

# Seeking Innovative Solutions to Managing Cultural Resources in the Department of Defense

**T**he Department of Defense (DoD) manages a wide range of unique cultural resources on its 25 million acres of public lands. Included are buildings, structures, sites, and objects associated with the historical growth and development of the U.S. military, as well as many other elements of American history and prehistory.

Cultural resources under DoD management include the impressive architecture of our military service academies and other historic military installations; Native American rock carvings and archeological sites; pioneer cemeteries, structures, and sites; sites and buildings associated with such major recent efforts as nuclear weapons development and the space program; historic aircraft and ships; and documents, photographs, and other objects associated with our nation's military history. These cultural resources are tangible

reminders and symbols of people, events, and ideas that shaped our nation's character. They also are important because of their support of military mission goals, their contributions to military history and tradition, and their enhancement of quality of life for the residents, employees, and visitors to DoD installations.

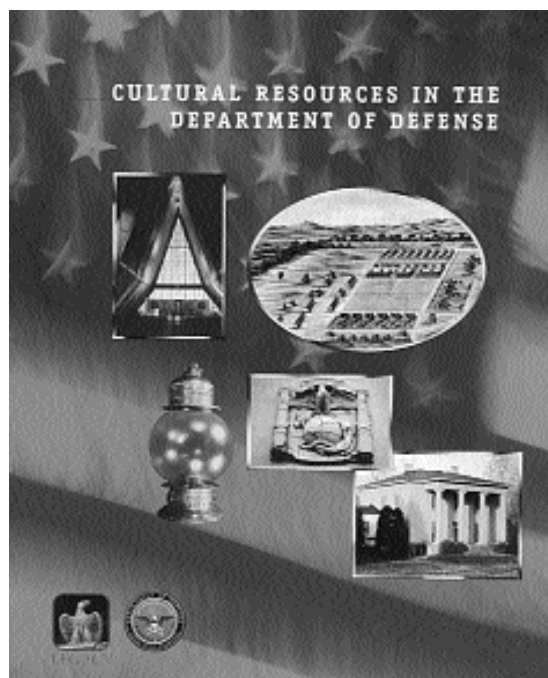
These facts notwithstanding, cultural resource management (CRM) is not a core element of DoD's primary mission of national defense. It is difficult to fund CRM requirements that are not strictly driven by legal compliance issues. And CRM usually lies "below the radar screen" with respect to its visibility to senior DoD officials. Consequently, DoD has been working to develop new solutions for CRM in the Department.

## ***Identifying New Technologies for CRM***

A major recent initiative, jointly sponsored by the DoD Legacy Resource Management Program (Legacy) and the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP), was a CRM workshop held at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, in June 2000. The workshop's goals were to define the state-of-the-art in CRM science and technology, define DoD's future CRM needs, and identify potential technologies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies. (The proceedings from this workshop are available at <http://www.denix.osd.mil>.) The Legacy and SERDP programs currently are evaluating the workshop's many recommendations to determine which offer the best short- and long-term opportunities.

One way that new technologies may help is by reducing the amount of field sampling through a better integration of techniques, such as predictive modeling, remote sensing, and geophysical prospecting. Equally important is to assess how well previous predictive techniques have worked.

*Brochure cover, courtesy Office of the Secretary of Defense.*



### **New Tools for CRM**

DoD's new Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) Toolbox is discussed elsewhere in this issue (see Loechl and Whalley, p. 7). Another recently completed project is the Center of Expertise for the Preservation of Historic Structures and Buildings, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District's study, *The Cost of Maintaining Historic Military Family Housing*. This report looks at the current conditions of historic military family housing, and the factors affecting their maintenance costs. The report identifies improved management and operations procedures for both historic and non-historic housing.

New communications tools are also needed. For example, Legacy-SERDP workshop participants suggested a need for new tools to facilitate stakeholder involvement in Native American consultations. Documents such as Cultural Resources in the Department of Defense and DoD-specific training courses may help facilitate communications throughout the Department.

### **New Policies and Procedures for CRM**

A potentially contentious issue surrounds the questions "what should we preserve?" and "how should we preserve it?" While an idealist might be unwilling to sacrifice any artifacts, documents, buildings, or other cultural resources, others would argue that certain of these resources are of marginal value and are diverting scarce resources from more compelling needs. DoD has undertaken several major inventories to begin to address such issues.

A four-volume inventory, *California Historic Military Buildings and Structures*, analyzes the way in which these buildings and structures have been evaluated by the various DoD components in California, and provides a methodological and contextual framework to guide future work. It is hoped that the results of this study will identify those buildings and structures that DoD must protect, while permitting the Department greater management flexibility with others.

The nationwide curation needs assessment conducted by the Mandatory Center of Expertise for the Curation and Management of Archaeological Collections, U.S. Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, may result in simi-

lar management flexibility (see Marino and Trimble, p. 11). For example, this seven-year study of almost 250 DoD collections identified many collections with substantial percentages of soil samples, and others with large amounts of fire-cracked rock. Because it is unlikely that these items have any significant scientific research value, it may be possible to delete these items from our long-term curation inventory.

### **Summary**

DoD continues to be a leader in federal CRM. The cultural resources under DoD control are significant national assets. Wise stewardship of these resources is DoD's moral and legal obligation. New technologies, tools, policies and procedures will help maintain DoD's ability to manage these resources for future generations.

### **References**

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