

# 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 279,270 acres in southeast Georgia of acquired by the Army in World War II. It is 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. 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). 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 ISP was adopted in 2004 and is updated annually. The installation Sustainability Management System (SMS), which is the installation's Environmental Management System, 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 resources. 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 known archaeological sites and 309 historic buildings and 1 historic district in accordance with the FS/HAAF Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP). This plan was first implemented in 2001, is periodically revised, and is undergoing update (2013). 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 substantially revised and executed its Programmatic Agreement (PA) with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in FY11 in order to cover standard operations and maintenance of the installation. The FS/HAAF CRM program is managed by the Lead Professional Archaeologist and supported by an Architectural Historian, a Curation Specialist, and Field Technician support staff who all meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for each position. The CRM staff is occasionally augmented short term to provide additional archaeological or curatorial support.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Overall Cultural Resources Management



The installation's FY11 revised PA with the SHPO 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 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 FS/HAAF 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 project reviews.



In FY11 & 12, CRM inventoried 35,491 acres at FS (12.7%) and 2,682 acres at HAAF (49.9%). 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%) remaining to be inventoried. At HAAF, 100% of the 5,370 acres has been surveyed. As a result of these surveys, only 786 acres (0.27%)

of training lands are encumbered by cultural resource concerns. 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 for potential adverse effects and are therefore free of any further cultural resource concerns or constraints. 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. Through adaptive re-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.



CRM has 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 or repairs 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, the database for Real Property Inventory's historical status codes can be updated annually.



In order to support mission needs through use of historic properties, 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 Secretary of Interior's Standards adaptive-reuse approach will not only leverage the installation's mission of stewardship but also provide opportunities for future alternative mitigation strategies should they become necessary.



Adaptive Re-use and rehabilitation of Building 1206, HAAF's original civilian hangar constructed in 1936.

### **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 in FY11 & 12 involved Fort Argyle, an early 18th century outpost protecting the new colony of Georgia,



and the only individually listed NRHP-listed site 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.



In FY12 the installation investigated an unmarked cemetery at HAAF which was slated for aviation support and parking. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century burial at HAAF.

## Native American Program

The installation regularly consults with eight affiliated Native American Tribes as part of its annual report to the SHPO and when projects are anticipated to adversely affect historic properties. 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 in FY11 & 12 include upgrading existing accession documents and electronic files. 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.



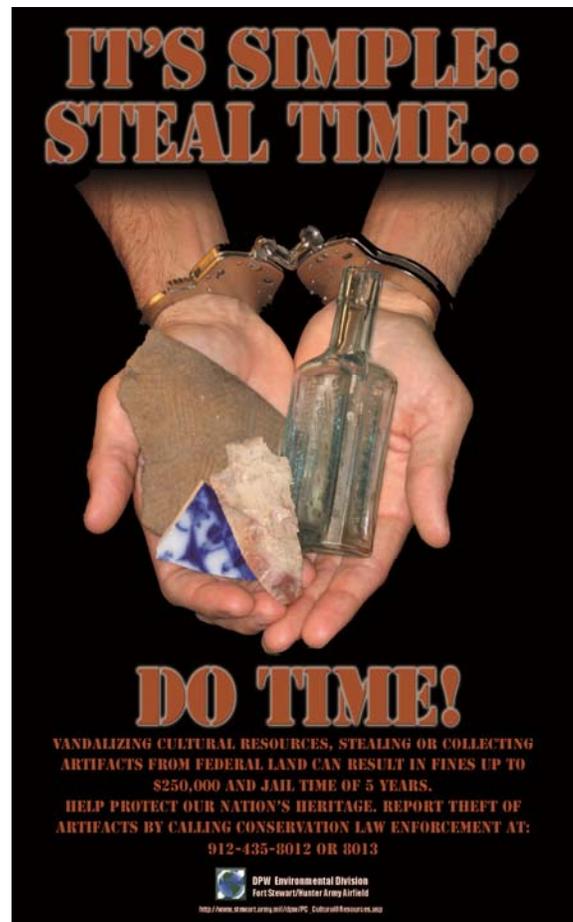
The FS curation facility is used exclusively for the storage of CRM artifacts, original documents, and associated files. The facility is supported by a separate off-site curation annex at HAAF for the storage of duplicate records. The curation facility



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.



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



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

### **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.



### **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. In FY 11 & 12, 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. In FY11, CRM cooperated with the FS Public



Affairs Office to transform the Cemetery Council into the Historic Communities Council. Through a Proclamation of Support by the FS Garrison Commander, the council expanded to include tours of historic sites and structures. The tour provides a stronger 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.



Each year, CRM participates in National Public Lands Day (NPLD) through volunteer supported cemetery clean-ups and outdoor interpretive displays. In FY11, NPLD volunteerism was at an all time high with 94 registered volunteers (up from an average of 25 per year) and included Scouts, local churches, and individual Families associated 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 FY12, CRM partnered with the FS Museum, ITAM, and the Environmental Division to clean and maintain FS's Environmental Outdoor Classroom. Through this effort, CRM seeks to increase access and awareness of the installation's cultural resources and its integration with military training and achievements in sustainability.



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 installation commemorates the rich historical legacy of these people.



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

### **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 development 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.

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 mitigation of two NRHP-eligible 19<sup>th</sup> century African American cemeteries located at HAAF which were both finalized in FY12. 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 mitigation data proved to be an important source for ongoing academic research of material culture from a poorly documented population. The installation ensured that this data was made available to the public which resulted in available 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, transferrable 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. CRM's goal

is not only sustainability for the military mission but also in its efforts to maintain a sustainable management system.

As the CRM program approaches the conclusion of a nearly 20-year campaign to survey the installation, Soldiers will be training on more sustainable ranges while the 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 while ensuring that an effective management strategy will endure over time.



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