

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED **MAY 23 1983**  
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **PUERTO RICO NATIONAL CEMETERY**

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

**PR 168**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

**Bayamon**

VICINITY OF **0140**

STATE

**Puerto Rico**

CODE

**RQ**

COUNTY

**San Juan**

CODE

**072**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<b>N/A</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <b>Cemetery</b>

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

**VETERANS ADMINISTRATION**

STREET & NUMBER

**810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.**

CITY, TOWN

**Washington**

VICINITY OF

STATE

**D.C.**

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Land Management Service - VA Office of Construction**

STREET & NUMBER

**810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.**

CITY, TOWN

**Washington**

STATE

**D.C.**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

**VA Historic Sites Survey**

DATE

**Continuing**

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

**VA Historic Preservation Office**

CITY, TOWN

**Washington**

STATE

**D.C.**

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Puerto Rico National Cemetery comprises 108.24 acres of land in the Ward of Hato Tejas which is approximately 13 miles from the City of San Juan. The national cemetery is irregular in shape and the land slightly rolling. Grave markers are flat stone perfectly aligned row, upon row giving the cemetery a park like atmosphere. A chain link fence approximately eight feet in height encloses the west, north and a portion of the east boundaries. A low stucco finished masonry wall topped with a eight foot wrought iron ornamental fence encloses the east and southern boundaries of the cemetery. On either side of the main wrought iron entry gates are two stone pillars which are approximately ten feet in height. Smaller wrought iron pedestrian gates flank the entry gate. The main driveway is lined with stately palm trees with the focal point the flags of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico flying side by side. The flags are in a recessed plaza near the center of the cemetery. It measures approximately 100 feet in length by 35 feet in depth. Stone benches outline the perimeter of the plaza and are attached to a stone wall approximately three feet in height. At the corners of the plaza are square raised stone planters. On the side of each flagpole are four steps leading to the second level of the plaza. A bronze plaque is set on a pedestal of Puerto Rican marble inscribed in English and Spanish. The Court of Honor is surrounded with marble panels that are approximately three feet in height. Wings extend from both sides of the main plaza.

Paved roadways wind throughout the cemetery. There are two permanent buildings located on the grounds. The first, director's office, administration and residence are combined into one long building on the right side of the entryway. The building is a one story, H shaped rambler painted white on the exterior and referred to as a "Bermuda" type building. The roof is stepped and windows are louvered aluminum and wood. The residence and office were constructed in September 1949 at a cost of \$37,700 and contained 2,583.55 square feet of space. Additions were made in 1961, 1968 and the early 1970's for administrative purposes. The second is a service complex located in the western section on Service Drive with an entrance from Punto Brava Road. It is fully enclosed by a chain link fence approximately eight feet in height. The facility is modern salt box style and contains shop areas, mechanical bays and employee facilities. The facility is painted white with multi-color doors on the mechanical bays. There are underground fuel storage tanks within the complex. These buildings do not contribute to the historical significance of this national cemetery.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Nat'l Cemetery
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1948 to Present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

National Cemeteries administered by the Veterans Administration are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places because they have been designated by Congress as primary memorials to the military history of the United States. These cemeteries were created in response to a national sense of obligation to care for those who served their country, and are physical manifestations of our social conscience. It is important that these sites be preserved and maintained as a statement of these sentiments for future generations.

It was not until 1948 that the people of Puerto Rico, having sent their sons and daughters to the battlefields of two World Wars, had land set aside for the resting places of their departed. The Puerto Rico National Cemetery was originally a United States naval reservation that was transferred to the Department of the Army in October 1948, by General Orders No. 68.

The dedication ceremony for the national cemetery was November 11, 1949. Thousands of Puerto Ricans were present on this solemn occasion to pay their respect to those whose past deeds and lost lives were in defense of our great Nation's ideals. In September 1973, the cemetery was again transferred, this time to the jurisdiction of the Veterans Administration. The land transferred consisted of 108.24 acres.

A Medal of Honor was posthumously awarded to Private First Class Fernando Luis Garcia-Ledesma, the sole recipient of this honor memorialized in the Puerto Rico National Cemetery. A marker was erected in his memory at the cemetery as his remains could not be recovered from the battlefields of Korea. Private Garcia received this medal for his act of heroism that occurred on September 5, 1952, while engaged in combat with enemy Korean forces. In the midst of a battle, Garcia, although suffering painful wounds, moved through intensive hostile fire to a supply point to obtain more grenades. When an enemy grenade landed dangerously close to a fellow Marine, Garcia unhesitatingly threw his body on the deadly missile. His citation read in part "...His great personal valor and cool decision in the face of almost certain death sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. naval service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Veterans Administration - Title Files  
 National Cemetery Service - Construction Records  
 "Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863"

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 108.24

\*NOT UTM REFERENCES  
 E 180750 64015

A 

1	8	0	0	1	0	6	3	9	5	0
ZONE EASTING					NORTHING					

B 

1	8	0	2	6	0	6	4	5	4	0
ZONE EASTING					NORTHING					

C 

1	8	0	7	8	0	6	4	6	2	5
ZONE EASTING					NORTHING					

D 

1	8	1	0	3	5	6	4	4	4	0
ZONE EASTING					NORTHING					

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Situated in the Ward of Hato Tejas, Municipality of Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Bounded on the north by land of Central Juanita, Inc., and land of Juan Martina; on the east by land of Central Juanita, Inc; on the south by land of Otto Irizarry; and on the west by the Punto Brana Road, which crosses land of Central Juanita, Inc.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Gjore J. Mollenhoff - HPO  
Sandra A. Webb - Program Analyst

ORGANIZATION Veterans Administration DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET & NUMBER 810 Vermont Avenue TELEPHONE 202-389-3447  
 CITY OR TOWN Washington, STATE D.C.

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

*Patricio de Rosafont*  
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National  State  Local

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Gjore J. Mollenhoff

TITLE Historic Preservation Officer DATE 2/24/83

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Patrick Andrews* DATE 9/26/83  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Approximately 40 acres, about half of the land suitable for interments, has been developed for burials. The design for the remaining useable land has been developed. The high bluff area along the east and a hilly area in the north central area are not suitable for interments.

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Among the honored men and women interred in the Puerto Rico National Cemetery rest two veterans who, by their leadership, courage, and dedication, earned special recognition. Major General Juan Cesar Cordero was a prominent Puerto Rican who distinguished himself in the military with the U.S. Army during World War II. Later during the Korean conflict, Cordero fought with the 65th Infantry Regiment. He rose to the rank of Major General as Adjutant General of the Puerto Rico National Guard. General Cordero met an untimely death at the age of 61 and was interred with full military honors in Section C, Grave 1. Dr. Bailey Kelly Ashford, a native of Washington, D.C., earned the gratitude of the thousands of people living in the tropics due to his role in conquering hookworm, a dreaded tropical disease. Dr. Ashford came to Puerto Rico with the occupying forces of the U.S. Army during the Spanish-American War. It was then that he realized the prevalence of hookworm and became determined to find a cure. Dr. Ashford died in 1934, a retired Colonel, and was interred in Fort Brooke Military Cemetery. Later, in 1954, his remains were disinterred, and his final resting place is Section A, Grave 1204.

The gratitude the people of Puerto Rico have for those who served this Nation manifested itself on May 25, 1975, when, for the first time, the flag of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was hoisted to its place of honor beside the American flag in the Puerto Rico National Cemetery. This unique event was made possible by contributions by the people and by Puerto Rican business establishments. These funds were used to enlarge the old Court of Honor, to erect the second flagpole, and to install a 24-hour illumination system. The solemn flag raising ceremony attracted thousands of spectators who gathered that Sunday morning to honor the memories of the men and women at final rest in the cemetery.

A bronze plaque was placed in the Court of Honor to commemorate this event, bearing the following inscription: "The modest contributions of the people of Puerto Rico have made possible the erection of a second flagpole to fly the colors of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico alongside the national colors. Day in and day out, the Puerto Rican flag will hover over this cemetery as an eternal token of love, respect and gratitude to those who, at one time or another, served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America."

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As of June 1983, there were 16,045 interments at the Puerto Rico National Cemetery, increasing by about 750 per year. These include veterans of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. The interments represent members of the Armed Forces who served in the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. These trace the history of Puerto Rico since it became a part of the United States.

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10 Geographical Data

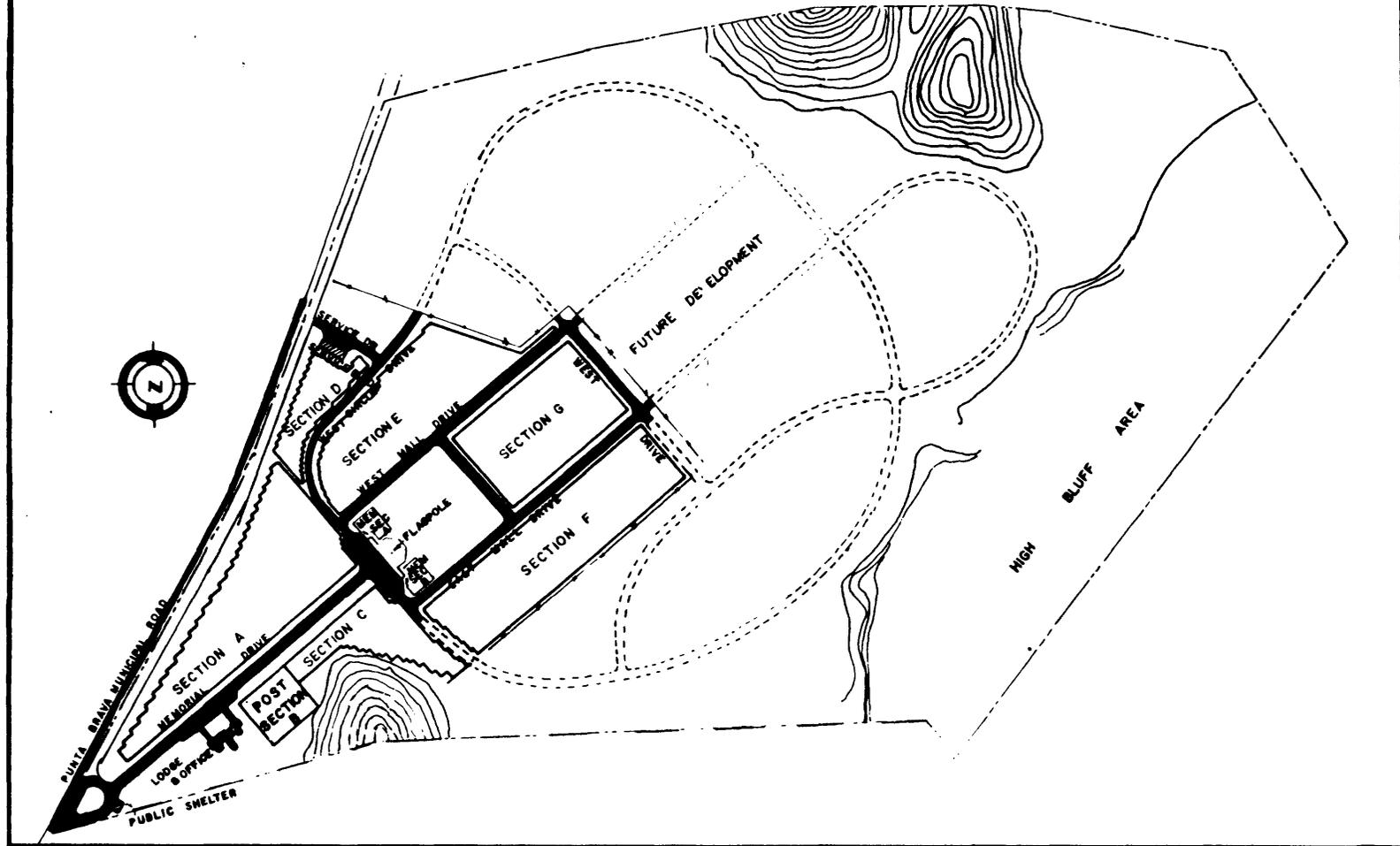
\*NOT UTM REFERENCES - Coordinates above are in meters, based on Puerto Rico coordinate system. A 2000 meter grid based on the Puerto Rico system is on the Bayamon, P.R. 1:20,000 USGS quad, dated 1969. No other USGS quad is available.

Verbal Boundary Description

The Puerto Rico National Cemetery is located approximately 1.5 miles northwest of Bayamon in the Ward of Hato Tejas. It is bounded on the north by the Riverview subdivision and an area of open land which surrounds the cemetery to the east and southeast. The Punta Brava subdivision lies along the southern boundary. Punta Brava Road (Route 168) forms the western boundary.

# PUERTO RICO NATIONAL CEMETERY

HATO TEJAS , PUERTO RICO



0.5 KILOMETER