



2019 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards Cultural Resources Management, Individual/Team Award

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) has honored installations, teams, and individuals for outstanding conservation achievements, innovative environmental practices, and partnerships that improve quality of life and promote efficiencies without compromising the Department of Defense's (DoD's) mission success. The 2019 SecDef Environmental Awards cycle encompasses an achievement period from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2018 (Fiscal Years (FY) 2017-2018). A diverse panel of 58 judges with relevant expertise representing Federal and state agencies, academia, and the private sector evaluated all nominees to select one winner for each of the nine categories that cover six subject areas: natural resources conservation, environmental quality, sustainability, environmental restoration, cultural resources management, and environmental excellence in weapon system acquisition.

About the Cultural Resources Management, Individual/Team Award

The Cultural Resources Management, Individual/Team award recognizes efforts by individuals or teams to promote effective cultural resources management through proactive stewardship of DoD's extensive and rich heritage assets, including archaeological sites, cultural items, the historic built environment, and cultural landscapes. Through dynamic cultural resources management programs that partner with installation stakeholders, such as master planning, public works, and range management, DoD identifies and evaluates cultural resources that impact training, testing, and operational capabilities. Awards also showcase successful partnerships with American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, Native Hawaiian Organizations, states, and other historic preservation stakeholders to protect cultural resources in a manner that sustains mission readiness as responsible stewards of our collective heritage. The 2019 winner of the Cultural Resources Management, Individual/Team award is *Ms. Rita McCarty, Mississippi Army National Guard*.

About Ms. Rita McCarty, Mississippi Army National Guard

As the Cultural Resources Manager for Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center of the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG), Ms. Rita McCarty is charged with preserving the installation's rich cultural heritage, without impeding the critical training activities that support mission readiness. With approximately 132,000 acres of land available for training, Camp Shelby includes a regional school for unmanned aerial systems use, maneuver training sites, and multi-purpose range complexes for all tank gunnery and artillery weaponry currently in use. In FY17 and FY18, Ms. McCarty went above and beyond conventional cultural resources management (CRM) initiatives by jointly coordinating a large-scale centennial celebration for the post, adaptively reusing historic structures to meet current needs, creating new resources for education and outreach among the community, introducing cutting-edge technology to delineate archaeological sites, and more. With over 10 years of experience as the Cultural Resources Manager and with specialties in archaeology, artifact conservation and analysis, cultural resources compliance, and Native American consultation, Ms. McCarty helps stakeholders continue to discover, preserve, and celebrate Camp Shelby's history.



Ms. Rita McCarty supports cultural resources management on the 132,000 acres of Camp Shelby by managing resources like the World War I-era dig site seen here.

Major Accomplishments in FY 2017-2018

- Ms. McCarty simultaneously helped rehabilitate and redevelop two historic buildings on Camp Shelby to include a state-of-the-art curation facility, CRM offices, and cultural center for the MSARNG. By establishing curation facilities on the installation, MSARNG eliminated the annual \$5,000 university curation facility fee and allowed full public access to all holdings.
- Ms. McCarty initiated an internship program with the University of Southern Mississippi to provide one second-year graduate student and one undergraduate student in archaeology with hands-on experience in a real world setting. The program is a cost savings tool for the MSARNG in that it provides much needed cultural resources management assistance at a fraction of a contractor's cost. One of Ms. McCarty's former interns is now the Cultural Resources Manager for the Louisiana National Guard.
- Ms. McCarty secured grant funding for multiple MSARNG projects including \$28,000 from the Federal Highway Administration to convert old rail lines to historic walking trails. The trails circle the installation's historic complex and integrate educational signage into this recreational resource for Camp Shelby's soldiers, staff, and visitors. Ms. McCarty also secured a \$6,200 DoD Legacy Program National Public Lands Day award for a special cemetery restoration project in FY17.
- Ms. McCarty launched a multi-year ground penetrating radar survey project to confirm, delineate, and excavate rare World War I (WWI)-era training trenches and other facilities. This effort converges with a new \$30,000 DoD Legacy Program funded project to generate a historic context study for WWI-era training resources.
- Ms. McCarty initiated a new survey effort for 23 historic Cold War-era armories throughout the state that have never been fully surveyed for National Register of Historic Places significance.
- To mark the 1917 founding of Camp Shelby, Ms. McCarty jointly organized a Centennial Celebration, which involved a year-long programming schedule beginning with a gala fundraiser and culminating in a public festival showcasing the installation's century of contributions to Mississippi and the Nation. The event welcomed the Governor, local community, and local businesses featuring exhibits that tracked the transformation of Camp Shelby through WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War.



Ms. McCarty initiated an internship program with the University of Southern Mississippi to provide graduate and undergraduate students with exposure and learning experience in a real world archaeological setting, as seen here. The program allows students to work on Camp Shelby three days per week while earning their degrees.



As part of the year-long Centennial Celebration, Ms. McCarty organized a special centennial display in the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum. The display featured archaeological and historical artifacts excavated from or donated to Camp Shelby. Reenactors answered questions about the war and training at Camp Shelby.