

**2015 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD NOMINEE**  
**CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT- INDIVIDUAL**  
**NAVFAC MIDLANT**  
**HEATHER L. ROBBINS**

**NARRATIVE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Heather Robbins is a Community Planner, who has been designated the Navy's Regional Historic Preservation Officer for the Hampton Roads region in Virginia and is the Cultural Resources Team Lead for NAVFAC MIDLANT providing cultural resources management support and contract management to the Navy installations in Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic's (CNRMA) area of responsibility which extends from Maine to North Carolina. In addition to her regional management responsibilities, she is the installation level Cultural Resources Manager for the six Navy installations in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia (Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads, Naval Support Activity Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Naval Air Station Oceana and Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story) and supports Marine Corps installations in North Carolina. She is employed by NAVFAC MIDLANT, and is assigned to the Environmental Business Line, Environmental Planning and Conservation Branch.

Responsible for supporting installations with a vast array of missions including shipyard operations, training, fleet headquarters administrative and communication facilities, and supporting the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Mrs. Robbins cultural resources management skills directly supports the warfighter. As the Regional Historic Preservation Officer, she is involved with the day-to-day management of cultural resources to facilitate mission readiness.

**BACKGROUND:**

CNRMA is located in the oldest part of the nation and as a result contains several of the oldest Navy installations including the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia (1797) and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Maine (1800). Among the many significant resources within CNRMA are the earliest historic building and structure in the Navy's building inventory, the Lee House (18<sup>th</sup> century) at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown in Virginia and National Historic Landmark Dry Dock #1 (ca. 1833) at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, still actively used. CNRMA has a numerous and diverse collection of cultural resources ranging from prehistoric to historic archaeological sites; pre-Navy historic buildings and structures; and Navy historic buildings and structures constructed from 1800 through the Cold War period. The region contains 25 historic districts, 1,120 historic buildings and structures and over 600 archaeological sites spread throughout its installations. The six Navy installations in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia have the majority of the Region's historic properties which includes 14 historic districts and 394 historic buildings and 531 identified eligible and potentially eligible archaeological sites. Due to the vastness of cultural resources in the CNRMA AOR, cultural resources management and compliance is an integral part of all phases of project planning, design and construction to strike a balance between cultural resources stewardship and mission readiness.

Heather Robbins is a Community Planner with a BA in Historic Preservation and a MA in Historic Preservation and exceeds the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for Architectural History. Since 2011, Ms. Robbins has directly overseen the cultural resources management program for CNRMA and acted as Cultural Resources Manager (CRM) for the six Navy installations in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. She provides direct leadership to the Region and installation CRMs on cultural resources related issues including identification of

ways to minimize or avoid adverse effects to historic properties and, if necessary, cost effective ways to mitigate any effects. She also provides guidance to the installations with the identification of cultural resources requirements such as archaeological or architectural investigations in support of construction projects and facilitates the Section 106 consultation process for projects with complex cultural resources issues or projects that will cause adverse effects to historic properties. For various reasons, Mrs. Robbins has been the only cultural resources professional at the CNRMA region level since 2012, but has managed to provide stellar support to the installations throughout the Region.

Mrs. Robbins' major routine duties and responsibilities from the regional perspective include:

- Management of the cultural resources budget for the Region and working with the installations to determine requirements within the POM cycles and to meet mission goals;
- Obtaining funding for the cultural resources program
- Execution of the cultural resources spend plan;
- Management of cultural resources contracts and technical sufficiency of cultural resources reports and other products;
- Completion of in-house National Register evaluations and architectural surveys;
- Cultural resources technical sufficiency review of National Environmental Policy Act documents and Environmental Condition Property reports;
- Technical guidance to CNRMA and Marine Corps installations for cultural resources compliance and management including facilitation of Section 106 consultations and development of Memorandum of Agreements and Programmatic Agreements;
- Provide training to Public Works Department personnel, Integrated Product Team personnel and Navy commands;
- Guidance to the DoD Regional Environmental Coordinator staff on cultural resources related issues;
- Briefs command on cultural resources issues and concerns; and
- Serves as the MIDLANT representative on the Navy's Cultural Resources Media Field Team.

Mrs. Robbins' major routine duties and responsibilities from the installation level perspective include:

- Implementing, updating and managing the Regional Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) for Hampton Roads;
- Implementing, updating and managing the Programmatic Agreement for the Navy's Historic Buildings in Hampton Roads;
- Acting as the local technical expert on all Cultural Resources related subjects;
- Training local Navy personnel on cultural resources;
- Briefing the command on cultural resources concerns;
- Review of Environmental Checklists and various projects to identify cultural resources requirements and potential impacts to cultural resources during the early planning stages;
- Collaborating with planners, architects and engineers to avoid and minimize impacts to cultural resources during project design and construction through site visits, attending design charrettes, review of design drawings, attending pre-construction meetings, and meeting with project team and contractors if an issue arises during construction;
- Development of Section 106 consultation packages; and coordination with Navy stakeholders and consulting parties to ensure compliance with cultural resources regulations.

## **SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- **Project Funding** (*Program Management - Technical Merit - Stakeholder Interaction - Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins successfully executed 18 cultural resources contracts in FY14 including actively pursuing and executing over \$500,000 in Conservation Plus-up funding to support cultural resources projects unfunded in FY13 or requirements necessary to support construction projects in FY14 and FY15. Her coordination with the installation CRMs and Public Works Department personnel enabled her to identify cultural resources priorities and communicate through the chain of command the need to secure additional funding in support of the CR program. In summary, for FY14 the Cultural Resources control was \$717K and the final control was \$1,208K resulting in the execution of 100% of funds received. Project execution necessitated developing scopes of work and government cost estimates to facilitate contract awards within the desired time frames.
- **Contract Management** (*Program Management - Technical Merit - Stakeholder Interaction –Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins managed 32 contract actions in FY13 and FY14 to deliver cultural resources products to various installations and commands including but not limited to: cultural resources training, architectural surveys, landscape surveys, archaeological surveys, ground disturbance assessments, view shed analysis, Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans, archaeological collections curation studies, public education exhibits and brochures, literature searches and tribal cultural affiliation study. The management of the contracts included providing technical guidance to the contractors, technical reviews of all deliverables, coordination with installation CRMs, appropriate internal Navy stakeholders (Public Affairs Officers, security, Public Works Department Personnel, tenant commands, etc.), and external stakeholders (SHPOs, federally recognized Native American tribes) to address comments on deliverables and produce user-friendly documents applicable to all audiences.
- **ICRMP Completion** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Orientation to Mission - Stakeholder Interaction –Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins provided technical guidance, and facilitated coordination with two State Historic Preservation Offices and federally recognized tribes to address concerns for the completion of two Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plans (ICRMP) in FY13 and FY14 including the Hampton Roads Regional ICRMP in Virginia (six installations in one document), and Naval Submarine Base New London in Connecticut.
- **iNFADS Improvements** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Transferability - Stakeholder Interaction – Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins initiated coordination with NAVFAC Atlantic Asset Management (AM) to address omissions or errors in the coding of historic assets for CNRMA installations within the iNFADs database. She collaborated with NAVFAC Atlantic AM to develop a process to review, verify and make necessary revisions for thousands of records in an efficient way. NAVFAC Atlantic AM is utilizing this process as a model for other Navy regions. Her efforts also enabled the ability to accurately showcase the coding of historic assets in the Navy’s GIS system for use by planners, architects and engineers to identify at an early stage if a project will involve a historic building or the building requires evaluation.

- **Legacy Projects** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Transferability – Stakeholder Interaction*). Mrs. Robbins utilized the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program to address complex cultural resources issues that are prominent at CNRMA installations as well as other DoD installations through the sponsorship of two FY13 Legacy projects: 1) Strategies for Applying AT/FP Measures to Historic Properties (draft currently under review); and 2) 20<sup>th</sup> Century Building Materials and Suitable Substitutes: Windows (finalized November 2014). Mrs. Robbins served as the Navy’s technical representative on the projects providing review of draft deliverables and worked with the contractors to facilitate coordination with DoD installations and personnel, SHPOs, and other stakeholders. The end products of the two Legacy projects will provide tools for CNRMA installation CRMs, and planners, architects and engineers to address complex issues affecting historic buildings during renovations and will facilitate the Section 106 consultation process. Due to the response received from questionnaires sent to DoD CRMs and issues identified with 20<sup>th</sup> Century Building Materials, NAVFAC MIDLANT Cultural Resources sponsored a Legacy Proposal for FY14 to look at fenestration materials utilizing the same template as the initial project covering 20<sup>th</sup> century windows.
- **Innovative Process Improvements** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Orientation to Mission – Transferability - Impact/Outcomes*). Through Mrs. Robbins’ involvement with the day-to-day management at the installations in Hampton Roads and communication with the installation CRMs in the Northeast, she proactively identifies regional cultural resources issues and develops innovative approaches to alleviate CRMs workload and shorten timeframes for Section 106 consultations. For instance, in 2012 inadvertent discoveries of historic archaeological resources during construction projects in particular at the two Shipyards occurred numerous times and resulted in project delays and costs. Due to the nature of the waterfront operations at the Shipyards and the urbanized environments, traditional Phase 1 archaeological survey is cost prohibitive and has a significant impact on operations. Therefore, in FY13, Mrs. Robbins managed and facilitated contracts for the completion of two Literature Searches and a historic map geo-referencing project at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to identify and locate through non-invasive ways potential historic features that may be below ground. The final products provide the CRM with the ability to identify any potential historic archaeological resources during the early planning stages of a project, work with the Navy project team to determine ways to avoid or minimize impacts or utilize existing planned studies such as soil borings and geotechnical studies to ground-truth the information, and if impact cannot be avoided, work with the SHPO ahead of time to outline a mitigation or documentation plan for potential resources discovered during construction. Ultimately, the use of these innovative tools has drastically reduced the number of inadvertent discoveries and project delays and costs during construction. Due to the success and positive feedback on the products from PWD personnel and the Maine SHPO, similar projects for the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and other Hampton Roads installations were executed in FY14 and are currently underway.
- **In-House Surveys** (*Program Management - Technical Merit - Stakeholder Interaction – Orientation to Mission - Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins completed an in-house architectural evaluation of 148 resources at NIOC Sugar Grove, West Virginia to facilitate the schedule for the transfer of the property to GSA for disposal. Initially, the West Virginia SHPO requested an extensive architectural survey of the property that would have required about 6-12 months to complete and \$150K through a contract action. Mrs. Robbins worked with the SHPO in September 2014 to reach agreement to reduce

the survey requirements in order to perform the work in-house to meet project timeframes and reduce the costs for the tenant command by \$130K. Mrs. Robbins completed the fieldwork, research and developed the draft report and survey forms within a 6 week period to meet the November 2014 submission to SHPO. The WV SHPO concurred with the findings of the architectural survey with no comments to the report.

- **Training Initiatives** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Orientation to Mission - Stakeholder Interaction –Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins developed and provided training to various audiences at the installations in Hampton Roads in FY13 and FY14. The training served three main purposes: 1) to promote awareness of cultural resources; 2) to promote cultural resources stewardship; and 3) to provide a better understanding of cultural resources compliance as it relates to the day-to-day functions of the Public Works Departments and military readiness. Mrs. Robbins provided two 1-hour sessions to the construction managers and facility maintenance specialists at Naval Station Norfolk to provide information on the historic buildings at the installation; describe types of projects that require cultural resources reviews (in particular self-help projects and minor repairs performed by in-house personnel); and encourage coordination with the CRM during renovations projects that require change orders or changes to the original design. Mrs. Robbins also provided two 8-hour training sessions to all Public Works Department personnel in Hampton Roads with 50+ people attending each session. The 8-hour training sessions provided an overview of cultural resources compliance responsibilities, the cultural resources program in Hampton Roads, application of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (SOI Standard) and approximately 4 hours on specific cultural resources issues affecting projects in Hampton Roads. For instance, in FY13, Mrs. Robbins facilitated a design review workshop to provide architects and engineers with an understanding of the SOI Standards and how the CRM makes determinations of effect. In FY14, training focused on best management practices to avoid and minimize impacts to archaeological resources during vegetation clearing and the treatment of Cold War era historic properties that are eligible under Criterion A for an event and not for architecture.
- **Standard Operating Procedure Development** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Orientation to Mission – Transferability - Stakeholder Interaction – Impact/Outcomes*). Mrs. Robbins developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for cultural resources coordination for Naval Weapons Station Yorktown in Virginia after two inadvertent adverse effects occurred during work in FY12 and FY13. The SOP establishes a process for engagement of the cultural resources manager at the conception of a project through completion and promotes awareness of the diverse cultural resources at the installation including the adjacent National Park Service property, Colonial National Historical Park. The VA SHPO reviewed and concurred with the SOP and the SOP will be turned into a base instruction in FY15 to ensure tenant commands and any commands visiting the installation also practice stewardship of cultural resources. As a result of the SOP in FY14, NWS Yorktown had no inadvertent adverse effects and the relationship between the Navy and the National Park Service improved greatly through coordination with NPS staff at the early stage of projects bordering their property. In FY15, Mrs. Robbins is working on applying the SOP to the other Hampton Roads installations and the development of a regional instruction for Hampton Roads.

- **Enhanced Regulator Relationships** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Stakeholder Interaction –Impact/Outcomes*). In FY14, Mrs. Robbins facilitated a meeting between CNRMA and NAVFAC MIDLANT leadership with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer and the SHPO’s Section 106 Reviewer to discuss the status of the cultural resources program in Hampton Roads and start discussions about complex cultural resources issues impacting mission readiness including maintenance of historic buildings. The discussions highlighted unique challenges including the application of ATEP and energy efficient requirements for rehabilitations and management of archaeological resources for large-scale projects. The result of the discussions provided the VA SHPO with a realistic perspective on the Navy’s cultural resources program and agreement for collaboration to find solutions or an approach to address cultural resources issues in the Hampton Roads region.
- **Improved Tribal Consultation Program** (*Program Management - Technical Merit – Transferability - Stakeholder Interaction –Impact/Outcomes*). In FY12, Mrs. Robbins initiated an effort to develop tribe consultation relationships for installations in CNRMA’s AOR working specifically towards improvement of consultation protocol at NSA Mechanicsburg, NSA Philadelphia, and Philadelphia Navy Yard in Pennsylvania, and NWS Earle in New Jersey. In FY13, she collaborated with NAVFAC Washington and Headquarters to arrange meetings with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers of three federally-recognized tribes (Delaware Nation, Delaware Tribe, and Stockbridge-Munsee Community, Band of Mohican Indians) at their offices in Oklahoma, Kansas and Wisconsin to establish a foundation upon which to build consultation relationships. The specific objectives of these meetings included: introducing NAVFAC representatives to the tribe and meeting tribe staff in person; sharing information on Navy shore bases and cultural resources program; learning directly from the tribe about their traditional and contemporary culture and tribe history; enumerating their concerns with and preferences for consultation protocol to meet various ends, including building relations, meeting Section 106, NEPA and NAGPRA requirements. The meetings were well received by the staff of the tribes and have resulted in quicker reviews of consultation packages under Section 106 reducing typical timeframes for a response from 6-8 months to 30-60 days. In FY14, Mrs. Robbins continued working on the initiative with the development of a SOP on tribal consultation for the PWD-Pennsylvania ICRMPs, currently being updated. The SOP will be provided to the tribes for review in FY15. Additionally, Mrs. Robbins utilized her experience to champion funding in FY14 to support a Tribal Cultural Affiliation Study to identify federally-recognized tribes that have ancestral ties to CNRMA installations and special areas. The study will enable CNRMA to initiate and continue to foster relationships with Native American tribes with the ultimate goal of developing a regional instruction for tribal consultation.
- Mrs. Robbins has been recognized throughout the command for her leadership and teamwork in the cultural resources program and ability to balance mission and historic preservation goals with numerous performance awards. In FY13 and FY14, she has received a Quality Step Increase, NAVFAC MIDLANT Meritorious Recognition Award, NAVFAC MIDLANT Environmental Business Line Employee of the Quarter, and on the spot and time off awards.

## CONCLUSION:

Over the past two years, Mrs. Robbins has made major process improvements within the CNRMA cultural resources program that enable timely, cost-effective compliance. Her expertise, drive, and sensitivity to mission have facilitated critical project completion within deadlines while improving stakeholder relationships. Mrs. Robbins has singlehandedly provided unparalleled support for installations within an 11 state AOR while enhancing the overall program. Her efforts have improved CNRMA's stewardship of some of the nation's most significant historic resources and deserve formal recognition.

*Feedback from internal stakeholders during Cultural Resources Metrics 2013 for Mrs. Robbins in her position as installation level CRM for Hampton Roads installations:*

“CRM works effectively with Planning and Architectural staffs, CPLO, and the Installation Environmental Program Director to minimize /avoid impacts.”

“CRM is very responsive and proactive in addressing the staff concerns and issues regarding project reviews. CR program is well managed and provides informational briefs on Cultural Resources Metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the cultural resources program.”

” Our Cultural Resources staff is always ready to assist with all projects that involve historic properties.”