

# 2023 FORT MCCOY YEAR IN REVIEW



SPECIAL INSERT TO THE REAL MCCOY

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## Fort McCoy 2023 Year in Review: Second half of year included extensive troop training, more new construction, special events

The second half of 2023 at Fort McCoy — July to December — was a busy time at the installation with big exercises taking place, construction of a third new barracks beginning, and so much more.

And again, as the second half of the year went on, the Fort McCoy team and workforce stepped up to get many, many things accomplished successfully. No matter what challenge arose, through every month, the installation team stood strong to get the mission done.

### JULY

— **Fort McCoy held its 2023 Lil Firecracker Fest on July 8, 2023, at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area in the Pine View Recreation Area and more than 500 people attended during its four hours of operations.** The fest opened at 10 a.m., and right away there were nearly 50 people there ready to have fun, officials with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) said.

And as the event went on, more and more people arrived and departed as they partook in the many different things to do at the event. The event included food, games, bounce houses, a large water slide on the ski hill, a climbing wall, a visit by Brutus the MiniPig, a display with wild turtles with Endangered Species Biologist Jessup Weichelt, paintball target practice, a miniature horse, and more.

DFMWR Business and Recreation Division Chief Karla M. Rynes said the event was very successful.

“The Outdoor Recreation team did a magnificent job putting the event together and executing the event,” Rynes said. “All of the guests who I spoke with said they were having a great time and that they loved that we put on this type of an event for the families.”

— **The stage was set at dawn July 17, 2023, at Warrens Drop Zone on Fort McCoy's North Post. The 153rd Engineer Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Heath Abraham, even said, “it looks like a good morning for a war.”**

That morning, Soldiers with the 153rd and units supporting the 153rd were about to hold a breach-of-a-complex-obstacle training event. The event took several days to prepare and plan and was the culminating training event for the battalion from the South Dakota Army National Guard that traveled all the way to Fort McCoy to hold their 2023 annual training.

In this training event were M113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APC), M60 Armored Vehicle Launch Bridge vehicles, M88 Recovery Vehicles, Mine Clearing Line Charge, Humvees, and more.

On one side of the drop zone, select unit Soldiers served as opposing forces. On the other side, the rest of the unit's forces used their training and expertise to navigate the drop zone's terrain, the obstacles, the smoke and haziness of the morning, and they had to fight through to meet training objectives in this large battalion-wide training event.

“The operation we had here this morning was a maneuver augmentation company, specifically the 211th Engineer Company, conducting a combined obstacle breach,” Abraham said. “We had one platoon place in a complex obstacle consisting of a triple strand, a mine field, and a 12-row, anti-tank barrier.

“Our breach team then came in with AVLBs and 113s and their breach teams of combat engineers,” Abraham said. “They breached the 12-row, breached the triple-strand, and then breached a natural obstacle. ... Once the breaches were complete, the combat engineers were able to mark lanes to safety.”

The training event was held just as the sun was rising, which added to the training effect and put direct sunlight right into the eyes of the combat engineers as they approached the breach points.

— **Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco became the new garrison command sergeant major for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy on July 13, 2023, during a change-of responsibility ceremony in building 905 at Fort McCoy.** Calarco takes over for Command Sgt. Maj. Rael DiDomenico who is retiring from the Army, and who has served as the Fort McCoy Garrison command sergeant major since July 2021.

Prior to coming to Fort McCoy, Calarco served as the U.S. Army Reserve Command Surgeon Directorate Sergeant Major at Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg), N.C. In his first message as the garrison command sergeant major, Calarco discussed how thankful he was to be at McCoy, and more.

“I want to start by thanking CSM DiDomenico for your warm and helpful transition,” Calarco said. “You don't always get that in every assignment. ... Thank you, Col. (Stephen) Messenger for your guidance and your confidence.

“I've recognized that this installation is full of pride, craftsmanship and dedication,” Calarco also said. “I get the distinct privilege to pass through the gates each and every morning. How fortunate am I? That does give me a smile every single morning knowing that I'm now a proud member of this outstanding installation.”

— **Stepping outside of her regular role as an office manager at U.S. Army Europe in Brussels, Belgium, Stephanie Condon took a chance to take on a special career-broadening developmental assignment as a recruiter at Fort McCoy.** She was recognized for that effort in July 2023.

The assignment was for four months — March-June 2023 — where Condon would be doing something not only new for her but likely a new approach for Fort McCoy as well.

“Stephanie was on the front lines of Fort McCoy's most challenging problem — leading, developing, and implementing a civilian recruitment strategy to fill 56 positions,” said Fort McCoy Resource Management Officer Bonnie Hilt. “She developed multiple means to rapidly leverage recruitment talent to eliminate vacancies. She networked with local community leaders, universities, students, educators, and other prospective job candidate pools to establish opportunities to recruit and fill positions with the most qualified candidates.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Trenton Lowery/181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade Public Affairs

**Sp. Michael Larson, with the 323rd Chemical Company, 476th Chemical Battalion, aims an M2 machine gun during the M2 qualification range as part of the Mobilization Exercise level II at Fort McCoy on July 21, 2023.**

Condon said when she arrived at Fort McCoy, she admittedly didn't take on the recruiter role with a much experience but was eager to get to work.

“When this came up, I was like this is a great opportunity to come and learn a little bit about human resources, personnel, and recruiting so that I could possibly incorporate that back into my own job as well as hopefully and provide a little bit of help here, too,” Condon said. “Learning about civilian personnel, recruiting, and human resources — which I knew nothing about before I arrived — was a great opportunity to learn something about an area of my career field that I've never done.”

— **Fort McCoy received a new commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy during a change-of-command ceremony July 12, 2023, in building 905 at the installation.**

During the ceremony, Maj. Randy Downs Jr. took command of the company from Lt. Col. James Lavelle. Lavelle had been the company commander since July 2021. Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger served as the presiding officer.

In his first remarks as the new company commander, Downs said thanked the garrison command team for their welcome, and he said he looks forward to working with the Fort McCoy team.

“I'm looking forward to working with you and learning from your experiences,” he said.

— **The summer season saw the \$11.96 million transient training brigade headquarters project at Fort McCoy make significant strides in completion.**

In early June 2023, the project was at approximately 40 percent complete. Then on June 18 it was 55 percent complete. And a month later, during a July 21, 2023, update, the project jumped well past 65 percent to 67 percent complete, according to Ken Green with the Army Corps of Engineers Program Office at Fort McCoy.

Green reported in his July 21 update that the project was continuing at a quick pace. Green stated in his update that current work included interior framing, interior sheet rock and finishing, window installation, exterior concrete placements were continuing, roofing trim out was continuing, and gutter placement continued.

— **Workers with R.J. Jurowski Construction Inc. of Whitehall, Wis., continued to make steady progress on the renovation construction project of the Rumpel Fitness Center in early July at Fort McCoy,** post officials said. The project began Nov. 1, 2022.

The project includes the exterior receiving new siding, roofing, and sidewalks as well as a storage addition. The interior is receiving a full layout redesign that includes locker rooms, cardio/stretching/equipment areas, and offices.

There will also be fresh paint throughout, a new entryway and vestibule, and a new redesigned pool, Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials said. As of the beginning of July 2023, the project was at approximately 65 percent complete, said General Engineer Gareth Ferguson with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works.

“Current work includes interior framing; drywalling; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, and electrical installation; pool deck concrete work; exterior roofing; excavating and pouring additional foundation for exterior brick siding; new entranceway construction; and excavation for new domestic and fire suppression water services.”

Overall, it's a multi-million-dollar renovation for the fitness center that's never been done before.

— **Fort McCoy Army Community Service Director Sylvia Lopez and Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger provided remarks for the installation observance of the Army Community Service's 58th birthday July 25, 2023, at McCoy's Community**

Center at Fort McCoy, Wis.

Also, during the celebration, a cake-cutting was held, and the Fort McCoy Army Community Service Office had a full setup of items for community members to see about what their organization offers, and more.

— **Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers with Charlie Troop, 106th Cavalry conducted helo casting from a 106th Aviation Chinook helicopter on July 17, 2023, into Big Sandy Lake on South Post at Fort McCoy.** Water insertion is one method the 106th Cavalry troops trains on to drop Soldiers into enemy territory to conduct recon missions.

The 106th was at Fort McCoy in July conducting annual training. According to its definition, helocasting is an airborne technique used by small unit, special operations forces, and also practiced extensively by the U.S. Army's light infantry units to insert into a military area of operations.

The small unit is flown, by helicopter to a maritime insertion point, such as Big Sandy Lake. Once there, the aircraft assumes an altitude just above the water's surface and an airspeed of 10 knots or less. Team members then exit the aircraft and enter the water.

— **Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, garrison command sergeant major, were with Mark Siple of the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation on July 24, 2023, at McCoy's Community Center during Siple's retirement from civil service after 36 years.**

Siple was honored by many in the Fort McCoy community for his more than three decades of service to the Army and the Fort McCoy community.

— **The 153rd Engineer Battalion with the South Dakota Army National Guard and its corresponding units convoyed with 90 vehicles and equipment in early July to Fort McCoy to hold their annual training.**

The unit held their training July 8-19, 2023, said 153rd Commander, Lt. Col. Heath Abraham. Throughout their time, the unit stayed busy completing unit tasks, training, and more.

“So, I brought units from Huron and Madison, S.D. — three different companies — here to Fort McCoy this summer to train for annual training,” Abraham said. “Our battalion headquarters was conducting TOC (tactical operations center) operations. Our HHC (headquarters and headquarters company) was supporting our exercise. Our forward support company was supporting two other (engineer) companies and the ongoing LOGPAC (logistical packages) operations.”

— **Students in the Fort McCoy Regional Training Site (RTS)-Maintenance Wheeled Vehicle Recovery Operations Course were at the North Post Vehicle Recovery Site on July 24 and 25, 2023, practicing their skills recovering military vehicles with military wrecker vehicles — and it wasn't easy, students said.**

That field training was a big part of the course, instructors say, because it gets them the experience, they need to do the same kind of work at their own units and home stations. And, according to senior instructor Staff Sgt. Alicia Curtis, helps them earn an additional skill identifier.

— **Fort McCoy Garrison staff and Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade (MFTB) combined to support the mobilization training of Soldiers with the 323rd Chemical Company during July and early August.**

The 323rd, an Army Reserve unit based in Sioux Falls, S.D., are completing their mobilization at Fort McCoy through Pershing Strike 23 and its associated Mobilization Exercise Level II. Pershing Strike 23 was led by First Army Headquarters at Rock Island Arsenal, Ill., and included participation from both active- and reserve-component forces at multiple installations.

— **Multiple units with Wisconsin's Army National Guard and Air National Guard combined July 27, 2023, to hold a practice session of their airshow event at the Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport at Fort McCoy.** The event, which was a practice for the Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture airshow in Oshkosh, Wis., included Soldiers and Airmen and included field artillery, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, an F-35A Lightning II, and a KC-135R Stratotanker.

The artillery belonged to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 120th Field Artillery. The Black Hawks belonged to the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment of Madison and West Bend. The F-35 belonged to the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Fighter Wing, also in Madison. And the KC-135R belonged to the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee.

Lt. Col. Dan Allen, commander of the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, said the “dress rehearsal” at the Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport was a complex and coordinated event.

— **Fort McCoy supported a session of the 17th annual Wisconsin Government Opportunities Business Conference on July 28, 2023, in building 905 at the installation.**

Tamaya Jo Loewe, executive director of the Juneau County Economic Development Corporation served as the master of ceremonies for the session of the conference. The conference, which was organized in part by the Wisconsin Procurement Institute, focused on helping small business owners and representatives learn more about working with the federal government facilities at Fort McCoy.

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger and Com- (See REVIEW, Page 2)



Photo by Scott T. Sturkal

**The construction area of a transient training brigade headquarters in the 1600 block on the cantonment area is shown Aug. 10, 2023, at Fort McCoy.**



## FORT MCCOY'S 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

## REVIEW

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mand Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, garrison command sergeant major, both spoke at the beginning of the conference.

— **At the end of July 2023, Randy Eddy finished his career as the installation safety manager at Fort McCoy. Eddy has held that position since 2005.**

From 2004-2005 he was mobilized at Fort McCoy supporting the mobilization mission from the Army Reserve. In May 2005, when his mobilization support time was finishing, he said he was asked by the Fort McCoy Garrison commander at the time to come fill in as the installation safety manager for a bit.

“He came and asked me to ... help him out by coming over here to the Safety Office because his safety manager had just quit and walked off the job,” Eddy said. “He needed somebody in the office to kind of keep things going for a little while.

“So that’s what he asked me to do. And as it was, he said I’d be here about 30 days,” Eddy said with a slight laugh. “That 30 days turned into a career.”

Eddy’s not only retiring as a government civilian employee. He’s also been retired several years now as an Army lieutenant colonel — since August 2008. One of the facts about him is he’s always lived in the local area near Fort McCoy.

— **Contractors were continuously moving dirt in July and August 2023 from a borrow pit next to the cantonment area fence at Fort McCoy through the summer of 2023 as part of an ongoing development of a site.**

The location has also been a spot for an ongoing troop project on post for the past two years. The dirt movement has been to an ongoing construction project on the installation.

This area was once a fully wooded area. The project work is in an area of land near the old Gate 20 and Logistical Support Area Liberty and the cantonment area fence, said Larry Morrow, troop projects coordinator with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works.

— **On July 17, 2023, paralegals (27D) from the U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard participated in a two-week Paralegal Warrior Training Course at McCoy** to refresh their skillsets with a focus on regulations and policies centered on Reserve and Guard servicemembers, concluding with a field training exercise on July 27.

## AUGUST

— **At the beginning of August 2023, the Army was starting its first new privatized housing project in 13 years.** The project includes privatizing Fort McCoy’s housing.

The new project, Cadence Communities LLC, will provide much-needed housing to service members who live in the high-cost, congested areas in the vicinity of U.S. Southern Command, which is headquartered in Doral, Fla., near Miami.

Cadence Communities also now develops, operates, and maintains existing military family housing at four other installations — Fort McCoy, Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.; the Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Mass.; and Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif. Overall, 371 family housing units that are currently government-owned were privatized.

— **Col. Charles Wells assumed command of the 181st Multifunctional Training Brigade on Aug. 1, 2023, at Fort McCoy. Wells is a former Eagle Brigade Soldier, having served previously as the commander of the 3rd Brigade Engineer Battalion, 340th Infantry Regiment — a sub-unit of the 181st.**

“If you can’t tell, my family and I are greatly honored and appreciative to be rejoining the Eagle Brigade,” Wells said. “When given the chance to return to Wisconsin, Monroe County, and the Fort McCoy community, we jumped at the opportunity.”

— **Fire and police personnel with Fort McCoy’s Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) took numerous vehicles and equipment to support the 20th annual Monroe County National Night Out event Aug. 1, 2023, in Tomah, Wis., and the second National Night Out event in Sparta, Wis.**

Hundreds of people attended each event. The Monroe County National Night Out was held for four hours at Tomah’s Recreation Park. It was the second time at that park. Sparta’s National Night Out event was held at the city’s Memorial Park.

Fort McCoy DES had numerous pieces of equipment and vehicles as well as more than a dozen people from both the police and fire departments at both events. Fort McCoy police personnel also educated people about Operation Family Safe at the Monroe County National Night Out, which included EZ child-identification (ID) stations that provided ID materials for dozens of children.

New Fort McCoy Director of Emergency Services Micah Komp described the Fort McCoy support for National Night Out events.

“Fort McCoy has continuously supported these events,” Komp said while attending the Monroe County event in Tomah. “Every year we are invited, and we are happy to support both the Tomah and the Sparta events. We’ve got police and fire and emergency services personnel supporting in both communities. We are absolutely thrilled to be here and happy to support.”

— **The Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 32nd “Red Arrow” Infantry Brigade Combat Team completed their 2023 eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) training exercise in July and August 2023 at Fort McCoy** in preparation for taking on the more challenging four-week exercise in 2024

at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Johnson, La.

XCTC is the U.S. Army National Guard’s program of record that enables brigade combat teams to achieve the trained platoon readiness necessary to deploy, fight, and win battles throughout the world. The three weeks provided Red Arrow Soldiers with exercises that tested their skills and grew their knowledge base as the brigade prepares for JRTC next year.

— **U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin made a brief visit Aug. 10, 2023, to view ongoing construction projects and observe some of the training at the installation.**

Baldwin visited one of the completed transient training four-story barracks in the 1600 block of the installation. Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Director Liane Haun described to Baldwin about the ongoing work in the 1600 block and the transformation that has been taking place there.

The new barracks, of which two are completed for the 1600 block and two more are planned, are four stories tall and can house 400 people in approximately 60,000 square feet, according to building specifications from Fort McCoy DPW. The barracks buildings also are built with the latest in construction materials and includes state-of-the-art physical security and energy-saving measures.

Baldwin also visited simulations training in the 200 block at Fort McCoy, specifically the Engagement Skills Trainer. There she saw Army Reserve Soldiers from a Wisconsin-based unit completing weapons qualifications at the trainer.

— **On a rainy Monday morning, 57 U.S. Army Soldiers started a weeklong journey in pursuit of a special honor.** For only the second time, the Army Reserve hosted an event for candidates of the Expert Soldier Badge, held Aug. 14-18, 2023, at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Members of all three Army components (active duty, Army Reserve and National Guard) were invited to participate.

Earning this badge is no small feat. Soldiers must complete a variety of mental and physical challenges, and any slip up could mean going home.

Of the 57 candidates this year, only 16 remained at the end, standing tall as their shiny new badges were pinned to their uniform.

— **Fort McCoy held its first privatized housing town hall event Aug. 9, 2023, at the installation in building 50 with several dozen affected housing residents in attendance.**

At meeting were members of the housing partner agency Cadence Communities LLC as well as Fort McCoy Garrison command team and other related garrison agencies that support housing residents, such as the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works, Fort McCoy Installation Legal Office, and more.

— **Though it’s officially observed Aug. 26, Fort McCoy held its observance of Women’s Equality Day on Aug. 15, 2023, with a special event featuring guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Deanna Czarnecki, commandant of the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy, at McCoy’s Community Center.**

The event, organized by Equal Opportunity Advisor Master Sgt. Ana Guzman with the Fort McCoy Garrison Equal Opportunity Office, recognizes the day the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was passed on Aug. 26, 1920, giving women the right to vote.

Czarnecki talked about the history of the day and why it’s significant and the importance of the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

— **Soldiers with the 996th Engineer Company who traveled to Fort McCoy to train in the 86th Training Division’s Combat Support Training Exercise (CSTX) 86-23-02 in August 2023 also took time to complete work on a troop project** to replace a length of sidewalk on the cantonment area at Fort McCoy.

The 996th Engineer Company, an Army Reserve company based in Milwaukee, has completed work at Fort McCoy in past years, said Fort McCoy Troop Projects Coordinator Larry Morrow with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works.

“For this project, they’re replacing 140 feet of sidewalk,” Morrow said. “They came in and went to work right away. We appreciate all the work they’re doing for us in improving Fort McCoy.”

— **An ongoing troop project that began in 2022 to create new office buildings for training at Fort McCoy’s Logistical Support Area Liberty on North Post increased to four buildings, and work on those buildings had continued with engineer units on post for the 86th Training Division’s Combat Support Training Exercise 86-23-02.**

“We intend to build a total of six buildings,” said Troop Projects Coordinator Larry Morrow with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works. “Each one of these office buildings will be divided into two 24-foot by 30-foot spaces and have a 9-foot by 10-foot office.”

The first two buildings that were built have already completed, and they’ve been in use for training. Most recently, the first two buildings were used during the Wisconsin National Guard’s 2023 eXportable Combat Training Capability exercise from late July to early August.

“That was great to see, and I’m glad we have work continuing on this project,” Morrow said.

— **In just under a month, the construction progress on the \$11.96 million transient training brigade headquarters project at Fort McCoy has gone from 67 to 75 percent complete,** according to



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

**Soldiers with the 153rd Engineer Battalion and 211th Engineer Company participate in a breach-of-a-complex-obstacle training event July 17, 2023, at Warrens Drop Zone on North Post at Fort McCoy. The 153rd and 211th are engineer units with the South Dakota Army National Guard.**

an update from Ken Green with the Army Corps of Engineers Program Office at Fort McCoy.

As recent as early June, the project was at 40 percent complete, and at mid-August 2023 it was 75 percent done, meaning significant progress continues, Green said.

Green reported in his Aug. 18 update that the project was continuing at a quick pace. Green stated in his update that current work included interior framing, interior sheet rock and finishing, window installation, roofing trim out was continuing, interior painting started, tile work started, and ceiling grid installation started.

— **Hundreds of installation community members stopped and participated in the 2023 Fort McCoy Wellness Fair on Aug. 9, 2023, at building 905 on post.**

Participants either participated in a 5k run/2-mile walk or visited dozens of information displays in the business area showcase featuring products and services from local businesses and post agencies.

The Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (DFMWR) organized the event.

— **More than 7,000 troops made up the environment that was the 86th Training Division’s Combat Support Training Exercise 86-23-02 at Fort McCoy from Aug. 12-26, 2023.**

That group of troops included Army Reserve Soldiers with rotational training units as well as training partners from combined and joint forces from the Navy, Marines, and Air Force and international service members from Great Britain, Canada, and Estonia, 86th Training Division organizers said.

“There were approximately 46 rotational training units involved and 16 training partners in this exercise,” said Maj. Jon Dahl, public affairs officer with the 86th.

All the rotational training units conducted simulated combat operations in “a dynamic and complex environment in support of live, constructive, and virtual maneuver forces with joint and coalition partners,” Dahl said.

— **Fort McCoy Food Program Manager Andy Pisney has often said that “food service is a training enabler.” During July and August 2023 at Fort McCoy, it surely enabled thousands of troops as Pisney and his team provided tens of thousands of meals for troops training at the installation.**

Though July was very busy, August was likely the busiest training month Fort McCoy has seen in some time with thousands of troops training at the installation for the Wisconsin National Guard’s 2023 eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise as well as the 86th Training Division’s Combat Support Training Exercise (CSTX) 86-23-02.

“For XCTC we supported their Class I requirements only,” Pisney said. “We didn’t feed them in the dining facility.”

Pisney said the XCTC exercise received support from the Logistics Readiness Center (LRC) Food Program Management Office and LRC Supply Subsistence Management Office that included 5,757 cases of Meals, Ready-to-Eat (69,084 meals); 96 cases of Halal Meals, Ready-to-Eat (1,152 meals); 1,391 Unitized Group Rations (69,550 meals); 975 cases of milk (26,325 individual milk containers); \$15,000-plus of food enhancements (cereal, fruit, salad mixes, and dressings); and 6,374 20-pound bags of ice.

The support for CSTX was even greater, Pisney said.

“For CSTX, we supported them in Dining Facility 1672 which fed 31,102 meals for those participants on the cantonment area,” Pisney said.

Pisney said the CSTX received support from the LRC Food Program Management Office and LRC Supply Subsistence Management Office that included 8,892 cases of Meals, Ready-to-Eat (106,704 meals); 33 cases of Kosher Meals, Ready-to-Eat (396 meals); 154 cases of Halal Meals, Ready-to-Eat (1,848 meals); 2,250 cases of Sun Meadow Meals (40,500 meals); 2,366 Unitized Group Rations (118,300 meals); 4,380 cases of milk (118,260 individual milk containers); \$71,000-plus of food enhancements (cereal, fruit, salad mixes, and dressings); and 8,022 20-pound bags of ice.

“Meal kits are just a complete meal that requires no food-service preparation,” Pisney said. “The Unitized Group Rations require food-service capability — a food-service specialist — to prepare. These rations are configured in 50-person modules and contain meat, starch, vegetables, condiments, and beverages.”

— **Dozens of Army Reserve Soldiers lined up Aug. 10, 2023, to complete a part of their M4 qualification training at the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) II simulator at Fort McCoy.**

“Soldiers are required to complete training on the Engagement Skills Trainer before actually going out to the range to complete their qualifications there, so this training facility is one of our busiest,” said Fort McCoy Training Support Officer Rob Weisbrod with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

— **By mid-August, workers with R.J. Jurowski Construction Inc. of Whitehall, Wis., continued to make steady progress on the renovation project of the Rumpel Fitness Center at Fort McCoy, Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials said.**

The project began Nov. 1, 2022, and was originally expected to be complete in fall 2023 but could go longer, officials said.

The project includes the exterior receiving new siding, roofing, and sidewalks as well as a storage addition.

As of August 2023, the project was at 70 percent complete, Ferguson said.

— **Hundreds of U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from across the country and their Canadian armed forces counterparts conducted a simulated medical evacuation training event at Fort McCoy on Aug. 18, 2023, as part of Exercise Global Medic 2023.**

Global Medic is an annual multicomponent, multinational collective training exercise where forces from

all components along with joint and international partners perform a collective medical training event to test their medical equipment and systems as well as treatment techniques and procedures to help increase medical readiness for future conflicts.

“Medical preparedness is one of the most essential things the military can have, especially with joint force training,” said Spc. Selena Sanchez, an operating room specialist with the 7455th Medical Operations Readiness Unit. “It lets us know what we need to do when that time comes.”

— **More than a dozen students in the Unit Movement Officer Deployment Planning Course learned about all aspects of transporting military equipment, vehicles, goods, and more in August during 10 days of training.**

The course, taught by the 426th Regional Training Institute/Wisconsin Military Academy of the Wisconsin National Guard, a Fort McCoy tenant organization, provides 80 hours overall of training.

“Our overall mission is that we train selected non-commissioned officers, officers, and warrant officers,” said course instructor Staff Sgt. Alexander Kilbane with the 426th. “It doesn’t matter if they are active duty, National Guard, or Reserve. We teach them how to move or transport any of their unit’s organic equipment, whether that’s by boat, by plane, by train, or by trucks to anywhere in the world.

— **More than 150 Sailors who were supporting the 2023 Global Exercise at Fort McCoy made a special afternoon visit Aug. 24, 2023, to the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area.**

Despite outside temperatures hovering about 90 degrees Fahrenheit, more than 150 Sailors visited the Commemorative Area for some post-exercise recreation fun.

The 900 block of Fort McCoy and the 11-acre area surrounding it are the hub of the fort’s history-preservation efforts that make up the Commemorative Area.

— **At the end of June 2023, after more than three decades, Fort McCoy’s lead Fisheries Biologist John Noble retired.** Just weeks later, Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood began working in the same role and program as Noble, but it’s a program Rood knows well because he’s supported it since 2005.

Rood, who now works with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch, said he began working at Fort McCoy in 2005 as a seasonal employee for the Fort McCoy fisheries program with Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education.

“I am very excited at the opportunity to be a part of the Fort McCoy Natural Resource Branch, and to be able to build upon the ideas and management objectives that I have been a part of over the last 15-plus years,” Rood said. “I have spent a lot of time working on and developing an understanding of the different watersheds and landscapes on Fort McCoy, and I am eager to put that knowledge to use in order to maintain a high-quality fishery and military training.”

— **Eight U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers with the Army Reserve Medical Command (AR-MED-COM) hierarchy took part in Operation Enabling Readiness (OER) at Fort McCoy from Aug. 16-25, 2023.**

Hosted by the 88th Readiness Division as a pilot program, OER is a unity of effort between AR-MED-COM, Blanchfield Army Community Hospital and Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security - Mobilization Branch.

— **A project to complete roofing work that is led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is was ongoing in August 2023 for a hangar at Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport on South Post and for building 2187 on the cantonment area at Fort McCoy.**

Jacque McNamee, project engineer for the Louisville District office of the Army Corps of Engineers at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., said a contract is in place that covers “the reroofing work for building (hangar) 6058 and building 2187.”

The contractor on this project is AR6/CRAM Roofing Joint Venture. McNamee said the scope of work for the hangar covers a complete replacement of the existing flat-roof systems with a new two-ply modified bitumen roof system.

— **Fort McCoy’s new Installation Safety Manager Edson De Leon began his duties in July 2023 and hasn’t looked back, states an August 2023 article.**

De Leon arrived at Fort McCoy from Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg), N.C., where he had served in several safety-related positions. They included with the 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade (XVIII [18th] Airborne Corps) from April 2009 to March 2014; 20th Engineer Brigade Safety (XVIII Airborne Corps) from April 2014 to October 2015; and 406th Army Field Support Brigade safety manager from November 2015 to June 2023.

De Leon is also a retired Army infantry sergeant major, serving from 1989 to 2009. He said he has served in airborne infantry, the Jungle Operations Training Center at Fort Sherman in Panama, with the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea; and he’s a graduate of Class 57 of the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

— **World War II, U.S. Army, and Fort McCoy veteran Lt. Col. (Ret.) Harry Baker received some very special visitors on August 8, 2023, at his home in Pewaukee, Wis.**

Baker and his son, Scott welcomed Maj. Gen. Matthew Baker (no relation), commander of the U.S. Army Reserve’s 88th Readiness Division, Maj. Gen. Ernest Litynski, commander of the 76th Operational Response Command, 88th RD Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Betty, and Sgt. Maj. Diana Anzaldua from the 76th ORC. The senior leaders were visiting on behalf of the United States Army Reserve to wish Baker an early happy 103rd birthday, which will be on Oct. 9.

(See REVIEW, Page 3)



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

**Engineer Soldiers with the 477th Engineer Platoon, 467th Engineer Battalion, and other Army Reserve engineer units work on an office building troop project Aug. 16, 2023, at Logistical Support Area (LSA) Liberty on North Post at Fort McCoy.**



# REVIEWfrom Page 2

However, the visitors would be quick to note that Harry Baker was the main attraction and the special guest they traveled to meet.

## SEPTEMBER

— Five Soldiers from across the United States competed at Fort McCoy in the inaugural First Army Observer Coach/Trainer (OC/T) competition in September 2023 at Fort McCoy.

“I’m very proud of our Soldiers,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser, senior enlisted Soldier, First Army. “They came out here and they’ve been giving it their all.”

After five days of physical and mental challenges, Capt. Zachary Holder, 177th Infantry Brigade, was named the top OC/T in First Army.

This competition tested each Soldier in a variety of tasks including land navigation, Army Combat Fitness Test, weapons qualification, confidence course, hand grenade qualification, and a 12-mile march.

— More than 100 members of the Fort McCoy military community made their way to the South Post Community Center in the South Post Housing Area to enjoy Military Appreciation Night on Sept. 15 at Fort McCoy.

The event was hosted by the Sparta Chamber of Commerce, Tomah Chamber of Commerce, and businesses for military troops whose duty station is Fort McCoy and is held the third Thursday of September.

Troops and their family members were served a meal of barbecue and chicken salad sandwiches, beverages, chips, cookies, and related sides. Door prizes also were handed out to several participants.

— More than 300 military retirees and family members visited Fort McCoy on Sept. 8, 2023, for the 2023 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) at the installation.

The event was centered around building 2472 for a second straight year and was held from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fort McCoy Retirement Services Officer Brent Johnson with the Directorate of Human Resources called the event a success even though the attendance was slightly lower than 2022.

“I received really good feedback from some of the people who attended again after last year,” Johnson said. “They said it was a little more jam-packed with some of the information they were hoping to get.”

Some of that information was updated information about TriCare healthcare and Social Security, Johnson said.

— The Fort McCoy Commissary a “Hometown Heroes” sidewalk sale Sept. 8, 2023, while the installation was holding the 2023 Fort McCoy Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) for hundreds of military retirees.

The sale included deals on snacks, beverages, baking goods, paper products, canned goods, cleaning products, and more, according to a sign for the sale at the store. The sale was a typical effort taken by the Fort McCoy Commissary to support the RAD like it has in past years.

— Fort McCoy held its 2023 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) on Sept. 8, 2023, and as part of the day’s festivities the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area was opened to the hundreds of RAD attendees to also see more about Fort McCoy’s and the Army’s history.

The area was open from noon to 4 p.m. and nearly a hundred of the RAD attendees visited the area’s many attractions, said Fort McCoy Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell.

— Hundreds of Soldiers, veterans, workforce members, family members, Wisconsin Challenge Academy cadets, and others lined up in the dark, early morning hours to pay honor to the victims of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, on the United States as they participated in the Fort McCoy 9/11 Memorial Run and Stair Climb.

The 3-mile run/2-mile walk started and ended in the parking lot of one of the new four-story barracks at Fort McCoy — the tallest buildings on post. The stair climb, which also was meant to resemble the firefighters climbing the stairs of the World Trade Center, also took place inside the barracks building.

Lined up in front of the chaplain were many members of the 1304th Military Police Company of Arlington Heights, Ill. The MPs were at Fort McCoy for annual training but also were major participants in the event.

— Staff of the Fort McCoy Commissary were presented with a plaque on Sep. 21, 2023, in recognition of their outstanding efforts supporting the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) Program.

The Fort McCoy SHARP Team joined together to express their gratitude for the Fort McCoy Commissary’s ongoing advocacy.

“In recognition of outstanding support and donations the past two years to the Fort McCoy SHARP Team during the month of April for Sexual Assault Awareness Prevention Month (SAAPM),” said Michael Bowman, sexual assault response coordinator, 88th Readiness Division, while presenting the plaque to Kimberly Graham, interim commissary manager.

The Fort McCoy Commissary highlighted events during the month of April, displaying the Clothesline Project and acting as a donation site.

— Fort McCoy held its annual observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month on Sept. 19, 2023, at McCoy’s Community Center with a special event led by a guest speaker who’s a Milwaukee-native.

The guest speaker for the event was Vickie Sanchez, director of Multicultural Student Services at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Sanchez shared many personal experiences in her presentation.

Sanchez’s presentation was about culture, which also reflects the 2023 Department of Defense theme for National Hispanic Heritage Month — “Todos Somos, Somos Uno.”

“Todos Somos, Somos Uno” translates to “we are all, we are one.” Jennifer Lasko, human resources specialist and diversity, equity, Inclusion and accessibility advisor at the Bureau of Fiscal Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury came up with the 2023 theme.

— Aircrews with the Wisconsin National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment operated UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters Sept. 14, 2023, at Fort McCoy for a training operation at the installation.

Members of the unit regularly complete training operations at Fort McCoy and the unit also supports numerous training events at the installation each year. According to the Army fact sheet for the Black Hawk, its mission is to provide air assault, general support, aeromedical evacuation, command and control, and special operations support to combat, stability, and support operations.

— The regular archery/crossbow archery season began at Fort McCoy on Sept. 16, 2023, at the same time as the opening of the Wisconsin archery season.

The regular archery early season will go from Sept. 16 and run through Nov. 16. Late season will run from Nov. 27 and run through Jan. 31, 2024, said Wildlife Biologist Kevin Luepke with the Natural Resources Branch (NRB) of the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division in September.

— More than a dozen members of the Sparta, Wis., Honorary Citizens Group visited the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area on Sept. 22, 2023, to learn more about the installation’s history and heritage.

The group’s visit to the installation was part of ongoing Army community relations efforts between Fort McCoy and communities within Monroe County and other areas outside of Fort McCoy, said Fort McCoy Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell.

## OCTOBER

— The Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services Fire Department completed several efforts to support the 2023 National Fire Prevention Week/Month campaign at the installation.

Fort McCoy Fire Inspector Curt Ladwig with the fire department said the department conducted fire drills at buildings throughout the instal-

## FORT MCCOY’S 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



Photos by Scott T. Sturkal

Participants in the Fort McCoy 2023 9/11 Memorial Run and Stair Climb complete the stair climb portion of the event Sept. 11, 2023, in a four-story barracks building at Fort McCoy.

lation, checked on fire systems and dozens of buildings, had firefighters interacting with children at the Fort McCoy Child Development Center, and more.

“Fire Prevention Week was held Oct. 8 to 14, and this year’s theme was ‘Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention,’” Ladwig said.

— The next shovel to dig in the 1600 block of the cantonment area at Fort McCoy started the construction of a third transient-training enlisted barracks project at the installation, said Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy.

The second barracks was awarded June 28 to BlindermanPower (Construction) at \$28,081,843. A notice to proceed with construction was given on Sept. 26.

As of early October 2023, the company began preparing the site at Fort McCoy with fencing off the construction area, bringing in the start of equipment and operations facilities, and other preparations.

In the statement of work about the project, it states the contractor will “construct a four-story transient training enlisted barracks for major exercises, annual training, battle assembly, and mobilization training at Fort McCoy ... to house 400 Soldiers in approximately 60,000 square feet.”

— As October 2023 began, the construction progress on the \$11.96 million transient training brigade headquarters project at Fort McCoy reached past 80 percent complete, according to a recent update from Ken Green with the Army Corps of Engineers Program Office at Fort McCoy.

As recent as early June, the project was at 40 percent complete, and now at early October it’s 80 percent done, meaning the contractor made great strides during the summer months, Green said.

Green reported in his Sept. 29 update that the project was continuing at the planned, scheduled pace. Green stated in his update that current work included interior framing, interior sheet rock and finishing, continued window installation, interior and exterior painting was continuing, tile work continued, elevator work continued, and ceiling grid installation continued, and more.

— Seeing an increase of more than 8,600 troops training on post in fiscal year (FY) 2023, Fort McCoy supported the training of 86,090 troops on post during FY 2023 — a boost from the 77,411 troops who trained at Fort McCoy in FY 2022.

Larry Sharp, chief of the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) Training Coordination Branch, said the training numbers include Army Reserve Soldiers; National Guard service members; and active-duty troops from not just the Army but also other services, such as the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

Training statistics reflect many types of training opportunities that take place at the installation by active- and reserve-component forces and other governmental agencies, according to DPTMS.

During fiscal year 2023, training included battle-drill (weekend) training; annual training; mobilization; institutional training; and numerous exercises, including an Exportable Combat Training Capability exercise, Combat Support Training Exercise, Global Medic, Spartan Warrior III military police exercise, and numerous other training events.

— With October comes Energy Action Month, and one way Fort McCoy was “taking action” in saving energy is by using goats. That’s right — goats.

More than 100 goats were being used combat invasive plant species at Fort McCoy, and they are very effective, said Wildlife Biologist Kevin Luepke with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

“It will help us save labor/equipment time, reduce costs, reduce pesticide usage, and hopefully give us better results,” Luepke said. “The goats will be used in an integrated approach. I see our approach looking like this in the future — shred and mulch the invasive brush during the winter or fall, then allow the invasive brush to respout the following growing season, introduce goats to the site during that same growing season to defoliate, and then treat with herbicides the following growing season after that.

— As part of a bi-annual effort, Fort McCoy’s Directorate of Human Resources (DHR) records manager who oversees records management for the installation, held a paper records shredding and recycling event Sept. 18 to dispose of old documents on post.

In spring and in fall, the Fort McCoy’s records manager oversees the disposal of documents that are no longer needed in records holding. The 2023 fiscal year shredding events destroyed and recycled 39,060 pounds of paper and 100 pounds of media according to DHR Administrative Services Division Chief Trudy Ward.

DHR contracted Confidential Records Inc. to shred all 14,230 pounds of paper during the fall shredding event over the course of four to six hours. Until the documents are shredded, they are housed in the records holding building. The shred trucks arrive on site at the records holding building and use pierce-and-tear shredders with multiple rotating blades that punch holes in the material being shredded, and then rip the material into tiny pieces.

— Dozens of students with the Sparta, Wis., Innovations STEM Academy visited the Regional Training Site (RTS)-Maintenance facility at Fort McCoy on Oct. 20, 2023, to learn more about mechanical advantages of pulleys and hydraulics and how engines and axles

work, and more.

While at RTS-Maintenance, students took turns with their teachers at different stations to learn about how some equipment and processes work at the facility with the assistance of RTS-Maintenance instructors.

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger spoke with Soldiers about leadership Oct. 24, 2023, in McCoy’s Community Center during a new gathering initiative called TRIAD Nights at Fort McCoy.

The initiative, according to Messenger, is yet another chance for the Fort McCoy community to meet and build interpersonal relationships within the community.

“I want this to be something to be where we can share leadership ideas and learn about leadership, and more,” Messenger said.

— Fort McCoy’s Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council (SOHAC) met Oct. 10, 2023, at the Fire Station to discuss fiscal year (FY) 2023 and safety measures at Fort McCoy.

Safety Manager Edson De Leon gave an overview of safety readiness and statistics saying Fort McCoy is doing very well. In FY 2023 there were only six recordable accidents and 33 near miss accidents. Noticeably less than FY 2019 with 74 near miss accidents — showing growth in safer conditions and actions at Fort McCoy.

Fort McCoy Fire Inspector Curt Ladwig detailed some of Fort McCoy’s safety features during the meeting including Enhanced 911 (E911). All of Fort McCoy Garrison and South Post family housing landline phones ring directly into the Fort McCoy Emergency Dispatch Center, allowing Fort McCoy’s emergency services to receive local calls.

— Michelle Neumann, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program manager at the Tomah Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, served as the featured guest speaker Oct. 19 for the 2023 National Disability Employment Awareness Month observance at Fort McCoy where she outlined how the VA is working with people with disabilities to improve their employment possibilities.

The observance was held in McCoy’s Community Center. Neumann discussed some personal stories in addition to what the VA is doing. Derrick Caulkins with the Army Reserve EEO Office served as master of ceremonies for the event.

“It’s with great pleasure that I get to come and showcase the Tomah VA and our efforts for celebrating the contributions of workers with disabilities and our support of inclusive policies and practices that benefit employees in the organization alike,” Neumann said.

— Soldiers with the Wisconsin National Guard’s 724th Engineer Battalion, headquartered in Chippewa Falls, Wis., completed weapons training Oct. 13, 2023, on two ranges on North Post at Fort McCoy, Wis.

The unit completed a weekend training for weapons training and other training. During October, thousands of troops trained on post, kicking off a busy fiscal year 2024 training year at Fort McCoy.

— Contractors were fully into completing excavating and starting infrastructure work for a third four-story, 60,000-square-foot barracks project at Fort McCoy, said Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy.

The second barracks was awarded June 28 to BlindermanPower (Construction) at \$28,081,843. A notice to proceed with construction was given on Sept. 26. As of Oct. 18, area preparation through excavation by the contractor has the site well started for construction.

In his second weekly update about the project Oct. 13, 2023, Green said continued site preparation will continue, and he stated construction progress was at 1 percent complete.

— Fort McCoy and Xcel Energy were continuing the process of changing the electrical grid on post in October 2023 from a Delta Electrical System to a Wye Electrical System, Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials said.

Wye is a three-phase electrical system that uses a wire for each electrical leg and a separate neutral wire.

Delta is also a three-phase but uses one of the legs as the neutral, so it only has three wires. Work will continue throughout the year.

— Earlier in 2023, history was made at Fort McCoy when four World War II-era barracks were moved from the 1600-block to other areas of the cantonment area in an effort to save the buildings for reuse in spaces in other blocks.

Contractor JMJ Construction of New Lisbon, Wis., and Heritage Movers of Blue River, Wis., successfully moved the first two of the four barracks on Feb. 24 and March 2. Then they moved the last two buildings from the 1600 block to the 1800 block and 2800 block on April 4 and April 6, respectively.

Once the buildings were moved, they were set on blocks and fenced off until further work could be completed in their new areas. As of Oct. 19, 2023, Ferguson said three foundations were nearly complete and three of the barracks would be moved on to those foundations starting the third week of October.

— Thirty-five Soldiers with the Wisconsin National Guard’s 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team completed three days of railcar-loading training at Fort McCoy in late October to prep for a future rail movement.

The training was coordinated through the 426th Regional Training Institute/Wisconsin Military Academy of the Wisconsin National Guard, a Fort McCoy tenant organization, where the Unit Movement Officer Deployment Planning Course is taught.

Chief Warrant Officer 1 Eric Frank, a UMO course instructor, described what the training was all about.

“This was three days of pure rail training,” Frank said. “We (brought) in a rail expert from the Yermo Rail Yard located at the National Training Center in California to train our 32nd Soldiers on how to properly move vehicles on railcars, how to properly tie them down, how to inspect tie downs, and then how to remove vehicles and equipment from rail cars.

— Pfc. Charles Dickman was only 17 years old when he died fighting in the Korean War on July 12, 1950, as a heavy weapons infantryman with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. But he never made it home.

“He was reported missing in action on July 12, 1950, near the town of Chochiwon, South Korea, as his regiment engaged in a series of delaying actions to buy time for reinforcements and resupply as they withdrew from the area to avoid being surrounded by North Korean forces,” a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or DPAA, news release states. “He was not seen to fall in battle, and he was not reported to be a prisoner of war. After regaining control of Chochiwon in the fall of 1950, the Army began recovering remains from the area and temporarily interring them at the United Nations Military Cemetery (UNMC) Taejon.

“However, Pfc. Dickman’s remains were not identified among those recovered from the area, and in 1953, the Department of the Army issued him a presumptive finding of death. The unidentified remains from UNMC were sent to Hawaii where they were buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, as Korean War Unknowns,” the release states.

“In July 2018, the DPAA proposed a seven-phase plan to disinter 652 Korean War Unknowns from the Punchbowl,” the release further states. “As part of the second phase of this Korean War Disinterment Project, one set of unidentified remains was sent to the DPAA laboratory for further study. The laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available established the remains as those of Pfc. Dickman.”

On June 20, 2023, the DPAA announced they had identified the remains Pfc. Dickman officially. And on Oct. 21, 2023, finally, Pfc. Dickman made it home to Cashton, Wis.

A funeral mass was set up Oct. 21 in Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Cashton with hundreds of people in attendance. And just down the road, setting up for the graveside service for Dickman at Sacred Heart Cemetery was a team of Soldiers from Fort McCoy who would form a U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team to fold the U.S. flag.

This team included Maj. Randy Downs, company commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company; Maj. Michael Ball, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for Fort McCoy; 1st Sgt. Jacob Pattison, first sergeant for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company; and Sgt. 1st Class Jason Henderson and Staff Sgt. Nathan Miller, also both with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

— Twenty-two hunters participated in Fort McCoy’s 2023 gun-deer hunt for hunters with disabilities Oct. 7-8, 2023. It was the 22nd straight year this hunt took place on post.

Every October, Wisconsin holds a nine-day gun deer hunt for people with disabilities. From 2002 through 2019, Fort McCoy participated by holding a two-day hunt the first weekend of the statewide hunt.

Julie Steinhoff with the Fort McCoy Permit Sales Office said of the 22 people who were hunting with their Fort McCoy Gun-Deer for Hunters with Disabilities permit, 15 of the hunters were able to harvest deer. Five of those 15 were even able to harvest a second authorized deer (five of the hunters harvested two deer each).

— In addition to the 22 hunters that participated in the gun-deer hunt for hunters with disabilities, Fort McCoy also supported a youth gun-deer hunt for a fourth consecutive year on Oct. 7-8, 2023.

“During this hunt, nine deer were harvested,” said Julie Steinhoff with the Fort McCoy Permit Sales Office.

(See REVIEW, Page 4)



Contractors with JMJ Construction of New Lisbon, Wis., along with support from Heritage Movers of Blue River, Wis., returned to the post to move World War II-era buildings to their new foundation areas Nov. 1, 2023, at Fort McCoy.



REVIEW

from Page 1

NOVEMBER

— Work continued in late October and early November by contractor JMJ Construction of New Lisbon, Wis., and Heritage Movers of Blue River, Wis., to “drive” four World War II-era barracks to their new foundation areas at Fort McCoy. Earlier in 2023, on Feb. 24, March 2, April 4, and April 6, they moved the buildings from the 1600 block to new locations in the 1700, 1800, and 2800 blocks of the cantonment area. Once the buildings were moved, they were set on blocks and fenced off until further work could be completed in their new areas.

That work began this summer in early August with the building of the new foundations for the buildings, said Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works (DPW) General Engineer Gareth Ferguson. As of Nov. 9, three foundations were complete and three of the barracks were fully moved on to those foundations.

Matt Childs and his team with Heritage Movers guided one barracks building on Oct. 31 and a second building on Nov. 2 when conditions best permitted it.

— Fort McCoy held its annual Native American Heritage Month observance Nov. 14, 2023, in building 2000 with a special guest from the Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa.

That guest was Michael Charette “Laughing Fox.” Charette is a Native American storyteller and flutist. During his presentation, Charette told stories and played music for the dozens in attendance.

Charette’s home, the Red Cliff Reservation, “hugs the northeastern shoreline of the Bayfield Peninsula, nestled between Cornucopia and Bayfield overlooking the Apostle Islands in northern Wisconsin,” states the tribe’s website at <https://www.redcliff-nsn.gov>.

— Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team coordinated a prescribed burn Nov. 13, 2023, along a drop zone on South Post at Fort McCoy.

The burn was small, and conditions were ideal to complete about 28 acres to burn, said Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger, who approved the go-ahead for the burn the morning of the event.

The post prescribed burn team includes personnel with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services Fire Department; Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB); Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; and the Colorado State University Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands, under contract with the post.

The entire burn began at approximately 11:30 a.m. and went for about two to three hours. Messenger was on site with the entire burn team as well as Tim Wilder, chief of the NRB. Wilder said the burn opportunity was good to get done.

— Fort McCoy Garrison command team members donned chef hats and joined staff in Dining Facility 1362 to serve the annual Thanksgiving Meal on Nov. 8, 2023, to more than 100 Fort McCoy community members.

One by one the plates of food were handed out to all who came to enjoy the meal in an environment decorated to the hilt for Thanksgiving spirit, said Fort McCoy Food Program Manager Andy Piskey with the Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center Food Program Management Office.

The meal was open to the civilian workforce members and retirees as well as military members, Piskey said.

— Good weather and steady construction progress on the \$11.96 million transient training brigade headquarters project at Fort McCoy have allowed the project to reach 90 percent completion, according to a recent update from Ken Green with the Army Corps of Engineers Program Office at Fort McCoy.

As recent as early June, the project was at 40 percent complete, and at early October it was 80 percent done. Now the project is at 90 percent done as of Nov. 17, Green said in his weekly Nov. 17, 2023, update.

Green stated in his update that current work included interior finishes; flooring work; exterior work with concrete placements, final grading, caulking, and hydroseeding; and there was also installation of solar panels taking place.

— Contractors were fully engaged in creating and forming the foundation and forming the full footprint of the third four-story, 60,000-square-foot barracks during November construction at Fort McCoy in the Army Corps of Engineers-managed project.

The third barracks was awarded June 28 to BlindermanPower (Construction) at just over \$28 million. A notice to proceed with construction was given on Sept. 26. As of Nov. 8, a lot of infrastructure construction had been completed after the area had previously saw plenty of excavation work take place, said Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy.

— Karen Kohn, human resources officer and director of the U.S. Army Reserve Command (US-ARC) Human Resources Service Center (formerly the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, or CPAC) celebrated her long-lasting career at the McCoy’s Community Center banquet room with a retirement ceremony Oct. 25, a November news article stated.

During her 38-year Army career, Kohn had many professional accomplishments. She oversaw the civilian human resources (HR) aspects related to USARC transformation in 2008; led CPAC through COVID-19-related change to the work environment; had 16 years overseas (including four years as the director at Wuerzburg, Germany); sustained commitment to customer service; and mentored numerous HR professionals.

“I could not have asked for a more challenging, fulfilling, and rewarding career than my 38 years with the Department of Army,” Kohn said. “It has been an honor and privilege to work with so many exceptional military and civilian professionals. I am humbled and proud to have served as an Army civilian.”

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, garrison command sergeant major, participated in the Veterans Day observance Nov. 10, 2023, at the Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Tomah, Wis.

Both leaders from Fort McCoy spoke to the audience about the importance of Veterans Day and more.

— Wildlife Biologist Kevin Luepke spoke with people planning to deer hunt in the 2023 gun-deer season at Fort McCoy, Wis., while they attended a special Meet and Greet event Nov. 17, 2023, at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area at the installation.

The event was organized by Luepke and the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch and included support from the Fort McCoy Permit Sales Office, Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services, and the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

The event gave hunters an opportunity to register firearms, get any permits needed and talk with post officials about any concerns prior to the season. More than 40 people attended.

— Fort McCoy Archeologist Ryan Howell with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch gave a presentation about Fort McCoy and Native

American coordination and cooperation at the Onalaska Public Library on Nov. 21 in Onalaska, Wis.

The presentation covered topics such as a timeline of federal Indian policies and current tribal relations at Fort McCoy. Howell commented on the significance of teaching others about these particular topics.

“It was important to show the public the integration of Fort McCoy and the local Native American tribes,” said Howell. “Particularly the Ho Chunk Nation, (and Fort McCoy), have worked together to learn about and protect the past in our area and on their public lands.”

— Lt. Col. Nathan Bennington took the reins of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 426th Regiment, a regional training institute at Fort McCoy, during a formal change of command ceremony Oct. 14, 2023, a November news article states.

Bennington succeeds Col. Paul Gapinski, who soon will take command of the Wisconsin Army National Guard’s 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, headquartered in Milwaukee.

— More than 70 Fort McCoy personnel volunteered for the Sparta Ministerial Association’s annual Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 23, 2023, in Sparta, Wis.

“There were people from each unit on the installation and both chapel congregations,” said Garrison Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Amy Noble with the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office.

“Individuals assisted with the dinner prep and set-up on Wednesday (Nov. 22),” Noble said. “On Thursday (Nov. 23) personnel cooked, served, prepped 200 to-go meals, delivered those meals across the county, and cleaned-up the American Legion dining room and kitchen.”

Overall, more than 500 meals were served as part of the event (delivered and in-person), Noble said.

— Heading into the 2023 Fort McCoy gun-deer season, the goal was to have a similar harvest as 2022 or better, said Wildlife Program Manager and Biologist Kevin Luepke with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch. And that goal was close.

“Overall, I think the season went great,” Luepke said. “It was a slower start than most hunters, including myself, wanted to see with the warmer temperatures and breezy conditions on opening weekend. In total, the nine-day gun-deer season harvest was 426 deer, an 8 percent decrease from last year’s harvest of 464, but an 18 percent increase from the five-year average of 360 deer.”

DECEMBER

— In what might seem like a race to beat the extreme weather of winter, contractors have been busy forming the footings and stem walls for a third four-story, 60,000-square-foot barracks at Fort McCoy as December construction at Fort McCoy in the Army Corps of Engineers-managed project continues.

The third barracks was awarded June 28 to BlindermanPower (Construction) at just over \$28 million. A notice to proceed with construction was given on Sept. 26. As of Dec. 4, 2023, a lot of infrastructure construction has been completed and work on concrete placements for footings, stem walls, and piers was getting done, said Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy.

In his eighth weekly update about the project Dec. 4, Green said construction progress was still at 1 percent complete but remained steady.

— The Canadian-Pacific Railway Holiday Train rumbled through Fort McCoy, Wis., in the early evening Dec. 5, 2023.

The train was traveling between stops in Tomah and Sparta, Wis.

According to Canadian Pacific, the train toured Canada and the United States from Nov. 20 through Dec. 19, 2023, raising money, food and awareness for the important work that food banks do in their communities. Rail traffic rolls through Fort McCoy daily, including many Canadian Pacific trains.

— Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade and from units within the brigade participated in an Army Meritorious Unit Commendation ceremony Dec. 14, 2023, at Fort McCoy in building 905.

During the ceremony, the 181st and its units received the commendation for their support for Operation Allies Refuge/Operation Allies Welcome (OAR/OAW) that took place at Fort McCoy from August 2021 to February 2022. The award was officially presented to the unit by Brig. Gen. William Ryan, First Army Division West commanding general.

In addition to the 181st Headquarters, other units associated with the 181st receiving the award were the 1st Brigade Engineer Battalion, 310th Infantry Regiment; 1st Brigade Support Battalion, 351st Infantry Regiment; 1st Brigade Support Battalion, 291st Infantry Regiment; and 3rd Brigade Engineer Battalion, 340th Infantry Regiment.

The Army awards units the Meritorious Unit Commendation for exceptionally meritorious conduct in performance of outstanding achievement or service during combat or non-combat, requirements show.

The recognized timeframe for support for the award for the award is Aug. 15, 2021, to April 1, 2022.

— Fort McCoy Garrison senior leaders gathered in early December 2023 for a Phase V strategic planning session that supports the installation’s five-year Strategic Business Plan, Fort McCoy Plans, Analysis, and Integration Office (PAIO) officials said.

This type of strategic planning is something that takes place regularly at Fort McCoy. This latest planning session that went for several days at McCoy’s Community Center supported the five-year Strategic Business Plan for fiscal years 2021-2025.

Phase five of strategic planning is implementation and reporting, PAIO officials stated.

“Over the years, Fort McCoy has established a proven record of excellence for installation management,” states the Installation Management System Handbook.

— Contractors completed another building demolition in the 1600 block during mid-December 2023 at Fort McCoy as part of continuing work in that block, said Master Planner Brian Harrie with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works (DPW). Demolished was the old Fort McCoy Installation Legal Office building 1644, Harrie said. The building had to be taken down to make way for continued future construction in the same area.

“That area will be developed in conjunction with the east barracks (when built),” Harrie said. “That specific 1644 footprint will be a stormwater pond and will store runoff from the north barracks, east barracks, and east parking lot.”

Demolition of buildings in the 1600 block originally began in 2019 and has since led to the construction of two large four-story barracks buildings, and a third that is currently under construction.

All of the work is part of the Fort McCoy master plan that looks at continuously upgrading the installation’s infrastructure to be prepared for the future, Harrie said.

Overall, nine new buildings are planned for the entire 1600 block, Harrie said. The plan is to build four barracks buildings, the three 20,000-square-foot bri-



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Maj. Randy Downs with the U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team from U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy presents U.S. flag to 93-year-old Patricia Filut, the sister of Pfc. Charles Dickman, during the graveside service Oct. 21, 2023, for Dickman in Cashton, Wis., at Sacred Heart Cemetery.



Photo by Kevin Clark/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office

Soldiers from the 32nd Infantry Brigade train using the M3E1 Multipurpose Anti-Armor Anti-Personnel Weapons System at Fort McCoy, Wis., on Oct. 26, 2023.

gade headquarters buildings, and two 160-room officer quarters.

“The 1600 block will be completely transformed when all of this construction is completed years from now,” Harrie said in a past news article. “The 1600 block is a great location for this transformation, too, because it places these facilities for transient training troops near the post’s service-related facilities, such as the Fort McCoy Commissary, Fort McCoy Exchange, and McCoy’s Community Center.”

— Fort McCoy held its 2023 Christmas Tree Lighting Event on Dec. 7, 2023, at McCoy’s Community Center with hundreds of community members in attendance to enjoy a variety of holiday activities.

After Isabella Hilt, Fort McCoy’s and Wisconsin’s 2023 Military Youth of the Year, and her family officially lit the Christmas tree in front of McCoy’s Community Center to officially kick off the holiday season, Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Stephen Messenger told the event-goers it was time to have fun.

“It’s so great to see everybody out here for the tree lighting ceremony to kick off the holiday season,” Messenger said. “And I would just like to thank everyone here for being part of the greatest military that has ever been fielded on the face of the Earth at any given time. It takes Soldiers, family members, civilians — it takes everyone.”

Inside McCoy’s there were many things to do. People could get photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. There was also cookies and hot chocolate available for everyone, and there was a wide variety of holiday crafts and activities for children and families to enjoy.

The event took place from 4 to 6 p.m., and in addition to having all the work done through the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR), there also were several volunteers from organizations throughout the Fort McCoy Garrison helping as well.

Before the actual tree lighting, children active in the Fort McCoy Child and Youth Services program, also a part of DFMWR, sang Christmas songs to get everyone into the holiday spirit for the tree lighting.

— Fort McCoy military members were treated to 70 free Christmas trees Dec. 1, 2023, courtesy

of the Trees for Troops effort as a FedEx truck delivered the trees to McCoy’s Community Center at the installation.

By midday Dec. 1, staff with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) were lining military members and their family members up to get their free trees. DFMWR also offered several hours on Dec. 2 for people to pick up a tree.

The truck delivering the trees arrived earlier in the morning Dec. 1, and DFMWR staff members helped unload the truck. Once the trees were out of the truck and lined up, the delivery to the troops was next later in the day.

According to [www.christmasspiritfoundation.org](http://www.christmasspiritfoundation.org), approximately 16,000 total trees were picked up from dozens of locations in 2023 and given to more than 90 total bases, including Fort McCoy.

Trees are donated by individual farms and lots, the collective efforts of state and regional Christmas Tree associations, local sponsoring groups, and the customers of participating locations. Hundreds of donors and volunteers participate each year to make Trees for Troops happen, the website states.

Fort McCoy’s motto is to be the “Total Force Training Center.”

Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

The installation has provided support and facilities for the field and classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching “ft-mccoy,” and on Twitter by searching “usagmccoy.”

Also try downloading the Digital Garrison app to your smartphone and set “Fort McCoy” or another installation as your preferred base. Fort McCoy is also part of Army’s Installation Management Command where “We Are The Army’s Home.”

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office through the archives of The Real McCoy newspaper with support from the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Army Reserve and Army National Guard personnel.)



Photo by Lt. Col. James Ontiveros

Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team oversee a prescribed burn Nov. 13, 2023, along a drop zone in South Post at Fort McCoy.



Photo by Claudia Neve

Members of the Tomah High School Show Choir from Tomah, Wis., sing Christmas carols as part of the 2023 Fort McCoy Tree Lighting Ceremony held Dec. 7, 2023, at McCoy’s Community Center at Fort McCoy.