

# SECRETARY OF THE ARMY ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS 2019

## MISSISSIPPI ARMY NATIONAL GUARD CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, INDIVIDUAL

As Cultural Resources Manager for Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, *Rita McCarty* is charged with preservation of the installation's rich cultural heritage—without any impediment to the critical training activities supporting the Mississippi Army National Guard's (MSARNG) readiness. With approximately 132,000 acres of training land (15,000 owned by the Department of Defense and 117,000 encompassed by a special use permit with the US Forest Service), the installation is the home to two large armored brigades, special operations units, units from other state Guards, and units from all other military service branches. Training resources include a regional school for use of unmanned aerial systems and many maneuver training sites and multi-purpose range complexes for all tank gunnery and artillery weaponry currently in use. The installation also provides Naval Seabee training, supports the Air Force and all other DoD branches, and hosts annual summer ROTC camps, in which over 2,000 Air Force ROTC cadets from across the United States conduct their summer training at Camp Shelby. Clearly, a throughput like this relies upon the highest levels of environmental excellence to ensure uninterrupted operations. With over ten years' experience as cultural resources manager and specialties in archaeology, artifact conservation and analysis, cultural resources compliance, and Native American consultation, McCarty is the ideal person to meet these challenges. Under her leadership, Camp Shelby's history continues to be (re)discovered, preserved, and celebrated.



Over the past two years, McCarty has gone above and beyond conventional cultural resources management (CRM) initiatives, jointly coordinating a large-scale centennial celebration for the post, adaptively reusing historic structures to meet current needs, creating new resources for education and outreach among the community, introducing cutting-edge technology to delineate archaeological sites, and more. This year, McCarty was decorated for her many hours of service to the MSARNG organization and cultural resources with the Civilian Meritorious Service Award, the highest honor that can be awarded to a civilian MSARNG employee. Last year, McCarty jointly organized the Centennial Celebration for Camp Shelby, which involved a year-long programming schedule beginning with a gala fundraiser and culminating in a public festival showcasing the installation's century of contribution to Mississippi and the nation. McCarty simultaneously assisted in the redevelopment and rehabilitation of two historic structures on post to serve as a state-of-the-art curation facility, CRM offices, and cultural center for the MSARNG, conveniently collocated with the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby. Through this effort, McCarty effectively established a comprehensive historical resource complex on the installation, with displays created for the Centennial Celebration installed as permanent exhibits. She also launched a multi-year ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey project to confirm, delineate, and excavate rare WWI-era training trenches and other facilities. This effort dovetails with a new Legacy-grant funded project she is pursuing with NGB, Alabama Army National Guard, and Marine Base Quantico to generate a historic context study for WWI-era training resources. This year she spearheaded the conversion of the historic Mississippi Central Railway on the installation into a walking/running/exercise trail using federal Rails to Trails grant funds. The trail circles the post historic complex and integrates interpretive signage, functioning as an



educational and recreational resource for Camp Shelby's many soldiers, staff, and visitors. Beyond Camp Shelby, McCarty has initiated a new survey effort for 23 historic Cold War-era armories throughout the state that have never been fully surveyed for National Register status. To encourage awareness and education, McCarty created an archaeology day for MSARNG soldiers' children and family members, featuring excavation activities at a WWII-era archaeological site. McCarty is also co-organizing with the University of Southern Mississippi to host an archaeological expo for the public this October. On top of all this, McCarty hosted this year's multi-state tribal consultation workshop at Camp Shelby, bringing six state Guards and all their associated tribes together.

McCarty is supported in these endeavors by the Environmental Office's conservation staff and the GIS Coordinator for the MSARNG, who has collaborated with her to create maps and displays of historic and present-day operations and resources. Her program is guided by the installation Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP), which she is currently revising to reflect present priorities and new data. She further maintains strong partnerships with the Museum on the installation and with the state Department of Archives and History (DAH). Over the past 13 years, McCarty has worked

diligently to establish a record of credibility and compliance for the MSARNG, characterized by proactive undertakings; as a result, the state historic preservation office (SHPO) functions more as a partner than as a regulatory agency. Her program has proven to be incredibly valuable to other professionals in the CRM field, particularly for University of Southern Mississippi (USM) faculty and students who conduct research and internships under McCarty's guidance. Her internship program is a win-win for the MSARNG, providing thousands of dollars cost-savings on fieldwork and administration while fostering the next generation of cultural stewards.

By establishing curation facilities on post, McCarty will ultimately save resources for the MSARNG, allowing for full access to all holdings and eliminating the annual \$5000 annual fees paid for curation to USM. In FY17, McCarty secured \$6200 in Legacy grant funding for special cemetery restoration projects; these initiatives emphasized community outreach and volunteerism. Her project to convert old rail lines to historic walking trails is also grant-funded—McCarty and partners sought out and won \$28,000 in Rails to Trails funding from the Federal Highway Administration. The MSARNG's portion of the Legacy project for WWI context studies was approximately \$30,000: \$15,000 for volunteer services (historical research, site assistance, GIS support, etc.) and \$15,000 in non-Legacy federal funds for a Phase I survey of WWI features.



Rita McCarty has served as the MSARNG CRM for 13 years. Here, she is presented the MS Meritorious Civilian Service Ribbon by COL Amos Parker, MSARNG Chief of Staff. The MS Meritorious Civilian Service Ribbon is the highest honor awarded to a civilian employee of the MS National Guard.





*Camp Shelby Centennial Celebration:* As the largest state-owned training facility in the Army National Guard, Camp Shelby inevitably encompasses a lot of local and military history. Founded in 1917 as the United States entered WWI, the training site still contains some of the most extensive relics of that period of any installation in the United States. To celebrate this heritage, McCarty captured and documented the transformation of the post over the past century, collecting and compiling articles, photographs, artifacts, and more to reflect the MSARNG’s transformation. With the aid of the MSARNG Museum and archives, as well as USM and local newspaper holdings, McCarty designed a public outreach campaign to promote awareness and participation over the year’s events. Then in July 2017, the celebration reached the public at large with a special, once-in-a-century version of the annual Camp Shelby Day festival. The event welcomed the local community, the Governor, and local businesses, and it featured not only the historic centennial exhibits, but also military displays with helicopters, planes, and tanks, bounce houses and booths for children, food trucks, and more for the several thousand people who attended. McCarty designed and displayed exhibits that tracked the transformation of Camp Shelby through WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. Map overlays of the installation at each of these moments visually depicted how the training site has evolved; these visuals were augmented by photos, documents, ephemera, and artifacts from each period. Today, these displays are permanent exhibits in the cultural center’s conference rooms.



*Historic Structures, Adaptive Reuse, and Curation:* McCarty manages Camp Shelby’s two buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a WWI ammunition building that has been restored to its original appearance and the WWII “White House,” the former headquarters from the camp. The ammunition building is part of the Museum complex as a static display with some artifacts exhibited. Three additional buildings are potentially eligible for NRHP listing, including a chapel and WWII warehouses, and the two structures that are being converted to curation facilities are also eligible. With funding in FY19, the conversion of the curation and CRM office facilities will be complete.



The first curation building dates to the 1920s, when it served as a mess hall through WWII and was then converted to office, and later storage, space. In 2008, the historic structure was designated as a representative of the interwar period and then rehabilitated in 2012 to serve as modern office space. Using archival blueprints and photographs, McCarty restored the building to its original 1930s character. Last year, she completed further renovations to convert the mess hall into a curation/cultural center dedicated to archival storage, permanent exhibits, temporary holdings of artifacts, and meeting and office space for CRM operations. While internal features like wainscoting and fixtures were preserved, the building’s HVAC and electrical systems were thoroughly upgraded to meet curation requirements. At present, the curation/cultural center is storing the installation’s artifacts as rehabilitation is completed on its neighboring structure, the future home to Camp Shelby’s collections and curation operations. Rehabilitation to the curation facility will be complete in FY19. This brick structure, built in 1936, served as a latrine; under McCarty’s oversight, it has undergone external rehabilitation and is currently being renovated inside to meet the security, HVAC, and humidity control requirements of 36 C.F.R. These curation facilities complete a de facto historic complex on Camp Shelby, as they stand next to the Museum on the site of what was a 60-acre hospital during WWI and then the cantonment area in WWII. The historic chapel and the original Camp Shelby dispensary, constructed in 1936, also share the site. While not a designated historic district, the DAH recognizes the area as a state heritage site.

These facilities will allow McCarty and her staff to conduct all curation of MSARNG artifacts in-house. She already completes all documentation and cataloging of materials, but without an appropriate facility, all artifacts had to be maintained at USM. The return of these collections aids the CRM program in its research and allows the MSARNG to showcase items for the public. On-site collections will also streamline McCarty's efforts toward NAGPRA compliance.

This year, McCarty has launched a critical survey of 23 historic armories, seeking to document them in historic context with current and past photographs and blueprints. These armories have recently crossed the 50-year threshold and have not been surveyed for historic character before. McCarty is working with the MSARNG Command Historian to develop historic contexts for the armories, documenting the history of the armory location and the genealogy of the units that trained within the armory. The historian McCarty has contracted will contextualize the construction documents with media clippings related to important events at the armories; because many of these were built in the 1950s and 1960s, they are likely to have significance not only for Cold War connections, but also for the Civil Rights Movement.

*Archaeological Sites and Surveys:* Camp Shelby encompasses around 300 archaeological sites that are eligible or potentially eligible for NRHP listing, including several rare features. The installation is one of the few sites where WWI training trenches can still be found, and these are scattered over roughly 250 acres of the training site; documenting and preserving these features are a particular passion for McCarty. The trenches and sites associated with a 1917-18 bakery company were the focus of a GPR survey launched last summer; McCarty targeted these areas for delineation so that future construction proposals for the MSARNG's motor pool would be appropriately sited. The trenches are particularly notable because several of them still include cave shelters, areas where soldiers dug out space for officers and storage within a trench. McCarty identified 14 cave shelters, though some have collapsed, and there were some indications that these shelters may have been connected by tunnels; a 1918 engineering manual published on post contained photos of such a tunnel. Using scopes that are deployed to inspect gopher tortoise burrows, she was able to confirm that tunnels (some collapsed) are still connected to the cave shelters. A subsequent GPR investigation was then launched to fully delineate the tunnel system and on sites including the WWI cantonment area's roads, bakery operations, restaurant, pool hall, ice house, post office, library, and other facilities. McCarty completed this survey over the summer of FY18. The GPR survey covered five locations of what was WWI's downtown Camp Shelby, and GIS overlays were created as data from the survey came in, so that actual sites could be geo-rectified against historic maps, creating a contextual landscape view. In the process, McCarty discovered previously unknown and unmapped roads, infrastructure, and structural remains, and identified several sites that will undergo secondary investigation.

This summer, McCarty launched Phase II testing and excavation on a Native American site where timber harvesting and thinning is planned; USM assisted in this project, as well as with evaluations where roads for a new tank maneuver range will be constructed. Also this year, McCarty addressed an inadvertent discovery: in the process of building a new sewer line, contractors uncovered a large WWII trash pit. McCarty immediately assessed the site, which contained hundreds of artifacts, including bottles and cans, newspapers, medical supplies, and other camp refuse dating to the early 1940s. The materials were so well preserved, McCarty surmised that they must have been covered immediately upon disposal. In a sense, she had a WWII time capsule—but it contained far too much material to realistically recover and curate all of it.





Kid's AT (Annual Training) is a program for children whose parents serve in or has served in the military. In 2018, McCarty and the Kid's AT coordinator created an archaeology day for the kids. Approximately 180 kids and adults participated in a real archaeological excavation on a World War II pit.

This spring, McCarty was approached by the organizer of the "Kids AT" program, a camp for the children of military personnel, to create an archaeological dig for the 180 campers and 40 counselors. The WWII waste pit was the perfect site, providing the children with a real excavation experience without risk to significant artifacts.

McCarty's current project focuses on conversion of the historic rail line to a walking/running/biking trail with historic elements. Construction of the trail started in April 2018; this first phase connects the rebuilt train depot to the MSARNG museum, and the following phases will expand the trail to wrap around a lake and campground, with signage interspersed throughout. When complete, the full trail will stretch five miles and connect the depot to the military obstacle course and RTI track; already bikers and hikers have begun using the trail. To date, McCarty has created 15 signs that highlight the features of the historic complex, Native American history, and the MSARNG's contributions to the state at different historic periods. McCarty ensured the entire project had the buy-in of the SHPO and tribes, completing NEPA processes and a cultural survey along the proposed pathway, as well as incorporating these stakeholders' input in the signage. McCarty has asked Native American tribes to assist in the design of the signage and will highlight specific areas to showcase Native American heritage.



McCarty's CRM program has been essential to the process of siting and clearing any new construction or training capability development on Camp Shelby; her efforts with armory evaluation will also help the MSARNG to effectively transform its organization to meet the mission needs of the future. Whenever excavations for construction or training development are undertaken at Camp Shelby, McCarty provides monitoring throughout the process, from preliminary shovel tests through all construction activities. The support of the mission actually begins long before any ground is broken: McCarty continuously looks to future project proposals to prioritize survey and treatment efforts—but they often take preservation of historic resources above and beyond the norm at the same time. Her GPR survey of trench and tunnel sites, for instance, directly supported the proposed expansion of a present-day motor pool facility. She was able to leverage that project, however, into a multi-state effort to delineate WWI holdings, and ultimately she vastly expanded the understanding and context of these rare military sites. The complete data she collected, moreover, will help to easily site future construction without impacts to historic resources, thus streamlining CRM compliance and consultation. She is currently completing surveys on several Native American sites so that a proposed tank maneuver range can proceed. In addition to working with GIS staff, McCarty works closely with natural resources and NEPA staff to integrate CRM goals within broader operations; for instance, longleaf pine habitat restoration is an installation priority. McCarty assists in clearing tracts for timber harvests and encourages Native American tribes to harvest Longleaf pine needles to be used in the making of their baskets; this year, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas harvested pine needles during the annual consultation meeting. Because much of Camp Shelby operates under a special use permit

on lands owned by the US Forest Service, McCarty is also in constant coordination with that agency and its CRM staff. Constant communication ensures that the MSARNG's training and development goals guide the priorities of the CRM program.



Many of McCarty's techniques could be transferred to other Guard and military installations, particularly her adoption of GPR survey technology to efficiently delineate known or suspected archaeological sites. She has also set a great example for how adaptive reuse of historic buildings can directly support CRM operations with minimum expense and impact to the larger organization. Her continuous use of these historic resources also ensures their continued maintenance and preservation. For states that pay curation facilities for storage but complete their own cataloging, McCarty's creation of an in-house curation facility is a strong model to follow. McCarty has also always taken part in the wider cultural resources community, sharing her professional experience and the unique perspectives of working CRM within a military organization with others in the field. She serves as the regional coordinator for the Mississippi Archaeology Association, which provides many opportunities for outreach, partnership, and transfer of information and practices. She is also a member of the Register of Professional Archaeologist, the Mississippi Association of Professional Archaeologists, and Southeastern Archaeological Conference.

Internally, McCarty has promoted CRM program continuity by ensuring that CRM data and plans are fully integrated within all other environmental, planning, training, and facilities activities and operations. The MSARNG's extensive GIS database incorporates a tremendous amount of CRM data and research to aid in planning and implementation across departments; all maps of the installation dating back to 1917 have been digitally incorporated for easy access and identification of known or potential cultural resources sites.

Outreach and engagement are program areas where McCarty has truly excelled, consistently finding new avenues to educate the MSARNG's communities and encourage their interaction with the MSARNG. As part of her regular duties, McCarty consults with 13 Native American tribes. McCarty participates in annual multi-state consultation meetings, which help to maximize participation among agencies and tribes at reduced cost for all attendees. This year, the meeting was hosted by the MSARNG at Camp Shelby, providing McCarty with an opportunity to showcase her GPR-WWI project and railroad conversion, among other initiatives. The Forest Service, USM, and MS SHPO representatives were also all in attendance, helping to foster more interagency coordination. McCarty has cultivated excellent relationships with tribal representatives, who have in turn been great supporters of her effort to establish in-house curation—this approach to artifact preservation will actually enhance tribal access to the MSARNG's holdings. Last year, McCarty employed a graduate intern who was a member of the Jenna Band of Choctaw Indians and had previously served as the tribe's NAGPRA representative; her perspective was invaluable in



McCarty is dedicated to the historic preservation of all cultural resources on lands utilized by the MSARNG. She works closely with MSARNG Command to ensure that cultural resources are not damaged and that training can proceed. Above, McCarty briefs the Adjutant General of MSARNG, MG Janson D. Boyles, on historic preservation issues at Camp Shelby, MS.

continuing the process of NAGPRA compliance. At present, McCarty has completed the catalog and report for compliance with Sections 5 and 6 of NAGPRA, which means all artifacts have been identified and inventoried; this report was presented at the meeting.

The internship program represents a major contribution to education. This long-standing program provides hands-on experience to USM graduate students who work on Camp Shelby three days a week while completing their degrees. The new cultural center includes office space for the CRM intern, reflecting McCarty's commitment to this program. The internship strives to provide students with hands-on experience so that they are ready for the real world once they graduate. One of McCarty's former interns is now the CRM for the Louisiana National Guard. Of course, for younger students, McCarty has also been proactive in encouraging cultural awareness, for example, with the creation of an archaeology component for the Kids AT camp. Her excavation project was such a success, that a CRM activity will be integrated into the camp activities each year going forward. For the first time this year, McCarty's program will join with USM to host the annual Archaeological Expo on the university campus. This public event is aimed to area schoolchildren, with exhibits and interactive presentations on pottery-making, excavations, and more. Representatives from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw will also participate, performing dances, demonstrating traditional games, and sharing traditional foods. In addition to all this, McCarty began working with local libraries this summer to integrate CRM and historical awareness activities into summer reading programs. This fall, McCarty will host another archaeology day at Camp Shelby for the kids and their families.

The Centennial Celebration was an unparalleled opportunity for community education and engagement. McCarty promoted public interest in the celebration with social media posts highlighting Camp Shelby history, coordinated with the Public Affairs Office to establish a CRM-dedicated Facebook page, and gave interviews to local papers to raise awareness. She was intensely involved in the planning and implementation of the Camp Shelby Day Centennial event, where thousands of members of the community were in attendance, along with the Governor, local businesses, preservation and historic interest groups, veterans, local entertainers, and people with a special tie to the installation. Building on this momentum, she has continued to build community through the CRM Facebook page, sharing photos, videos, and historic trivia to an ever-growing audience. McCarty encourages visitors to explore the historic resources entrusted to the MSARNG, and she has designed a walking tour that will tie into the railroad trail; she regularly hosts school groups, preservation groups, and scout troops for tours and presentations. In McCarty's view, it is important to show the public how the MSARNG cares for its cultural resources in order to ensure that appreciation of that heritage continues to resonate throughout the community.



Eight years ago, McCarty initiated a project to turn an old World War II railroad bed into a recreation Rails-to-Trails. The project was partially funded by the MS Department of Transportation through their Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). In 2018, the project commenced using contract labor and MSARNG engineering units conducting their annual training at Camp Shelby.