



## 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award Cultural Resources Management – Large Installation Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler

### Introduction

Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler (MCB Butler), located in the islands of Okinawa, Japan, is a dynamic collection of widely dispersed installations, facilities, and training areas, creating a unique cultural resource management challenge. Supporting more than 32,000 active-duty military and civilians, MCB Butler provides base support and training areas for III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF).



With its diverse landscape, the island of Okinawa is a key training location for the Marine Corps. Featured here is an example of the island's jungle and ocean resources.

III MEF is a deployable Marine-Air-Ground Task Force able to conduct operations across the spectrum from humanitarian assistance to contentious operations. MCB Butler provides unique training opportunities in various environmental habitats, including the only U.S. Marine Corps Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC) and the only U.S.-controlled live fire ranges in Japan. MCB Butler encompasses more than 30,000 acres and is home to over 3,000 species of flora and fauna, of which approximately 260 are rare, threatened, or endangered. Nearly 1,000 archeological sites, some dating over 6,000 years old, have been identified including prehistoric shell mounds, ancestral tombs, buried village sites, and sacred springs and shrines that remain culturally significant to the people of Okinawa. The various types of training and facilities supported by MCB Butler necessitate a Cultural Resources Management Program skilled in supporting military readiness, balancing environmental sustainability, and fostering collaborative environmental stewardship between the U.S. and Japanese governments.

### Background

In support of MCB Butler's broad military mission, the Cultural Resources Management Program focuses on conservation, protection, and preservation through the implementation of several key guidance documents. These documents include MCB Butler's Integrated Natural Resources and Cultural Resources Management Plan (INRCRMP), Section 402 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 402), the Japan Environmental Governing Standards (JEGS), and various U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), Marine Corps Installation Pacific (MCIPAC), and MCB Butler orders.



The Deika Hill Religious Complex, located on Camp Courtney, is one of the many culturally significant sites found on MCB Butler.



## 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award Cultural Resources Management – Large Installation Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler



One of the more extraordinary finds recovered in recent years.

The last update to the INRCRMP was completed in 2019 and is close to the end of its five-year lifecycle. As such, the 2024 update is currently in progress and will improve the Cultural Resources Program by addressing recent findings in Okinawan and regional archaeology, providing an up-to-date reference for Japanese cultural laws, and containing an easily accessed synthesis of cultural resources at MCB Butler. Additionally, for the first time, this update will address the effects of climate change on cultural resources and tie in with MCB Butler Climate Change Assessment Project.

MCB Butler's Cultural Resources Program Team includes Mr. Masayuki Yonaha and Mr. Paul French. Mr. Yonaha, an archaeologist at MCB Butler since 2001 has more than 20 years of archeological experience in Okinawa and co-oversees the Cultural Resources Management Program. As a Cultural Resources Program Manager, Mr. Yonaha serves as the primary point of contact for the thirteen local Boards of Education that MCB Butler consults with to ensure proper protection of significant cultural assets within training area and camp/station boundaries. The local Boards of Education are similar to the State Historic Preservation Offices in the U.S. In addition to reviewing installation construction and repair projects that have the potential to impact cultural resources, Mr. Yonaha is responsible for securing funds for cultural asset surveys and has initiated extensive cultural resources studies of both the Central Training Area and JWTC at MCB Butler. These studies include archival research, remote sensing, field verification, and reconnaissance survey of remote areas that until now, have received little attention from archaeologists. With his expansive understanding of Okinawan cultural resources and his tireless dedication to the field of archaeology, Mr. Yonaha's contributions reach beyond the boundaries of MCB Butler, significantly enhancing Okinawa's body of archaeological knowledge.

Mr. Paul French, an archaeologist with 12 years of government service, became a part of the MCB Butler Cultural Resources Management Program in 2019. He has provided technical expertise in various aspects of the Cultural Resources Program, including cultural asset survey, site testing, and report editing and production. Additionally, Mr. French's duties include reviewing requests for environmental impact review documents (REIRs) submitted to the MCB Butler Environmental Affairs Branch (EAB) for cultural resource concerns. Mr. French also coordinates with U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps units to ensure that all comply with cultural resource protection requirements.



## 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award Cultural Resources Management – Large Installation Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler

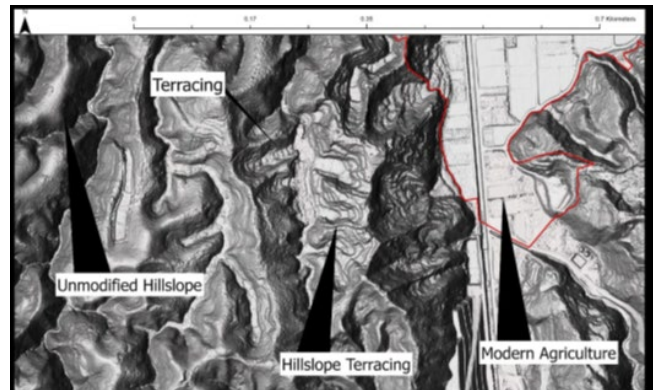
Together, Mr. Yonaha and Mr. French maintain positive collaborative relationships with both national and local Japanese government officials and frequently provide advice and assistance on host nation cultural resource issues outside of the installation. These cooperative and constructive partnerships serve to enhance relations between the U.S. and Japan.

### Cultural Resources Summary of Accomplishments

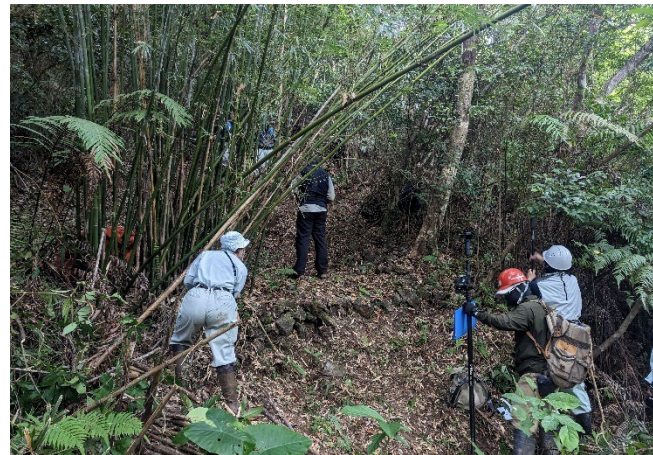
In 2022, an environmental compliance audit conducted by the Headquarters of the Marine Corps (Marine Corps Installations Command GF-5 Environmental) returned no negative results for the MCB Butler Cultural Resources Management Program. This audit found the program to be in complete compliance with required guidance documents and marks a continued trend of excellence. To maintain this record that has stood in place since 2013, the Cultural Resources Management Program exhibits tireless dedication to the conservation, protection, and preservation of cultural resources that is essential in furthering Marine Corps readiness throughout MCIPAC. The following accomplishments are a small sampling of its vital and ongoing efforts.

#### *Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) Survey at the Cental Training Area*

For the first time at MCB Butler, LiDAR data was repurposed to assist in a cultural asset survey and management of the Cultural Resources Program. Starting in FY22, LiDAR data that was originally collected for range management and planning was reprocessed for cultural resources. This effort was accomplished through contract with International Archaeology and University of Hawai'i researchers. It is the intention of the Cultural Resources Program to utilize LiDAR studies such as this to help facilitate fieldwork in difficult terrains like those found in the CTA. With this, we hope to cut down on the cost and time of traditional cultural asset surveys by conducting more targeted studies in areas of high probability for containing cultural features. For example, past surveys using conventional pedestrian survey fall within the \$350K range for 1,000 acres; however, our current LiDAR survey was approximately \$465K, but covered nearly 17,000 acres and took less time. Additionally, costs for this effort were



Previously unrecorded cultural features located through LiDAR analysis at the CTA.



Survey crew contractors recording a walled terrace feature alongside giant bamboo boundary marker.



## 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award Cultural Resources Management – Large Installation Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler

reduced since no additional LiDAR data needed to be collected. So far, the fieldwork component (which included validating the LiDAR data) has been completed and preliminary reports are showing positive results for this being a worthwhile endeavor. The MCB Butler Cultural Resources Program hopes to show that this type of project can be implemented at many other installations, which may already have LiDAR data available free of use.



Example of contractors excavating large scale pits during the testing at Kin Blue Beach.

### *Archaeological Surveys at the Kin Blue Beach Training Facility*

During FY22, the Cultural Resources Program finished a series of testing projects at the Kin Blue Beach Training Facility. Kin Blue is known for containing a wide variety of cultural resource concerns including shell middens, shrines, and structural remains. Diagnostic ceramics recovered from the project area have provided insight into the occupation of Kin Bay. The recovered artifacts indicate a continuous occupation between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as an

earlier Shellmound period site. Kin Cho Site 17, recorded in the 1960s, includes the Kinhama Shellmound, with pottery remains dated to the Late Okinawan Shellmound period.

The final and largest of three surveys was conducted in 2022 to support the continued use of Kin Blue Beach for training operations by addressing the potential for cultural concerns. This survey also serves to research landform utilization of the Shellmound Period population and attempt to narrow down areas of likely habitation. Seventy large scale pits were mechanically excavated during this final phase of testing, which uncovered areas of large-scale previous disturbance from sand quarrying operations and subsequent refilling. This last survey completed the environmental analysis required to clear the training area for expanded operations and added additional 17 acres of usable land.



## 2024 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award Cultural Resources Management – Large Installation Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler

### *Local Government Partnerships on MCAS Futenma*

The multi-year survey by the Okinawa Prefectural Government has continued its full-scale excavations at the Uehara Site on MCAS Futenma. In coordination with the cultural resources team, this project is uncovering exciting new insights on the cultural history of Okinawa. Coordination was complex and involved the Cultural Resources Program, local Board of Education, MCAS Futenma Security Office, and U.S. Forces Japan. Additionally, the Cultural Resources program has supported special projects in coordination with the Ginowan Board of Education. One such project was an extensive investigation of culturally significant caves on Futenma. The ongoing program of cultural research on MCAS Futenma are of mutual benefit to both the U.S. military and Japanese government in several ways. The U.S. military saves on what would otherwise be costly research and receives the benefit of being able to better manage the cultural assets under MCB Butler administration. The Japanese government also has the added benefit of being able to proactively plan for future management of these assets in the case of a land transfer.

### **Conclusion**

MCB Butler provides unique training environments that are vital to mission readiness. Our Cultural Resources Management Program plays a pivotal role by balancing environmental protection and sustainability with mission requirements. Mr. Yonaha and Mr. French have incorporated numerous management strategies to protect and preserve the sensitive cultural resources hidden throughout MCB Butler and MCAS Futenma. Allowing for proactive management and information sharing, their actions aid in maintaining the vitality of the training areas that support Marine Corps. The development of a comprehensive GIS database provides an additional step in cultural resources protection and furthers our commitment to protection of the land and resources entrusted to the Marine Corps. Through community awareness and collaborative partnerships with local governments and agencies, MCB Butler's Cultural Resources Management Program has been a cornerstone in improving relations between the people of Okinawa and the Marine Corps and supporting the U.S. – Japan alliance.



Overview of Uehara excavation block. This section of the site includes Jomon period pit features and a possible medieval period fortified site.



Researchers from the Ginowan Board of Education conducting an updated survey of caves on Futenma. Documentation efforts were completed in coordination with a new exhibit at the local historic museum.