

## **The Importance of Training Cultural Property Protection An Example from the U.S. Army**

### **Introduction**

During the course of recent conflicts, NATO forces have been required to operate in cross cultural environments, encountering battle spaces characterized by people and communities very different from their own. Attempts to teach cultural awareness and to map the “human terrain” resulted in a serious gap in preparation when these efforts failed to include discussions of material culture and cultural property geo-spatial data layers. Based on U.S. deployment lessons learned, the cultural resources team at Fort Drum, New York a group of qualified archaeologists trained as anthropologists, developed a series of new models and pilot projects in order to support pre-deployment Cultural Property Protection (CPP) training for deploying elements of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and National Guard and Reserve units from the U.S. northeast.

These models and projects included construction of replica archaeological sites and cultural features as training assets; creation of opportunities for soldiers to train on actual archaeological properties; incorporation of these sites and assets into actual exercise training scenarios; support for other aspects of cross cultural training like preparation for Key Leader Engagements (KLEs); development of professional military education (PME) presentations discussing CPP for all levels of military personnel and their families; development of training materials like playing cards; establishment of PME programs like Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) internships; and reaching out to international colleagues and programs to develop and share best practices. Partnership with the academic community of archaeologists and museum professionals has played a critical role in the success of all the nascent US Department of Defense CPP efforts including those at Fort Drum.<sup>1</sup>

### **Creating Opportunities to Train CPP in the Field**

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author and may not represent the views of NATO, ACO, ACT, the US Federal Government, the US Department of Defense, or the US Army.

<sup>1</sup> Laurie Rush, 'Cultural Property Protection: The Critical Role of Partnership Between Academia and the Military' in Serenella Ensoli (ed), *For the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage in Libya; a dialogue among institutions, Proceedings of Conference 1-2 July 2011, monumental complex of Belvedere, San Leucio, Caserta.* (Fabrizio Serra Editore 2011).

Modern military organizations across the world train on land that was previously occupied by ancient people over the course of millennia. In the U.S., significant traces of past occupation are protected by the National Historic Preservation Act<sup>2</sup>, so all large acre U.S. military installations have a cultural resources team composed of archaeologists, most of whom trained first as anthropologists. The research specialties of these professionals tend to focus on better understanding of the former occupants of the land for which they are responsible. For example, the research specialties of the Fort Drum archaeology team concentrate on Native Americans of the Great Lakes region of the U.S. and the local history of northern New York State. The known and protected archaeological sites on the installation range from paleo occupation of Native Americans dating to the end of the Pleistocene, continuing through all phases of aboriginal occupation up to and through Late Woodland people, commonly known as Iroquoians, and terminating with the farms and villages of European settlers who, along with the Indians, lost their homes when Fort Drum expanded for increased military training required by World War II.

Five of the villages destroyed when Fort Drum expanded in 1941 are now managed as National Register Listed archaeological historic districts. Originally, the management strategy was to simply declare these districts to be off limits to military personnel. However, after twenty years, the archaeological remains were being destroyed by weathering and vegetation. After September 11, 2001, elderly citizens who had lost their homes back in 1941 pointed out to Fort Drum officials that they wanted their sacrifice to support military training, and they expressed concern that archaeological protection was preventing soldiers from using the properties. As a result, the cultural resources staff worked with the Integrated Training Area Management Team (ITAM) to stabilize the deteriorating ruins; covering some with filter fabrics and fill while reinforcing others with protective frameworks. Once ITAM had stabilized the archaeological remains to the point where personnel hazards were minimized and soldier occupation would not do any damage, the historic village of Sterlingville with its key crossroads intersection was opened for historic area training. The cultural resources team posted signs clearly indicating that the area is a heritage property of special significance where

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<sup>2</sup> National Historic Preservation Act [1966] 16USC470

training is encouraged and digging forbidden. The signage also includes the Blue Shield, the symbol agreed upon to identify protected cultural sites in the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Fort Drum lawyers actually permitted use of the symbol as a training aide prior to US ratification of the convention in 2009.

Currently, over 10,000 U.S. soldiers per year have the opportunity to train at Sterlingville, offering them an opportunity to occupy an historic property without doing any damage, essentially minimizing their footprint. Once they were permitted access, the soldiers and training community became increasingly interested in the history of the village, its past as an iron foundry company town, and its founder, James Sterling. In response, cultural resources added an interpretive sign that also includes images of the inhabited village dating to the 1940s.

Once the installation archaeologists had established the opportunity to train on an actual archaeological site, the team realized that it would be helpful to supplement existing urban sprawl training sites with cemeteries and replica ruins. The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division is one of the most, if not the most, deployed Division in the United States Army. Returning Division soldiers are very pro-active about wanting to insure that lessons they have learned forward are addressed in the form of training opportunities for future deployments. Soldiers returning from Iraq, for example, requested new training options like opportunities for engaging structures with courtyard walls and opportunities to practice backing military vehicles down narrow dead end allies draped with electrical wires. In the realm of cultural property protection, they asked for assets where they could prepare to be fired upon from cultural sites like cemeteries, places of worship, and ruins. The soldiers also requested chances to train for securing cultural sites being used as firing points and/or weapons caches while minimizing collateral damage.

In response to these needs, the archaeologists built replica ruins out of stone that looked like mud brick and identified these structures as protected cultural sites. They also added replica cemeteries since soldiers had reported being fired upon by insurgents using grave markers as cover. These replicas were interspersed with mock village and urban sprawl features, and the trainers chose how to incorporate these sites into meaningful scenarios. The cultural resources team made an effort to create grave markings that looked similar to ones that 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division soldiers were encountering in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition to the assets created for infantry training, replica ruins were added in the immediate vicinity of the actual targets at the aerial gunnery range so that air crews could practice approaches that would minimize their potential for collateral damage. Essentially, these features offered opportunities for operators of aerial weapons systems to practice for implementation of “no strike” listing or non-lethal targeting.

### **Incorporation of Aboriginal Archaeological Features into CPP Training**

Native Americans moved onto the land we now know as Fort Drum as soon as the ice began to melt at the end of the last ice age. Essentially, for over 10,000 years, people have modified the installation landscape, leaving evidence of their passing. At Fort Drum, the ancient places include piles of stone that may mark memorials and locations of significant past events, stone features that reflect celestial events, campsites, villages, and even tiny sites where an individual may have stopped to sharpen a stone tool and then moved on. In combination, these features offer a cross cultural landscape and the opportunity to teach deploying personnel how to look for features in a landscape that matter to those who have come before and have not been left behind by natural forces.

It is still common for military cultural resources managers to protect archaeological sites of aboriginal origin by posting or fencing them and placing them off limits to military personnel. However, the ability to identify and protect cultural property is important for deploying personnel, and these sites offer a chance to hone that skill. Fort Drum uses these sites in two ways. The first is to add them to the inventory of actual archaeological sites available for incorporation into training scenarios. Generally, these sites are treated as extremely sacred places of the indigenous peoples of the scenario and are to be avoided, respected, and protected by the force. The second is to use them for field exercises, where the archaeologists challenge soldiers to analyze the landscape for identification of the features that “don't fit.” This exercise not only offers the opportunity to engage the training areas in a new way, it also offers the cultural property protection specialist a chance to teach appropriate responses, once a significant cultural feature has been identified.

### **Incorporation of Cultural Property Training Assets into Actual Scenarios**

In keeping with the motto, ‘train as you fight,’ an effective way for military personnel to gain experience with the concept of cultural

property protection (CPP) is to draft and implement CPP injects into military exercises. Military exercises are organized by MSELs, Master Scenario Event Lists, and when an event is unexpectedly added to the list, it is called an “inject.” To our knowledge, in late 2016, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain completed the first ever CPP inject during the course of a U.S. Army major division field exercise. This accomplishment offers an experiential foundation for the more specialized pre-deployment training events where CPP is beginning to be included.

The premise of the exercise scenario was that insurgents were invading the fictitious country of Atropia. In keeping with Fort Drum’s proactive approach to encouraging training on real and replica archaeological sites, the cultural resources team met with exercise planners on multiple occasions as part of the preparation. Initially, the Division representatives thought that the meeting with the archaeologists would be review of off limits properties, so the planners were surprised by and appreciative of the realism offered by presentation of the cultural resources of Fort Drum as training assets. The village, farmstead and aboriginal features became Atropian cultural property and sacred sites like the birthplace of the revered Atropian founding leader, ethnic shrines, and ancient battlegrounds. The cultural resources team made new signage for many of the sites, identifying them with property names that fit the scenario. The replica archaeological ruins and cemeteries were also offered to the trainers to be used in any way they wished.

The next step was to complete field tours with the exercise planners. For the Mountain Peak CPP inject, the Deputy G9 Civil Affairs Officer participated in the field tour. A field tour with cultural resources personnel can enrich the exercise experience in multiple ways. First, the field archaeologists at any military installation are well equipped to educate soldiers on how to read the cultural landscape, an extremely useful skill in the deployed environment. For example, on Fort Drum, the tall shade trees growing in the midst of the brush along the tank trails indicate the presence of the historic farmsteads. Supplementary clues include the presence of garden flowers like day lilies and lilacs, and food plants like apple trees. Knowing where the farmsteads are is useful information because their foundation features offer excellent cover for insurgency role players, who are placing Improvised Explosive Devices. These properties also may contain hazards like open wells and rusting barbed wire fences, so the ability to identify an historic farmstead complex benefits the soldiers

operating in unfamiliar territory. The tour can become a training exercise of its own as the tour participants further develop their ability to identify cultural features in the training area landscape.

The field tour also included introductions to a wider range of historic area cultural features that could be used for future scenarios. These assets can range from historic dams that offer opportunities to train for insurgent attacks on critical infrastructure to artificial pine plantations that can substitute for agricultural assets forward.

When the tour was complete, the G9 began to draft the CPP inject, designed to offer the combatant commander a realistic training experience involving cultural property. It also fell to the G9 to make the case for the value of the CPP inject. The G9 decided to use a replica temple located in an urban sprawl training area as the basis for a scenario where artifacts sacred to the Atropian people had been looted from the temple museum. In the scenario, the Atropian Minister of Culture sent a request to the Brigade Commander requesting a meeting to discuss not just the missing artifacts but also the status of the sacred sites located in territory recovered from the insurgents by the Division.

The Brigade Commander agreed to the request for a meeting, and with support from the Civil Affairs staff prepared the headquarters for the key leader engagement. It was clear that the Commander's staff had attended to every detail; greeting the delegation as they exited their vehicles; offering food and warm beverages; preparing for hosting delegation security; and completing research and intelligence on Atropian cultural property issues. The Cultural Resources Manager played the role of Atropian Minister of Culture accompanied by the archaeology field team who represented Atropian Museum professionals, faith based Humanitarian Aide Societies, Ethnic Indigenous Atropians, and even the Atropian Minister's Security detail.

The Brigade Commander demonstrated his genuine concern for the Atropian sites by using the installation cultural resources Geographical Information System coverage to prepare a detailed map of all of the known sites within his Area of Responsibility (AOR). He requested more information concerning each of the sites, asked well prepared and thoughtful questions, and explained that one of the mission goals was to secure and protect these very important places. The conversation then turned to the missing artifacts. Again, the Brigade Commander demonstrated genuine concern and comprehension of the significance

of the objects and the importance of securing their recovery. The Atropian delegation left the meeting with a sense of confidence and trust in the U.S. Force.

Upon completion of the meeting, the Brigade Commander issued orders that made recovery of the artifacts a priority, increasing the value of the inject as a form of realistic training. For example, the military police participating in the exercise immediately recognized the importance of their role in the search and recovery, and the Civil Affairs officers made preservation of religious facilities a priority so that they could be used as a base for humanitarian aide operations during the stability operations phase of the exercise. The After Action Report gave all participants opportunities to consider improvement, and without question, the inject improved the Division's preparation for the extremely complex cultural property issues they will encounter during the course of their next deployment.

### **Development of Professional Military Education for Teaching Cultural Property Protection**

One of the challenges for educating the force with respect to CPP is creating specialized training customized for a wide range of military occupational specialties (MOS). In the author's experience, informed commanders generally agree that an entry-level introduction to the concept is useful for all deploying personnel. To that end, a pair of retired Navy Commanders are working on a CPP video game designed to convey the basic concepts of CPP in an interactive format that can easily be delivered to all personnel with computer access. The game is called "Culturalrecon" and should be available for wide distribution by the end of 2017<sup>3</sup>.

Advocates of CPP, with the support of MG Erik Peterson, then Deputy Commanding General of Cadet Command, were successful in establishing an introduction to CPP as a curriculum requirement for all U.S. Army ROTC cadets. The ROTC military science module includes a practical exercise that challenges cadets to consider the mission implications of protecting or failing to protect cultural property in the battlefield environment. In addition, Fort Drum offers an ROTC CPP internship where ROTC cadets in

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<sup>3</sup> Kim Himmer and Keith Himmer, 'Culturalrecon' Presentation at the NATO SPS Krems Training Workshop (2016)

the summer prior to their senior year are immersed into an active installation cultural resources management program and experience the field exercises in addition to be offered opportunities to meet representatives of the Native American nations whose ancestors once lived on Fort Drum.<sup>4</sup> The cadets also select and complete a project during the course of the internship. The goal for these projects is to add to the compendium of CPP reference and education products available worldwide. Successful projects have ranged from introductory briefings on the cultural property of specific countries to development of cultural property inventories for four Baltic nations in support of NATO exercises.

Another approach for educating the force writ large has been development of cultural property training materials for wide distribution. The most successful effort along these lines was creation of archaeology awareness playing cards for military personnel, the result of a partnership between Fort Drum and Colorado State University Center for the Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML). Each card in a deck of 52 offers a different educational message related to the importance of heritage protection. The first deck focused on Iraq and since its introduction in 2007, the partners have distributed over 150,000 decks to deploying military personnel. The Iraq deck organized the messages by suit, so hearts discussed CPP issues related to “winning hearts and minds,” the spades warned about the dangers of digging, the clubs focused on cultural preservation and the diamonds conveyed messages about the value of artifacts. The designer created each suit to work as a puzzle, so that the pieces could be combined to make an image of a piece of cultural property. The team followed the original deck with a bilingual English/Arabic deck focusing on Egypt for distribution during the Bright Star War Games, and a third deck on the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan intended for all forces serving in that country. The Egypt and Afghanistan decks also work as puzzles. The Drum CEMML team supplemented the playing cards with soldier pocket cards designed to easily fit into a uniform pocket, and these cards were translated into multiple European languages in addition to Arabic.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Laurie Rush, 'Introduction of Cultural Heritage Management to the U.S. Military' in Robert Albro and Bill Ivey (eds), *Cultural Awareness in the Military* (Palgrave MacMillan 2014)

<sup>5</sup> James Zeidler and Laurie Rush, 'In-Theatre Soldier Training through Cultural Heritage Playing Cards: A US Department of Defense Example' in Laurie Rush (ed), *Archaeology, Cultural Property, and the Military* (Boydell and Brewer 2010)

Graphic training aides like playing cards also offer an opportunity to engage families of military personnel on this important subject. The Fort Drum cultural resources team also offers educational programming to soldier spouses and children of all ages whenever the opportunity arises. Whether it is “Be an Archaeologist Day” on the installation or a discussion of mummies with first graders, the protection message often makes it home to the deploying family member.

An internet presence is also critical when working to provide awareness and information to large numbers of people. For nearly a decade, the Combatant Command Cultural Heritage Action Group (CCHAG) hosted a website that offered PowerPoint briefings for download, pdf versions of all of the playing card decks and soldier pocket cards, and current events related to CPP. The CEMML website supplemented the CCHAG website by offering detailed reach back information concerning archaeological sites in Iraq and Afghanistan with interactive maps. The CCHAG website is currently in the process of transitioning to a different host as the CCHAG works toward its goal of becoming a more influential organization.

Introductory and awareness training is only a beginning. Effective implementation of a CPP program also depends upon customized training for a wide range of military specialties. When we consider the wide range of jobs and challenges in the deployed environment, it is immediately clear that CPP courses for a site surveyor, a bulldozer operator, a planner, and a targeteer are going to be very different. Just as air crews use the avoidance targets on the aerial gunnery range at Fort Drum to practice minimization of collateral damage, site surveyors need to learn how to potentially identify the presence of an archaeological site in order to avoid damage during base construction or expansion. Heavy equipment operators need to be able to determine conditions where an archaeology monitor might be appropriate and what types of inadvertent discoveries would warrant a work stoppage. A planner needs to be sure that a sufficient cultural property geo-spatial data layer is available for the battle space. An imagery analyst needs to know what the signatures of past cultural behavior might look like from the sky, and legal advisors need to know the requirements faced by their commanders.

One area where CPP education is gaining traction is in the arena of combat engineering. In the US and the UK, protection of cultural resources falls within the portfolio of the combatant command environmental

engineer. For the U.S., U.S. Central Command and U.S. Southern Command have been especially pro-active when it comes to education and awareness. U.S. Southern Command sponsored CPP training for the entire headquarters in 2012, and has developed a series of CPP briefings focusing on four specialized areas: legal requirements for protection of cultural property; how to identify cultural property; CPP specifically for Engineers; and the potential contributions that understanding cultural property can make to intelligence gathering. In 2010, the CENTCOM Environmental Engineer included cultural property as a key topic in a series of environmental shuras held in Kabul. He also made every effort to insure that the forward environmental engineer not only understood the significance of the issue to the Afghan people but also made a point of introducing the forward engineer to members of the Afghan government ministry of culture.

Members of the Civil Affairs community have also worked to insure that their officers and soldiers develop competence in the realm of CPP. The U.S. Army published a Graphic Training Aid (GTA)<sup>6</sup> that outlines some guidance for appropriate response when soldiers encounter cultural property on the battlefield. The Smithsonian Institution has also stepped up to offer educational events to civil affairs units that include behind the scenes visits to collections; visits to conservation laboratories; and briefings by leaders in the field. The Smithsonian even partnered with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan, who hosted a major training event for Civil Affairs officers that included a tour of the Islamic collection and a special briefing by the Museum's armorer concerning the arms and armor collection. The U.S. Marine Corps has strengthened their Civil Affairs curriculum to include a museum collection evacuation exercise in addition to their more formal CPP introduction and briefings.

### **Academic Partnership with the Military for Development of an Effective CPP Training and PME Program**

Every aspect of CPP program development at Fort Drum and in the U.S. Department of Defense has depended upon partnership with academic experts (Rush 2012). As explained above, most of the U.S. military archaeologists are anthropologists who specialize in specific areas of North America. When the global media covered the story of U.S. Marine Corps

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<sup>6</sup> GTA 41-001-002 (2009) Civil Affairs Arts, Monuments, and Archives Guide.

damage at Babylon, it immediately became clear that expertise would be required from archaeologists with experience studying Ancient Mesopotamia, the Middle East, and the Silk Road. Scholars from the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) volunteered to provide informational lectures to deploying personnel and worked pro-actively on a voluntary basis advising U.S. military archaeologists who were beginning to work with the soldiers on their installations. For over a decade, academic partners have welcomed military representatives at their annual meetings; have provided subject matter expertise for all of the training products and PME materials; have volunteered to provide lectures for ROTC participants attending their universities; have traveled to military bases to offer briefings for deploying personnel; and have shared archaeological data to contribute to Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) cultural property inventories. As recently as January of 2017, the AIA hosted a heritage preservation workshop at their annual meeting where over fifty members met with representatives of DIA, the US Army, the Iraq Conservation Institute, and the US Committee of the Blue Shield to discuss how AIA can continue to support CPP in the military context.

### **International Engagement on CPP**

Modern warfare often involves multinational forces on the battlefield requiring a coalition approach to meaningful preparation and training in all shared mission requirements, not just cultural property protection. In 2015, the NATO Science for Peace and Security Program funded a project to explore development of CPP Policy, Doctrine, and Best Practices, and Fort Drum provided one of the project co-directors. Over the course of two years of subject matter expert workshops, the project, in cooperation with the NATO CIMIC Center of Excellence produced a compendium of potential training materials that includes publications, fact sheets, the prototype CPP video game, and suggestions for injects. Members of the SPS working groups also drafted and incorporated the NATO exercise inject mentioned above. In addition to the training materials, there have been additional significant outcomes of the NATO project including a commitment to add a cultural property geo-spatial data layer to NATO Geographic Information Systems and more proactive partnering across military specialties to include military police, stability police, and legal advisors.

### **The Future of CPP Training at Fort Drum and Beyond**

With the successful inject of a CPP scenario into a 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division exercise, there is renewed interest and enthusiasm for CPP at Fort Drum, for both the Division and the Archaeologists. Current plans include repetition of the inject with additional brigade exercises along with incorporation of the topic into the Division Command's pre-deployment academic week in the fall. The Division would like to continue to use the archaeology team as role players, and the archaeological sites will continue to serve as training assets into the foreseeable future. The Division G9 is also very interested in using the cultural property inventories managed by DIA as information assets for ground operations planning. Fort Drum hopes to continue to be a pioneer and DoD model for effective Cultural Property Protection as a force multiplier.