

## PROJECT ORCHID

### Cultural Heritage Protection in the Contingency Environment

The need for an effort like Project ORCHID [\[1\]](#) was shown by headline events in Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003: looting of the National Museum, damage from military operations to ancient Babylon and Ur, and the widespread looting of archaeological sites due to the breakdown in civil order. Less sensational, but potentially of greater overall impact to global heritage, is the unknown toll of activities by the Department of Defense (DoD) and other federal agencies throughout the world on a recurring basis. Aside from contingency situations, examples include disaster response, nation or capacity building, anti-terrorism, and prevention of narcotics trafficking. The historic preservation infrastructure which effectively 'minds the store' in the U.S. is largely absent within the DoD overseas, so these kinds of actions proceed unevaluated for the most part by our personnel. In many cases, host nations benefiting from U.S. assistance or affected by intervention lack the resources, procedures, and training to identify and deal with potential problems in heritage preservation. Furthermore, host nation heritage experts may be unaware of the existence of many military support projects in the first place.

Within DoD, there is no overarching policy or program concerning cultural heritage protection during contingencies [\[2\]](#). In practice, there is no linkage in policy, resources, or procedures between the few cultural resources professionals at overseas 'enduring' bases and contingency operations or other activities outside the installation proper. Even more remote are instances of employing the expertise of better staffed U.S. installations to assist with contingency or other overseas mission planning and resource impact evaluation. Section 402 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 16 U.S.C. 470a-2, which sets a minimum standard for review of proposed federal actions overseas, has yet to be implemented through regulation. The recently U.S. ratified Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict requires implementing guidance for federal agencies. The Department of the Interior's Section 110 guidance for federal agencies echoes the Section 402 directive for foreign historic properties but is otherwise brief in

content and discretionary in application. In sum, DoD operational forces and cultural resources professionals work in this arena at their risk, without specific policy, procedures, interagency game plans, technical reachback, or dedicated funds.

Air Combat Command (ACC) is a member of the U.S. combat air forces and an airpower force provider for the combatant commands (COCOMs). In this capacity, its A7 Installations and Mission Support Directorate is represented on CENTCOM's Historical/Cultural Advisory Group (CHCAG). CHCAG members are engaged in developing policies, procedures, and resources to address the issues outlined above in the CENTCOM area of responsibility. Project ORCHID was conceived to assist CENTCOM in this effort and to help foster development of a cultural heritage data inventory for use by all the COCOMs. The long term goal is to ensure that global heritage resources are identified and evaluated in a timely manner and considered in DoD mission planning so as to minimize or avoid adverse impacts. Involvement by other agencies and subject matter experts is sought to leverage both resources and the most effective use of the data.

The Project ORCHID Manager is Dr. Paul Green, HQ ACC/A7AN, and the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative is Dr. Jay Newman, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District. Project components for the initial several years performance period include a strategic planning workshop, expeditionary force heritage training/awareness, and overseas cultural heritage site data development. The purpose of the workshop is to develop an action plan for the compilation, maintenance, and use of global cultural heritage data for planning and management. It will also consider related issues, such as the prioritization and valuation of various types of heritage properties. The training/awareness component covers a wide range of activities to improve the consideration of overseas heritage properties by DoD personnel at all levels. This is being conducted in coordination with ongoing DoD and Air Force actions in cultural awareness training. The major component of Project ORCHID is cultural heritage data acquisition, maintenance, sharing, and stewardship. A country data profile template will be developed, international cultural heritage data standards will be studied, and data population performed for selected areas of interest.

The statements in this paper are those of the author alone and do not represent the official policy of the U.S. Air Force or the U.S. Government.

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This article should be cited like this: P.R. Green, PROJECT ORCHID. Cultural Heritage Protection in the Contingency Environment, Forum Archaeologiae 55/VI/2010 (<http://farch.net>).