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Fort Hood, Texas

CRM in the Home of the Army's Largest Fighting Machines

Fort Hood's Cultural Resource Management program is an integral part of the fort's mission to provide an efficient and effective training facility through an active program of identification, assessment, protection, monitoring, and education of cultural resources. The program sustains training by providing options that avoid impacts to resources and assists in creating a safe training environment by identifying potential hazards associated with some resources that need to be avoided, such as historic well and cistern locations. In addition, Fort Hood's CRM program research provides information to military and other landscape users, e.g., geomorphologic units, erosion patterns, and relationships between locations of past usage areas and the landscape topography. Most importantly the program supports the installation's mission by increasing awareness of the presence and importance of cultural resources and by providing a link to identify these resources as part of our American heritage that the Department of Army protects.

Background

Fort Hood is located in central Texas, approximately one hour south of Waco and one-hour north of Austin. Its boundaries encompass approximately 220,000 acres (349 square miles) of diverse landscape. The terrain is varied with gently rolling, open hills on the west side and 200 to 300 meter (600 to 900 foot) escarpments on the east side. The installation consists of a live fire area, training maneuver areas, and a cantonment. The cantonment borders dense residential and commercial development. The majority of the installation borders low-density residential development and agricultural lands used primarily for livestock grazing.

Camp Hood formally opened for troop training in September 1942 and provided training grounds for over 130,000 troops. In the 1950s, the Department of the Army designated Camp Hood a permanent post, renamed the installation "Fort Hood," and acquired approximately 50,000 acres concurrently with the acquisition of land for Belton Lake Reservoir. Over the years, Fort Hood has expanded through a series of smaller land acquisitions to accommodate new equipment and training needs. Today, Fort Hood owns all but approximately 6,000 acres adjacent to Lake Belton which are leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Fort Hood's CRM program has oversight responsibility for the entire 220,000 acres.

Fort Hood is the largest armored post in the United States and is home to two armored divisions. It is also home to Headquarters III Corps Phantom Command and is the primary training resource for the 49th Armored Division of the Texas Army National Guard. Fort Hood supports two major airfields, the Robert Gray Army Airfield and Hood Army Airfield.

Example of Fort Hood landscape. Photo by the author.

Projectile point recovered during excavations on Fort Hood. Photo by Ian McGuire.

Training is conducted on Fort Hood year-round. Training lands are used for battle readiness in tank and mobile infantry maneuvers, artillery firing, helicopter tactical training, and large-scale mock offensives. Fort Hood's 61,374.9 -acre live fire area, impact area, firing ranges, and associated facilities accommodate firing of all Army weapons.

The Program

Since 1978, the Fort Hood Cultural Resource Management Program (FTHCRM) office has kept pace with training due to a long-range program of identification and testing for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. Successful coordination of cultural resource conservation and protection with the Army's training mission has occurred. Surveys identified a total of 2,222 archeological resources resulting in 99% of training areas and cantonment plus 71% of the live fire area systematically inventoried for archeological cultural resources. This number consists of 1,102 prehistoric archeological sites inclusive of one Native American sacred resource and 1,120 historic archeological sites. The archeological cultural resource inventory was completed in 1991. Since then, Fort Hood has implemented National Register eligibility testing for prehistoric archeological resources that is currently near completion. Chronology of the prehistoric material recovered span from 10,000 BP to 700 BP and represent the remains of hunter/gatherer camps, kill sites, quarries, and resource processing centers. Other features include rock art, burned rock middens and mounds, rockshelters, and an identified Medicine Wheel.

Fort Hood contains the entire or partial territories of 23 dispersed rural communities represented by the historic archeological resources, three historic buildings, and 21 pioneer cemeteries. Historic resources include cattle ranches, farms, community structures, and trash dumps ranging from the 1850s through the military acquisition periods of 1942 and 1953. Pioneer cemeteries and adjacent community sites remain the focus for ethnic identity among former members of these dispersed communities and are currently the focus of an oral history project.

Operations and Initiatives

FTHCRM is integrating cultural resource awareness and hence coordination into the various operational divisions within the installation. First and foremost is obtaining a better understanding of training needs, and the operation of the equipment and its impact on the landscape in which the resources are located. Hence FTHCRM has implemented a detailed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program to coordinate all the information FTHCRM has acquired.

Being part of the Environmental Division of Fort Hood's Department of Public Works (DPW) has benefited FTHCRM by providing a large amount of baseline environmental information. The other departments have provided vegetation maps, habitat definitions, and hydrological maps, which complement the geomorphologic work FTHCRM has undertaken concurrent with surveys and inventories. By combining the current versions of this information in the GIS, FTHCRM is able to track landscape impacts resulting from proposed training exercises, assess if specific resources will be affected and provide alternatives to enable implementation of the training exercises on schedule, thereby not requiring postponement for mitigation purposes. For example, FTHCRM is entering the locations of dig sites requested for different training exercises into a GIS layer. By overlaying this layer with training area boundaries and underlying the layer with digital aerial photographs, FTHCRM is identifying high use areas. With this information, high use areas can be targeted for research and identify the best alternative to conserve an archeological resource *in situ*. This analysis will also

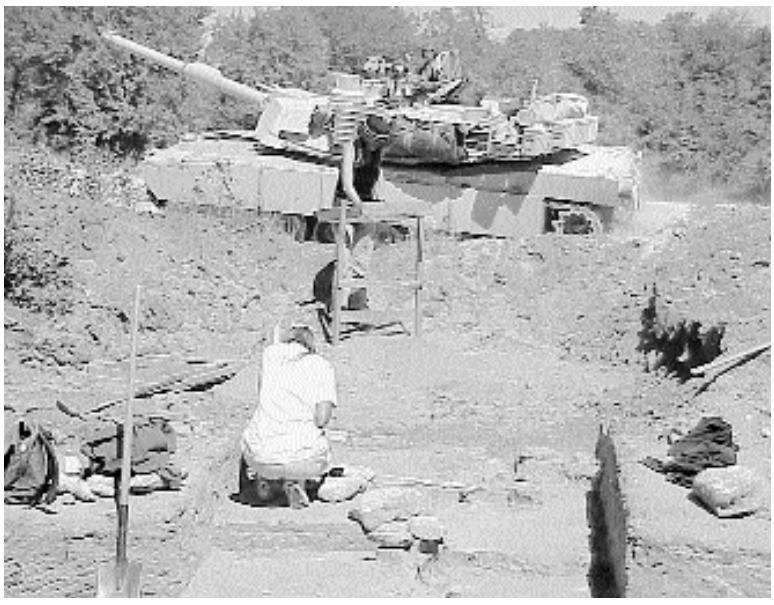
identify those high use areas where data recovery may be the best option in trade off for resource preservation *in situ*.

From an operational perspective, FTHCRM has worked closely with the Natural Resources program and the Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) program to provide a comprehensive map compatible with the existing training maps to assist training planners in identifying potential environmental coordination requirements. This map is a restricted document signed out to military personnel and complements the Coordination for Excavation Form that is required for all excavation activities on Fort Hood. To obtain the permit, soldiers are required to visit various offices to provide location and information on the training exercise enabling assessment of the proposed exercise impacts. By consulting the Coordination for Excavation map, trainers are able to identify those areas where environmental requirements will be minimal or non-existent, thus expediting the coordination process. This reduces the need to go back and forth revising training plans and re-checking with the various environmental and other DPW offices. The Corps of Engineer's Construction Engineer's Research Laboratory in Champaign, Illinois, is currently developing an electronic coordination procedure.

To assist construction in support of training, FTHCRM attends project-planning meetings with G3/Range Control engineers, ITAM project coordinators, and DPW's Engineering and Planning Services to identify potential cultural resource impacts early. This provides time to identify alternatives for project locations. If avoidance is not possible, coordination and any needed mitigation measures must be implemented.

Supplementing integration and coordination efforts is FTHCRM's expanding education program. An example of this is the awareness training provided for troops. A half day segment is included in the Environmental Awareness Training Class provided to all unit environmental coordinators, during which coordinators and potential coordinators are briefed on how to comply with regulations that require them to avoid impacts to cultural resources, how to recognize resources in the field so they are able to insure avoidance, and how to obtain the Coordination for Excavation permit. The soldiers are then taken on a field trip to gain first hand experience in identifying resources in the field. Succinct briefings on regulation compliance and resource avoidance are prepared for senior military personnel as well as civilians. Upon request, civilian training is provided and FTHCRM participates in a variety of environmental and installation activities to promote cultural resource awareness, such as Earth Day and Texas Archaeological Awareness month. In 2000, FTHCRM sponsored brown bag lunch seminars featuring talks on Fort Hood archeology. FTHCRM also has established associations with Mercyhurst College and the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom, for personnel and research purposes.

Active resource protection is a fundamental crucial program that includes implementing direct protection options such as stabilizing, fencing, burying, and avoiding resources. The type of protection a resource needs is based on the potential degradation activities that could affect it. An open campsite, for example, is more likely to be run over by tanks than a rockshelter and thus requires different protection measures. However, military degradation is not the only



Cultural resource field activities occur concurrently with military training activities. Photo by Karl Kleinbach.

degrading activity affecting sites. They are also affected by natural actions and man-made degradation, such as erosion and looting, respectively.

The second component of protection addresses all these types of degradation by monitoring resources to track degradation impacts. This enables FTHCRM staff to identify recent military impacts that occurred from a lack of following coordination for excavation procedures, major erosion events, such as heavy rains, and man-made degradation, such as looting. This information is then used to implement appropriate rehabilitation or mitigation measures. In the case of looting, FTHCRM works with the Provost Marshall's Office (PMO) and Criminal Investigation Unit (CID) to identify potential looters leading to arrest and prosecution.

This collaboration with PMO and CID has resulted in the third component of protection, the implementation of Archaeological Resource Protection Act procedures. FTHCRM staff developed a standard operating procedure for a response team to investigate active looting at archeological resources. In cases where potential perpetrators have not been identifiable, a surveillance program has been established to regularly visit archeological resources where previous looting activity has been identified. This is enabling FTHCRM to establish activity patterns and through documenting the damage and collecting other evidence in accordance with criminal investigation practices, FTHCRM is establishing the basis for prosecution when a perpetrator is apprehended. FTHCRM is also testing different remote surveillance equipment set-ups to improve identification of potential perpetrators.

Another protection program under development involves integration with military operations. FTHCRM is working with military personnel to develop a digital avoidance map that is downloadable into heavy equipment navigation systems. The aim is to provide personnel operating the heavy equipment with a way to efficiently avoid sensitive areas via an alert system tied into the navigation equipment, which sounds when entering a buffer area abutting a sensitive area.

Fort Hood within the Department of the Army

Though FTHCRM supports Fort Hood's mission, we do not work in isolation. Fort Hood's mission reflects our Department of the Army Forces Command's (FORSCOM) mission: to train, mobilize and deploy combat ready ground forces of America's Total Army to meet operational requirements of our nation. FORSCOM is a steward of Army resources, caring for soldiers, civilians, retirees and families, and of the high quality installations from which we project and support the force. To support this mission, FORSCOM's cultural resources program initially began in the 1970s at Fort Hood and at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

FORSCOM, headquartered at Fort McPherson, Georgia, consists of 11 installations scattered about the continental U.S. encompassing 2,491,912 acres. Military personnel are routinely transferred between them to maintain their readiness training. Hence FORSCOM installations work close together to insure a level of homogeneity in program approaches. This helps produce training continuity in meeting environmental requirements that help to sustain the training landscapes. Nevertheless, the CRM programs at each installation are distinct because of the specific resources for which they are stewards. Some installations have a preponderance of archeological resources such as Fort Hood while others, such as Fort McPherson, consists primarily of historic buildings.

Conclusion

Cultural resources and particularly archeological sites are a common component of the Army's training landscape. Installation programs that integrate their preservation efforts with training needs, not only insure that America's Army meets its readiness training requirements, but also support stewardship of these resources. Identifying and assessing the resources and exploring options to best meet preservation needs accomplish this aim. The military have been responsive to the programs by providing feedback on the feasibility of avoidance options and what information is most helpful for them to avoid resources while training. This cooperative spirit will enable Fort Hood's Cultural Resource Management program to move in new management directions in the 21st century.

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