-to-day training and larger exercises. The restrictions on military activities can be summarized as follows:

Within areas designated as NWD, to protect vegetation and nesting sites, forces are prohibited from conducting cross-country, off-road vehicle travel. During the nesting season of the threatened Tinian monarch (*Monarchus takasukasae*), field maneuvers cannot be conducted in tangantangan habitat areas. To reduce the potential for field fires and loss of vegetation habitat, the use of pyrotechnics or demolitions (except for emergency signaling) is not

authorized. The use of live and blank ammunition is not allowed so that unexpected, disturbing noises are curtailed. Potential loss of habitat is also controlled by allowing no mechanized vegetation clearing and establishing the maximum size of brush suitable as camouflage material. Flight altitude restrictions have been established as necessary to protect endangered species habitat. No flights below 1,000-ft (305-m) above ground level (AGL) are authorized over known endangered Mariana crow habitat at Northwest Field. No helicopter landings are authorized except at designated landing zones.

NCRD areas are established to protect known or potential cultural resources. Sub-surface disturbances are prohibited in these areas. There will be no cross-country, off-road vehicle travel, and vehicle parking is confined to surfaced areas and cleared road shoulders only. The use of pyrotechnics and demolition charges is also restricted. No digging or excavation is permitted without prior approval of COMNAVMARIANAS or 36 ABW environmental monitors. During major exercises on Tinian, authorized traffic routes through NCRD areas are marked with engineer tape to facilitate movement between the beaches and inland maneuver areas without impact. NCRD constraints maps have been included in a recently developed Programmatic Agreement and a Memorandum of Agreement executed to protect cultural resources in the CNMI and Guam.

Areas designated as NT are off-limits, meaning that there is absolutely no training allowed in these areas. Entry to some of these areas can be authorized for administrative troop and vehicle movement on designated roads or trails only. NT areas have been established to protect both endangered species habitat and areas of particularly sensitive cultural value. NT areas are also established for safety purposes in the vicinity of the munitions storage areas on Andersen Air Force Base and the Ordnance Annex.

Environmental Impacts

USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI has analyzed the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of proposed training in the Mariana Islands across a spectrum of alternatives ranging from no training activities to maximizing training by adopting all of the activities published in the MTP. Each alternative was evaluated for potential effects on the physical environment (climate, geology and hydrology, water quality, air quality, noise, visual setting/aesthetics, and natural hazards and

constraints), biological environment (terrestrial and marine), cultural resources (archaeological and historical), infrastructure, utilities and public services, and the socioeconomic environment on the affected islands.

The alternatives were also evaluated with respect to their consistency with policies established by Executive Orders for Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, Coral Reef Protection, Protection of Wetlands, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, and Invasive Species.

From the outset, three training activities were identified as environmentally controversial and potentially significant. One was the potential for damage to nearshore coral caused by contact with landing craft utility (LCU) and tracked assault amphibian vehicles (AAVs) on Tinian and Guam. Beaches free of nearshore coral and suitable for landing craft and AAVs were identified at the Waterfront Annex. No suitable site for displacement hull LCUs and AAVs was found in the MLA on Tinian, and therefore, LCU/AAV landings will remain confined to Tinian Harbor. Potential impacts to coral in shallow nearshore waters and reefs by landing craft, air-cushion (LCAC) were evaluated in a marine biological survey at Unai Chulu, Tinian. No significant impacts are caused by the LCAC when operated within acceptable parameters. A similar marine biological survey will be conducted to revalidate the lack of impacts to shallow coral by LCAC landings at Unai Dankulo, Tinian and Dadi Beach, Guam. Potentially significant damage to nearshore coral has been eliminated by identifying the suitable types of craft that will be allowed to use each landing beach on Tinian and Guam.

The second issue was underwater demolition training by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and NSW units that cause portions of Apra Harbor to be temporarily closed to other uses and may have a significant impact on marine species. Closure of the harbor, which interferes with commercial boating and diving activities, will be minimized by use of additional underwater training sites in open ocean waters to lessen the frequency of use of Apra Harbor. Training site selection will favor the ocean sites unless weather conditions dictate otherwise. USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI continues to work with Guam Environmental Protection Agency (Guam EPA) and Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) to

select additional sites and to continue using demolition training protocol that minimizes potential impacts to marine biota and provides advance coordination with affected commercial enterprises. Although potentially significant impacts are not anticipated, the activity may remain controversial with respect to the commercial ocean recreation sector and government agencies responsible for protection of endangered and threatened marine species.

The continued use of FDM as a naval gunfire and aerial bombardment range is the third issue. Used as a bombardment range since at least 1971, the island has been the subject of a series of biological evaluations by federal, commonwealth, and military experts. Although the bombardment of FDM may significantly impact endangered species and habitat vegetation, no alternative bombardment range sites are available to USCINCPAC forces for this training requirement. Therefore, compensatory mitigation measures have been enacted in cooperation with U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to enhance the population of the endangered Micronesian megapode on Sarigan, another uninhabited island in the CNMI. Mitigation measures include controlling the types and amounts of ordnance to be dropped and confining the impact areas to minimize impacts on biological resources. The Navy will conduct aerial evaluations of vegetation habitat and birds in conjunction with major bombardment activities. The condition of nearshore coral and the effects of bombardment on the marine environment will be surveyed annually for the next three years by USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI in cooperation with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), USFWS, and CNMI DFW.

Environmental Mitigation

COMNAVMARIANAS analyzed the potential impacts of the selected action on the following: natural or biological resources, cultural resources, environmental quality, infrastructure deficiencies on Tinian, public safety, and socioeconomic quality.

Natural Resources

In addition to identifying areas subject to NWD or NT constraints, mitigation measures to reduce training impacts to nonsignificant levels include adhering to operational requirements for beach landing craft to minimize impacts to shallow reefs and nearshore coral, requiring qualified biologists to conduct pre-training surveys to ensure that

training will not impact sea turtle nesting, and adhering to updated brown tree snake (*Boigis irregularis*) control and interdiction methods to prevent the introduction and proliferation of the BTS from Guam to other locations. These and other mitigation measures identified in the FEIS are now in effect and will be published in Navy and Air Force training orders, directives, and plans. The BTS Control and Interdiction Plan will be updated and published as a COMNAVMARIANAS directive to regulate routine as well as training material/cargo movement from Guam.

With the exception of the continued use of FDM as a naval gunfire and aerial bombardment range, the Preferred Training Land Use Alternative does not significantly impact listed threatened or endangered species. Impacts are reduced to nonsignificant levels by establishing training area boundaries, implementing mitigation measures and training constraints, and conducting environmental monitoring and evaluation. Particular attention has focused on enhancing endangered Micronesian megapode (*Megapodius laperous*) habitat in the CNMI, protecting the threatened Tinian monarch (*Monarcha takasukasae*) during nesting seasons, restricting maneuver in areas of Mariana common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus guami*) habitat, causing little or no disturbance to the island swiftlet (*Aerodramus vanikorensis bartschi*) and three species of federal and Guam endangered fruit bats, and restricting maneuver in areas of Ordnance Annex recently identified as habitat of tree snails being considered for federal listing. Mariana crow (*Corvus kubaryi*) nests at Northwest Field will continue to be monitored by Guam Division of Aquatics and Wildlife Resources (DAWR). As nesting activities are found, this information will be made known to Flight Operations to ensure no overflights at unauthorized altitudes. Protective measures for hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) are in place to minimize or avoid impacts on these species that may enter training beaches and open waters during amphibious training and underwater demolitions.

On FDM, migratory seabirds, federally endangered Micronesian megapodes and Mariana fruit bats may be killed by ordnance or displaced by a loss of habitat. These impacts are mitigated by avoiding certain munitions and by relocating targets so that the majority of ordnance delivered will avoid the most sensitive areas for nesting and roosting birds. Formal consultation in accordance with Section 7 of the

Endangered Species Act has been completed and the protective measures recommended in the biological opinions of USFWS and NMFS have been adopted.

Due to the increased danger of field fires being caused by training during periods of drought and high winds, fire prevention and response plans will be enforced at all ranges and maneuver areas. During periods of high risk, training activities with potential fire-causing effects will be suspended as necessary. Crash-fire-rescue (CFR) vehicles will be available during flight operations in case of a crash and resulting fire.

Cultural Resources

The Preferred Training Land Use Alternative would not significantly impact sites listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Such sites located on land and off-shore could be damaged by off-road vehicles, construction, rapid runway repair, excavation, vandalism, small arms and mortar fire, and shock waves generated by deepwater explosives. These impacts will be mitigated to nonsignificant levels by designating areas with listed or eligible NRHP sites as "No Training" or "No Cultural Resources Disturbance" areas, which would prohibit digging within three feet of historic structures with concrete walls or in any cave, require pre-training archaeological surveys in historic structures used for urban warfare scenarios, and require post-training evaluation for evidence of impacts that would require additional mitigation. The consultation process with the CNMI and Guam Historic Preservation Offices has been completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 16 U.S.C. 470f (1994). A Programmatic Agreement has been signed by the USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI, CNMI Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) regarding the conduct of military training on Tinian. The agreement (signed in June 1999), provides direction in the identification of historic properties, establishment of constrained areas, instructions to training participants, field mitigation and monitoring, coordination of training program revisions, response to public objections, reporting requirements and proposed long-term site protection at Unai Chulu, Tinian. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in June 1999 by the USCINCPACREP GUAM/CNMI, COMNAVMARIANAS, 36th ABW, Guam Historic Preservation Officer, and

the ACHP identifies protective measures to be carried out while developing live-fire weapons ranges in the Ordnance Annex and activities on Northwest Field. The MOA also addresses the continued use of constraints maps as one means to protect cultural resources from training impacts.

Environmental Quality

The Preferred Training Land Use Alternative would not have a significant impact on air quality, climate, geology, surface water quality, flooding, or groundwater. Existing military standing operating procedures (SOPs) and regulations prevent significant impacts on these resources. Major construction projects once proposed on Tinian that could have impacted groundwater quality will not be conducted at this time. If any construction is proposed in the future, appropriate environmental evaluations would be conducted. The concern that live-fire ranges could cause lead contamination in groundwater has been eliminated since there will be no small arms range development. The military is also developing lead-free small-arms ordnance for all range training.

Tinian Infrastructure

Wastewater disposal has been a major logistic issue for all large-scale exercises. Tinian presently has no large-scale municipal wastewater treatment facility and there has been concern that temporary overuse of the systems would impact groundwater resources, air quality, and public health. Leasing portable toilets, contracting pumping services and disposing wastes in municipal systems was the standard practice to handle large quantities of black-water wastes. The shared use of municipal septic tanks during major exercises is no longer necessary. Navy Public Works constructed a septic tank and leach field based on the requirement to support up to 2,500 exercise personnel. This tank was first available during Tandem Thrust 99 (March–April 1999). Its availability has eliminated concerns about cumulative impacts on the island's municipal system capacity.

Tinian has no EPA-approved solid waste landfill and no hazardous waste or hazardous material handling facility. Training activities routinely generate varying amounts of solid waste (primarily cardboard and paper) and may generate very small amounts of hazardous materials and used oil. Collecting, compacting, and transporting solid wastes off Tinian will continue as a requirement for any military exercise on Tinian. The Tinian

municipal landfill will not be used. Hazardous materials, used oils and expended lithium batteries will be handled as stipulated in exercise plans for removal from the island of Tinian to authorized waste streams. Maintenance activities that could generate hazardous materials will be minimized while on Tinian, with scheduled maintenance conducted on military bases or while aboard ship.

Public Safety

The Preferred Training Land Use Alternative would not have a significant impact on public health and safety. The COMNAVMARIANAS policy limiting access to FDM remains in effect, allowing only active duty, DoD-trained explosive-qualified personnel responsible for range operations and maintenance. The proposal to expand the range for firing ground weapons such as artillery, mortars, and anti-tank missiles is not approved due to the existence of unexploded ordnance throughout the island. Biological surveys will continue to be conducted from the air by helicopter.

Range safety and control measures are presently in place on Guam at Orote Peninsula, the Communications Annex at Finegayan, and Andersen Air Force Base. Risks to public safety from projectiles from small arms and rifle ranges will be avoided by adhering to range regulations, conducting required range area sweeps and surveillance during training on affected land and water areas, installing and maintaining coastal warning devices of the presence of ranges, and temporarily restricting range access when necessary. Prior to the activation of new and modified live-fire training ranges on Guam, the ranges will be evaluated and certified by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command. At the Ordnance Annex, the design will also be reviewed and approved by the Naval Ordnance Command. The orientation of the sniper firing range at Ordnance Annex has been modified to avoid intersection of the range's Surface Danger Zone and a public hiking trail that infringes Navy property.

The proposed small arms fire and maneuver range will not be constructed on Tinian at this time. An alternative fire-and-maneuver range site is being developed on a former small arms range at Orote Point on Guam. This decision eliminates potential safety impacts to civilians or non-training personnel who could encroach on the range training area.

The proposed 60mm mortar range will not be developed on Tinian. This eliminates potential safety risks due to unexploded ordnance remaining in

areas that could be encroached by the public and difficult to control access restrictions to 100 percent certainty.

Proposed construction of a permanent shooting house or breacher trainer will not be undertaken on Tinian at this time. Whenever the former World War Two Japanese Command Center is in use as a shooting house, area access will be restricted. Alternative urban training facilities are also available on Guam.

Notice to Airmen (NOTAMS) and Notice to Mariners (NOTMARS) will be published and broadcast to forewarn of naval gunfire and aerial bombardment at FDM. The island range and its three-mile radius surface danger zone will be surveyed prior to commencing training to ensure that the area is clear of all non-training related activity.

Potential impacts between civilian and military aircraft will be avoided through the coordinated efforts of military and FAA air traffic controllers in accordance with military SOPs and FAA regulations. NOTAMS will be published in advance of training that involves the use of airspace over FDM, Tinian and Guam.

There will be no hazards to ordnance, fuel storage, and personnel from electromagnetic radiation during training. Required clearance distances are maintained between field emitter sites and ordnance, fuel, and personnel. There would be no risk to public health caused by transmissions from the International Broadcasting Bureau's site recently constructed in the MLA on Tinian. The acreage has been removed from the areas in the MLA used for training.

Impacts to boaters and divers from shallow and deepwater mines will be avoided by continuing to clear and patrol demolition sites and exclusion zones prior to all exercises. To avoid potential sympathetic detonation of depth charges located on the Tokai Maru, a sunken Japanese World War II vessel in Outer Apra Harbor, the present demolition site will remain unchanged and the size of the explosive charge limited to ten pounds.

Civilian ports of entry will not be significantly impacted. On Tinian and Rota, approval from civilian authorities will be obtained 30 days prior to any exercise. To avoid significant impacts on customs and immigration services, local authorities will be notified 30 days prior to large exercises. Noise impacts from training at Tupalao and Dadi beaches will be temporary. To eliminate potentially significant impacts, training will be conducted during the day.

The Preferred Training Land Use Alternative will not have a significant impact on roadways and traffic. Military

traffic control will be used as necessary to move military convoys through Tinian town. AAVs using public roads will have track pads installed to avoid damaging road surfaces.

Socioeconomic Environment

Tinian's relatively small population is isolated from many economic opportunities that are available to Saipan residents. Training activities offer potential economic benefits through the purchase of local goods and services. Temporary exclusion of tours from active training sites in the EMUA could have a negative effect. One casino hotel has opened and another is planned, and cumulative socioeconomic impacts may result from the combination of military training and increased tourism.

USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI will continue to provide advance information to CNMI agencies and affected commercial enterprises whenever military training safety considerations require temporary restrictions to areas on Tinian normally open to the public. Affected agencies and firms have requested at least a 30-day notice, which in almost all instances can be accommodated. This interaction will include the CNMI and Tinian municipal governments, the Commonwealth Port Authority, and tourist agencies in advance of all training on Tinian that may interfere with tourist activities in the MLA, nearshore waters or the harbor. Whenever active training is not taking place in portions of the MLA, these areas will be opened to visitors.

Underwater demolition by EOD and NSW units in Guam's Outer Apra Harbor requires certain areas of the harbor (including a number of popular dive sites) to be closed to civilian activities once a month for approximately four hours. This public safety measure may cause loss of income to commercial boat and dive operators. SOPs practiced by EOD and NSW units will continue to provide advance information to affected commercial firms so that they can seek alternative dive, boating and fishing sites during the temporary closures. This process will continue along with the use of NOTMARs and coordination with GEPA and DAWR to actively observe and monitor training.

Executive Orders

The FEIS considered federal policies under Executive Orders pertaining to Environmental Justice, Protection of Children from Environmental Health and Safety Risks, Protection of Wetlands, Coral Reef Protection, and

Invasive Species, to ensure that training will be conducted in compliance with said policies and that appropriate mitigation actions will be taken to eliminate or reduce potentially significant impacts.

Preventive practices to address the potentially significant impacts that could be caused by brown tree snakes have been addressed and remain a subject of periodic review and updates to ensure that the latest proven methods have been incorporated. Appendix E of the FEIS compiles the measures taken to prevent BTS impacts to date. An updated order defining BTS control/interdiction protocols will be published by COMNAVMARIANAS.

The prevention of coral damage or destruction was a primary criterion in selecting beaches for landings by displacement hull landing craft and tracked amphibious assault vehicles. The lack of impact to shallow coral by LCACs was demonstrated at Unai Chulu, Tinian, and similar studies will be conducted at Unai Dankulo, Tinian, and Dadi Beach, Guam, prior to final approval as LCAC landing sites.

Marianas Training Management Regulations

Implementation of the Preferred Training Land Use Alternative requires the COMNAVMARIANAS and 36th ABW to implement mitigation measures and training constraints for their respective areas of responsibility and to cooperate in monitoring and corrective measures. The mitigation and constraints identified in the FEIS will be incorporated into training orders and directives. Compliance with these directives is the responsibility of each military organization involved in Marianas training. The military will conduct advance coordination as needed with agencies of the territorial and commonwealth governments and affected commercial enterprises to avoid training area use conflicts.

Comments Received on FEIS

The CNMI Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) identified an additional cultural resource site in the vicinity of Unai Dankulo, Tinian. The training constraints map for Tinian training will be modified to incorporate an additional NCRD area south of the landing beach site. The HPO also expressed concern regarding the lack of an archaeological survey on FDM. Conducting such a survey is not feasible due to potential danger to the surveyors since the island is an impact area and replete with unexploded ordnance.

CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR) commented

on the need to follow LCAC operational protocols to protect the beach environment. The lessons learned during LCAC operations at Unai Chulu, Tinian during Tandem Thrust 99 will be incorporated into COMNAVMARIANAS training orders. The department's Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) suggested a change in the timing for setting up portable BTS barriers at cargo points on Guam and Tinian. When updating the BTS Control/Interdiction protocols, the process for using portable snake barriers at ports of entry and shipment will be defined by military representatives and CNMI, Guam, and federal regulators.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX commented on the BTS Control/Interdiction Plan update requirement, compensatory mitigation measures for impacted biological resources, and prevention of impacts by amphibious landings during coral spawning. COMNAVMARIANAS will continue to monitor and mitigate these concerns as necessary.

Guam Environmental Protection Agency has concerns regarding training at the Waterfront Annex's Dadi Beach and instead, favors the use of the beach and waters at Tipalao for amphibious landings and underwater demolition training. Site surveys and evaluations between the Navy and GEPA will continue in regard to any activities at either beach.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, APHIS, Wildlife Services provided a list of lessons learned from Tandem Thrust 99 that will be incorporated in the updated BTS Control/Interdiction directive.

U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife also identified the need to update the COMNAVMARIANAS BTS Control/Interdiction Plan, initiate compensatory mitigation for impacts to migratory seabirds on FDM, and to initiate a Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation for target placement on FDM. This agency participated in the development of the 1996 BTS Control/Interdiction Plan and will be asked to participate in the process to update the plan as a COMNAVMARIANAS BTS Control/Interdiction directive. Compensatory mitigation measures will continue for endangered and threatened species. Target material selection and placement is an ongoing action, which will be incorporated in the update of the BTS Control/Interdiction directive.

Conclusion

USCINCPACREP GUAM/CNMI, in cooperation with federal, territorial and commonwealth regulatory agencies, will conduct all necessary steps to avoid or

minimize environmental harm that could be caused by military training.

The Preferred Training Land Use meets the purpose and need to train in the Mariana Islands while avoiding or minimizing impacts on the existing environment. The preferred alternative and its mitigation and constraints are fully responsive to the concerns expressed by regulatory agencies and members of the public, local economic conditions, and required levels of public safety. Although the "No Training Alternative" may be perceived as causing no significant environmental impacts, it does not necessarily foster continued stewardship in areas that will remain free of development, and does not meet the stated purpose and need for maintaining the operational readiness of USCINCPAC forces.

The EIS evaluated a mix of activities with variable schedules of activities at each site, training event duration, and numbers and types of participating units. The findings of the EIS reflect this dynamic training environment and potential changes to military training missions that require continuous environmental monitoring and evaluation of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. Training management measures will be modified whenever (1) it is discovered that the environmental effects of ongoing activities are significantly and qualitatively different or more severe than predicted, and (2) a new training activity represents a substantial change from existing activities and has the potential for generating significant environmental impacts. Under these circumstances, USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI will review the issues with appropriate regulatory agency representatives to determine and implement appropriate mitigation measures.

Accordingly, training in the Mariana Islands will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the Preferred Training Land Use Alternative as identified in the Marianas Training Environmental Impact Statement.

Dated: July 28, 1999.

Rear Admiral J.W. Greenert,
USCINCPAC REP GUAM/CNMI.

[FR Doc. 99-21375 Filed 8-17-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5001-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

AGENCY: Department of Education.

SUMMARY: The Leader, Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before October 18, 1999.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Leader, Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes that notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g. new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment.

The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Dated: August 12, 1999.

William E. Burrow,

Leader, Information Management Group,
Office of the Chief Information Officer.

Office of the Under Secretary

Type of Review: New.

Title: Evaluation of Effective Adult Basic Education Programs and Practices.