

Fiscal Year 2012 Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards

Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield

Cultural Resources Management, Installation

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield (FS/HAAF) is home to the 3rd Infantry Division and other smaller tenant units. Fort Stewart occupies a contiguous land area in southeast Georgia of 279,270 acres acquired by the Army in World War II, making it the largest Army installation east of the Mississippi River. Hunter Army Airfield (HAAF) covers almost 5,370 acres on the southwest side of Savannah, Georgia, and was formerly the Savannah Municipal Airport, acquired by the Air Corps in World War II. HAAF became an Air Force Base before being made into an Army sub-installation of Fort Stewart in 1967. HAAF features the Army's longest runway on the east coast (11,375 feet). From HAAF Soldiers can deploy to any area of operation in the world within 24 hours. Together, FS/HAAF is the Army's premier training and power projection platform on the Atlantic Coast. The combined current population of FS/HAAF is approximately 92,000, and includes active duty Soldiers, Family Members, and Civilians, in addition to Reservists who conduct annual training at FS. FS/HAAF is constantly striving to meet the many challenges of sustaining both the environment and the installation's military mission to train and deploy combat-ready Soldiers.

To that end, FS/HAAF has an installation Strategic Plan (ISP), comprised of six Quality Management Boards, each with a specific focus as aligned with the installation Management Command Management Campaign Plan's six Lines of Effort. The installation Sustainability Management System (SMS) is fully integrated into the ISP to ensure management decisions are focused on sustainability. The ISP provides a framework and management structure to prioritize projects to support and sustain the installation missions, as well as our natural, cultural, and fiscal re-

sources. This innovative approach has earned FS/HAAF the 2012 Commander in Chief's Annual Award for installation Excellence and the 2012 GreenGov Building the Future Award.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

FS/HAAF Cultural Resources Management Program (CRM) supports the ISP through active participation in the Training Support Quality Management Board, the SMS Land Management Process Action Team, and the Integrated Management Prescription Team. The central emphasis of the CRM is to fully complement the military mission by reducing training land encumbrances, supporting conservation efforts (such as maintaining Red Cockaded Woodpecker habitat) and enhancing range sustainment through archaeological survey. Between these various teams, CRM collaborates with Natural Resource Managers, Trainers, engineers, real property managers, and sustainability managers to preserve the past, while changing, improving, and building for the future.

FS/HAAF manages approximately 4,000 archaeological sites and 309 historic buildings in accordance with the FS/HAAF Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP). This plan was implemented in 2001, is periodically revised, and is undergoing update (2012). These revisions included development of Cultural Resource Action Plans for each of the 124 Training Areas which are used to efficiently manage resources and consolidate data for all reviews and planning surveys. The installation established a Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in 2000, which was renewed twice, and then completely revised in FY11. This PA covers the standard operations and maintenance of the installation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Overall Cultural Resources Management

In FY11, the installation executed a new PA with the SHPO which outlines how the installation meets its requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act. This new PA resulted in elimination of various survey requirements and the mitigation of 95 km (235 acres) of historic railroads. The PA also streamlined the overall Section 106 review process by removing the standard 30-day SHPO review process for all undertakings that will not adversely affect historic properties. The PA pioneered new processes and procedures that could be used by other Department of Defense (DoD) installations, including the establishment of a new categorical exclusion for archaeological surveys within areas of low probability for cultural resources yet within areas of elevated unexploded ordnance area concerns. Adoption of this categorical exclusion as a nation-wide policy could potentially eliminate millions of dollars in unnecessary Phase I survey and most importantly, reduce the overall risk to health and safety. It is estimated that adoption of these new procedures will save the installation a cumulative total of \$4.5 million over a five-year period.

To better carry out program goals outlined in the PA, CRM developed the Annual Program Plan, which outlines CRM's fiscal year operations in advance, focusing the program on specific installation priorities. In addition to annual planning, CRM also regularly reviews all real property, range, maintenance, and engineering projects that will potentially impact cultural resources. To coordinate Section 106 review under the PA, CRM participates in the FS/HAAF National Environmental Policy Act Work Coordination System for expedient environmental clearances. In FY11 and FY12 CRM conducted 1380 reviews.

Archaeological surveys to date have cleared 234,000 acres of land at Fort Stewart for mission-required training with only 45,000 acres (less than 16 percent) remaining to be inventoried. At HAAF, in FY11 CRM surveyed all training lands. Of the 4,000 known archaeological sites, 50 are listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), while 379 need further evaluation, reducing training lands encumbered by protected CRM sites to only 0.27% of FS and 0.03% of HAAF. Because of the near-completion of survey, CRM will soon change from a survey to a testing management posture, with the next step being an aggressive push to evaluate all potentially eligible sites.



Phase I Archaeological Inventory in support of training & timber thinning requirements.

CRM has also completed the building inventory for FS/HAAF. Of the 309 NRHP-eligible buildings, 280 have been mitigated. This streamlines coordination with Real Property, Engineering, and Operations and Maintenance, and ensures projects involving building construction, modification, and demolition are executed in a timely manner with minimal consultation.

In FY12, FS/HAAF initiated a DoD Legacy Program funded study to produce a Historic Context for the Naval Stores Industry to assist NRHP evaluations for sites in southeastern coastal plain DoD installations. The context will explore DoD Program Alternatives/Comments, potentially allowing southeastern DoD installations to reduce the total acreage of encumbered training lands associated with naval stores sites, and will provide guidance for the identification and evaluation of archaeological resources related to the Naval Stores industry. Additionally, CRM began to explore the potential for cultural resource preservation easement opportunities in conjunction with the Joint Land Use Study/Army Compatible Use Buffer program.

Historic Buildings and Structures

FS/HAAF utilizes multiple NRHP-eligible structures for their original purpose. Fire towers at FS constructed in the 1950s are still in use. Hangars and aircraft maintenance shop buildings, constructed for bomber operations in World War II and for SAC in the 1950s, continue this mission with Army helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

In 2002 and 2004, CRM completed building surveys for all buildings built through 1990, which included consideration for exceptional significance under the U.S. Army Cold War Military-Industrial Historic Properties Context. As buildings approached their 50-year mark, further SHPO consultation is required to re-assess buildings under standard criteria. CRM staff established a continual updating of installation building surveys. These updates provide installation planners with enough lead time to take into account the effects of any projects impacting newly assessed NRHP-eligible facilities. As part of these survey updates, for 2011-2012, CRM re-assessed 365 buildings, outbuildings, and ancillary structures, with none determined eligible for the NRHP. With completion of these surveys,

Real Property Inventory historical status codes can be updated annually.

In late FY12, CRM began assisting the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on the planned rehabilitation of HAAF Building 1206, originally a civilian hangar built in 1936. Although the building had been previously mitigated for any demolition or modification, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum had expressed interest in relocating the structure on its property should the military wish to demolish it. As result, USACE plans to encapsulate the original outside material with similar metal paneling which will largely preserve the original exterior appearance. This approach will not only leverage the installation's mission of stewardship but also provide opportunities for future alternative mitigation strategies should they become necessary.

Archaeological Resources

In FY11 and FY12, surveys recorded and evaluated 235 sites and determined 11 sites as NRHP-eligible. To protect these and other sites, the ICRMP details a comprehensive site protection program, including site marking and regular visits to protected sites and cemeteries by CRM staff and Conservation Law Enforcement. In FY11, CRM staff established a baseline condition of property for the majority of the NRHP-eligible properties under management. Site condition was recorded and a numbered scoring system was developed to determine which sites were the most susceptible to vandalism and/or natural damage. This system allowed CRM staff to determine which of the 429 protected sites required additional time and resources to protect.

Other site protection efforts involved Fort Argyle, an early 18th century outpost protecting the new colony of Georgia, and the only NRHP-listed property on FS/HAAF. Due to its close proximity to the Ogeechee River, a systematic monitoring plan was necessary to

evaluate the potential threat erosion/vandalism may have to the site. In FY12 CRM began monitoring the rate of erosion on the riverbank over an eight-month period. Preliminary results indicate an elevated degree of erosion. Once the study is complete, management recommendations will be considered as the basis for either long term planning & protection or mitigation if deemed necessary. FS is already exploring innovative methods of shoreline protection using natural, biodegradable material that will help establish strong interlocking root systems using shrubs and trees to keep erosion at a minimum and maintain site integrity.



Site boundary marking measures at FS conducted as part of the baseline condition of property report.

In FY12 the installation investigated an unmarked cemetery at HAAF which was slated for development. Using methodology developed from previous cemetery investigations, the installation augmented the preliminary cemetery investigation through an integrated team of installation support to fully assess the extent of the cemetery and realize a cost avoidance of approximately \$750,000. As a result, CRM established accurate cemetery

boundaries and estimated burial densities, and then encouraged project proponents to avoid the cemetery for an *in situ* cost avoidance of \$525K.



In situ investigation of a 19th century burial at HAAF.

Native American Program

The installation regularly consults with eight affiliated Native American Tribes. Access provisions are outlined within the ICRMP, as are procedures for any Native American Grave Protection & Repatriation Act related inadvertent discovery. Based on current consultation with the Tribes, there are no known natural resource use issues on FS/HAAF. FS has one significant Native American burial site, Lewis Mound. This NRHP-eligible property is a potential Sacred Site and its location is kept undisclosed by CRM staff. Procedures are in place for access to this site should visitation be requested. The installation's NAGPRA inventories are up-to-date. CRM manages only one set of fragmentary NAGPRA-related human remains. Consultation with culturally affiliated Tribes occurred during the late 1990s regarding the remains; thus far, there has been no claim by the Tribes for repatriation.

Curation

The curation program concentrates on the full remediation of substandard archived collections, monitoring the quality of incoming

contract deliverables, and the complete process and accession of all internal CRM projects in an effort to maintain all accessions to 36 CFR 79 standards. Other curation actions include upgrading existing accession documents and electronic files, and filing incoming documents. At the end of each fiscal year, CRM staff conduct an annual internal facility audit. Any deficiencies identified during the audit are targeted for resolution within the next fiscal year. CRM continues to develop standard operating procedures to streamline and standardize the curation process, such as its comprehensive Disaster Response Plan. The plan outlines responsibilities in the event of emergency and how to mitigate the impact on the collections.

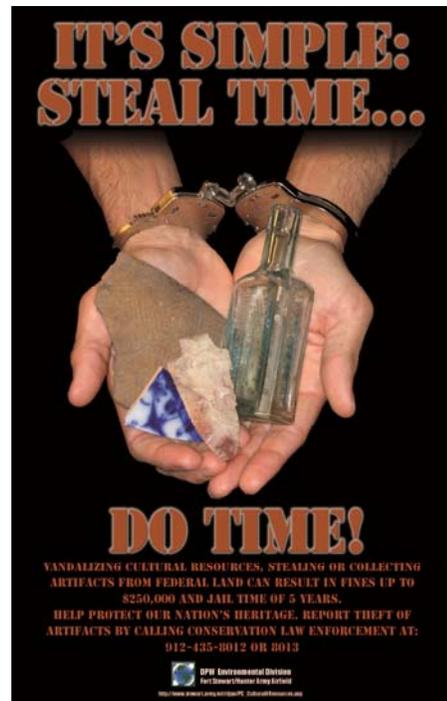


FS/HAAF's 625-square foot climate-controlled Curation Facility.

The FS curation facility is used exclusively for the storage of CRM artifacts, original documents, and associated files. The facility is supported by a separate off-site curation annex at HAAF for the storage of duplicate records. The curation facility ensures that the artifacts and data are held up to federal standards which allows efficient research for CRM, outside researchers and the interested public. Tens of thousands of dollars are saved by the installation each year by on-site curation that would otherwise be diverted to private facilities.

Cultural Resources Awareness and Education (on and off nominee property)

CRM instructs Soldiers and Civilians on each Unit's cultural resource compliance and stewardship requirements through quarterly Environmental Compliance Officer courses, Environmental Quality Control Committee meetings, and newspaper articles. FS/HAAF also developed a cultural resource protection poster which has wide on-post dissemination, and twice a year publishes this poster along with an article in the FS newspaper. CRM gives classes and educational talks at local schools (both on and off-post) and state historical sites, such as Fort Morris. CRM personnel have also provided Cultural Resource Conservation & Compliance guest lectures for anthropology students at Georgia Southern University and the University of Georgia.



Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) poster distributed each year to all units on the installation.

Community Relations

CRM personnel have close academic ties to cultural resource programs at both Georgia Southern University and the University of Georgia and have memberships in such organizations as the Historic Savannah Foundation and the Society for Georgia Archaeology. CRM personnel have also volunteered assistance with Georgia Southern University's excavations of the recently discovered Camp Lawton, a Civil-War era prisoner of war camp. CRM has also complied with Preserve America Executive Order (E.O.) 13287, in particular those stipulations regarding involvement with outside groups and increased public access to historic resources. CRM has had a central role in coordinating cemetery tours for the Fort Stewart Cemetery Council, an outside group with a historical interest in the installation's cemeteries. The tour provides a connection to the local communities past. Also pursuant to E.O. 13287, HAAF has cooperated with the local Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum regarding preservation issues, particularly of the pre-World War II resources of the former civilian airfield.

Since 2008, CRM has conducted a cemetery clean-up day at one of Fort Stewart's 60 cemeteries for National Public Lands Day. CRM enlists up to 100 volunteers in cleaning gravestones. Volunteer partnerships include the Cemetery Council, Scouts, local churches, and individual local Families affiliated with the cemeteries. Through DoD Legacy support, the installation develops and installs interpretive signage at selected cemeteries as well, fostering a sense of community.

In addition to these efforts, CRM engages in a comprehensive public education program to increase public awareness of cultural resources. Archaeology interpretation efforts are aided by a cooperative relationship with the Fort Stewart Museum, which now features

two displays on the Archaeology of FS/HAAF. CRM also attends Earth Day and other public events with portable displays and interpretive material. CRM offers a publication series, which include six historical and archaeological booklets, a children's coloring & activity book, and personnel have also published articles in local newspapers and professional publications. Oral histories from long-time residents are being collected. The CRM website includes an "on-line museum" of interesting artifacts, prehistoric and historic narratives of FS/HAAF, and CRM publications in electronic format. Engaging stakeholder participation, CRM is now developing "The Scrapbook," a webpage featuring pre-military historic documents, photos, and real property records for the installation area, partially provided by the general public, and partially provided by the installation. Through all these efforts, the installation preserves the history of the communities that were displaced by the Army in 1941. In return for their sacrifice, the installa-



Participants in the Little Creek Cemetery National Public Lands Day cleanup pose in front of a newly-installed interpretive sign.

tion commemorates the rich historical legacy of these people.

Cultural Resources Compliance

CRM primarily consults with the SHPO and Tribes through submittal of an Annual Report, Environmental Assessment reviews, potential impacts to NRHP-eligible properties, and de-

velopment of agreement documents. Consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is usually conducted only during development of MOAs and subsequent submittal of mitigation material.



Phase II Archaeological Site Testing efforts to further reduce training land encumbrances and manage resources effectively.

To remain compliant with cultural resource laws, CRM must budget time and funds appropriately to ensure there are no delays to the military mission. In FY11 and FY12, CRM executed 100% of its \$1.56 million budget in a timely manner with no delays to the mission. Furthermore, CRM is able to execute Headquarters approved and validated projects by maintaining appropriate contracts and leveraging year-end funds to ensure maximum efficiency.

As outlined in the ICRMP, FS/HAAF is fully committed to enforcing legal protection of historic properties. However, when ARPA violations occur, the offenders are pursued by FS/HAAF with the intent of punishment with the full force of the law.

Perhaps the most complex compliance project CRM conducted was the finalized mitigation

of two NRHP-eligible 19th century African American cemeteries located at HAAF. The project involved extensive outreach and meetings with the general public, respectful exhumation, analysis and reburial of the 400 remains. The installation's CRM staff successfully navigated the complex and sensitive nature of cemetery mitigation with no delay to military construction. As a result of this project, FS/HAAF contributed substantially to the region's post-Emancipation period of American history. Cooperation with the SHPO allowed the academic community to become more aware of the significant efforts the Army has conducted to not only meet its regulatory obligations but also its role in recovering and preserving community history. The data proved to be an important source for ongoing academic research of material culture from a poorly documented population, and provided material for doctoral research, articles in academic journals, and multiple conference papers and posters. In addition, for this project, the regional standard of 20-foot buffers around each grave was experimentally expanded to 30 feet. This methodology, transferable to other installations, proved to be a more effective standard establishing cemetery boundaries, resulting in a higher degree of confidence in avoiding accidental discoveries.

CONCLUSION

Restoration and preservation of training lands for future generations are critical elements in sustaining the military mission, and CRM is a crucial component of these efforts. The CRM program is approaching the conclusion of a nearly 20-year campaign to survey the installation. As a result, Soldiers will be training on more sustainable ranges, while the CRM program shifts to evaluation of potentially eligible sites and protecting NRHP-eligible resources. The CRM program's flexibility in changing program focus from survey to testing and site protection shows far-reaching strategic vision conforming to evolving situations and the military mission.