

Fort Bliss

Cultural Resources Management

INTRODUCTION

Fort Bliss entered the twenty-first century with a superior Cultural Resources Management Program (CRMP) that supports the installation's mission while effectively managing cultural resources. Innovative agreements with State Historic Preservation Officers (Texas and New Mexico) and cooperative management programs with installation units inspire post-wide interest and awareness of Fort Bliss' heritage. Consequently, enthusiasm for preservation and conservation is increased, the physical environment of the post is improved, and the ability of cultural resources personnel to broaden the preservation mission is enhanced.

BACKGROUND

Currently, Fort Bliss is immersed in the biggest transformation of its 160-year history with a projected 300 percent population increase by 2012. The installation is a multi-mission U.S. Army installation located on 1.12 million acres in Texas and New Mexico. Currently, the population averages about 24,000 military, 35,000 Family members, and 14,000 Civilian employees. These numbers have been increasing since 2005 and are expected to continue increasing until 2012 as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and Grow the Army (GTA) transformation initiatives the installation is currently undergoing. The population increase corresponds to re-stationing of one generation of several brigade combat teams, the 1st Armored Division headquarters and numerous supporting units. The Army is investing \$5 billion in construction for new, top of the line facilities for incoming personnel and their families.



M-1 Abram Tank participates in a training exercise at Doña Ana Range 50 in the Organ Mountains of the Fort Bliss Training Complex.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Fort Bliss has one of the largest and most extensive CRMPs in the Army. The Fort Bliss CRMP mission is to identify and manage the significant cultural resources on the installation, while reducing any impediments to training and accommodations to the incoming units and their Families. The CRMP is executed within the Directorate of Public Works - Environmental Division (DPW-E) at Fort Bliss by the Cultural Resources Management Team (CRMT), which consists of archaeologists, historical architects and environmental liaisons. As Fort Bliss implements BRAC and GTA initiatives, and transitions from an Air Defense Artillery installation to one focusing on Armored and Light Infantry Training, creative cultural resources management approaches are needed to ensure Soldier readiness.

Currently, Fort Bliss manages more than 19,000 archaeological sites and more than 550 historic buildings, structures and landscapes on 1.12 million acres of training land. This massive undertaking is accomplished through an innovative programmatic agreement (PA). In 2005, Fort Bliss entered into consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and the Texas and New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO). This consultation culminated in 2006 with a signed Programmatic Agreement among the Fort Bliss Garrison Command, New Mexico SHPO, Texas SHPO and ACHP for the Management of Historic Properties on Fort Bliss, Texas.

With the PA, “findings of effect” are only consulted once at the end of the year with an annual report. The PA has an extensive list of exemptions, including the incorporation of Army-wide exemptions found in Army Alternative Procedures (AAP), program comments and nationwide programmatic agreements. Similar to the AAP, the Fort Bliss PA allows streamlined management of cultural resources to meet the fast-paced and ever-changing mission on Fort Bliss, and has saved approximately 75,000 review days per year. This approach allows the maximum flexibility for effective and cost-saving compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and enables rapid review and approval times.

The installation is currently operating under the 2008 Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) which will be updated in 2012. This

comprehensive document addresses all aspects of cultural resource management and can be used as model for comprehensive cultural resources compliance.

CRMT Accomplishments (FY2009-FY2010)

The PA was amended in June 2009 and November 2010 to further streamline the Section 106 process. The PA also streamlines the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) consultation by combining it with Section 106 consultation, saving time and money. A total of seven public brochures have been prepared under this PA’s alternative clause. Four of these were published within the last two years. Also, a report on the “Historic Sites on Otero Mesa” was completed and published in February 2010.

In 2009, the revision of the prehistoric site guidance document “Significance and Research Standards,” providing standards for evaluation and treatment was completed. That work has set a standard not only in the region but across the Army. This unique document summarizes the state of archaeological knowledge in the region and focuses a series of historic contexts and eligibility thresholds to the “data gaps” in prehistoric archaeology. The end result is a very stringent criteria for what is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This focuses Fort Bliss’ resources on only the most significant sites and results in opening substantially more training land.

The CRMT has conducted NRHP evaluations on over 2,000 archaeological sites with more than 7 percent of them being found “Not Eligible” and no longer a hindrance for training or construction.

The team has successfully managed the 400 historical buildings in the installation, of which approximately 181 were substantially restored and rehabilitated in the Fort Bliss Main Post Historic District. Also, a variety of methods to upgrade these structures to be more energy efficient while retaining historic integrity were reviewed. The team supports installation energy audits on historic buildings and looks at ways to incorporate renewable energy into these structures.

With a curatorial facility located on the installation the government saves hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. This facility houses more than a million artifacts and their associated site files,

photographs, field records, historic maps of post facilities, and artifacts from White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) and Holloman Air Force Base collections.

Another contributor to Fort Bliss's successful program is the close working relationship of the CRMT, NEPA team and other divisions and directorates from the installation. The NEPA team receives all work orders for new construction, repairs to existing buildings and training requests from the Directorate for Plans, Training Mobilization and Security; Directorate of Public Works-Business Operations and Integration; and Engineering Services and Master Planning Divisions, and transfers them to the CRMT. Senior archaeologists review all training requests to ensure compliance and suggest alternatives when adverse effects are anticipated, while the historical architects review new construction and repair projects to prevent adverse effects to the properties.

The goal of a 24-hour turnaround time for cultural resources review is met over 90 percent of the time. This is accomplished using the CRMT's comprehensive geo-database. The ability to quickly access relevant data, such as location of a cultural site, site content, environmental setting, and NRHP eligibility, allows archaeologists to expedite review of the data and determine whether the proposed action will affect significant cultural resources or will require survey, evaluation or mitigation.



The Building 21 (Original Guardhouse) project began in May 2008 and was completed in December 2010. CRMT staff provided historic preservation/adaptive reuse guidance to tenants.

TECHNICAL MERIT

Architectural Resources

The historical architecture team is staffed by two historical architects, an historic preservation crew chief and assistant, a construction monitor and an archival assistant. The Fort Bliss Main Post Historic District and its 355 buildings is listed on the NRHP. Many of the original barracks and administrative buildings within the historic district are used as offices through adaptive reuse.

Through the use of the team's innovative "Historic Buildings Program" these historic buildings support the military mission while maintaining their historic integrity. Through the practice of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings on Fort Bliss, the team along with the Engineering Services Division, is able to preserve the cultural resources of the installation and provide facilities with updated systems for continued support of Fort Bliss' mission. The following are five examples out of approximately 181 building that were adapted, rehabilitated or upgraded in the last two years:

1. Bldg. 1441 (Chapel 3) Built in 1915, this building originally served as the post bakery. The scope of this project included the addition of a historically compatible vestibule, upgrading of heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system to refrigerated air system, reconstruction of historic wood doors and windows, addition of a ramp and new restrooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), compatible light fixtures, interior and exterior painting, and landscaping.

Bldg. 21 (Courthouse and Administration) Built in 1893, this building originally served as the main headquarters, mess hall and library. The scope of this project included the reconstruction of original porches, conversion of the second floor into a courtroom with support spaces, preservation of original windows, upgrading of HVAC system to refrigerated air system, addition of new ADA compliant restrooms and ramp, elevator, compatible interior and exterior light fixtures, interior and exterior painting, and landscaping.

Bldg. 241 (Administration) Built in 1893, this building originally served as the post guardhouse. The project scope included the reconstruction of the louvered monitor on the peak of the hipped roof, rehabilitation of deteriorated exterior brickwork, reconstruction of transom windows and wood steps

of the front porch, upgrading of HVAC system to refrigerated air system, addition of new ADA compliant restrooms, ADA ramp, compatible interior and exterior light fixtures, interior and exterior painting and landscaping.

Pershing Gate Canopy This structure was built in 1944 and remains a gate entrance. This project included the construction of a historically compatible canopy at the entrance of Pershing Gate. Design included both the canopy and guard house.

Bldg. 503 (Administrative) This building, built in 1934, originally served as an enlisted men's barracks. The project scope included the creation of new offices, addition of new bathrooms, upgrading of HVAC system to refrigerated air system, reconstruction of interior hallway transom windows, new interior finishes, ADA handicap ramp, the installation of an elevator, compatible light fixtures, interior and exterior painting, new flooring and landscaping.

The team continues to develop the Fort Bliss Interpretive Program with signs placed within the historic district that highlight the long and interesting history of the post.

The historical architects have explored the use of the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit program for the Enhanced Use Leasing (EUL) proposal for the old William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBAMC), and continue to work with the Master Planning engineers and the Fort Worth Corps of Engineers to ensure the successful outleasing of 92.75 acres of land within the former WBAMC.

The team continues to provide landscaping design schematics to tenants and DPW engineers and designers for areas around historic properties and new development. The goal is to design and install a landscape within the Chihuahua Desert that is aesthetically pleasing and water conserving to preserve the area's resources.

The historical architects team has successfully used alternative mitigations provided by the PA to document its history, mitigate adverse effects to historic properties and provide a public education format.

Mitigation of historic buildings and structures has centered on the development of public brochures

capturing the historic significance of the activities in the buildings as well as the buildings themselves.

Five public brochures were prepared under the PA's alternative mitigations clause and used to capture the historical significance and provide education to the public.

- 1) "Winged Victory" mitigates the demolition of the 2300 Area buildings (Nike Missile Training);
- 2) "Utlima: Designing the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Capstone of the NCO Educational System" was developed after the determination of eligibility of the Sergeants Major Academy;
- 3) "Hawks in the Desert" mitigates the interior renovations of the 700 Area buildings (Hawk Missile Training);
- 4) "Tularosa Basin & Coe Ranch," winner of the 2009 New Mexico Heritage Preservation Award in the category of Heritage Publication, captures the early ranching history of the Tularosa Basin and mitigates the impacts to the Coe Home Ranch by road improvements; and
- 5) "Watering Oro Grande" brochure centers on the development of the Oro Grande water pipeline and associated reservoirs and its impact to early mining, transportation (railroad), ranching and settlement in the Tularosa Basin.

Archaeological Resources

The archaeological team is staffed by five archaeologists, a curator, four curatorial assistants and a GIS specialist. Fort Bliss has a wide variety of significant archaeological resources. Examples



This "Stone Toad" effigy was discovered during site recording on Fort Bliss. Unique finds like this occur on Fort Bliss because of the rich archaeological record within its borders.

include small Paleo-Indian campsites dated around 10,000 B.C., multi-room Jornada Mogollon pueblos, early historic ranching and homestead sites and Cold War Era sites. With more than 2,500 sites eligible for listing on the NRHP, the CRMT meets the challenge of managing these significant properties through a variety of programs. For example, Fort Bliss continues to use the “Red Zone” concept of mitigation.

Through the PA, successful negotiation with the Texas and New Mexico SHPOs allows for off-limits areas to protect particularly significant archeological sites as well as representative examples of the types of sites found on the Fort Bliss landscape. In exchange, units are allowed free maneuver in areas outside of these “Red Zones,” even though they contain thousands of NRHP-eligible sites.

Additionally, the team recently implemented, through consultation with the New Mexico and Texas SHPOs, the “Fort Bliss Significance and Research Standards.” This innovative and comprehensive document outlines a series of historic contexts that illustrate well-defined eligibility thresholds when evaluating archaeological sites. In addition, it allows for the development of “Programmatic Research Designs” that streamline and expedite data recovery when mitigation is necessary. This allows the Army to proceed with new construction, new ranges and a variety of training scenarios in a fraction of the time it would normally take.

When the programmatic research designs are concurred with by the other signatories of the PA, they can be used on future projects with no further consultation. This document is being viewed as an example to other agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service, and the New Mexico SHPO as an effective alternate procedure for meeting Section 106 compliance. It also represents the culmination of 20 years of archaeological research in the Jornada Mogollon culture area.

For the exemplary work on excavation of a Jornada Mogollon pueblo, known as the “Madera Quemada Pueblo,” Fort Bliss received the 2007 New Mexico Heritage Preservation Award for Archaeological Heritage. Since then, Fort Bliss has been on the forefront of archaeological research for pueblo

occupations in the Jornada Mogollon Region. A contract to excavate a large, multi-room prehistoric pueblo site in the foothills of the Sacramento Mountains is ongoing. No site of this type has ever been discovered in that area and preliminary results indicate the site may represent the contact zone between southern and northern Jornada culture areas. These results also indicate this pueblo may be one of the largest pueblos found in the region and will greatly increase understanding of interactions between areas during the late prehistoric period. The excavation of only a sample of this site was negotiated through a successful consultation with the New Mexico SHPO.

Native American Program

Through meaningful consultation, Fort Bliss maintains a great relationship with the Comanche Nation (Lawton, OK), the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma (Carnegie, OK), the Mescalero Apache (Mescalero, NM) and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (Ysleta, TX). Consultation occurs on a regular basis to address Army activities that may affect resources of interest to Native Americans.



Prehistoric pottery from the Jornada Mogollon culture excavated from a pueblo site on the installation. These collections are housed in the FB curatorial facility and are on display for the Soldiers and public view.

This ongoing consultation has greatly enhanced Fort Bliss’ ability to meet range construction without impacting military training. Tribal interests range from harvesting of plants significant in their cultural practices and scarcely available on tribal lands, to identification of sacred sites. Every year, the Mescalero Apache harvest agave plants from the installation to be used in critical tribal ceremonies. Also, a wild tobacco survey was conducted by the CRMT to allow tribal members opportunities to

harvest these plants for ceremonial purposes. These initiatives have fostered cooperation and goodwill with the Army.



Tribal members, as well as members of the public, tour excavations at Madera "Quemada Pueblo." This is one of the most intact multi-room adobe pueblos discovered in over 20 years in the region. Fort Bliss received a New Mexico Heritage Preservation award for their work on this important site.

The team facilitates regular access to the installation for the tribes to visit areas of interest to them including more than 33 sacred sites. Successful consultation with the tribes makes it possible to conduct low-impact training on sites of importance.

Fort Bliss also has a comprehensive Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) program to address compliance with this regulation. The team is currently in negotiation with five federally recognized tribes on a comprehensive agreement that will streamline NAGPRA procedures. The CRMT also completed its Section 5 inventory and is currently in negotiation with the tribes on a potential reinterment site.

Curatorial Facility

The CRMT maintains a state-of-the-art 36 CFR 79 compliant curatorial facility with more than 33,000 linear feet of storage and houses over 1 million artifacts and their associated site files, photographs, field records, and historic maps, derived from nearly 600 archeological projects. Fort Bliss also assists Department of Defense neighbors, White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base, as well as the U.S. Forest Service, by providing a

secure facility for housing their archaeological collections, helping ensure their compliance with 36 CFR 79. The facility avoids hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in external curation costs. It also generates some funding to support its operations through curation agreements with these other agencies. Due to the changing mission at Fort Bliss and ongoing data recovery projects from 2008 through 2010, more than 260,000 artifacts were housed, a substantial increase from previous years. Having a 36 CFR 79 compliant facility saves thousands of dollars in curation costs.

Cultural Resources Awareness and Education

Fort Bliss continues to have one of the most effective CRMPs in the Army through a variety of programs that educate Soldiers. The CRMT sponsors and participates regularly in Senior Commander Course, Quarterly Environmental Compliance Officers Course, and Unit Commander's Courses. The installation also takes the lead in coordinating "on call" environmental presentations to units who fulfill annual environmental education requirements across the post, participates in school career days, sponsors archaeological digs for the public, and participates in the installation's annual environmental open house on Earth Day. Also, Fort Bliss archeologists work closely with units, from company sized to brigades to find ways to maximize training opportunities and minimize impacts to important resources.

ORIENTATION TO MISSION

The CRMP mission is to preserve and protect the cultural resources on the installation, while reducing any impediments to training. To keep up with the enormous mission changes as a result of the BRAC and GTA initiatives, Fort Bliss has aggressively contracted to complete numerous cultural resources projects to ensure compliance with Federal laws and regulations, while expediting the availability of training assets for the incoming BCT units. This is accomplished by an ongoing contract with four fully-staffed local archaeological firms that allow for rapid deployment of cultural resources work. For example, during the last five years Fort Bliss has contracted to conduct "transect recording unit" on more than 200,000 of acres.

This method captures archeological data in 15 meter by 15 meter cells keyed into a Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinate system and allows for

seamless site inventory, definition and management in a GIS system. The process enables quick “findings of effect” for planned actions and expedites Section 106 compliance. Many of these projects were crucial to provide base-line data for two programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) to pave the way to the stationing and training of six heavy BCTs, two light BCTs, one Stryker brigade, one Combat Aviation Brigade and nine Sustainment Brigades. To date, more than 85 percent of Fort Bliss has been inventoried.

In addition to surveying massive amounts of acreage, the CRMT conducted NRHP evaluations on more than 2,000 archaeological sites during the last two years. The team also conducted data recovery to mitigate the adverse effects of military undertakings on 44 NRHP-eligible archaeological sites.

A current project, conducting data recovery on 11 upland cacti-processing sites, will open up future live-fire and forward operating base areas for light infantry brigades.

The CRMT also deploys environmental liaisons to ranges and training areas. The staff is on call 24/7 to assist Range Control and units in the field. They work in concert with the cultural resources staff, accompany the units when required to support training in remote locations and night training activities. The Environmental Liaisons assist the units in meeting regulatory compliance and installation guidance on a variety of environmental issues, including cultural resources.

TRANSFERABILITY

The CRMT provides a model for other large installations to use to streamline their section 106 compliance through the PA and ICRMP. This PA is already being used as a model at WSMR, NM and Fort Carson, CO, as they begin negotiating their own PA.

Creative mitigation efforts, such as the “Red Zone” concept, could be negotiated at other maneuver installations to increase maneuver training assets. This unique staging is currently being adopted by Yuma Proving Ground, AZ.

The Historic Resources Construction Monitor position, which is currently unique to Fort Bliss, could be beneficial on other Army installations. This position is dedicated to reviewing, observing and

monitoring construction activities that have the potential to affect installation historic properties, report historic preservation compliance violations, and provide architectural compliance solutions. This person also provides technical review of building features and functions to ensure relevant building codes are adhered to.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

All of the archaeological work on Fort Bliss is conducted in close cooperation with other stakeholders, to include the BLM, WSMR, the Forest Service, four federally-recognized tribes, New Mexico and Texas SHPOs, and the communities of El Paso, Las Cruces and Alamogordo.

Outside researchers are encouraged to use their data to advance the field of archeology and the understanding of prehistory in the region and consider innovative research as part of the scope of work. With the “Significance and Research Standards,” data gaps in our regional understanding are identified and the contractors focus their research based on those gaps. This facilitates a long-range goal to address various research domains, focuses the work, and saves time and money.

Most of these projects also include a public outreach component, to include public brochures, and presentations at local schools, to military families and other military associations.

Fort Bliss’ large collection of artifacts in the curatorial facility allows researchers from various organizations, students from the University of Texas at El Paso and New Mexico State University students to benefit from the enormous amount of work conducted on the installation. The CRMT also arranges to loan items to museums in the area, such as the El Paso Museum of Archaeology, to develop displays that enlighten the local community about the rich cultural heritage on and across Fort Bliss.

The CRMT participates in every NEPA public meeting addressing questions on the effects of the action being analyzed under NEPA. Finally, the CRMT provides groups the opportunity to visit historical sites such as historic ranching and homestead sites that have significance to the local community.