

## 50-plus teams compete in ROTC's Northern Warfare Challenge at Fort McCoy, La Crosse



**STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL**  
*Public Affairs Staff*

Fifty-four teams of ROTC cadets competed Feb. 21-22 in the Northern Warfare Challenge event held at Fort McCoy and La Crosse, Wis.

ROTC teams with U.S. Army Cadet Command came from all around the United States as they battled through a wide variety of challenges and long ruck marching courses in cold and snow to

fight for the top spot as challenge champion.

Lt. Col. Brian Knutson with University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Military Science Department said at Fort McCoy cadets faced a variety of challenges during the competition. The cadets then did a 12-mile ruck in La Crosse, Wis., on the second day of their competition.

Final Results included West Point taking first, Wheaton College earning second, and the University Wisconsin-Mad-

ison taking third.

"The competition is designed for Army ROTC teams to compete against each other in cold-weather survival skills that also test their physical endurance," said Knutson, whose ROTC team from La Crosse won the title two years ago. "The first day ... at Fort McCoy, we were testing various skills related to cold weather. They were being tested on their knowledge of weather, knots, (See **CHALLENGE**, Page 4)



(Above left and above) ROTC cadets compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge on Feb. 21 at Fort McCoy.

## Workers successfully move second World War II barracks at Fort McCoy; preparations under way to move third building

**BY SCOTT T. STURKOL**  
*Public Affairs Staff*

Building movers chalked up a full second movement of a World War II-era barracks building Feb. 12-13 as they moved it from the installation's 1600 block on the cantonment area to the 500 block for temporary placement.

The first of the five 83-year-old buildings was moved Jan. 22. A total of five barracks buildings on the installation cantonment area's 1600 block are being moved during January and February 2025 while the ground is frozen, Army Corps of Engineers officials said.

Devooght Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., is the contractor doing the building moving with wheels and remote control powered by a generator. These buildings, originally constructed in 1942, will eventually be reset at another area of the post so new construction can begin in their current location on two new officer quarters buildings.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works master planners said a plan was previously worked out with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the contractor to move the five old barracks buildings to the 500 block of Fort McCoy in this move. The buildings will be temporarily set in that block until new locations are determined.

As stated in a previous news article, four other barracks buildings also were moved from the 1600 block to other post areas in 2023 by a different contractor. Those four buildings are now operational in their new locations in the 1700, 1800, and 2100 blocks on the post.

In 2023 during the first barracks move operations, that was the first time an effort like that took place at Fort McCoy, Fort McCoy officials said.

Looking back to 1942, when the "new camp" be-

(See **BARRACKS MOVE**, Page 6)



Photos by Greg Mason/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office

Contractors move the second of five World War II-era barracks from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy on Feb. 12 to another area of the installation.

## East Barracks Project more than 25 percent complete; framing, sheeting continues as March 2025 begins



Contractor work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, is shown March 6 at Fort McCoy.

**STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL**  
*Public Affairs Staff*

February 2025 held some of the coldest days seen at Fort McCoy in years. Below-zero temperatures hovered for many days mid-month while also several snow events hitting the post as well and none it stopped construction efforts on the fourth four-story transient training troops barracks project at Fort McCoy.

The project, also referred to as the East Barracks Project, was list at 27 percent complete as March 2025 began, said Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the Army Corps of Engineers at Fort McCoy.

As of Feb. 28, the date of Butts' most current update on the project, contractors with L.S. Black Constructors were moving right along with framing and sheeting work and more.

"Metal framing in the middle section floors continues," Butts wrote about the project Feb. 28. "Contractor has enclosed and is heating areas where concrete placement is occurring to maintain required temperatures.

"Exterior sheeting continues. Rebar placement continues. North section structural details (are) being completed. (And) mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in continues," Butts wrote.

Since May 2024, construction of this barracks have been nonstop by the contractor who was awarded the project in February 2024. The exact contract amount for the project when it was awarded was \$27,287,735.

As the workers with L.S. Black Constructors work on this project, they can look over at two other barracks they constructed in the same block. They are a familiar name in the construction history at (See **EAST BARRACKS**, Page 3)

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South Barracks project update Page 8



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NEWS

# Fort McCoy holds 2025 AER Campaign Kick-off Breakfast; officially begins drive to support AER

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

The 83rd Army Emergency Relief (AER) Campaign began officially at Fort McCoy on Feb. 26 with the 2025 campaign kick-off breakfast at McCoy's Community Center at the installation.

The AER campaign runs from March 1 to June 14 this year, according to the AER webpage, [www.armyemergencyrelief.org](http://www.armyemergencyrelief.org). AER helps provide emergency financial funds for food, rent, funeral expenses, emergency medical expenses, and other needs.

Contributions to AER help active-duty Soldiers (single and married) and their families, retirees and their family members, and surviving spouses or orphans of Soldiers who died while on active duty or after they retired.

The breakfast included dozens of Fort McCoy community members. The breakfast was organized by the Fort McCoy Army Community Service (ACS) Office with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez, Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon, and 1st Sgt. Thomas Ninkovich, first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, all were in attendance as well as Maj. Randy Downs, HHC commander. Numerous other guests were also present.

"Welcome to the kickoff campaign today," Baez said. "Last year, Fort McCoy donated about \$9,645 to our AER campaign, but we disbursed ... over \$40,000. So, my main goal here today is to reach leadership at all levels to ensure that Soldiers know about AER."

"AER is more than a campaign that collects money," Baez said. "AER is a program that provides services to many families, and I'm sure that, you know, most of the leaders here have had an experience where you have taken a Soldier to get either an AER loan or a grant. Some of the examples of situations that Soldiers can utilize AER are for any type of financial hardship related to (when) they cannot pay their utilities, they cannot pay their rent, or they have a debt in the family."

Baez emphasized the importance of informing troops about these resources available to them.

"I want to make sure that leaders at all levels understand the importance of the campaign, and our goal this year is that we contact every single Soldier," Baez said. "We are going to also reach out to retirees and family members and also spouses and children of deceased Soldiers who can participate in this campaign. This campaign is to show how AER offers services for Soldiers, also for retirees, and we know that a lot of times military retirees could live under the scale, so we need to make sure that everybody understands ... some of the things that the programs offer."

"In our goal for this year, we have two main priorities," Baez said. "The first one is that every single person within the installation is contacted and understands the program. The second goal is that we can pass the goal from last year, and I think that (is possible)."

Fort McCoy Army Community Service's (ACS) lead campaign coordinator, Janeen Folgers, who is the ACS Financial Program manager, led the discussion about the campaign. She noted how AER helps many people in many categories, including through financial assistance as well as scholarships.

"There is a scholarship program with AER," Folgers said. "Worldwide, they awarded \$9 million in scholarships to spouses and dependent children. AER programs (are) ... authorized by your commander or your first sergeant or me or Mike. Years ago, it used to be the Soldiers had to go to their commander if they were having financial issues. They had to go to their commander and request assistance."

"Then the commander signs off, yes, you can get \$2,000 from AER," Folgers said. "But two or three years ago they changed it where there is also a direct program. A Soldier might not want to ask the commander for help. ... Now they can come directly to Mike and myself. If the situation is such that they're in dire straits as far as their financial situation, we will reach out to the commander and say, hey, the Soldier came to us."

"One thing, as a financial readiness specialist, if they come to me and have issues with their budget, I'm going to have them come back every paycheck," Folgers said. "Come on in, let's talk. Where's your money going? We can help them, but then we also circumvent that happening in the future."



Photos by Scott T. Sturkol/U.S. Army graphic illustration

(Above) Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez provides opening remarks Feb. 26 during the 2025 Army Emergency Relief Campaign Breakfast at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy. (Below) Army Community Service Financial Program Manager Janeen Folgers gives a briefing about Army Emergency Relief on Feb. 26 during the campaign breakfast.



Folgers also noted that AER has provided more than \$2 billion overall in assistance since 1942, and more than \$1 billion since 9/11.

In addition to government civilian employees and Soldiers, retired Army personnel also can donate to the AER campaign. At Fort McCoy, contact Folgers or Michael Larsen at ACS for more information on how to donate and how to get support from AER. People can also get more information by visiting the AER website at [www.armyemergencyrelief.org](http://www.armyemergencyrelief.org).

cyrelief.org.

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.

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## 'BEHIND THE TRIAD' WITH THE GARRISON COMMANDER



"Behind the Triad" is an award-winning series of videos hosted by Fort McCoy Garrison commander that highlights the hard-working, behind-the-scenes employees around the installation who help make Fort McCoy the outstanding installation it is today, and it provides news and information for the Fort McCoy team.

In this episode of Behind the Triad available at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/953992/march-2025-edition-fort-mccoy-behind-triad> by Greg Mason, Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez and 1st Sgt. Thomas Ninkovich with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, team up to give some news about March at Fort McCoy.

Both highlight important dates and events taking place during March as well as offering tips and advice that follow safety and preparedness requirements.

Watch for new episodes on Fort McCoy's YouTube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUf0\\_BwU3d2p51rTh-TE\\_kw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUf0_BwU3d2p51rTh-TE_kw).

Episodes are also available at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FMPAO>

Or, find other episodes at the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office Defense Video and Imagery Distribution Service page at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FMMVIB>.



**VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY**  
March 29

**Replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors**

**FORT MCCOY LEPRECHAUN LOOP .08 MILE RACE**

**MARCH 17, 2025 5:00-8:00 PM**  
McCoy's Community Center

**\$18 EARLY BIRD**  
Registration fee for the race.

**\$20 ADVANCED**  
Registration fee for the race.

**\$25 DAY-OF**  
Registration fee for the race.

**TO REGISTER CALL 502.898.3011**

**NATIONAL MEDAL of HONOR DAY**  
MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup> 2025



NEWS

EAST BARRACKS

from Page 1

Fort McCoy, having not only built the first two of the 60,000-square-foot transient training troops barracks, but they also built the new brigade headquarters building located in the same block as the barracks buildings.

The contract duration is scheduled for completion in 780 calendar days, Army Corps of Engineer contract documents show. “Current contract completion date is April 24, 2026,” Butts also wrote.

From the building description, when complete, the building will be able to house up to 400 people like the other completed barracks in the same block. According to the scope of work, it’s going to be “made of permanent construction with reinforced concrete foundations; concrete floor slabs; structural steel frames; steel stud infill; masonry veneer walls; prefinished standing seam metal roofing; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning capabilities; plumbing; mechanical systems; and electrical systems. Supporting facilities include land clearing, concrete sidewalk paving, general site improvements, and utility connections.”

Work also continues as 2025 begins by the contractor to prepare a large swath of the 1600 block on Fort McCoy’s cantonment area to construct the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project by contractor BlindermanPower (Construction).

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works planning officials said all the construction is done with projects on this part of Fort McCoy, it will demonstrate a major transformation of the block and hold lots of barracks space for troops training at the installation.

See more news about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by visiting <https://www.usace.army.mil/Media/News>.

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Contractor work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, is shown on March 3 at Fort McCoy.



Contractor work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, is shown on Feb. 28 (above), Feb. 27 (lower left), Feb. 26 (lower right), and Feb. 21 (bottom) at Fort McCoy.





NEWS

CHALLENGE

from Page 1

cold-weather injuries, and then how to evacuate a casualty in cold weather.

“And then ... the 12-mile race was through the bluffs of La Crosse,” Knutson said. “That’s one of the more enduring things of this challenge.”

The 2025 Northern Warfare Challenge offered a better experience for the cadets to compete in than 2024 because of the weather.

“Compared to last year where we had no snow, this year we’ve got a little bit more snow. So, that (could) slow down the teams a little bit. Maybe also create some ice out on the trails around the bluffs to add a little bit more of a challenge for the teams.”

Knutson also said the competition is good for building camaraderie between the cadets and the different teams.

“The cadets — they absolutely love it,” Knutson said. “Not only do they like coming to cheer on their own teams, but they love seeing all the other schools and getting to compete against them is kind of a highlight for this time of year when not much else is going on.”

Knutson said his team from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse was a good team.

“We were hopeful,” Knutson said. “I think we (had) a strong team this year.”

In the end, Knutson said he was just glad to see enjoy the competition once again.

“It’s just a great time for all these teams to get together, have a little competition, and enjoy the cold weather here in Wisconsin,” Knutson said.

According to their history at <https://armyrotc.army.mil/history>, “Army ROTC is the largest officer-producing organization with the American military, having more than 600,000 men and women have earned a commission through the program. Among them are two chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, seven Army chiefs of staff, two Cabinet secretaries and a sitting Supreme Court associate justice. Few other military commissioning sources can claim such significant lineage.

“Throughout the last hundred years, the U.S. and the Army faced numerous challenges both at home and abroad,” the website states. “Wars against despotic foreign governments were fought and won; economic depressions endured; medical, scientific and technological advances were made; and U.S.-led peacekeeping operations contributed to greater global stability. ... These opportunities expose cadets to everyday life in different cultures and also intensify language study. Armed with these experiences, today’s ROTC cadets are well-prepared to assume the reins of small-unit leadership from the onset of their service to the nation.”

The next Northern Warfare Challenge is tentatively planned for February 2026.

Learn more about Army ROTC by visiting <https://armyrotc.army.mil>. Learn more about the ROTC battalion at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse by visiting their Instagram page at <https://www.instagram.com/eaglebattalionarmyrotc>.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching “ftmccoy,” on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching “usagmccoy.”

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(Above and below) ROTC cadets compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge on Feb. 21 at Fort McCoy.



Fort McCoy portion of 2025 ROTC Northern Warfare Challenge included 4-mile march, station challenges

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL

Public Affairs Staff

With 54 teams of cadets participating, the competition for the 2025 ROTC Northern Warfare Challenge at Fort McCoy on Feb. 21 had cadets all throughout many areas of the installation’s South Post answering the challenges presented to them.

The challenge was held Feb. 21 at Fort McCoy and Feb. 22 in La Crosse, Wis. At Fort McCoy, cadets marched in teams in a pre-determined route on the installation’s South Post.

The main operating location for the challenge at the installation was at Fort McCoy’s Logistical Staging Area Freedom (once named Forward Operating Base Liberty). The 4-mile challenge by the cadets started and ended at Freedom.

During the day of competition at Fort McCoy, even though the sun was out, the temperatures were cold, and snow was also present all throughout the course for the competition.

Lt. Col. Brian Knutson with University of Wisconsin-La Crosse’s Military Science Department described what the challenge was about.

“The first day ... at Fort McCoy, we were testing various skills related to cold weather,” Knutson said. “They were being tested on their knowledge of weather, knots, cold-weather injuries, and then how to evacuate a casualty in cold weather.”

Knutson also said the competition was good for building camaraderie between the cadets and the different teams.

“The cadets — they absolutely love it,” Knutson said. “Not only do they like coming to cheer on their own teams, but they love seeing all the other schools and getting to compete against them is kind of a highlight for this time of year when not much else is going on.”

The cadets did a 12-mile ruck in La Crosse, Wis., on the second day of their competition.

“Was another challenge going through the bluffs by La Crosse, which is always challenging,” Knutson said.

Final Results included West Point taking first, Wheaton College earning second, and the University Wisconsin-Madison taking third.



Fort McCoy regularly supports training efforts with U.S. Army Cadet Command and for ROTC cadets.

Events like the Northern Warfare Challenge have also been a regular occurrence at Fort McCoy for decades.

Learn more about Northern Warfare Challenge by visiting their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/northernwarfarechallenge>.



(Above and below) ROTC cadets compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge on Feb. 21 at Fort McCoy.

ROTC cadets, teams react to participation in 2025 Northern Warfare Challenge

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL

Public Affairs Staff

Hundreds of ROTC cadets from 54 teams competed in the 2025 Northern Warfare Challenge Feb. 21-22 at Fort McCoy and in La Crosse, Wis. After competition was done, many of the universities that participated posted the reactions of their team’s participation.

In a Facebook post by Southern Illinois University (SIU) on Feb. 25 at [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02WuZPxbuBz6ZcnQaYwNhx8ugqY8Gikq27STsVUpiPfn-6pZwcdMAaYgzRjyP7pHK5l&id=100000562900792](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02WuZPxbuBz6ZcnQaYwNhx8ugqY8Gikq27STsVUpiPfn-6pZwcdMAaYgzRjyP7pHK5l&id=100000562900792), which is located in Carbondale, Ill., they highlighted how proud they were of their team.

“Five of SIU cadets took part in the Northern Warfare Challenge at Fort McCoy and in La Crosse, Wis., this past weekend,” the post states. “They completed a grueling ... ruck march, each carrying an average weight of 50 pounds. They were tested on navigating cold weather, terrain and hazards, using the (Extended Cold Weather Clothing System) gear system, tying knots, and demonstrating essential medical skills. They placed 21 out of 54 teams!”

In the comments below the photos in the post, fan Sharie Sopeak Phelan wrote, “What is really amazing is that, through all that, they are all smiling.”

In another Facebook post on Feb. 26 at <https://www.facebook.com/ndsuarmyrotc/posts/pfbid0LQ4PRyGG2XV6Hctr9ko4twVVRV7B4235Gr2yNLm3o5zHtEXoLw4EfNzEpJnZVLbl>, North Dakota State University (NDSU) cadets who competed in the challenge were highlighted.

“Last weekend we sent a team down to La Crosse, Wis., to compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge,” the post states. “Hosted by the University of La-Crosse Wisconsin, Northern Warfare Challenge fea-

tures two days of cold-weather skills lanes and a culminating 12-mile ruck through Grandad’s Bluff (in La Crosse). We are honored to have competed in what is dubbed ‘The hardest race in ROTC.’ We’d like to give a big shout out to our competing cadets for working hard to represent NDSU. Go Bison!”

A Facebook post by David Cordeiro on Feb. 23 highlighted some team members of the winning team from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. The post is available at: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid02nV47uGpgPPAgwYKN-1jZ8rL8ANPMBZCrv54pk5SnDWyRctUZBu5ziZmTQwLQyKR27l&id=1664862749](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02nV47uGpgPPAgwYKN-1jZ8rL8ANPMBZCrv54pk5SnDWyRctUZBu5ziZmTQwLQyKR27l&id=1664862749).

“English brothers are members of winning team at 2025 Northern Warfare Challenge,” Cordeiro wrote in the post. “First year Cadet Clayton English and third year Cadet Sebastian English of Holyoke, Mass., were part of a five-man, West Point squad that competed in the 2025 Northern Warfare Challenge hosted by the ROTC department of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The team won the competition for the second year in a row. Forty-five units from across the country competed against the West Point team. The competition took place in the hill country of Fort McCoy with inches of snow on the ground and sub-freezing temperatures.

“The first day consisted of written and oral tests and demonstration tests of orienteering, mountaineering, winter tactics and survival skills,” the post states. “Saturday dawned with anticipation, as teams embarked on a formidable 12-mile ‘ruck’ (full-pack and rifle hike) through the bluffs, with each squad dragging a ‘body’ on a litter-sled for two of the ... miles.

The ruck culminated at the flagpole atop Grandad Bluff where a bell was rung by each squad upon arrival.

“The Northern Warfare Challenge serves as a crucible for cadets, (See CADETS, Page 5)



ROTC cadets compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge on Feb. 21 at Fort McCoy.



## NEWS

# Fort McCoy establishes Civilian Personnel Office; new team grows capabilities for workforce

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy continues to build its team for personnel management with the newly established Civilian Personnel Office (CIVPO) at the installation.

The office, Fort McCoy Garrison leaders say, will improve capabilities for supporting Department of the Army civilian employees at Fort McCoy, and much more.

CIVPO Chief Ben Finn said the goal of the CIVPO team is to focus on personnel management as it relates to the civilian workforce on Fort McCoy with objectives focused on improving hiring, streamlining processes across the garrison, shoring up communications internally and externally regarding personnel, and assisting with liaising with the Civilian Human Resources Service Center (CHRSC).

“The other important part of this is that the directorates and organizations across Fort McCoy are staffed with fantastic admin teams who perform critical functions internally,” Finn said. “CIVPO is not being built to supplant that but rather integrate into some of those shared efforts from a garrison-wide perspective. We are currently building the full team here.”

The CIVPO will be staff with four people to support the office’s unique mission.

“We have two people now,” Finn said. “This is an exciting time that involves team-building, priority-setting, and all the other important pieces that are required to stand up a brand-new organization.”

The idea for the office grew from an understanding that more support was needed for civilian employees.

“While the Soldier is the primary mission at Fort McCoy, it’s essential to acknowledge that civilians make up the majority of our workforce,” Finn said.

“The CIVPO initiative is a deliberate effort by our senior leaders to prioritize and support this vital asset. As the civilian customer-service landscape continues to evolve within the Army and the government, Fort McCoy is proactively responding to these changes by establishing a dedicated team to provide assistance. Our diverse and talented workforce across the garrison is the backbone of our daily operations, and the CIVPO initiative is looking to support their success in any way possible. By doing so, we can better empower our garrison and contribute to our overall mission.”

The new office is located in Fort McCoy’s new “one stop shop” — building 2187 on the first floor.

“While we are still building up the external-facing part of our team that can provide direct support to the workforce, the hours of operation are essentially when I am in the building. While work to normalize business standards, the best way to reach out would be to call our office at 502-898-5872.”

Finn has been a long-time Fort McCoy employee and knows many members of the workforce from across the garrison. He said he’s looking forward to the office’s possibilities along with coworker Dixie Dettinger and others who eventually will be joining the office.

“I came to Fort McCoy in 2011 as a police officer, but with a 14-month deployment as a service member and an almost four-year (overseas) bid to U.S. Army Garrison Kwajalein Atoll, I started to explore and develop other skills, training, and education that would allow me to broaden my career,” Finn said. This led me to an opportunity to work on an administrative team (outside of law enforcement) in 2020 within the Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services. It was from that position that I offered assistance this past summer to the Civilian Personnel Action Team, which was chartered by the Fort McCoy deputy to the garrison commander to look into the viability of the CIVPO.

“I was part of a great team, and that experience gave me some insight into what was to become the Fort McCoy CIVPO,” Finn said. “Taking the lead on a brand-new initiative like this is exciting and daunting at the same time. It’s exciting in the fact that building something from the ground up is a great challenge; yet, daunting because there are a lot of nuances to the mission of CIVPO, and there is a fine line between gaining efficiencies and creating redundancies.”

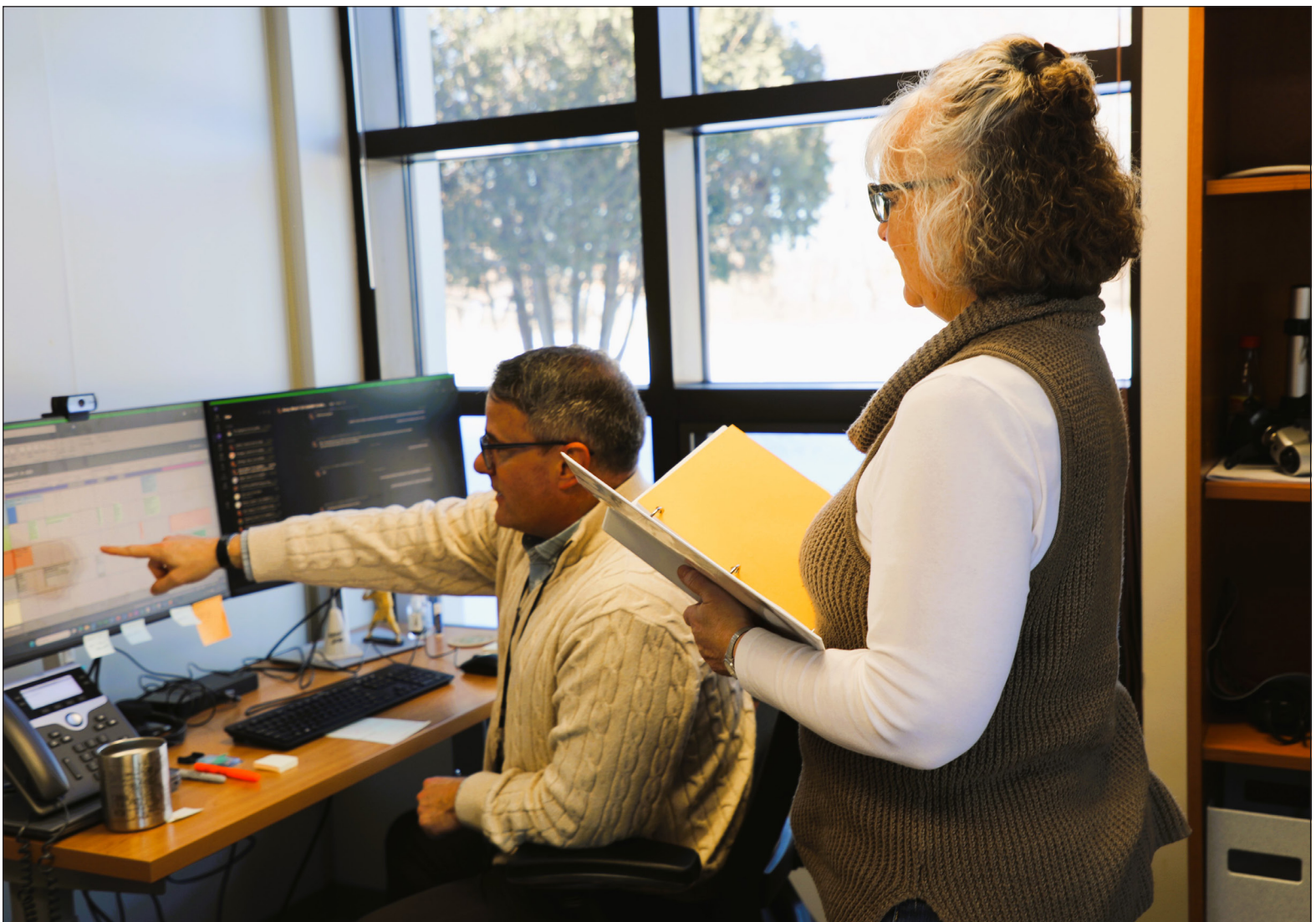
More work has to be done, Finn said, but the mission is important, and he’s looking forward to the future.

“I want to say that I am proud to be part of the



Photos by Melissa Dubois

(Above and below) Fort McCoy Civilian Personnel Office Chief Ben Finn and Management Analyst Dixie Dettinger work on a project Feb. 20 in building 2187 at Fort McCoy.



Fort McCoy mission here, and I ask for patience from the workforce as we settle into this new mission set,” Finn said.

“This team looks forward to serving the civilians and making impacts (however small) where we can. Thanks!”

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Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

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## CADETS

from Page 4

forging bonds of friendship and imparting invaluable lessons in leadership and resilience,” the post states. “It stands as a testament to their unwavering commitment to duty and their pursuit of becoming future army officers.”

In a Facebook post by the University of Illinois at Champaign, the “Fighting Illini ROTC Battalion” was also highlighted at <https://www.facebook.com/FightingIlliniArmyRotc/posts/pfbid02ntCy4E-puCmDmvi8NyxJD1jCw4mtJDawB2ntJciGU3ix3tcjn8d5S9NwP-plYwEQkML>.

“Congratulations to all the hard work and accomplishment of our Fighting Illini Northern Warfare Challenge teams,” the post states. “Our ... cadets traveled north this past weekend to La Crosse, Wis., to compete with over 50 other national ROTC programs. We sent our first ever female NWC team this year, and our men’s team placed 22nd! Great work! On to the next.”

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) Army ROTC program cadets were also featured in a Facebook post at <https://www.facebook.com/EKUArmyROTC/posts/pfbid0KNKb37RY-DASNd3ybS2UyHmZgKkHJmVpPhXSXufGZUp78hEWY9n-7AxcTnpzEf1ml>.

“EKU conducted the qualifying event for the Northern Warfare Challenge this morning at Fort McCoy,” states the post from Feb. 21. “The event consisted of a 4-mile course with multiple event stations that consisted of cloud identification, cold weather gear identification, the cold-weather casualty (sled) pull, cold-weather injury identification, and knot identification. The team completed the event in 1 hour and 1 minute, demonstrating effective collaboration and finishing with strength and determination.”

Lt. Col. Brian Knutson with University of Wisconsin-La Crosse’s Military Science Department said he was glad to see all the cadets competing and enjoying the challenge his “Eagle Battalion” organized.

“The cadets — they absolutely love it,” Knutson said. “Not only do they like coming to cheer on their own teams, but they love seeing all the other schools and getting to compete against them is kind of a highlight for this time of year when not much else is going on.”

The next Northern Warfare Challenge is tentatively planned for February 2026.

Learn more about Army ROTC by visiting <https://armyrotc.army.mil>. Learn more about the ROTC battalion at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse by visiting their Instagram page at <https://www.instagram.com/eaglebattalionarmyrotc>.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching “ftmccoy,” on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching “usagmccoy.”



ROTC cadets compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge on Feb. 21 at Fort McCoy.





NEWS

BARRACKS MOVE

from Page 1

came the center of then-Camp McCoy, these barracks buildings were considered state-of-the-art facilities. On Aug. 30, 1942, during a large open house to show the public all of the new buildings in the “new camp” at McCoy, more than 50,000 people visited.

“The public came. The public saw. The public praised,” states a news article in the Sept. 14, 1942, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at Camp McCoy. “Yes Soldiers, nearly 50,000 persons stared with pop-eyed amazement at the wonders of new Camp McCoy last Sunday when they came as guests in answer to the open house invitation of Camp Commander Col. George M. MacMullin.

“Roads, from every direction from miles around, were jammed with motor vehicles. Our visitors came in automobiles, trucks, taxicabs, and buses — an endless stream — almost bumper to bumper,” the article states. “According to Provost Marshal Capt. Hans R. Biegel, former sheriff of this county, it was the largest crowd of visitors he had ever seen. Expressions of delight at the beautiful buildings were heard on all sides. High praise was sounded at the efficient manner in which traffic was handled through the immense camp area. Not a word of dissatisfaction came from anyone. Members of the post and 732nd Military Police units acted as escorts and street guides were showered with compliments.”

Another article from the Aug. 28, 1942, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper further look at the post’s new cantonment area.

“One of the largest and most modern Army camps, the new Camp McCoy, located further inland than the old one, will offer its personnel the best that any Army camp can afford with its two spacious service clubs, its numerous theaters with its large seating capacity, its chapels, and its unlimited recreational facilities,” the article states.

“The greatest innovation to the personnel no doubt will be the opportunity to dwell in the most modern barracks with the privilege of taking a shower in one’s own home instead of hiking to distant points to cleanse oneself,” the article states.

As these facilities will see a revamping in the future, their movement also opens the old location up for the completion of the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project.

The project description in the contract for that new project states the plan is to build the two buildings based on the standard layout depicted in the Operational Readiness Training Complex.

“This facility is required to replace antiquated World War II-era wood transient training officer quarters currently being utilized to train Soldiers during major exercises, annual training, battle assembly, and mobilization at Fort McCoy,” the description states. “This facility will be designed with the ability to be winterized or deactivated during the winter months. When Fort McCoy is not stood up as a mobilization platform, its primary mission is to support the seasonal requirements of training ... Army Reserve Soldiers. In order to conserve as much energy as possible, while also decreasing the funding necessary to field extended utility costs, this building will be deactivated when it is not being used for training.”

Building moves will continue as conditions permit, officials said.

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Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

Contractors move the second of five World War II-era barracks from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy on Feb. 13 to another area of the installation.



Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

(Above and below, all photos) Contractors move the second of five World War II-era barracks from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy on Feb. 13 to another area of the installation.





NEWS

# Fort McCoy cantonment area look-back: News from 1942 when ‘New Camp McCoy’ premiered new barracks, more

COMPILED FROM HISTORICAL REPORTS

**FROM THE SEPT. 4, 1942, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY:** *Spectators praise new camp site* — The public came. The public saw. The public praised.

Yes Soldiers, nearly 50,000 persons stared with pop-eyed amazement at the wonders of new Camp McCoy last Sunday when they came as guests in answer to the open house invitation of Camp Commander Col. George M. MacMullin.

Roads, from every direction from miles around, were jammed with motor vehicles. Our visitors came in automobiles, trucks, taxicabs, and buses — an endless stream — almost bumper to bumper.

**Largest crowd**  
According to Provost Marshal Capt. Hans R. Biegel, former sheriff of this county, it was the largest crowd of visitors he had ever seen.

Expressions of delight at the beautiful buildings were heard on all sides.

High praise was sounded at the efficient manner in which traffic was handled through the immense camp area. Not a word of dissatisfaction came from anyone. Members of the post and 732<sup>nd</sup> Military Police units acted as escorts and street guides were showered with compliments.

**Monument to freedom**  
It was a great day for the military personnel of Camp McCoy. The Army had constructed a city out of nowhere. A monumental token to freedom had raised its red-top head from a hill-enclosed valley of jack pines and scrub oaks.

Started last March (1942), the new Camp McCoy today is a city of homes, chapels, theaters, recreation halls, garages, and oil stations. It has its stores and barber shops, fire halls and hospitals, training fields and athletic grounds.

It is a new city, sparkling and bright. Soldiers, let's keep it that way.

**FROM THE AUG. 28, 1942, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *A city from nowhere* — A city from nowhere is the new Camp McCoy.

Where once jack pines and scrub oaks only grew — where wild grass filled the fields — where valleys lifted up their chins to become lofty hills — now stands one of America's finest military camps.

The camp, with its hundreds of buildings, theaters, churches, recreation halls, and athletic fields, is a monumental tribute to Army Engineers and the contractors and workmen.

Soon within an area where men a few years ago once hunted deer, fished in its streams, will be thousands of marching feet, marching in cadence which is to be heard around the world.

**Cannon to roar**  
Soon within those majestic hills will be heard the roar of cannon whose echo will beat down with thunder upon the enemies of freedom.

The new Camp McCoy is a new city. A city where one will find determined faces, serious faces, smiling faces, and faces shining from the light of victory to come.

One will not find the slums of congested metropolitan areas in this new Camp McCoy. There, one will not find men hungry and unkept. Instead of stylish and unstylish dress, the men of the newest city of Wisconsin will have a dress of uniform style.

**Open house Sunday**  
Thousands of feet of electrical cables will be carrying electricity within the camp. Thousands of telephones will be used to carry on the business of the city.

Thousands of feet of water mains will carry its fluid to the thirsty. Thousands of feet of sewer pipe will keep the city clean.

And — all this happened in a few months. And — Sunday is your chance to see this new Camp McCoy. The open house, provided by the camp's commanding officer, Col. George M. MacMullin, will permit visitors to travel through the camp in conducted tours from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. that day.

**FROM THE AUG. 28, 1942, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *New Camp McCoy opened for public inspection; thousands are expected* — The new Camp McCoy, the largest military training center in the north central states, will be opened for public inspection (Aug. 30, 1942) Sunday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

This was the announcement of Col. George M. MacMullin, camp commander.

With this announcement, it is expected that thousands of visitors will flock to the new camp area and to facilitate the inspection. Soldiers will conduct caravan tours throughout the new Camp McCoy site.

**Conducted tours**  
The tours will be made under the direction of Lt. Col. Horace L. Rogers, chief of internal security. Cameras will not be permitted within the area and will be checked at the main entrance by all visitors.

Actual building operations at the new area were started March 20, 1942, and was this week that Col. MacMullin received word the new camp was partially completed for occupancy.

**HUGE** is not the name for it. The camp is larger than many of the cities within this territory, and plans for training, according to Col. MacMullin, will bring in more Soldiers than there area civilians in many of the nearby communities.

**Started March 20**  
Actual building and grading operations for the erection of the hundreds of buildings began March 20, 1942, although the original survey by a corps of engineers was made in July 1941. Authorization for construction was given by the War Department on Feb. 9, 1942.

Few civilians have had the opportunity to view this immense training center, although Col. MacMullin has been flooded with requests for permission to visit the new camp. Military regulations prohibited the visits while actual building operations were in progress.

**Of latest design**  
Each of the new buildings is of the most modern design for the comfort and welfare of the Soldiers. All are equipped with the latest scientific appliances.

The first Soldiers to move into the new area were the Camp McCoy Military Police. Hundreds of mechanics of every type and description were employed to grade and construct the hundreds of buildings, warehouses, recreation centers, chapels, and other necessary buildings.

A few months ago, this new camp site was a countryside consisting of beautiful hills and valleys studded with scrub oak, jack pine, and wild grass. Today it is one of the finest military camps in the world.

**FROM THE AUG. 28, 1942, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Soldiers*



U.S. Army Historical Photos

(Above and below, all photos) Images from the building of the “New Camp” at then-Camp McCoy in 1942 are shown along some after completion.



*await moving orders to new McCoy* — Trees to the right of them, trees to the left of them; barracks in front of them; with Mother Nature casting her magic spell all around such will be the future surroundings of those who will move to the new camp area.

One of the largest and most modern Army camps, the new Camp McCoy, located further in-

land than the old one, will offer its personnel the best that any Army camp can afford with its two spacious service clubs, its numerous theaters with its large seating capacity, its chapels, and its unlimited recreational facilities.

The greatest innovation to the personnel no doubt will be the opportunity to dwell in the most

modern barracks with the privilege of taking a shower in one's own home instead of hiking to distant points to cleanse oneself.

So it is with great impatier...that those who are soon to dwell in this Army paradise are awaiting impatiently for their migration to the new Camp McCoy.



NEWS

# South Barracks Project at Fort McCoy reaches past 80 percent complete as March 2025 begins

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

As March 2025 begins, one project at Fort McCoy is listed at three-quarters completed as the Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office stated the fiscal year 2022-funded South Barracks Project was 82 percent done.

That completion percentage is 12 percent above what it was at the beginning of February. The contractor BlindermanPower (Construction) has the building progress on schedule, said Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Fort McCoy in his March 7 update on the project.

Green reviewed the items being worked on in his 61st update on the project.

“Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) rough-in continued,” Green wrote. “MEP trim out continues. Interior sheet rocking continued. Interior sound batting continued. Interior finishing continued.

“Painting continued. Latrine/senior leaders tile work continued. Ceiling grid work continued,” Green stated. “VET flooring preparation and installation continued. Doors and hardware installation continued. Countertops and interior sills work also continued.”

BlindermanPower (Construction) got the contract to build the facility in June 2023 at just over \$28 million. Previous news articles have stated the statement of work for the project states the contractor will make the building be made of “permanent construction with reinforced concrete foundations; concrete floor slabs; structural steel frames; steel stud infill; masonry veneer walls; pre-finished standing seam metal roofing; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning capabilities; plumbing; mechanical systems; and electrical systems. Supporting facilities include land clearing, concrete sidewalk paving, general site improvements, and utility connections.”

Throughout the month of January and February, the contractor has worked through below-zero temperatures, snow, mud, and more.

Green also previously stated the building also is being built with the latest in construction materials and include state-of-the-art physical security and energy-saving measures. The South Barracks Project is the third large barracks to be built on Fort McCoy in the last five years.

It’s part of the ongoing transformation of the 1600 block of the cantonment area of the installation that improves quality of life on the post for decades to come as well as serves as a basis of transformation for the future, officials said.

“The current contract completion date is now Aug. 20, 2025,” Green also wrote.

Construction like this also plays a significant part in the installation’s economic impact throughout communities near Fort McCoy.

When looking back the last five years, Fort McCoy’s economic impact has continuously been \$1 billion or higher every year to local economies. In fiscal year 2019 it was \$1.18 billion, all the way to fiscal year 2023’s \$1.38 billion. That economic impact is expected to be nearly the same or more for fiscal year 2024 as well.

In previous news articles, Fort McCoy leaders have spoken about the importance of the installation’s economic impact. It’s been stated that the installation’s vast training space and facilities attract training opportunities for many units to come to the post, which also affects economic impact.

It’s also been stated how Fort McCoy has 48,000 training acres and 3,000 cantonment acres. The importance of that, as it was shown, means the Army puts a lot of money into the installation, such as millions in new construction like these barracks projects.

Read more about about Fort McCoy’s economic impact by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/465329/fort-mccoys-total-economic-impact-exceeds-138-billion-during-fiscal-year-2023>.

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The construction area for a new \$28.08 million barracks building, known as the South Barracks Project, is shown Feb. 20 at Fort McCoy.



(Left, above, and below) The construction area for a new \$28.08 million barracks building, known as the South Barracks Project, is shown Feb. 28 at Fort McCoy.



The construction area for a new \$28.08 million barracks building, known as the South Barracks Project, is shown March 3 at Fort McCoy.



NEWS

# Fort McCoy's snow-removal team keeps busy during February 2025

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Members of the Fort McCoy snow-removal team have been having a busier time during February 2025 as multiple snow and ice events have come through the installation.

It's well known that winter in Wisconsin can provide all kinds of bad weather, including freezing rain, snow, or sleet at any time or even all in one day. When that happens, the Fort McCoy snow-removal team plows through whatever Mother Nature dishes out.

The team includes the Fort McCoy grounds/snow-removal contractor Kaiyuh Services as well as Directorate of Public Works, or DPW, personnel.

In an email to the installation community, Fort McCoy DPW Director Liane Haun emphasized safety around operators clearing snow as winter continues.

"Plow crews are moving as safely, and efficiently as possible to get to everyone's areas before they come to work," Haun said. "Please be considerate of plowing operations and allow ample room when passing plowing equipment on roadways, intersections, and parking lots. There are blind spots in every piece of equipment, and the operators may not see you as they are concentrating on what they are plowing."

From late January to mid-February 2025, the post has had a series small snow events consistently that has required steady clearing operations. This includes the installation receiving several inches of snow from Feb. 14-15.

Fort McCoy Installation Safety Manager Edson De Leon with the Installation Safety Office reminds everyone to be prepared for cold weather, especially when driving.

"Freezing temperatures and hazardous road conditions are to be expected for the next several months as we go through winter," De



(Above and below) Equipment operators with the Fort McCoy snow-removal contractor, Kaiyuh Services LLC, clear snow Feb. 12 at Fort McCoy.

Leon said in December 2024. "On average, Wisconsin experiences over 18,000 motor vehicle crashes a year. A small percentage of those accidents ends up in a fatality."

So, whether you're doing winter driving in Wisconsin or elsewhere, De Leon said to just be prepared for anything.

"Winter weather conditions make driving more complicated but slowing down, keeping your vehicle properly maintained to handle the conditions, and some basic risk management considerations will help you avoid a winter car accident," De Leon said.

See more about being prepared for winter driving by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/460504/remember-safe-driving-practices-more-during-winter>. Also see more about winter safety by visiting the Army Combat Readiness Center's website at <https://safety.army.mil>.

And also visit <https://www.ready.gov> to learn about building home and vehicle winter safety kits.

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## Challenge Academy's class 54 stays busy with training



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Cadets in the Wisconsin Challenge Academy's Class 54 participate in training March 3 (above) and on Feb. 13 (below) on the cantonment area at Fort McCoy. The Challenge Academy, a Fort McCoy tenant organization, offers youth the opportunity to change the direction of their lives and develop the strength of character and life skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens. The program begins with a 5 1/2-month residential phase, followed by a one-year, post-residential phase.









COMMUNITY

# Invasive species management aids training, improves troop safety

**BY JESSICA SALESMAN**  
*Natural Resources Specialist*  
*Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works*  
*Natural Resources Branch*

National Invasive Species Awareness Week was February 24-28 in 2025. Invasive species cause problems that are important to bring to light — they negatively impact biodiversity, can cause or exacerbate health issues, threaten infrastructure, and cause economic harm.

According to the USDA, economic impacts include direct and indirect effects on property values, agricultural productivity, public utility operations, native fisheries, tourism, and outdoor recreation. In North America, costs exceed an estimated \$26 billion per year, including the cost of control efforts.

What exactly is an invasive species? Invasive species are any species — plant, animal, fungus, even bacteria, that are introduced through human activity to new places outside their native range and thrive to the point of being problematic. The most problematic species on Fort McCoy right now are invasive plants.

On military lands, invasive plant infestations are responsible for damaging infrastructure and equipment and creating safety and security concerns. At Fort McCoy, they impact the quality and availability of training areas and present additional hazards to soldiers training here.

Woody invasive plants including glossy and common buckthorn, autumn olive, barberry, and honeysuckle form dense thickets that are difficult to travel through and reduce the area available for training. The densely branched shrubs also create favorable conditions for ticks, some of which can transmit Lyme disease and other illnesses.

Wild parsnip is a large plant with a yellow umbrella-like flower clusters that can cause blisters and a burning rash when bare skin contacts plants. Leafy spurge plants contain a milky sap that can cause skin rashes and eye damage if it comes in contact with a person's face.

To combat invasive plants, Fort McCoy natural resource staff use an integrated pest management strategy. This is a sustainable approach that combines techniques to minimize economic, environmental, and health risks while being as effective as

possible.

Once we pull together all the background information we need, we can consider what treatments will be the best to use and come up with a plan. Mechanical, chemical, and biocontrol treatments are used in combination with scouting, monitoring, and prevention measures to manage the invasive species infestations we already have and reduce opportunities for new introductions.

Goat grazing is the most recent addition the tools we use. Over the course of several years they will repeatedly strip off leaves and chew on the small stems of many of the woody invasive plants.

Over time the root reserves are exhausted, and plant density decreases to a point where hand cutting and treating with herbicide become the practical final step. Goat grazing leverages our time, is compatible with training activities, and reduces herbicide use.

Fort McCoy also participates in the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group along with Monroe County Land Conservation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources forestry, Monroe County Natural Resource and Extension Committee, Monroe County Highway Department, University of Wisconsin Extension, and dedicated individuals.

Partnerships and information sharing are other ways Fort McCoy fights invasive species on and off the installation. This installation hosts an annual field day at Pine View Campground every June to share information with land owners and interested individuals.

There are successes to report. Vigilance in scouting and finding new plants has prevented the establishment of a handful of species. Purple loosestrife is present, but through targeted control work it never became extensively established within installation wetlands and wild parsnip remains in very localized scattered patches that are easier to keep an eye on.

Knotweed is only present in small amounts at a handful of sites. Although knapweed and leafy spurge are widespread, years of work and the release of biocontrol insects has helped reduce the total population of each dramatically. The goal sometimes isn't eradication but instead reducing the population to the point where it is not causing harm.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

**Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team oversee a prescribed burn March 3 on North Post at Fort McCoy. Prescribed burns are one of the ways the installation combats invasive plant species on the installation.**

Out of all the techniques we use here, prevention is the most efficient and cost-effective way to manage invasive species. The time and money required to keep problematic plants from becoming established is a fraction of what is required once they do become established.

Fort McCoy currently manages about 40 species of invasive plants and every new one strains available resources further.

Everyone can play a role in preventing or slowing the spread of invasive species by practicing the following:

- Check for and remove any seeds or burrs clinging to clothing and clean any mud off boots before heading out hiking or hunting and check again when you leave the trail or move between locations.
- Make sure your vehicle/equipment is free of dirt and debris before heading out to your favorite hunting spot, mountain bike trail, or off-roading location and check again before you leave the site.
- Clean and dry waders, fishing equipment, and watercraft between water bodies.
- Don't move firewood long distances, purchase it where you camp or vacation.
- Avoid planting invasive species in your landscaping. Consider adding native plants as well.
- Volunteer at a local park or with a local invasive species group or citizen science organization to help remove or map invasive species populations.

For more information invasive species management, also check out the following web links:

- Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin, <https://ipaw.org>.
- Wisconsin Invasive Species Rule NR40, <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/invasives/classification>.
- Midwest Invasive Plants Network, <https://www.mipn.org>.
- Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group, <https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/invasive-species-working-group>.
- Play Clean Go, <https://playcleango.org>.
- Clean Drain Dry, <https://stopaquaticinvasivehikers.org/aboutus/#cleandraindry>.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching "usagmccoy."

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Photo by Claudia Neve

**Goats are penned in on the Fort McCoy cantonment area July 9, 2024, eating away at invasive brush species.**



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

**Attendees to the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group Field Day talk to each other about invasive species June 13, 2024, during the event at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy.**



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

**Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood with Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch prepares to dive for invasive water plants June 15, 2023, in West Sandy Lake on South Post at Fort McCoy.**



Contributed photo

**Team members who are part of the Fort McCoy invasive species management complete some work on an area of Fort McCoy on Aug. 14, 2024.**



Contributed photo

**A Fort McCoy invasive species management effort to remove black locust invasive brush is shown at the cantonment area at Fort McCoy on March 4, 2025.**



## ABOUT POST



Contributed photos

### Dr. Seuss Dress Up Week

Children and staff are shown dressed up to celebrate Dr. Seuss on March 6 (left) and March 4 (right) at Fort McCoy Child and Youth Services. The dress up week coincides with Dr. Seuss Week, which is celebrated during Read Across America Week, which is from March 2 to 6, beginning on the birthday of the beloved author, Dr. Seuss. The week is dedicated to promoting literacy, fostering a love of reading, and encouraging creativity among children.



Photos by 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade Public Affairs

### Maj. Justin Hackett Five Stand Competition

(All photos) Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade participate in the first Maj. Justin Hackett Five Stand Competition at the Sparta, Wis., Rod and Gun Club. The Five Stand Competition was named in honor and memory of Maj. Justin Hackett, a valued member of the brigade lost unexpectedly in 2024 who had a passion for Five Stand, and shooting. Hackett was a part of a winning team. In addition to naming the competition in memory of Hackett, his family came down to attend and brought with them a large muskie trophy he had made to hang at the Sparta Rod and Gun Club in remembrance of him. Five Stand is a shotgun sport shooting where five stations, or 'stands', are set up for shooters, and they take shots at clays launched from strategically placed clay target throwers. Each station had a single target, report pair targets (the second clay is launched at the first shot), and true pairs (both targets are launched at the same time). The sport tests both basic and advanced shooting fundamentals, especially because it requires shooters to anticipate moving targets. The 181st Headquarters and Headquarters Company 2 team won the competition with top shooter Tom Bitterman from the brigade S6, who shot 24 out of 25 targets. This was also part of the brigade's 2025 Cabin Fever activities.



### Students with Academy of Excellence of Wisconsin enjoy day at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area



Contributed photos

(All photos) Students with the Academy of Excellence of Wisconsin enjoy a winter sports day Feb. 28 at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area at Fort McCoy. Hundreds of students took time that day to participate in the event at the area. Thousands of people have visited the ski area during the 2024-25 season at one of the few ski operations at an Army installation.



FEATURE

# Wooden box made by German POW during World War II donated to Fort McCoy

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

A small, wooden keepsake box adorned with carvings and the inscription, “Gefangenschaft Amerika 1944,” was donated in late January to the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office for inclusion in the Fort McCoy History Center.

Rosanna Laude, who operates the Upscale Rummage store in Libertyville, Ill., came across the artifact made by a German prisoner of war (POW) from World War II in donations to the shop. In lieu of selling it, because she knew what she had, she contacted the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office and offered to donate it to the post — which it was.

After further inspection and research with staff and archaeologists at Fort McCoy, it was determined the inscription reads, “Imprisonment America 1944.” The lingering question after that was did the German POW make the box at then-Camp McCoy or elsewhere?

Ryan J. Howell, staff archaeologist and cultural resource manager with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch, said German POWs were not only located at Camp McCoy during World War II, but they were also in areas all throughout Wisconsin and northern Illinois, including near Libertyville.

“There were a series of small canning and farm camps scattered across southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois,” Howell said. “That might be a more likely provenance for Libertyville as those camps ran out of Camp Sheridan and Camp Joliet in northern Chicago, not Camp McCoy. But there was a lot of transfers of prisoners back and forth between the two.”

So, was the box made at Camp McCoy during World War II? Maybe, according to Howell. But there’s no concrete evidence to prove otherwise.

But Howell said at the Fort McCoy POW camp areas, which were located on today’s South Post of Fort McCoy, included ways for the POWs to create such keepsakes.

“The German POWs had a wood shop, and the POWs were encouraged to do arts and craft projects in their spare time,” Howell said.

Archaeologists Tyler J. Olsen, Miranda Alexander, and Bill Thompson with the Colorado State University’s (CSU) Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands who work in partnership with Fort McCoy also all found the artifact interesting and contributed to researching its origins.

All of the members of the Fort McCoy archaeology team have spent decades piecing together history of POWs at Fort McCoy through working with local and regional scholars as well as a number of research institutions.

In 2023, Aaron R. Schmidt, Carey L. Baxter, and Kayley R. Schacht with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center and the Construction Engineering Research Laboratory released information from a study in a report about Camp McCoy’s former POW mission.

In their report, they give a summary about German POWs at the installation.

“German POWs comprised the largest group of prisoners at Camp McCoy from December 1943 to June 1944, when there was an average of three to four times as many Germans as Japanese,” the report states. “The tide shifted dramatically from July 1944 to October 1945 when a wave of Japanese POWs entered the camp. During this period, German prisoners only represented a small fraction of the total POW population. The tide shifted again in October 1945 when the War Department removed all of the Japanese POWs from Camp McCoy. Due to this exodus, Germans once again represented the largest (and only) nationality of POWs from October 1945 until June 1946 when the POW program ended.”

The report also mentioned some things about how POWs spent their off-work time while in camp.

“When work was done for the day, or for those POWs not required to work, off-duty hours were spent in a variety of physical, social, artistic, and intel-lectual pursuits,” the report states. “Camp administrators made sure the prisoners were supplied with the materials they needed to keep them acceptably occupied in their free time. ...

“At Camp McCoy, all of the POWs enjoyed a variety of recreational activities,” the report states. “Organizations like the YMCA provided supplies and equipment for hobbies, sports, and religious services. ... The POWs also enjoyed participating in fine arts. The Japanese regularly created arts and crafts projects from the items they found at camp. The most popular materials included cigarette paper and rice water, which the Japanese used to make paper flowers for the mess hall tables. They also enjoyed watercolor painting, using brushes, inks, and paints supplied by the YMCA. The Koreans also enjoyed arts and crafts and even planned to make small Korean flags that the POWs could wave when they returned home.”

The donated wooden box will make its way to the POW display at the Fort McCoy History Center at a later date. The Fort McCoy History Center, located in the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area,



Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

(Above and below) A small, wooden keepsake box adorned with carvings and the inscription, “Gefangenschaft Amerika 1944,” is shown Feb. 12 at Fort McCoy. The box was donated in late January 2025 to the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office for inclusion in the Fort McCoy History Center.



has numerous items recalling the POW experience of World War II at McCoy. Also, throughout several areas of Fort McCoy, there are posted placards where the POW encampments were once located.

Read more about the Camp McCoy history about POWs by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/462304/fort-mccoy-artifact-reviewing-prisoner-war-camp-history-world-war-ii-camp-mccoy>, or <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/451703/fort-mccoy-artifact-new-research-fort-mccoys-world-war-ii-era-prisoner-war-camp>.

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 “ftmccoy,” on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching “usagmccoy.”

Also try downloading the My Army Post 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.”



Photo courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Photo Collection

Prisoners of war at Camp McCoy prepare for work detail in the in early 1940s. McCoy served as one of many locations in the United States to host POWs during World War II.

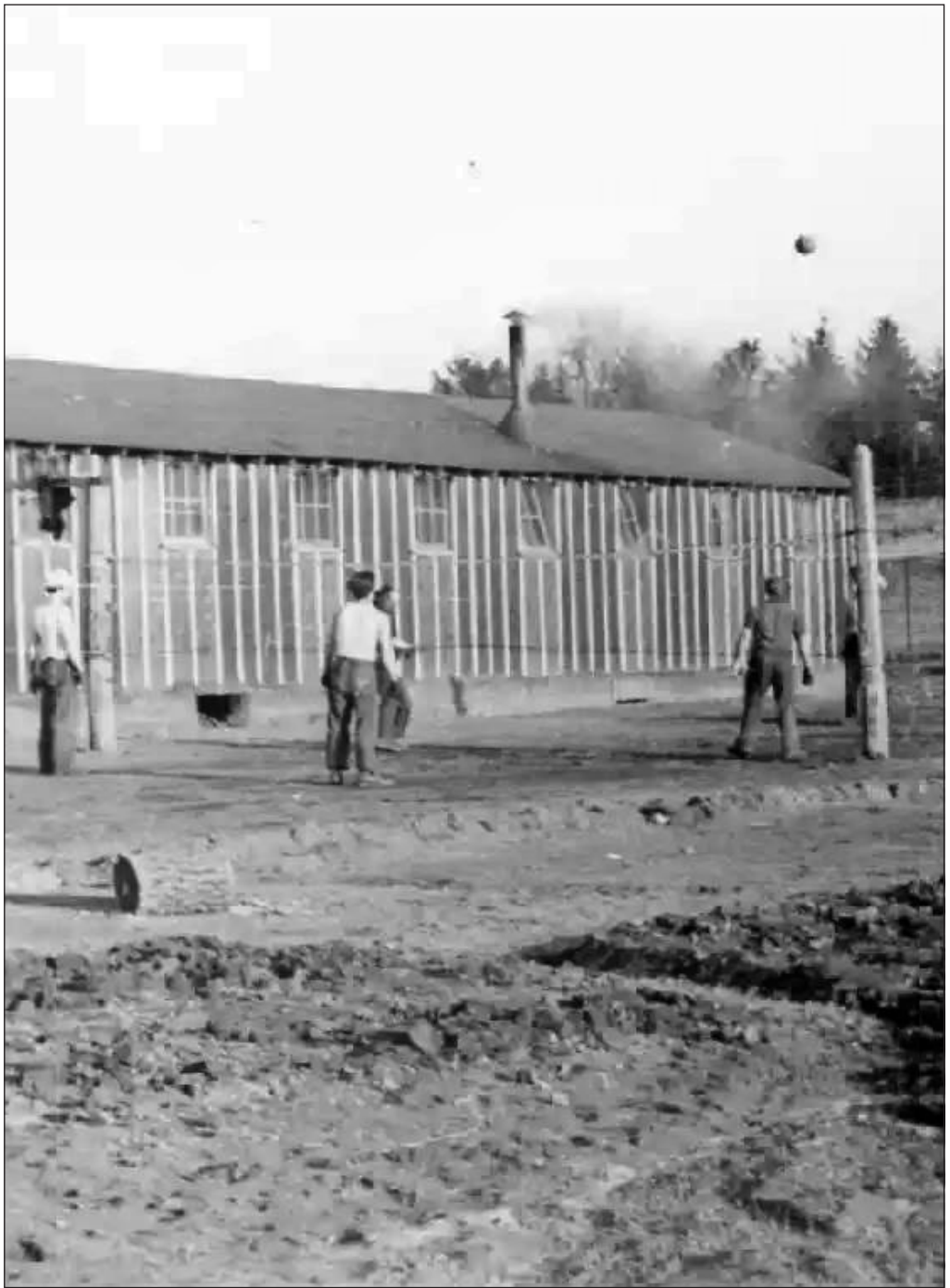



Photo courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Photo Collection

Prisoners of war at Camp McCoy get exercise during an undermined day in 1942. McCoy served as one of many locations in the United States to host POWs during World War II.



## NEWS NOTES/FACILITIES


Honor your hero. Be a hero. **Donate blood.**


 **American  
Red Cross**

**Blood Drive**  
**Fort McCoy**  
**NCOA Building 1363**  
Grad Hall  
1363 S 10th St

**Friday, March 21, 2025**  
**9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: NCOA to schedule an appointment.

  
Scan to be directed to  
RedCross.org

  
Scan to schedule  
an appointment.



# PCS Open House

**PCSing from Fort McCoy?**  
**Your next move starts here!**

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FOLLOWING AREAS WILL BE ON-SITE:**

- ACS Relocation Services
- ACS (Accepted Family Member Program)
- Personal Property Processing Office (Household Goods Movement)
- UIC: Transportation Passenger Movement Section
- DFPM Housing Office
- DHR Military Personnel Division
- MWR-CVS School Liaison Officer

Info tables, children's relocation materials, maps, and other relocation items will also be available.

**March 19, 2025**  
**11 am to 1 pm**  
**McCoy's Community Center (B1571)**

***For more information, please call ACS at 902-498-2159.***

ACS means the Army Military Service, Culture and Morale. Family Readiness is a mission to support the Army's Soldiers, units, and communities. We are committed to providing the best possible support to our Soldiers and their families. We are committed to providing the best possible support to our Soldiers and their families. We are committed to providing the best possible support to our Soldiers and their families.

For information on upcoming housing opportunities through ACS, please call 902-498-2159 or visit [www.army.mil/housing](https://www.army.mil/housing). Community use only and not for ACS Calendar.







501-858-2159 | [www.mccoy.army.mil](http://www.mccoy.army.mil)

**\*ALL PHONE NUMBER AREA CODE & PREFIXES HAVE CHANGED 502-898-xxxx.**

Last 4 digits remain the same.

**\*This applies to all numbers using 608-388-xxxx**

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Since November 2024, all phones at Fort McCoy no longer have the 608-388 phone area code and prefix. All phones now begin with 502-898.

See a complete list of Fort McCoy phone numbers by visiting the phone book on the Fort McCoy website at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy/contact/phonebook>.

**Next issue of The Real McCoy**  
The March 2025 edition of The Real McCoy will be published April 11. The deadline for submissions or article ideas is April 2, 2025.

If your unit is at Fort McCoy for training, you have some award-winning people, or if you have something newsworthy, please pass it along to the newspaper staff. For more information, call 502-808-4128.

Firearms are required to be registered prior to entrance or immediately upon entering any lands identified as Fort McCoy property. For more information, call 502-898-2266.



# THIS MONTH IN FORT MCCOY HISTORY

Fort McCoy, Wis., was established in 1909. Here is a look back at some installation history from March 2025 and back.

**80 Years Ago — March 1945**  
**FROM THE MARCH 3, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Prep buddies meet again at McCoy; vet's bravery earned medal (By Newspaper Staff)* — Coming to Camp McCoy for reconditioning proved a happy event for Pvt. Julie Gross, a wounded veteran of action in France, for it was here that he met a high school buddy, Cpl. Mickey Sharp, of the Special Services Office who is recognized as one of the Army's top entertainers.

Gross, a member of the 3rd Armored Division, has been in service for a year and a half. He was overseas from July 1943 until last October (October 1944). His outfit landed in France on D-Day and he was hit July 10 near St. Lo while rescuing a wounded man.

Gross was awarded the Silver Star medal for his bravery in attempting what appeared to be an impossible rescue. A medical aid man with the 3rd Armored, Gross went to the rescue of an observer whose left arm was almost shot off and was screaming in pain about 100 yards from Gross' position.

Gross came to within a few yards of the man when he himself was hit by fire from the hedge rows. The impact of the bullet flung him next to the wounded man and despite a bad leg, Gross managed to crawl along with the wounded man for nearly 25 yards. He stopped the wounded man's bleeding and also his own.

An officer, driving out in an M-4 tank, rescued the men.

## High school sports star

Before his entry into the armed forces, Gross was an athletic star at John Marshall High School in Chicago where he played basketball and football, captaining a championship quintet. He taught physical education at the Settlement House before donning khaki.

He hopes to do similar work when his fighting days are over. He came to McCoy from Gardiner General Hospital where he assisted in the Special Services Office. His fighting career included tours of duty at Camp Polk, La.; the Desert Training Center, Calif.; Camp Barkley, Texas; Indiantown Gap, Penn.; and Camp Picket, Va.

**FROM THE MARCH 10, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Quality work makes McCoy laundry one of best in U.S.; starching sun tan uniforms inaugurated (By Newspaper Staff)* — "Quality work" is the motto at the Camp McCoy laundry.

Orders issued at a conference of Army laundry officials from the Sixth Service Command last week in Chicago stressed high quality workmanship over quantity production, Capt. Louis Day, laundry officer, reported. Along with Lorenz Hackbarth, chief clerk, Capt. Day represented McCoy at the meeting.

As a result, Camp McCoy's laundry hereafter will give all officers' and enlisted men's clothes service equal or better than the best commercial laundry work, Capt. Day explained. The post laundry will in the future, he said, add such quality services as starching all summer khaki uniforms and complete quality pressing of all items, except fatigues.

**FROM THE MARCH 10, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Camp McCoy really getting old — trained mom, now daughter (By Newspaper Staff)* — Camp McCoy is really getting old.

Though the (new) camp is only two-and-a-half years old, it already has the distinction of having in training today a woman whose mother trained here as a nurse.

Lt. Arlynn C. Knapp, an Army Nurse Corps recruit, receiving her basic training at station hospital nurses center, is the stepdaughter of Lt. Myra E. Knapp, who was stationed here with the 17th General Hospital and has been serving overseas with that unit for nearly two years.

**FROM THE MARCH 17, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** Battle honors for 978th Engineers — McCoy units fighting Nazis (By Newspaper Staff) — After 25 weeks of action against the Germans, the 978th Engineer Maintenance Company, activated at Camp McCoy, has received several commendations for action under "extremely difficult conditions" and has had two of its members recommended for the Bronze Star medal.

Officers and enlisted men of the company were unanimous in their choice of Camp McCoy as "the camp I would like to return for discharge."

Members of the unit declared "excellent training facilities afforded by Camp McCoy have been an invaluable asset in the combat zone."

Removal of a wrecker blocking the approach to a river crossing under direct artillery fire brought recommendations for the Bronze Star medal for Pvts. August Thaler and Clarence Davidson. Both were wounded by a mine blast during the operation. Though injured, Thaler helped evacuate Davidson and then assisted the bridging units until ordered to the rear.

**FROM THE MARCH 17, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Sergeant major's son killed in Iwo Jima battle (By Newspaper Staff)* — Word was received Wednesday by

## Nurses Have Victory Incentive

### Kin of 2 Prisoners of War

1945

Three of the Army Nurse corps recruits at Camp McCoy have an added incentive to help speed victory.

Lt. Marian Doyle Ryno, 1385 Penn. Av., NE, Grand Rapids, Mich., reports her husband, S. Sgt. Charles A. Ryno Jr., is a prisoner of war in Germany. Sgt. Ryno has been awarded the Air medal and oak leaf cluster. Presentation of these awards will be made to Lt. Ryno at a future date.

In addition, Lt. Ryno's brother, Lt. L. A. Doyle, is with the Navy somewhere in the Pacific.

Another of the nurse recruits, Lt. Janice M. Hall, Norway, Ia., is anxiously waiting for word concerning her brother who has been a prisoner of the Japs in the Manila region since March of 1942.

Lt. Adrian Van Boven called March 11 her "happiest" birthday because it meant another step toward fulfillment of her dream of returning to the Netherlands some day for a reunion with her father and eight brothers and sisters. A brother and a sister-in-law served in World War I.

THE REAL MCCOY — Saturday, March 17, 1945

Master Sgt. Edward H. Shermacher, post sergeant major, that is son, Cpl. Edward C. Shermacher, 21, was killed in action on Iwo Jima.

Cpl. Shermacher, a Marine paratrooper, had seen combat duty on the New Georgia Islands battling Japanese forces at Vella LaVella and Choiseul. Prior to invasion of Iwo, he participated in several raids on Japan-held islands.

Cpl. Shermacher, who visited his dad here last March, enlisted in November 1942. In addition to his father, Cpl. Shermacher is survived by his mother, three sisters, and three brothers.

**FROM THE MARCH 17, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *McCoy Soldiers save Sparta man from icy death (By Newspaper Staff)* — Two Camp McCoy Soldiers were credited with helping save a 70-year-old Sparta man this week.

The men, Pvts. Herbert L. Hayes and Marlon Sellers, who reside in Sparta, heard screams for help, called a taxi, and went to Perch Lake's south shore nearby where they found Furman Shaw, 70, hanging on to the ledge of ice about 100 feet from shore.

They summoned police aid and with the help of a 50-foot rope managed to pull Shaw from the icy waters. Shaw was taken to St. Mary's hospital suffering from shock but reported in good condition.

Shaw had been on his way to Milwaukee Road depot and had taken the shortcut across the frozen lake. He fell through the ice and then in confusion walked the wrong way. Hayes and Sellers are at the station hospital as members of the detachment of patients.

**FROM THE MARCH 24, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Half a million seedling pines to be planted here (By Newspaper Staff)* — A half million seedling pine trees will be planted at Camp McCoy this spring, Lt. Col. H.E. Fillinger, post engineer, announced this week.

The trees, including 410,000 Norway pines, 78,600 jack pines, and 12,700 white pines, are being provided without cost, except for transportation to the camp by the Wisconsin Conservation Department, he explained. Word that the trees are available was received from W. H. Brenner, state forestry nursery manager, Griffith State Nursery, Wisconsin Rapids.

The white and jack pines will be trucked in Army vehicles from the Wisconsin Rapids nursery and the Norway pines from the state nursery at Trout Lake, Col. Fillinger said.

Planting will begin in early April under the direction of Ray Bufton, post agronomist. It is scheduled for completion about the middle of May.

Purpose of the tree-planting program is reforestation of cut-over and bare lands as a future source of timber, to control wind erosion of soil, to replace dead timber growths, to provide protection of roadways from drifting snow, and to provide windbreaks, Col. Fillinger said.

## 40 Years Ago — March 1985

**FROM THE MARCH 7, 1985, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER:** *Demolition exercise benefits post wildlife (By Lou Ann Mittelstaedt)* — It seems somewhat odd that demolition training could benefit the installation's natural resources since the very meaning of demolition is to destruct or ruin.

But recently, members of the 1st Training Support Brigade, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and the 36th Engineer Group, Fort Benning, Ga., participated in demolition exercises that will benefit the post as part of the units' winter training here.

The demolition work left holes in the earth 30 to 50 feet wide and three to four feet deep which will fill in with water in the spring, creating what the units refer to as "duck ponds" and what the post biologist more accurately defines as "potholes."

"Actually, the areas are too small to have nesting value for ducks because they need more space," said Kim Mello, post biologist. "However, ducks do use these areas for resting. We may try to tie some of the potholes together to create an island effect and maybe then we'll see some nesting."

"Through the blasting we're trying to reclaim a natural area which was once good wildlife habitat but has lost its ability to hold surface water due to plant succession," Mello said.

Plant succession occurs when more plant activity exists and when sedimentation from aging plants encroaches on a wetland area. It is this filling-in of the area that lessens its ability to hold water.

A wetland can't rejuvenate itself and therefore other means must be used to reclaim these areas. Blasting is one effective method.

"Units benefit from valuable training with explosives and wildlife resources benefit from the opening up of areas for water," Mello said. "We've really been excited about this type of project."

The blasting began in 1979 when the 88th Explosive Ordnance Detachment blasted three potholes.

Two days after the first blasting Mello went back to the site to see how much water had filled into the area.

"It was really amazing because in that short time frogs had actually moved into the area and we found raccoon and deer tracks around the edges," Mello said. "It doesn't take long for wildlife to find these areas and make use of them, and most every pothole put in so far is holding water well."

About 40 potholes had been blown or excavated since then. Between 20 and 40 additional potholes were scheduled to be blown, primarily on south post during the unit's winter training exercise.

**FROM THE MARCH 21, 1985, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER:** *Alaskan soldiers evaluate brigade's training (By Lou Ann Mittelstaedt)* — When 113 soldiers arrived at Fort McCoy their objective wasn't to train. The members of the 172nd Light Infantry Brigade (Separate), an active Army unit from Forts Richardson and Wainwright, Alaska, were here to watch.

"Our primary role was to evaluate the annual training for the 205th Infantry Brigade (Separate Light)," said Capt. Larry Lambert, assistant operations officer for the 172nd. "The secondary mission was providing them with active component support and an opposing force for their field training exercise," he added.

The 172nd had these roles because the 205th is their Army Reserve counterpart.

"We evaluated everything the 205th did for the entire two weeks—from the time their convoys arrived until the time the convoys departed," Lambert said. "The major things we looked for when evaluating the brigade were training, maintaining, caring and leading," he said.

"The 205th accomplished all the objectives they had planned prior to their annual training, and some went well, some not so well," Lambert said. "Anytime that you're able to sit back and observe it's not hard to pick up on things someone does."

## 30 Years Ago — March 1995

**FROM THE MARCH 17, 1995, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Ambitious summer schedule lies ahead (By Newspaper Staff)* — Early projections indicate a busy summer training season at Fort McCoy, according to the Reserve Component Support Branch of the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS).

Claude Gillam of the Reserve Component Support Branch said weekend (MUT) training began picking up in March. Annual training (AT), or two-week training, figures will pick up in May with 3,055 Soldiers projected.

June and July appear to be the busiest of the months with expected monthly totals in the 7,000-to-9,000 range. Numbers for weekend training (listed first) and AT are as follows:

- March — 7,321; 288
- April — 11,903; 1,444
- May — 13,666; 3,055
- June — 1,599; 7,486
- July — 1,484; 8,973
- August - 3,276; 4,111
- September — 4,314; 327, and,
- October — 4,065; (no AT confirmed.)

The weekend figures are likely to fluctuate, and the final totals probably will be higher, Gillam said. Units often make reservations for this training on short notice.

## 20 Years Ago — March 2005

**FROM THE MARCH 11, 2005, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER:** *Army Reserve Soldier awarded Silver Star for Iraq heroism (By Staff Sgt. Chris Farley)* — FORT McCoy, Wis. — Spc. Jeremy Church's platoon sergeant said he wasn't surprised to see Church be awarded the Silver Star.

Church, a member of the 724th Transportation Company from Bartonville, Ill., returned with his unit Wednesday, Feb. 25 from a 14-month deployment to Iraq.

Two days later, after the unit permanently arrived back on American soil, more than 440 family members and 130 Soldiers from the 724th gathered at Fort McCoy to witness Church become the

first Army Reserve Soldier to be awarded the third highest medal, the Silver Star for heroic actions during the Global War on Terrorism. Lt. Gen. James Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve, pinned the medal on Church during a homecoming ceremony at Fort McCoy, Wis.

"He deserves it. He did some amazing things out there on that day. He helped save a lot of lives that could have been lost without his initiative," said Sgt.

1st Class David R. Groff, 2nd platoon leader of the 724th Transportation Company.

According to Groff, April 9, 2004 was the day that Church performed remarkably. It was a day that Church labeled "rough" for the unit.

Two 724th Soldiers, Sgt. Elmer Krause and Pfc. Gregory Goodrich, made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives in a battle with enemy insurgents whose numbers were estimated to exceed 150 personnel when the 724th convoy was attacked.

Spc. Keith "Matt" Maupin of the 724th was captured during the battle and remains missing today. Church was 1st Lt. Matt Brown's, the convoy commander, driver in the lead vehicle for an emergency fuel mission to Baghdad International Airport. During the mission, the convoy was attacked by Madri Militia enemy insurgents. According to the medal citation, as soon as then Pfc. Church's vehicle entered the kill zone, enemy insurgents attacked from built-up areas with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), improvised explosive devices (IEDs), machine guns and assault rifles.

Church drove aggressively to avoid detonating IEDs and hitting objects placed by the enemy to slow the convoy. Within minutes of entering the kill zone, Brown was shot twice in the head by and enemy sniper. Prior to the convoy, Church had said Brown was very adamant that he learn the convoy commander's job because there might be a day when he'd have to take over the position for some reason, and on April 9 that day came.

Church immediately grabbed Brown's first-aid pouch and instructed him to apply the bandage while he continued to drive. An IED exploded and blew out his front tire. Church continued to engage the enemy with his M-16A2 while he navigated his vehicle on three functioning tires.

Church led the convoy for four miles into a secured perimeter established by a cavalry company from 2nd, 12th Cavalry.

He then carried Brown out of the vehicle for immediate medical attention and medical evacuation, according to the citation.

"I knew I had the entire convoy behind me and I knew they were following me. They needed me to get them out of there," Church said.

Church then rallied Soldiers in the secured area and went back into the kill zone. Returning to the fire fight Church had just left, the Soldiers launched an immediate recovery mission to aid other Soldiers and civilians pinned down by enemy fire.

Church identified the assistant commander's vehicle among the wreckage of burning fuel trucks and found two wounded Soldiers and four civilian truck drivers. Church immediately set up a hasty triage and administered first aid to a Soldier that had a sucking chest wound.

He applied a bandage and carried the Soldier over to one of the recovery vehicles while exposing him self to enemy fire, according to the citation.

According to the citation, once the wounded were loaded there wasn't enough room for Church to get in.

Church instructed the cavalry troopers to take the wounded back to the casualty collection point and he would wait for their return. Ten minutes later the recovery team would return and take Church from the kill zone. Church credits his survival and success on that day to his military police background and unit leadership.

"My primary MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) is military police. So basically, I credit that," Church also said, "The unit kept on us all the time so we were always ready to go and professional when we went outside the gates. We were always mission oriented."

But the military police background almost stopped him from deploying with the 724th. "He needed a general officer waiver because he had a MOS that didn't fit into the UMR (Unit Manning Report)," said Capt. Joseph Huber, S-3 operations officer of the 336th Transportation Group.

Huber said Church was a good fit for the unit and the 88M (Motor Transport Operator) MOS because he was licensed on all the vehicles and knew all the weapon systems. This gave Huber justification to sign and send forth a packet to have Brig. Gen. Michael W. Beasley, commanding general of the 88th Regional Readiness Command, sign off on and grant a waiver for Church's deployment.

"I was actually very pleasantly surprised when Lt. Brown came back and thanked me that I signed that waiver for Specialist Church because of the fact he saved his life," said Huber. For Sandy Hankins, Church's mother, she was happier just for him to get back to the United States. Hankins watched the medal ceremony with Church's sister, Ashley, and father, Curt.

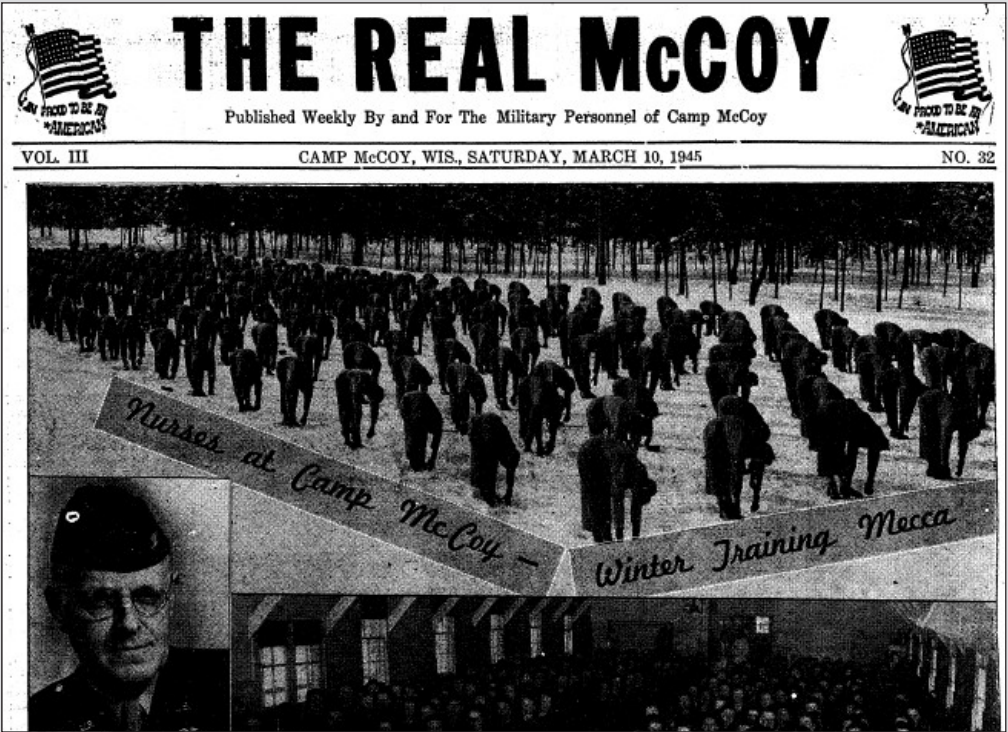
"I'm extremely proud of him. I actually can't articulate in words how I feel about the whole thing right now," said Hankins after Church was awarded the Silver Star. Hankins also said, "It hit me more just listening to someone reading the citation other than me reading it myself."

## 10 Years Ago — March 2015

**FROM THE MARCH 11, 2015, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** See THIS MONTH IN HISTORY, Page 16

## Distinguished Service Cross to 2nd's Gen. Robertson

Presentation of the Distinguished Service Cross to Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson, commanding general of the 2nd Infantry division, was made recently by Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges, commander of the American 1st Army. Gen. Robertson received the award for his extraordinary heroism in action against the German threat at the start of the Nazi's counteroffensive. He personally directed the defense of the right flank of his division, Robertson, fully aware of the urgency of the situation, personally assumed command of the defense of a vital road junction and delayed the enemy long enough for his troops to take up defensive positions. Braving intense artillery and direct tank fire, Robertson remained within complete observation of the enemy in order to supervise the disposition of his troops and direct their fire. Many German tanks were destroyed and the armored thrust in this direction was thwarted. Gen. Robertson repeated this action in another sector later. The citation concludes: "Constantly exposed to intense fire from tanks, machine guns and small arms, by his personal direction and calm and collective demeanor, Robertson successfully rallied his men to hold their ground tenaciously."





## HISTORY/COMMUNITY

# Fort McCoy communicators earn awards in 2024 IMCOM Communications-Public Awards competition

The Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office earned two unit-level awards in the 2024 Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Communications and Public Awards competition that was completed in January. A member of the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office also earned one award.

### Open house event recognized

First, the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office earned the award for Best Community Engagement Event in Category B: Community Relations Special Event. The special event highlighted for the award was the 2024 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House.

This category recognizes a specific event that supported a command community relations program. Entries were submitted as a five-page pdf packet and included communication objectives, description of the planning process, details of execution of the event, measures of effectiveness, and overall value to the Army.

Contributors recognized for the award include **Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell**; **Senior Public Affairs Specialist Scott T. Sturkol**; **Public Affairs Specialist Claudia Neve** (now in Germany); **Public Affairs Specialist Christopher Jones** (now in California); **Lt. Col. James Ontiveros**, public affairs contributor and civil affairs officer; and **Robin Michalski**, Fort McCoy Commemorative Area caretaker.

An estimated audience of nearly 4,000 visitors participated in the 2024 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House on May 18, 2024, at Fort McCoy, which included a Vietnam veterans welcome home ceremony, Army band performances, numerous military vehicle static displays, bus tours, and much more.

The day's activities were centered on the Commemorative Area from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., which features the History Center; five World War II-era buildings filled with historical equipment and displays, the outdoor Equipment Park, and Veterans Memorial Plaza.

Within the Commemorative Area, there were dozens of displays set up under tents for more interactive fun. Planned activities included guided installation bus tours, a sandbag-filling station, personalized ID tags, camouflage face painting, military equipment displays, marksmanship galleries, the special ceremony honoring Vietnam veterans, and more.

Read more about the 2024 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House at <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/472192/thousands-visit-post-2024-armed-forces-day-open-house-fort-mccoy>.

### The Real McCoy newspaper wins

The Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office was also won an award for IMCOM Best Printed Publication for Category D: Printed Publication. The award was given for the Aug. 23, 2024, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper.

This category is for printed Department of Defense publications — including newspapers, newsletters or magazines — that support the command's information mission. Publications considered for this category include those that are printed by a commercial publisher

under an exclusive contract with the command using appropriated funds, or those printed using the commercial-enterprise concept.

The Aug. 23, 2024, edition of The Real McCoy was a 10-page edition of the paper and can be found online at <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/71702>. This edition included coverage of the 86th Training Division's Combat Support Training Exercise 86-24-02, a visit by the new Chief of the Army Reserve, troop project work by the 612th Engineer Detachment, various visits and events, and August installments of the Fort McCoy ArtFACT and This Month in History.

**Sturkol served as the editor for the newspaper as he has for more than a decade. Additional contributors were Townsell, Neve, and Jones from the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office.** In the edition of the paper for photography support, **Photographer Amanda Clark** with the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office and **Staff Sgt. Trenton Lowery** with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade Public Affairs contributed several photos that were published.

### Graphic arts winner

**Graphic Designer Kendra Pierce** with the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office was the third winner from Fort McCoy in the competition, winning in Category A: Layout and Design for graphic arts.

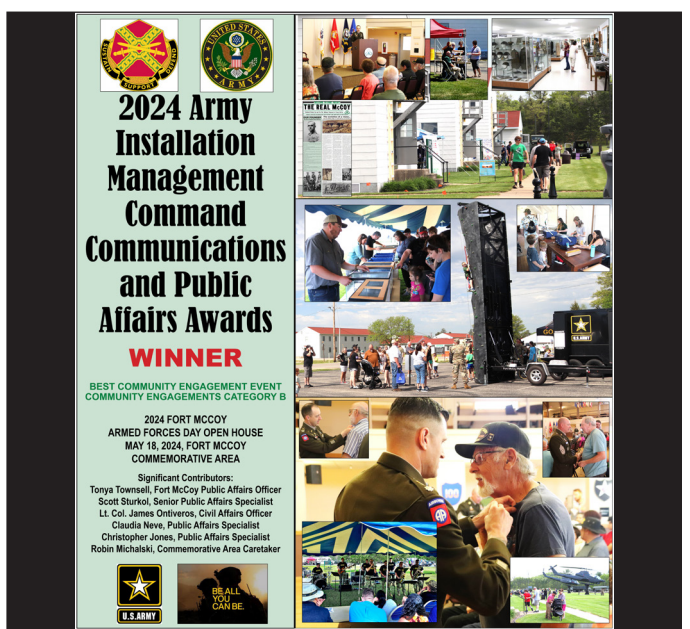
This category required submitting single- or two-page layouts created using elements from various sources. Examples include info charts, infographics, flyers, certificates, CD covers, cover art, and posters.

Pierce's entry was a backdrop design used by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security. It features photos of training at Fort McCoy, highlighting the installation's motto to be the Total Force Training Center. It can be seen at <https://www.dvidshub.net/graphic/33122/dptms-tradeshow-backdrop>.

In a message to the command announcing the winners of the competition, IMCOM Commanding General, Lt. Gen. Omar Jones sent well wishes to all who competed. "Please join me in congratulating a special group of IMCOM professionals," the message states. "IMCOM public affairs professionals from 29 garrisons worldwide entered 312 pieces of content into 22 categories. Their work reflects excellence in sharing and communicating the Army's story around the globe. The work of these civilian and military writers, editors, photographers, videographers, and graphic designers was distinguished from that of their peers by a panel of eight judges who were instructed to pick the top two entries in each category.

"Winners at the IMCOM level have advanced to the next level of competition, administered by the (Army Materiel Command)," the message states. "The top winners in all categories will be selected and announced by the U.S. Army Office of the Chief of Public Affairs later this year, and those winners will then compete at the Department of Defense level. ... Thank you to all our Army communicators!"

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office.)



## THIS MONTH IN FORT MCCOY HISTORY

**Marines hold exercise at Fort McCoy (By Scott T. Sturkol)** — More than 20 members of Marine Air Control Group (MACG) 48 of Great Lakes, Ill., participated in a four-day cold-weather training exercise on Fort McCoy's North Post.

The late-February exercise was led by two instructors from the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) of Bridgeport, Calif. It focused on over-the-snow mobility tactics and techniques to train members for operations in mountainous, high-altitude, and cold-weather environments.

"We taught them a very basic introduction to cold-weather operations," said Instructor Staff Sgt. Jaime Soto. "We taught them basic mobility on snowshoes and skis and how to best utilize the cold-weather equipment they were issued."

Soto said there was "just enough" snowcover to practice the snowshoe and ski familiarization. The sub-zero temperatures also helped. "We could have used deeper snow, but as far as the temperature, it was right on the mark," he said.

The Marines learned how to correctly carry a rucksack packed with skis, ski poles, and snowshoes along with personal gear. They also participated in pre-environmental training classes about cold-weather and mountain safety, survival techniques, warfighting loads and equipment, and cold-weather injury prevention and treatment.

"Unlike the Army, the Marine Corps doesn't have units that are specifically assigned to oper-

ate in cold-weather and mountain environments," said Gunnery Sgt. Marshall Cleveland, an MWTC instructor. "So, this training helps prepare Marines for those harsh, cold-weather Marines hold exercise at Fort McCoy.

Members of Marine Air Control Group 48 of Great Lakes, Ill., line up in formation to begin over-the-snow mobility tactics and techniques Feb. 27 as part of cold-weather training at Fort McCoy. Marines practice using cross-country skis.

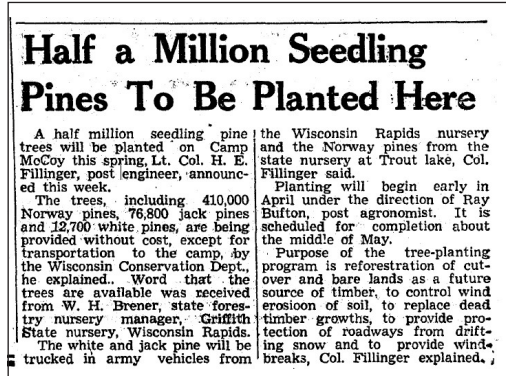
Maj. Andrew Carl, MACG 48 logistics officer, said the skills learned during training are valuable to a Marine's ability to "go anywhere."

"We came here to do this as a unit because we haven't done it in a long time," Carl said. "As Marines, we need to be prepared to fight in every climate. Also, Marines must always train and refine their warfighting skills, and this was another opportunity to accomplish that."

Gunnery Sgt. Jorge Sanchez, the supply and fiscal chief for MACG 48, recalled his first time completing cold-weather training.

"I completed that training as an active-duty Marine, right here at Fort McCoy back in '92," Sanchez said. "We went from here to the MWTC, and then to Norway. In the training, you learn important things to remember, such as you still need to hydrate. Your body doesn't know as well that it needs hydration during cold weather."

"You also learn that you need sunscreen because you can also get sunburn even though it's cold out-



Half a Million Seedling Pines To Be Planted Here

A half million seedling pine trees will be planted on Camp McCoy this spring, Lt. Col. H. E. Fillingier said. The trees, including 410,000 Norway pines, 76,800 jack pines and 12,700 white pines, are being provided without cost, except for transportation to the camp, by the Wisconsin Conservation Dept., nursery manager. Griffs said the trees are available was received from W. H. Brenner, state forestry nursery, Wisconsin Rapids. The white and jack pine will be trucked in army vehicles from the Wisconsin Rapids nursery and the Norway pines from the state nursery at Trout Lake, Col. Fillingier said.

Planting will begin early in April under the direction of Ray Buflon, post agronomist. It is scheduled for completion about the middle of May.

Purpose of the tree-planting program is reforestation of cut-over and bare lands as a future source of timber, to control wind erosion of soil, to replace dead timber growth, to provide protection of roadways from drifting snow and to provide windbreaks, Col. Fillingier explained.

side," Sanchez said. Many of the Marines said they appreciate the proximity of Fort McCoy.

"Fort McCoy is just a short drive for us, and the training areas here are very good," Carl said. "Additionally, the Fort McCoy staff is very user-friendly and accommodating for everything we do."

Cleveland added, "I would recommend to other instructors at the Mountain Warfare Training Center to come (to Fort McCoy) to do this same type of training in the future."

**5 Years Ago — March 2020**  
**FROM THE MARCH 13, 2020, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:** *Army Reserve Soldiers cite Cold-Weather Operations Course as valuable training (By Scott T. Sturkol)* — Dozens of Army Reserve Soldiers have completed training in Fort McCoy's Cold-Weather Operations Course (CWOC) during the 2019-20 training season, and many have said it was among the best training they've ever had.

"I'll be able to take the skills I learned here and bring them back to my unit and help my fellow (Reserve) Soldiers learn how to operate in cold weather effectively," said CWOC Class 20-01 student Spc. Hunter Blazek with the 445th Transportation Company, an Army Reserve unit in Waterloo, Iowa. "The best part about this course was working with service members of other military branches and with Soldiers from other career fields. ... And, some of the (best) skills I bring back to my unit are how to properly pack a rucksack and how to properly wear the layers of the cold-weather uniform."

During 14 days of training, CWOC students receive classroom and hands-on field training to gain the skills needed to operate in a cold-weather environment, said CWOC instructor Hunter Heard, who coordinates training with fellow instructors Manny Ortiz and Joe Ernst. All are with contractor Veterans Range Solutions, which works with Fort McCoy's Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security (DPTMS) to complete the training.

"This training is beneficial to anyone — no matter the service," Heard said. "For Reserve members, this kind of training is increasingly important because if you look at the possibilities of future conflicts on a global scale, there is a real possibility that we could have troops operating in cold-weather environments. Getting this training helps Reserve Soldiers be ready for just about anything."

"Additionally, getting into this course and getting this training can be very helpful for Reserve Soldiers to not only be ready themselves, but also in helping their units," Heard said. "Students who graduate this course are then subject-matter experts who can go back to their unit and do great things in preparing their fellow Soldiers for cold-weather operations."

Sgt. Adam Monson, also with the 445th Transportation Company who trained in CWOC Class 20-01, said the training helped him become a better leader.

"Through what I've learned, I'll continue to improve in my role as a noncommissioned officer," Monson said. "And I'll apply what I learned to better inform my Soldiers about cold-weather operations."

In each CWOC class, students complete nearly 40 kilometers of marching with snowshoes and practice skiing at McCoy's Whitetail Ridge Ski Area. They also learn how to pack and use akhio sleds to carry and move gear, and they practice building the Arctic 10-person cold-weather tent and improvised shelters made with materials they have on hand and find in the forest.

"Nothing the students go through here is easy,"



Triad

Published in the interest of Fort McCoy personnel

March 21, 2020

### Troops confront March weather

By Lou Ann Minshel

March in Wisconsin is notorious for changing weather and cold weather. Fort McCoy personnel are no exception. They are facing the weather head-on as they participate in the 2019-20 Cold-Weather Operations Course (CWOC) training.

"The return on investment for the Army Reserve to send their Soldiers through this course for two weeks of difficult, challenging, and dynamic training is tremendous," Stewart said. "I say dynamic because of the varying cold and weather conditions the students can experience throughout the course. The weather can either be your enemy or your friend if you know how to operate in cold-weather conditions."

CWOC Class 20-01 student Sgt. Edwin Bennett with the Army Reserve's 733rd Support Maintenance Company at Canton, Ill., said Fort McCoy is an excellent training center for land navigation and the cold-weather training.

"The weather can change rapidly (at McCoy), which reinforces the idea of being prepared for all weather situations," Bennett said.

Bennett said the training also helped him grow in skills and capability as a Soldier.

"The course really opened my eyes to how properly using equipment and packing efficiently in extreme conditions can be the difference between life and death," Bennett said. "By far this is one of the best courses I've attended."

Stewart said more Army Reserve Soldiers should get the training.

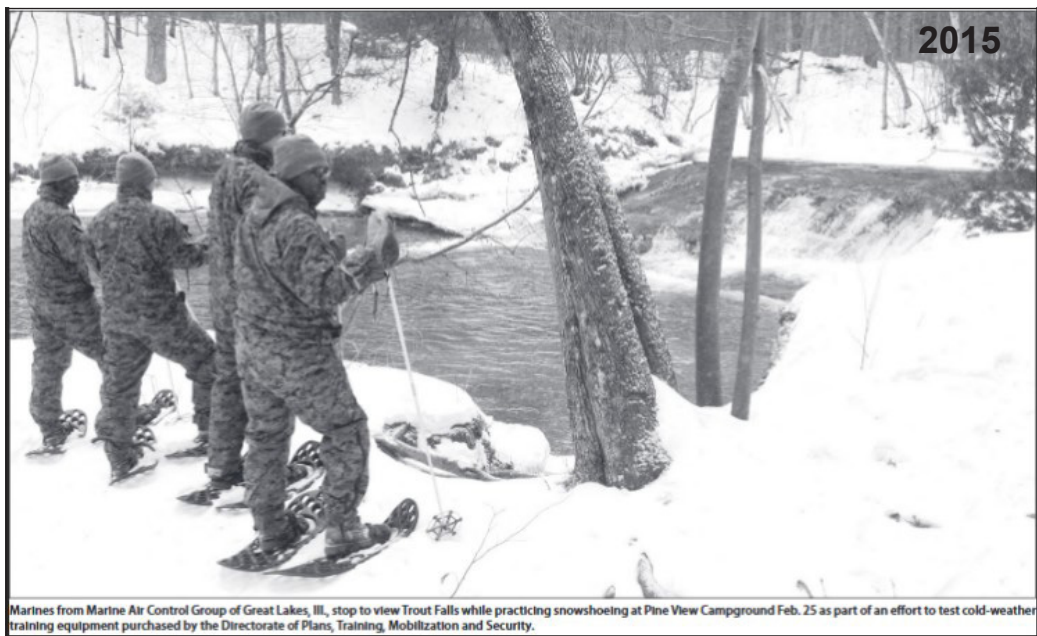
"I think this course is an exemplary opportunity for Army Reserve Soldiers to come in and gain some valuable skills during a two-week annual training opportunity," Stewart said. "Also, as we train more Reserve Soldiers on these skills, it builds a greater pool of people who can train others. This benefits units greatly."

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 "ftmccoy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi/>, on X (formerly Twitter) by searching "usagmccoy," on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/fortmccoywi/>, and on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@fortmccoy>.

Also try downloading the My Army Post 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."



Marines from Marine Air Control Group of Great Lakes, Ill., stop to view Trout Falls while practicing snowshoeing at Pine View Campground Feb. 25 as part of an effort to test cold-weather training equipment purchased by the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

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## Army stands ready to fight COVID-19

BY DEVON L. SUITS  
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army is taking the necessary steps to combat the spread of COVID-19, all while simultaneously implementing measures to meet personnel impacted by the disease, the Army's top medical official said March 5.

With the emerging concern over the spread of COVID-19, an extra effort focusing on the safety and health of all service members has become part of the Department of Defense's top priorities, said Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

According to data collected March 4, four people have tested positive for the coronavirus throughout the DOD, McCaffery said, as he testified with other defense health officials before the House Committee on Appropriations' defense subcommittee.

One Soldier and two dependents stationed in South Korea were among the four who recently tested positive for the virus, said Lt. Gen. Scott Dingle, the Army surgeon general.

"Twelve others throughout the DOD are suspected to have COVID-19," he said.

## Survivors gain easier access to Army installations

Photo credit: Alan Hastings/Post for McCoy

Gold Star family members participate in an event at Fort McCoy on Sept. 29, 2007.

Certain Gold Star and next-of-kin survivors are expected to find it easier to visit Army installations since a new process went into effect in January.

The new survivor's access policy allows qualified survivors to get through gate security more easily and travel on post without an escort to attend events, view memorials, receive services, and similar activities using their survivor's access cards.

"The Army values people, especially our Gold Star spouses and family members," said Lt. Gen. Douglas Gribben, commanding general, U.S. Army Installation Management Command. "This change allows them to more easily receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled, and helps enable them to remain connected to the Army."

Eligible survivors are those who meet the criteria to receive the Gold Star lapel button or Gold Star next-of-kin lapel button, including widow or widower, parent, child, stepchild, child through adoption, brother, half-brother, sister and half-sister.

Eligible survivors may apply for and receive a survivor's access card through the Army's Automated Installation Entry system at their local garrison. Installations without AIE will use DA Form 1602 for survivors' access.

Among the services available to Gold Star spouses and next-of-kin family members is the Army Survivor Outreach Services program, which provides dedicated and comprehensive support through a network of civilian serving as advocates for survivors. SOS staff can assist survivors to access benefits available to them.

## First Airmen attend CWOC training

Airmen with the 164th Security Forces Squadron of the Tennessee Air National Guard at Memphis as well as Marines and Soldiers participate in field training for Cold-Weather Operations Course (CWOC) Class 20-04 on Feb. 19 at Fort McCoy. Forty service members graduated from the class Feb. 29. This also was the first time Airmen have completed CWOC training. See more photos and stories about CWOC on pages 6-7.

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