



Iridium Supports Reactivated Monuments Officers

Archaeologists test capabilities in Honduras for the next generation of the famed World War II Monuments Men and Women

MCLEAN, Va., Jan. 19, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- [Iridium Communications Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: IRDM) today shared its supporting role in the U.S. Army Reserve's recently reactivated Monuments Officers in partnership with the Virginia Museum of Natural History's ([VMNH](#)) Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab ([CHML](#)). The Monuments Officers were initially founded during World War II to protect historic monuments and other cultural treasures. With a mission to protect and preserve cultural property and heritage sites, the CHML supported the deployment of an archaeological team of Monuments Officers, coordinated at the request of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and the Honduran government, to remote parts of Honduras. Iridium® satellite connectivity was critical to the success of this effort. Laying the groundwork for future missions in the region, Iridium technology supported the team of Monument Officer archaeologists as they investigated a series of remote Mayan sites and other cultural properties that may have been impacted by 2020 Hurricanes Iota and Eta.

With Iridium Push-to-Talk (PTT) handsets enabling real-time communication and personnel tracking coordinated by CHML, cultural heritage professionals worked side-by-side in a subject matter expert exchange with Civil Affairs Officers, local archaeologists, and the Honduran military. Their main mission was to investigate and set up a system to explore if any of the cultural heritage sites were impacted.

Hayden Bassett, Ph.D., Director, Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab and Assistant Curator of Archaeology, Virginia Museum of Natural History helped lead the efforts. "Iridium PTT technology was a game changer for our mission," says Dr. Bassett. "Instant and reliable satellite communications allowed us to deploy the resources of an entire museum in the U.S. to the military and civilian teams on the ground in Honduras. Archaeologists with complete access to their research libraries, geospatial technology, and extended professional networks of specialists were available at the push of a button."

The workflow included a setup at VMNH, where Dr. Bassett tracked and assisted U.S. Army personnel on the ground and conducted assessments on the multiple sites in Honduras. An [IC-SAT100M](#) PTT unit, provided by [Icom](#) in support of the CHML's mission, was installed in the VMNH. As the team in Honduras found impact, they relayed information back to Dr. Bassett over Iridium PTT. Dr. Bassett recorded those impacts, identified patterns, and relayed instructions on what they need to do to protect these sites.

With fast, simple, and secure group communications at the push of a button, the Iridium PTT devices allowed the cross-continental teams to remain consistently connected. Even in the heavily vegetated terrain of Honduras, the field team reported they had no problem securing a signal. The movement of the archaeological team in Honduras was also tracked in real time over the Iridium network, to support both safety of the teams and efficiency in locating the archeological sites.

"The World War II Monuments Men and Women represented an incredibly important collaborative effort between both military and civilian sectors. Iridium is proud to be involved in the next generation of this joint effort to preserve history," says Matt Desch, CEO, Iridium. "No matter how remote their work takes them, the Iridium network helps ensure the Monuments Officers stay safe and connected with reliable, real-time communications."

This deployment of Iridium technology in support of civil-military teams in Honduras served as a successful proof of concept for the development of civilian specialist reach-back capabilities critical to future Monuments Officer missions. The Monuments Officers program is one of 18 skill identifiers of the Army Reserve's Civil Affairs Military Government Specialists (MG/38G). Commissioning professionals from public and private sectors, the program harnesses subject matter expertise across civil society to meet the technical needs of military governance, humanitarian response, and civil information management, among other critical requirements.

For more information about Iridium visit: www.iridium.com

For more information about CHML visit: www.vmnh.net/research-collections/chml

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