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# The Real McCoy®

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## Fort McCoy Garrison Soldiers switch to wearing 88th Readiness Division patch in patching ceremony

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Soldiers with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy traded out the Army Materiel Command patches on their uniforms for the blue clover patch of the 88th Readiness Division during a special patching ceremony March 13 in building 905 at Fort McCoy.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division and Fort McCoy's senior commander, presided over the ceremony. Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez served as the top leader representing the garrison.

The patching ceremony was prompted by January 2025 Execute Order 123-25 from the Secretary of the Army, "Update to U.S. Army Installation Management Structure," which designates all uniformed personnel at the garrison as being under tactical control, or TACON, of the senior commander, who is Ricciardi at Fort McCoy. And because of the new TACON, a new patch was now needed for Fort McCoy Garrison Soldiers.

Ricciardi discussed the change during his address to the ceremony attendees.

"Ladies and gentlemen, special guests, thank you for being here today," Ricciardi said. "This is a really special day, I believe, for both garrison, for the Army Reserve, and for the 88th Readiness Division. And I can say that because the last patch I wore was the Army Materiel Command patch. ... And ... I just did this about nine months ago.

"A patch ceremony? Because what is a patch? And then I was thinking about it, and, you know, a patch is a brand, it's a logo, and it only means what it means to everybody else," Ricciardi said. "So, the Golden Arches, the Nike swoosh, the 82nd patch ... they're logos. ... They derive meaning, and they invoke emotion. And where does that come from? ... It comes from history. It comes from performance. And it comes from war.

"(When) I think about the 88th patch, and you

(See **PATCH**, Page 4)



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

A scene from a patching ceremony held March 13 is shown in building 905 at Fort McCoy. Soldiers with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy traded out the Army Materiel Command patches on their uniforms for the blue clover patch of the 88th Readiness Division.

## Contractors take advantage of good weather; successfully move third World War II-era barracks at installation

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Contractors took advantage of ideal sunny weather March 18 to successfully move a third World War II-era barracks at Fort McCoy.

Two World War II-era barracks buildings were already moved on Jan. 22 and Feb. 12-13. This third building was moved to the same area as the first two.

Army Corps of Engineers officials and the contractor are working to complete the movement of five 80-plus-year-old buildings while the ground is still frozen, although the contractor now has the route to move the buildings built up to better move around corners and along roadways.

Devoight Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., is the contractor doing the building moving with wheels and remote control powered by a generator. Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works planners have 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.

In moving the first building Jan. 22 on the installation's cantonment area, the work took the contractors most of the day to get the building to its new location.

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



A barracks building from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy is shown being moved March 18 from the 1600 block to another area of the installation.

## 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade hosts third Best Eagle OC/T competition at Fort McCoy

BY STAFF SGT. AVERY CUNNINGHAM  
181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade  
Public Affairs

The competition started with an introductory brief followed by a written test consisting of 66 questions to test the competitors on observer-controller/trainer (OC/T) knowledge.

The next event was the M17 pistol qualification, followed by an equipment layout to ensure the competitors were prepared for the next 48 hours of non-stop competition.

The second day of competition continued with an Expert Physical Fitness Assessment (EPFA) designed to mimic Army expert Soldier standards. Competitors then flew out to the lanes on UH-60 Black Hawks to enter the competition area.

There, the competitors rucked from lane to lane and slept the night as part of the event. The lanes they had to complete included chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) response, unmanned aerial systems report, hand grenade assault course, tactical combat casualty care, and radio communications.

The OC/Ts progressed to an M4 carbine zero and stress shoot. The stress shoot required the competitors to memorize a box of items to test their mental fortitude, followed by exercises to test their physical fortitude. After completing the shoot, consisting of crouching, kneeling, and standing shooting positions, the competitors had to list the items they saw in the box. After finishing the shoot, they had to complete weapon assembly and function checks of an M17 pistol, an M4 carbine, an M249 light machine gun, and an M240 machine gun.

After the second day, competitors had time to sleep under the stars while also preparing for land navigation. The land navigation event combined night and day navigation by starting early in the morning before dawn and finishing just after sunrise, with only three hours for competitors to find four different points using only a compass and a map.

The same skills used for land navigation would continue to be tested with a call-for-fire lane where OC/Ts had to use a map to pinpoint and call in artillery on a vehicle out in the open. The OC/Ts used the Call-For-Fire Trainer, one of the many simulators at Fort McCoy's state-of-the-art simulation facility, to complete the lane.

It wasn't over yet for the competitors, because they had to endure an unknown distance ruck march to finish the competition. By the time they completed, the OC/Ts had marched 12 miles to make it to the end.

By the end of the final challenge, Capt. Daniel Logan and Staff Sgt. David Fitzpatrick of Team Four were the first-place winners and Capt. Drew Russel and Sgt. 1st Class Logan Krul of Team

(See **COMPETITION**, Page 5)



Photos by Staff Sgt. Trenton Lowery

Staff Sgt. David Fitzpatrick (left) and Capt. Daniel Logan, assigned to 1st Battalion, 337th Brigade Support Battalion, 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade, prepare a medical bag to conduct a tactical combat casualty care lane as part of the Brigade Best Observer-Coach/Trainer competition on March 13 at Fort McCoy.



Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade fire at pop-up targets at the M17 pistol range while being observed by a range safety officer March 12 as part of the Brigade Best Observer-Coach/Trainer competition at Fort McCoy.

Inside  
This  
Edition:

Fort McCoy  
holds  
April SOHAC  
meeting  
Page 2



Prescribed  
burn  
season  
under way  
Page 9



Longtime  
employees  
retire  
at Fort McCoy  
Pages 15-16



This  
Month in  
Fort McCoy  
History  
Page 20





NEWS

# Fort McCoy holds April meeting of Safety & Occupational Health Advisory Council; focuses on spring, summer safety

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy held a special meeting of the installation Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council (SOHAC) on April 1 that included Fort McCoy Garrison as well as representatives from the post's tenant units and activities.

This meeting was presided over by Fort McCoy's Senior Commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, who is also the commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division. Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez also was present for the meeting along with other members of the garrison command team as well as directorate and special staff leaders.

"As I see it, this is our safety forum right here," Ricciardi said to start the meeting. "It's an opportunity for all of the tenants to talk about safety things and issues or observations from their foxholes as we come together. ... This is a forum for everyone to talk about and convey those things related to safety."

The meeting was prepared and managed by the Installation Safety Office. Installation Safety Manager Ed De Leon led the discussion



Fort McCoy Installation Safety Manager Ed De Leon leads discussion April 1 during the Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council meeting at Fort McCoy.



Post members hold a discussion April 1 during the Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council meeting at Fort McCoy.

throughout. Starting out, he reminded people to be aware of spring safety, which includes motorcycle safety, and he discussed the 101 Critical Days of Summer Safety campaign that takes place between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

"Whether you're wearing a green suit or civilian clothing, it's important to have those discussions with your employees about off-duty safety and 101 days of summer," De Leon said.

Regarding motorcycle safety, De Leon said May is Motorcycle Safety Month. He noted that civilians are not technically in the Army's motorcycle safety program.

"But they still have to apply it by the installation regulations as far as personal protective equipment, licensing, and related things like that," De Leon said.

Service members, however, have more requirements for motorcycle safety and training.

"On the Soldier side, there's a progressive motorcycle training program," De Leon said. "They start with the Basic Rider's Course and move to the Advanced Rider's Course."

De Leon said the ISO does offer training in those classes for service members on post in the summer.

"It is a limited amount of personnel that we can actually train and teach," De Leon said. "But we do offer it here during the summertime for both the basic and the advanced course."

De Leon said interested personnel who want to attend the courses should contact the ISO.

In addition to De Leon presenting, safety updates were provided by the 88th Readiness Division, 86th Training Division, 181st

Multi-Functional Training Brigade, Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy, and Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center.

Tanya Morene, LRC Director, said her organization's safety program has been doing well with zero incidents in 2025 so far. She said the Fort McCoy LRC has an effort that support safety program initiatives and best practices. She also stated safety committee members in each division ensure quarterly building inspections of their 36 facilities are "completed timely, accurately, and findings are annotated and then corrected."

In follow-up discussion, Ricciardi asked about the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) getting ready for a new recreational season in May. DFMWR Director Scott Abell said his team in outdoor recreation, which oversees the campground and facilities in the Pine View Recreation Area, will have everything ready.

"They are getting the campground ready," Abell said. "We don't force hazards or risks that will stall us from having another successful recreational season."

Learn more about Pine View Campground and Pine View Recreation Area by calling 502-898-3517 or by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/programs/pine-view-campground>.

The next SOHAC meeting with all tenant activities is planned for October.

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."

# Fort McCoy supports local natural resources, extension committee

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy personnel took time to be a part of the March 2025 meeting of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee in Sparta, Wis.

The monthly committee includes members Nodji VanWychen, Joey Esterline, Cedric Schnitzler, Doug Rogalla, Todd Sparks, and Paul Zas-tophil from areas within the county. According to the Monroe County webpage for the committee at <https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/government/county-board-of-supervisors/boards-committees/natural-resource-extension/-folder-2344>, the committee has a diverse mission.

"The mission of the Monroe County Natural Resource Committee is to manage, conserve, and protect our natural resources," the website states. "The committee will facilitate wise, sustainable land use and outdoor recreation through information and education while supporting technical and financial assistance to landowners of Monroe County and encourage all residents of Monroe County to be stewards of our natural resources keeping in mind the generations to follow."

As part of Monroe County, Fort McCoy has a part in supporting the committee.

The post does so through the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB) as well as the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office.

During the March meeting held March 10, NRB Endangered Species Biologist Jessup Weichelt served as one of the Fort McCoy representatives where he reviewed recent accomplishments completed by NRB and related Fort McCoy personnel.

Among those accomplishments in natural resources management Weichelt mentioned from February 2025 were:

- Monitored 10 lakes for dissolved oxygen and temperature for fisheries management. All lakes are still above average for dissolved oxygen due to minimal snow cover which lets light into the lake.

- Conducted 12 creel surveys in fisheries management. Angling pressure seems light given the good ice conditions. Some reports have indicated fish were not actively biting.

- Reported life history of 46 tagged fish to in-



Members of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee meets in Sparta on March 10.

stallation anglers.

- In endangered species management, updated the Special Status Species Fauna and Flora Database.

- Maintained trail cameras for wolf detection: two wolves detected via trail camera in training area B32 on Fort McCoy's South Post.

- Performed wolf tracking survey in North and South Post. Documented two wolves on South Post.

- Checked eagle nests. North Flowage East and Alderwood basin areas at Fort McCoy have eagles near the nests.

- Initiated draft of the Regal Fritillary (butterfly) Biological Assessment.

- With forestry management, administered four active timber sales, and received \$3,273.20 in timber sale revenue.

- Facilitated ½ mile of timber harvest on the installation boundary followed by shredding of the area creating a 50-foot-wide visible/cleared boundary with private land.

- Facilitated 4 acres of black locust removal near/around the Child Development Center at Fort McCoy.

- Facilitated over one mile of firebreak "clean up," removing snags and woody fuels within 50' of firebreaks at areas around post.

- Continued work on annual review updates of the Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan.

- With invasive species management completed 75.3 acres of basal bark treatment of glossy buckthorn.

- Also with invasive species management, completed 28.2 acres of shredding. Species within the area of shredding included autumn olive, common and glossy buckthorn, and honeysuckle.

- Attended the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group meeting. NRB staff will chair the working group for next two years.

- In wildlife management, Weichelt discussed the spring turkey season options at Fort McCoy. He also discussed how the NRB has started the annual process of updating the Fort McCoy Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Rules and Regulations, which is available at the Fort McCoy iSportsman webpage at <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>.

- Wood duck boxes at Fort McCoy have been cleaned, prepped, and closed up in anticipation of wood ducks returning for the spring breeding sea-

son at the installation.

- Planning for upcoming surveys (drumming grouse, gobbling turkeys) will take place from March to May.

Fort McCoy personnel also addressed upcoming opportunities at the installation for outdoor recreation, such as the spring opening of Pine View Campground. The availability of miles of hiking trails at Fort McCoy's Pine View Recreation Area also were shared.

Post personnel will also participate in the next monthly meeting in April 2025.

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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/957163/behind-triad-april-2025> Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez and 1st Sgt. Thomas Ninkovich give an update on items for April 2025.

They highlight happenings on the installation for the month and describes some of the base events and news for April. Learn more about Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation services by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com>.

Watch for new episodes on Fort McCoy's YouTube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUF0\\_BwU3d2p-5j1rThTE\\_kw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUF0_BwU3d2p-5j1rThTE_kw).

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

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/FM-MVIB>.



## National Volunteer Appreciation Month

"volunteers Make Waves"

Thank you to everyone who volunteers their time at Fort McCoy



### EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA

MCCOY'S COMMUNITY CENTER  
APRIL 12, 2025 from 9-11 am

ARRIVAL OF EASTER BUNNY 9:00 am  
EGG HUNTS BEGIN AT 10:00 am

502-898-2065 [mccoy.armymwr.com](https://mccoy.armymwr.com)  
@FortMcCoyMWR

ACTIVITIES & CRAFTS  
PICTURES WITH THE EASTER BUNNY & MORE!

BREAKFAST BUFFET SPECIALS  
\$10 ADULT  
\$5 CHILDREN 12 & UNDER

### STEP FORWARD

Prevent. Report. Advocate.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. SAAPM is a time to educate, support and empower each other to fight against sexual harassment and sexual assault. When we protect our people, we strengthen our Army.

@ArmyResilience  
[www.armyresilience.army.mil](https://www.armyresilience.army.mil)



## Celebrate Armed Forces Day with us!



# FORT MCCOY Armed Forces Day Open House

Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

At the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area

**Free, Family Friendly, Open to the Public!**

Come celebrate Armed Forces Day with a walk through our History Center, Equipment Park, the Veteran's Memorial Plaza and five World War II barracks. Lots of booths and kids activities!

Guests must enter the installation through **Gate 20** along Hwy 21 between Sparta and Tomah, Wis. Signs will be setup along Hwy 21 directing traffic to the event. Adult guests must be prepared to show ID and proof of vehicle insurance to enter the base.

**Veteran's Recognition Ceremony,  
Military Parade,  
Guided Bus Tours,  
Personalized ID Tags,  
Food for Purchase,  
and much more!**



## Post personnel support March meeting at local chamber of commerce

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

Fort McCoy's Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon and another installation member participated in the March 12 meeting of the Sparta (Wis.) Area Chamber of Commerce as post representatives.

During the meeting, the Fort McCoy representatives provided an update about news at the installation as well as answered questions from the chamber leaders and members.

The Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce regularly works with and supports Fort McCoy in numerous events throughout the year. The relationship between the city and the post goes back a century as Fort McCoy's founder, Maj. Gen. Robert Bruce McCoy, was also from Sparta.

Community outreach is an important part of the Army mission. According to the Army, as stated at <https://www.army.mil/outreach>, "the Army is about more than ensuring our national security at home and abroad, it's about giving back and getting to know the communities that support us."

It's also possibly important for community leaders to hear from the installation that provides a significant economic impact to their communities.

Fort McCoy's total economic impact for fiscal year (FY) 2023 was an estimated \$1.38 billion, Fort McCoy Garrison officials announced in 2024. Approximately 69 percent of the Fort McCoy workforce also lives within Monroe County, including Sparta. The total FY 2023 workforce payroll for civilian and military personnel was \$190.5 million.

FY 2023 operating costs of \$346 million included utilities, physical plant maintenance, repair and improvements, new construction projects, purchases of supplies and services, as well as salaries for civilian contract personnel working at Fort McCoy. Much of that includes supporting local communities as well, officials said.

Fort McCoy will continue to support these monthly meetings as well as other community events and meetings.

Fort McCoy's motto is to be the "Total Force



Members of the Sparta (Wis.) Area Chamber of Commerce meet March 12 in the Sparta Barney Center. Members of Fort McCoy also attended the meeting to provide information about the post, and more.

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)

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# PATCH

from Page 1

just watched the history that the 88th has,” he said referring to a history video previously played for attendees. “You saw what they did. Talk about performance. And you see the performance and the respect that the enemy gave the 88th with the moniker Blue Devils.”

Ricciardi said the patch also represents the lore of the 88th.

“You have the story that goes along with it. ... So what is the story that you will tell? And that’s what’s upon us right now is to continue that story, continue that legacy, to continue the brand that the 88th has and make the brand.”

Baez also reflected on now being one of the newest Soldiers wearing the 88th patch.

“As (Maj. Gen.) Ricciardi was talking about the significance of this ceremony, we can also look at the tradition that the Army provides and how the 88th Readiness Division is a huge part of that tradition.

“When we look at the history, right, since 1917 (when) the unit was founded, it has served in operations in World War I, World War II, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and also OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom) and OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom),” Baez said. “So, the tradition from the 88th Readiness Division is big and has had an important impact on the global landscape. The 88th Readiness Division is consistently ensuring that our Army Reserve is prepared to answer our nation’s call to have great Soldiers all of the time.”

Baez added, “For the Soldiers, for the civilians, for the families ... I say this. Welcome the change, love the change. I think it’s going to be very fruitful for Fort McCoy. Seize the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to contribute to the legacy of this great organization.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Dieckman, 88th command sergeant major, and 1st Sgt. Thomas Ninkovich, serving as acting garrison command sergeant major, were the top enlisted members represented in the ceremony as well.

Several dozen garrison and 88th workforce members also attended the ceremony.

Learn more about the 88th Readiness Division by visiting <https://www.usar.army.mil/88thRD>. See a video about the history of the 88th at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/955069/88th-readiness-division-history>.

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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Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez provides comments March 13 during the patching ceremony in building 905 at Fort McCoy.

Photo by Melissa Dubois



Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division and Fort McCoy's senior commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Dieckman, 88th command sergeant major, help change out patches March 13 on Fort McCoy Garrison Soldiers during the patching ceremony.

Photo by Melissa Dubois



Leaders with the 88th Readiness Division and the Fort McCoy Garrison participate in a patching ceremony March 13 at Fort McCoy.

Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

## Fort McCoy Garrison leadership holds forums for installation workforce members

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL

Public Affairs Staff

Leaders with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy held two forums for GS-8s and GS-9s on March 26 and for GS-10s and GS-11s on March 27 to hear from personnel in these grades and provide direct information to these workforce members.

Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon led each session that was held in building 905 on post.

Discussion in the forums included understanding the current guidance on hiring freezes, downsizing, and more. Cantlon also discussed the need for transparency around work spaces and for everyone to raise questions to garrison leadership any time they need to get clarification.

Cantlon took questions from all attendees that covered a variety of topics, including leadership support, budget items, evaluations, and more.

“We’re always here to support you,” Cantlon said during the GS-10/GS-11 forum. “Please let us know anytime you have any questions about anything.”

Forums like these strengthen ties and communication between leadership and the workforce, officials said. It also reflects the importance of the Army Civilian Corps to the mission.

In 2019 Army News Service article located at <https://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2019/08/09/>, the importance of the Army Civilian Corps is described.

“Army Civilians have been central to the success of the service in war and peace since the Revolutionary War,” the article states. “Currently, the Army has the largest civilian workforce in the Department of Defense, filling critical roles in 540 careers, spanning 31 career programs, including cybersecurity, engineering, medicine, and administration. Army civilian service offers valuable on-the-job experience, training, and avenues for advancement.”

According to the article, Army civilians:

- Support the nation, the Army and its Soldiers in times of war and peace, and improve the readiness of the force.
- Preserve continuity and provide essential support to the Army mission.
- Work together with Soldiers as one Army, one team, one fight.

“The Army is (reinvests) in Army civilians through professional development, training, and leadership opportunities,” the article also states.

Another opportunity for the Fort McCoy workforce to speak with the garrison leadership will be during town hall meetings planned for late April at the installation.

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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Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon talks with installation workforce members March 27 during a garrison forum for GS-10/GS-11 employees in building 905 at Fort McCoy.



NEWS

COMPETITION

from Page 1

One were in second place with the most accumulated points throughout the competition. The two teams moved on to the First Army Division West Best OC/T competition.

“When it comes to these kinds of events, it’s up to 48 hours, which isn’t super long, but grinding for that amount of time and doing a bunch of different things takes a toll on the body and the mind. That’s the hardest thing about this competition,” said Logan, one of this year’s Eagle Best OC/T Competition winners and an OC/T team leader in 1-337th Brigade Support Battalion.

The competition only lasted three days, but that speaks to the abilities of the planners, like U.S. Army Capt. William Gagnon-Brubaker, the brigade operations officer in charge of planning and hosting the competition. Gagnon-Brubaker spent months preparing and securing the training areas,

training equipment, and the necessary personnel to staff the lanes.

“This event represents over four months of planning and collaboration from across the brigade, from brigade to battalion staff members,” said Gagnon-Brubaker. “We took the sergeant major’s guidance and intent, and we ran from there. It took numerous organizational planning times and planning groups in order to shape it so that it best mirrors the Division West competition and provides not only a physically rigorous, but also an intellectually rigorous course to challenge competitors. It allows us to identify the best team with the greatest chance to be victorious at the Division West competition and hopefully the First Army competition later this year.”

Learn more about the 181st by visiting their page at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/181ID>.



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

**Sgt. 1st Class Logan Krul, assigned to 1st Brigade Engineer Battalion, 310th Infantry Regiment, 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade, throws an M69 training grenade behind a low barrier as part of the Brigade Best Observer Coach/Trainer competition March 13 at Fort McCoy.**



**Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade receive a weapons clearance check before proceeding to the M17 pistol range as part of the Brigade Best Observer-Coach/Trainer competition March 12 at Fort McCoy.**



**Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade begin the 7-mile road march as the final challenge of Brigade Best Observer-Coach/Trainer competition at Fort McCoy.**



**Capt. Drew Russell with the 1st Brigade Engineer Battalion, 310th Infantry Regiment, high crawls during an expert physical fitness test March 13 as part of the Brigade Best Observer-Coach/Trainer competition at Fort McCoy.**



**Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade conduct a layout of gear March 12 they are expected to have for a 7-mile road march at the end of the Brigade Best Observer-Coach/Trainer competition at Fort McCoy.**



## NEWS



A barracks building from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy is shown about half-way through its move March 18 from the 1600 block to the 500 block of the installation.

## BARRACKS MOVE

from Page 1

cation. The movement of the second building took two days to complete from Feb. 12-13. In the third move March 18, the contractors were able to follow the same route as the first two moves and complete it just slightly faster than the others.

The movement of these buildings is historical in that it's only the second time these barracks from 1942 are being moved to be reused at the installation. Four barracks were moved in 2023 and then reset in three different blocks on the post.

Back when the buildings were completed during World War II, they were "state-of-the-art" and made then-Camp McCoy one of the premier training facilities preparing troops for the war effort.

In the Sept. 4, 1942, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper, in an article titled "Spectators praise new camp site," some history of how the "New Camp" came to life is shared.

"The public came. The public saw. The public praised," the article states. "Yes Soldiers, nearly 50,000 persons stared with pop-eyed amazement at the wonders of new Camp McCoy ... 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."

The article further states, "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."

Building moves will continue as conditions permit, officials said.

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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://](https://home.army.mil/mccoy)



(Above and below) Contractors move the third barracks from the 1600 block March 18 along roadways at Fort McCoy.



[home.army.mil/mccoy](https://home.army.mil/mccoy), on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter)

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installation as your preferred base. Fort McCoy is also part of Army's Installation Management Command where "We Are The Army's Home."

## Contractor works groundwork preparation for \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy as April begins

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Now that three of the five older barracks have been moved from the construction area in the 1600 block at Fort McCoy where the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project is under way, contractors have been able to complete more work on grounds preparation.

The contractor for the project, BlindermanPower (Construction), which is also currently working on another major project at Fort McCoy — the fiscal year-2022 funded South Barracks Project, was awarded a contract totaling \$55,759,100, according to the Army Corps of Engineers, which is overseeing the project. The notice to proceed was acknowledged on July 19. The contract duration is scheduled for completion in 1,260 calendar days.

The project description in the contract 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."

Devoight Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., moved three of five World War II-era barracks in January, February, and March in support of the project so more space can open up for the site preparation.

Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy said the project calls for the construction of two new 48,000-square-foot, four-story Collective Training Officers Quarters buildings.

In his March 28 update, Green gave the latest actions.

"Work continued for the fourth building to be relocated," Green wrote. "Demo also continued. Clearing and grubbing continued. Over dig and fill started."

Once adding fill to the site begins as it has now, the landscape of the construction area begins to transform significantly.

The project description, as stated in previous news articles, gives more information about how the project will continue to grow.

"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," the description states. "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."

The description also states, "Information systems, fire protection



Contractors add fill and complete site preparation April 2 for the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy.

and alarm systems, and sustainability and energy enhancement measures are included. Supporting facilities include site development, utilities and connections, lighting, paving, parking, walks, curbs and gutters, storm drainage, information systems, landscaping, and signage."

The contract requirements also show that work includes building a standing seam metal roof over rigid insulation on steel deck on structural trusses; using utility brick veneer over rigid insulation on steel studs with exterior glass mat gypsum sheathing; building a concrete floor on metal deck and on-grade; installing and elevator, aluminum doors and windows, gypsum board and metal frame partitions, steel door frames and steel doors, and acoustical ceilings; installing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; completing plumbing, security, and electrical systems; and more.

The officer's quarters project makes three active, large construction

projects taking place in the 1600 block of the installation.

The others being the South Barracks Project and the fiscal year 2023-funded East Barracks Project that's being constructed by L.S. Black Constructors.

All of this work continues with the master plan for the 1600 block that will include not only the four barracks but also three 20,000-square-foot brigade headquarters buildings — one of which is done — and now the two 160-room officer quarters, Harrie said.

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

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."



NEWS

# New construction continues to transform Fort McCoy for future operations, support

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

For the past decade at Fort McCoy, new construction has included new dining facilities, state-of-the-art barracks, a brigade headquarters building, and more.

In that decade, too, Fort McCoy has rekindled its Mobilization Force Generation Installation (MFGI) mission. In recent years as part of other training, a number of Army units have completed their MFGI training at McCoy.

Historically speaking, Fort McCoy has a history of supporting mobilization in multiple conflicts. The installation supported mobilization during World War II from 1942-45, the Korean War from 1950-52, Operation Desert Shield/Storm from 1990-91, and for operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom from 2003-11. During the 2003-11 mobilization mission, more than 140,000 troops with more than 2,600 units mobilized at Fort McCoy.

In addition to that mission, Fort McCoy has also been supporting training for the Army's reserve-component forces with Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers training at McCoy every year in the thousands.

And if Fort McCoy is to maintain its capabilities to support a full range of training support, then upgrades are needed for feeding troops, training them academically and physically, and more, said Master Planner Brian Harrie with the Directorate of Public Works in past news articles.

Four new 20,000-square-foot brigade headquarters buildings, two 60-room officer quarters, and four new 60,000-square-foot barracks are the latest in the planned transformation of Fort McCoy's 1600 block for the future, Harrie said previously.

"The 1600 block (at Fort McCoy) will be completely transformed when all of this construction is completed years from now," Harrie said in 2020. "The 1600 block is a great location for this transformation, too, because it places these facilities for transient training troops near the post's service-related facilities, such as the commissary, Exchange, and McCoy's Community Center."

The 1600 block is part of campus plan, Harrie said, and it reimagines this century-old Army installation in the best ways possible to support the warfighter.

And before the current construction in McCoy's 1600 block, several new dining facilities were completed across the installation with the idea these new facilities will complement the current new construction as well as expand feeding capacity of transient training troops going to the post for MFGI operations, exercises, or annual training.

There was facility construction in the 1800 block for the new \$13.5 million, 1,428-person annual training/mobilization dining facility that began in May 2018 and ended in 2019, said Nathan Butts, contract oversight representative with the Fort McCoy Project Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

There also was the construction of the dining facility in the 2400 block, also a new 1,428-person annual training/mobilization dining facility, that began in July 2018 and finished in 2019, too. The Louisville, Ky., office of USACE awarded a \$12.3 million contract for the construction of that facility, Butts said. Other dining facilities include one in the 1600 block and one in the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy complex.

All the projects are part of the Fort McCoy Master Plan, Harrie said in 2019, that looks at continuously upgrading the installation's infrastructure.

Other projects also have been done to upgrade McCoy, too, such as new simulations training buildings in the installation's 200 block as well as a new shipping and receiving facility near one of the installation's gates.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Director Liane Haun discussed how historic all the new construction is during a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the first new barracks completion in May 2022. Haun said at the time the new barracks was only the second brick-and-mortar barracks built on post since 1942.

"Today is another historic moment at Fort McCoy as we assemble to cut the ribbon on the second permanent transient training barracks building at Fort McCoy since the Fort McCoy (cantonment area) was constructed in 1942," Haun said. "I have witnessed several ribbon-cutting ceremonies in my time at Fort McCoy, and each one brings great satisfaction to see the fruits of everyone's labors come to fruition."

At the same ceremony in 2022, Maj. Gen. Darrell Guthrie, former Fort McCoy senior commander and commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division at Fort McCoy, praised the opening of the new facility, and what it means for Fort McCoy's future.

"As you can see behind me, these barracks are quite different from all the other traditional barracks," Guthrie said. "Projects like the transient training barracks (here) are a direct result of community support and especially the support of elected officials. They enhance the ability of the Army, and especially the Army Reserve, to train here at Fort McCoy."

"One of the Army Reserve's, and therefore one of my top priorities, is our people," Guthrie said. "The completion of this new barracks is one example of taking care of our Soldiers."

And as the future looks brighter because of these improvements, McCoy leaders present and past have said they will need to continue to transform the post to continue to meet the Army's needs.

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



Contractors work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, on April 7 at Fort McCoy.



The construction area for a new \$28.08 million barracks building, also known as the South Barracks Project, is shown March 27 at Fort McCoy as progress on the facility continues.



Contractors add fill and complete site preparation March 27 for the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy.

classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984.

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## U.S. Army Installation Management Command-Readiness leader visits Fort McCoy

Col. Chris J. Ward, deputy director of Army Installation Management Command-Readiness, and Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez, Fort McCoy Garrison commander, meet with Property Book Officer Thomas Lovgren on April 2 at the Fort McCoy Central Issue Facility as part of an official visit by Ward to the installation.



Col. Chris J. Ward, deputy director of Army Installation Management Command-Readiness, and Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez, Fort McCoy Garrison commander, meets with Fort McCoy Director of Emergency Services Director Micah Komp, Acting Fort McCoy Fire Chief Brady Brever, and Fort McCoy Police Chief Brian Bomstein on April 2 at the fire station/police station at Fort McCoy.

Ward visited several areas of the post and talked with numerous installation leaders during his multi-day visit.



## NEWS



## C-130 training at Fort McCoy

A C-130 Hercules aircraft flies over South Post on March 13 at Fort McCoy as part of training operations.

The C-130 Hercules primarily performs the tactical portion of the U.S. Air Force's airlift mission, and Air National Guard C-130s often conduct training at Fort McCoy with austere landings as well as airdrop practice.

The aircraft is capable of operating from rough, dirt strips and is the prime transport for airdropping troops and equipment into hostile areas. The C-130 operates throughout the U.S. Air Force, serving with Air Mobility Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Air Combat Command, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Pacific Air Forces, Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve Command, fulfilling a wide range of operational missions in both peace and war situations.

*Photo by Scott Sturkol*

# Wisconsin National Guard UH-60 Black Hawks, crews support 181st MFTB competition

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

From March 12-14, the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade (MFTB) at Fort McCoy held its 2025 Brigade Best Observer-Controller/Trainer competition and on March 13 as part of the competition a pair of UH-60 Black Hawks and crews helped support the competition.

Black Hawks and crews with the Wisconsin National Guard's 1st Battalion and 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment supported a competition event from the open field next to Rumpel Fitness Center on the installation's cantonment area.

According to a Facebook post by 181st MFTB Public Affairs at <https://www.facebook.com/181MFTB>, competition on March 13 saw the competitors "take on multiple challenges that tested them both mentally and physically."

"Day two started with the competitors taking a physical exercise challenge that began in the early morning to test their endurance," the post states. "They then proceeded into the field to test on various lanes that ranged from chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN), combat lifesaving, grenade lanes, and stress shooting drills."

It was going out to the field where the Black Hawks played a role in ferrying Soldiers for the competition.

According to the Army fact sheet for the Black Hawk, its mission is to provide air assault, general support, aeromedical evacuation, command and control, and special operations support to combat, stability, and support operations.

The UH-60 also is the Army's utility tactical transport helicopter, the fact sheet states. The versatile helicopter has enhanced the overall mobility of the Army due to dramatic improvements in troop capacity and cargo lift capability over the years as well.

Now in its fourth decade of service, the Black Hawk was developed as a result of the Army's requirement in 1972 for a simple, robust, and reliable utility helicopter system to satisfy projected air-mobile requirements around the globe.

Named after Native American war chief and leader of the Sauk tribe in the Midwest, Black Hawk, the first UH-60A was accepted by the Army in 1978 and entered service in 1979 when it was delivered to aviation components of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions, the fact sheet states.

Since that time, the Black Hawk has accumulated more than 9 million total fleet hours and has supported Soldiers in every major contingency operation the Army has executed, including Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and throughout the Middle East.

"Today, the Army continues to integrate emerging technology enhancements into the Black Hawk fleet to increase the performance, reliability, availability, and maintainability of the platform through addition of technologies such as the integration of the improved turbine engine; upgrades to the airframe, including an improved troop seat for additional crash-worthiness; and a lightweight, composite all-moving tail," the fact sheet states.

As far as the competition goes, a follow-up Facebook post stated Capt. Daniel Logan and Staff Sgt. David Fitzpatrick of Team Four were the first-place winners of the competition and Capt. Drew Russel and Sgt. 1st Class Logan Krul of Team One placed second. These two teams move on to compete in the First Army Division West Best OC/T Competition.

Almost monthly, Wisconsin National Guard Black Hawks are supporting some type of training at Fort McCoy, according to the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

See more news about Wisconsin National Guard Black Hawks by visiting <https://wi.ng.mil/About/64TC>.

Learn more about the 181st MFTB by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/181ID>.

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(Above and below) Two UH-60 Black Hawks and crews with the Wisconsin National Guard's 1st Battalion and 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment support a competition event from the open field next to Rumpel Fitness Center on March 13, 2025, at Fort McCoy.





NEWS

# Fort McCoy prescribed burn team begins 2025 season with series of carefully managed burns

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Although the first prescribed burn at Fort McCoy took place in late-January 2025, the main part of the 2025 prescribed burn season has been under way in early to mid-March 2025.

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

Prescribed burns have taken place on March 3, 11-13, and 18, at several areas around the installation. Most of them were focused on range areas around the post's impact area so they were safe for training, and more.

Prescribed burns improve wildlife habitat, control invasive plant species, restore and maintain native plant communities, and reduce wildfire potential. Prescribed burns benefit the environment in many ways and are one of the tools we can use on a large scale to improve our wild habitat, said Fort McCoy Forester Charles Mentzel in a past news article who is part of the prescribed burn team and was present with all of the burn efforts so far in 2025.

Mentzel said prescribed burns help set back invasive species, and they burn up their seed banks. Burns also give native species an opportunity to compete against some of the non-native species, as many native species depend on fire to help stimulate them and set back non-native species.

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez discussed how Fort McCoy leadership works with the team on prescribed burn operations and how local conditions are reviewed to provide a safe and effective burn.

"We look at the training that is happening at Fort McCoy, and we look at what are the requirements for the prescribed burn," Baez said. "Every time that we are doing a prescribed burn, we go through very organized and prescribed steps in order to make the decision if we can burn. ... We look at weather conditions. We look at personnel and equipment. So, we do a very organized planning session to make sure that all the conditions are met in order for Fort McCoy to do prescribed burn."

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources also has the following information describing the benefits of prescribed burns for wild areas.

"Some specific advantages of prescribed burns include stimulating prairie grass growth and improve habitat for upland game and waterfowl; creating pockets of open water for waterfowl amidst cattails proliferating in low areas; stimulating the growth of wildflowers, which attract insects — a vital food sources for young game and non-game grassland birds; and improving cover type for grassland nesting birds such as pheasants."

Prescribed burns also "spur native vegetative growth for songbirds; and creates open pockets of bare ground, increasing diversity and richness of ground foraging, seed-eating small mammals and birds," according to the WDNR.

As the prescribed burn season continues into the spring, Fort McCoy will also continue to carefully assess the most appropriate days to conduct prescribed burns.

Fort McCoy's motto is to be the "Total Force



Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team oversee a prescribed burn March 3 on North Post at Fort McCoy.



Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team oversee a prescribed burn March 12 near the North Post impact area.

Training Center."

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# Fort McCoy holds prescribed burn along rail corridor on installation; improves safety

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team made an effort to improve safety from fire along the rail corridor on the installation March 13 by completing a prescribed burn.

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

For this prescribed burn, the team met on near the installation border not far from family housing on South Post, then carefully started the burn in sections to be able to manage it successfully and be able to adjust to any wind conditions.

In all, the team conducted the event for approximately 4 hours to complete the area they wanted to accomplish that day.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestfire/prescribedfire>, prescribed burns not just reduce fire danger, they also improve the habitat of plants and more.

"Fire and wildlife have a historic and complex relationship in grassland, wetland, and savannah communities," the website states. "Prescribed fire is rarely lethal to most wildlife, yet has a profound effect on habitat by increasing the number of native plant and animal species present food sources for wildlife. The wildlife species that benefit most from prescribed fire are those that rely on open habitat in one or more stages of their life cycle. Examples of these animals are grassland birds, sharp-tailed grouse, waterfowl and pheasant.

"Prescribed burns also help to stimulate flowering herbaceous plants (forbs) — a source of food for white-tailed deer," the website states. "Additionally, wildflower abundance and diversity support a wide variety of insects and other invertebrates, a food source that provides benefits all the way up the food chain."

Fort McCoy Forester Charles Mentzel, who is part of the prescribed burn

team with the NRB, said in a past news article that prescribed burns, generally, are done in the spring and fall seasons because weather conditions are most favorable at those times.

Mentzel also said the area of this burn is often one of the first to get done on post.

"We learned many years ago to burn the south slopes (along the tracks) as soon as they are cleared of snow," Mentzel said in a past article. "When everything is surrounded by snow, we cut our man-hours well over half. So, we keep an eye on conditions and burn it when it is ready."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also explains benefits of prescribed burns. The department's web page at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov> states "prescribed burns serve many purposes."

They include controlling undesirable vegetation; preparing sites for harvesting, planting or seeding; controlling plant disease; reducing wildfire hazards; improving wildlife habitat; improving plant production quantity and quality; and removing debris. The burns also enhance seed production, facilitating the distribution of grazing and browsing animals, restoring and maintaining ecological sites, and managing native plant diversity and composition.

"Prescribed burning is fire applied to a predetermined area within a prescribed set of conditions, dates, and with appropriate safety precautions to achieve specific purposes," the USDA site states. "Prescribed burning can be applied to forest land, grass-land, pastureland, wildlife land, hay land and other land uses as appropriate."

More prescribed burns will likely take place across Fort McCoy during spring 2025 as conditions permit.

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(All photos, above and below) Members of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team oversee a prescribed burn March 13 on South Post along the rail corridor at Fort McCoy.





NEWS

# Fort McCoy NEC completes voice modernization effort on post

The Fort McCoy Voice Modernization Project, led by Kenneth O'Connell and other team members with the Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center, was ultimately completed after four years of work in early January 2025.

The project's primary objective was to provide the warfighter with a modern and sustainable voice communication system by replacing the existing, aging, non-supportable phone systems on Fort McCoy with a modern Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system.

The project was a complex undertaking that involved several stages, including core installation, phone migration, and the decommissioning of the old analog/TDM system.

The team faced several challenges along the way including supply chain problems and contract renegotiation issues, along with the changing all Fort McCoy phone numbers, but their expertise and co-operation ensured that the project was successfully completed.

One of the key benefits of the new VoIP system is its ability to optimize circuits, reducing the need for expensive T1/PRI's (Primary Rate Interface) and resulting in significant cost savings for the Army.

The telecom, networking, server team, Information Management Communications Services III contractor personnel, and the cooperation and support provided by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy

and tenant organizations played a crucial role in the project's completion.

These teams and organizations worked together to ensure the project was completed effectively in accordance with Army and Department of Defense standards.

The change to the new phone system also changed the phone numbers at Fort McCoy. All phone numbers that previously began with 608-388 are now with a different area code and prefix — 502-898.

To see a complete updated list of the Fort McCoy phone numbers, visit the Fort McCoy website at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy/contact/phone-book>.

The updated phone book will also be available at the Fort McCoy DVIDS page in the 2025-26 Fort McCoy Guide by April 30, 2025.

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*(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center.)*



Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center employee Kenneth O'Connell disconnects the last legacy Time Division Multiplexing equipment for telecommunications Nov. 21, 2024, at Fort McCoy. Fort McCoy changed its telecommunications to voice over internet protocol in 2024.



A&T employees stand alongside Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center employee Kenneth O'Connell in the Dial Central Office on Nov. 21, 2024, at Fort McCoy. Their employees supported the decommissioned system and will continue to support the new voice over internet protocol telecommunications system at Fort McCoy. Pictured from left to right are Norman Glister, Michael Jarrett, O'Connell, and Michelle Jones.

# After Fort McCoy phone switch, team recovers old devices for disposition

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

From mid-January to mid-February 2025, Garrison Information Management Officer Bob Pennebecker and Information Technology Specialist Shawn Quinn took on the task to receive old phones for disposition after Fort McCoy switched to a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system.

Both Pennebecker and Quinn are with the Fort McCoy Garrison Information Management Office. They signed out warehouse building 1675 in January and went to work accounting for all the old desk phones that were replaced with new VoIP phones.

"We collected more than 1,500 phones," Pennebecker said.

Once collected, the old phones were placed into storage bins where they will then be recycled through government recycling, Pennebecker said.

The phone collection was the tail end of the Fort McCoy Voice Modernization Project that took years to complete. The project was led by the Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center (NEC).

During 2024, NEC personnel worked throughout the year and in all areas of Fort McCoy to set up the VoIP phones in offices, work areas, and buildings.

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Shawn Quinn with the Garrison Information Management Office moves a bin with old telephones to a ramp March 4 to be hauled away for recycling at Fort McCoy.



(Above and lower right) Old desk phones are collected for recycling and stored in a warehouse Jan. 17 at Fort McCoy.



Garrison Information Management Officer Bob Pennebecker processes information Jan. 17 in a warehouse at Fort McCoy while managing an effort to collect old phones from across the installation.





NEWS

# Fort McCoy leaders assist in housing planning during local economic development committee housing meeting

BY MELISSA DUBOIS & SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy leaders and team members took time out March 25 to participate in the Monroe County Economic Development Housing Meeting in Sparta, Wis., to support the planning and discussion for addressing housing in the county.

Participating from Fort McCoy were Fort McCoy Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Mike Corkum, Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Director Liane Haun, Fort McCoy Housing Chief Zach Hynes, and other installation members.

According to the Monroe County Economic Develop Committee who spearheaded the event, topics addressed were:

- Current housing situation in Monroe County;
- Reviewing where the greatest need for housing is;
- Defining “affordable” housing;
- Looking at what other counties are doing to address a lack of housing;
- Funding opportunities for housing the committee might be missing;
- How can all the varying agencies collaborate to address housing issues in Monroe County;
- And what are some actions Monroe County can take to address housing concerns.

The Fort McCoy leaders how the post is a smaller installation with limited housing for families and families are generally at the post for two to three years. They also discussed housing availability for military families and related topics.

Officials said this kind of community organizations helps improve quality of life possibilities for military families at Fort McCoy and for the community in general.

Post leaders will continue to support community engagement opportunities like this meeting.

Community outreach is an important part of the Army mission. According to the Army, as stated at <https://www.army.mil/outreach>, “the Army is about more than ensuring our national security at home and abroad, it’s about giving back and getting to know the communities that support us.”

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.”



Photos by Melissa Dubois

Fort McCoy leaders and local community leaders and members discuss ways to improve housing March 25 during the Monroe County Economic Development Housing Meeting in Sparta, Wis.



# Fort McCoy members support local college community panel breakfast

BY MELISSA DUBOIS & SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Several Fort McCoy members shared their expertise while supporting the Western Technical College Community Panel Breakfast on March 11 at the college’s campus in Tomah, Wis.

Western’s Tomah Campus Coordinator Nikki Purvis invited Fort McCoy members to attend, which included personnel from the Fort McCoy Plans, Analysis, and Integration Office (PAIO); Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, and Fort McCoy Garrison leadership.

According to college officials, the meeting was held to assist Western in developing their next 5-year strategic plan.

Discussion topics included attendee vantage points of how their organizations and communities see challenges, changes, and opportunities in their area, and much more. Also each org representative reviewed what their connection is to the college.

In addition to Purvis, other Western attendees included Western President Roger Stanford, Director of Enrollment Services Deb Hether, and many more community members.

For Fort McCoy participation in the event, it was another example of direct efforts to support the Army community relations program from Fort McCoy with local communities.

Community outreach is an important part of the Army mission. According to the Army, as stated at <https://www.army.mil/outreach>, “the Army is about more than ensuring our national security at home and abroad, it’s about giving back and getting to know the communities that support us.”

It’s also possibly important for community leaders to hear from the installation that provides a significant economic impact to their communities.

Fort McCoy’s total economic impact for fiscal

year (FY) 2023 was an estimated \$1.38 billion, Fort McCoy Garrison officials announced in 2024. Information for Fort McCoy’s FY 2024 economic impact have not yet been completed by Fort McCoy PAIO.

Approximately 69 percent of the Fort McCoy workforce also lives within Monroe County, including Sparta. The total FY 2023 workforce payroll for civilian and military personnel was \$190.5 million.

FY 2023 operating costs of \$346 million included utilities, physical plant maintenance, repair and improvements, new construction projects, purchases of supplies and services, as well as salaries for civilian contract personnel working at Fort McCoy. Much of that includes supporting local communities as well, officials said.

Fort McCoy will continue to support community meetings such as these to continue having strong community relations with its neighbors in surrounding communities.

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(Above and below) Panel members participate in the Western Technical College Community Panel Breakfast on March 11 at the college’s campus in Tomah, Wis.



# Fort McCoy teen named 2025 Wisconsin Military Youth of the Year

Devez DiOssi, a Fort McCoy family member who is part of the Fort McCoy Youth Center, was named the 2025 Wisconsin Military Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of leadership, service, academic excellence, and dedication to live a healthy lifestyle, Boys & Girls Clubs of America officials said.

Now in its 75th year, the program honors the nation’s most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures. As the Wisconsin Military Youth of the Year, Devez will serve as an ambassador for all teens in the state, will receive a \$2,500 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and went on to contend for the regional Youth of the Year and ultimately the national title.

DiOssi has overcome numerous challenges during his time at the Fort McCoy School Age and Youth Center. As a military child, frequent moves have built resilience and adaptability in him, significantly contributing to his personal growth.

He has developed strong social skills, independence, and empathy through these transitions. DiOssi said, “The Fort McCoy Youth Center has enabled me to grow as a leader in my community, allowed me to build relationships through the Keystone Club, and made me feel accepted for who I am.”

His experiences have prepared him for future challenges and opportunities to positively impact his community. DiOssi has been a member of the Fort McCoy Youth Center for one year. His move from California to Wisconsin, prompted by his mother’s orders, marked another significant transition in his life.



Devez DiOssi

Through activities focused on academic success, career exploration, community service, and teen outreach,

DiOssi has further developed his resilience, adaptability, and leadership skills. His involvement in the Fort McCoy

Youth Center has been instrumental in his personal growth and understanding of others.

DiOssi proudly represents the Fort McCoy Youth Center as their Military Youth of the Year. Over the past two and a half years, the teen centers he has been part of have significantly impacted his life.

Moving to Wisconsin was challenging, but the Fort McCoy Youth Center’s supportive environment helped him build new connections and further develop his leadership qualities. Memorable activities and volunteer events have shaped DiOssi into a resilient, empathetic, and adaptable individual.

He is honored to participate in the MYOY competition again and is grateful for the experiences and opportunities provided by the Fort McCoy Youth Center. He is on track to graduate in 2026 from Sparta High School and plans to attend the University of Oklahoma to pursue a career as a U.S. Army Reserve officer.

“We are incredibly proud of Devez and all the Youth of the Year nominees,” said Jim Clark, president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. “Be-

ing named Youth of the Year is a life-long honor. As the Wisconsin Military Youth of the Year, Devez will serve as a spokesperson for kids and teens across the state who face the many unique challenges associated with military life.”

Founded in 1947 as Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s premier youth recognition program, Youth of the Year recognizes outstanding contributions to a member’s family, school, community, and Boys & Girls Club.

This June, Devez will compete for the title of Midwest Region Military Youth of the Year and an additional \$20,000 college scholarship. A region’s military Youth of the Year will advance to the National Military Youth of the Year event for an additional \$20,000 scholarship. The National Military Youth of the Year will then advance to the final stage of the journey, National Youth of the Year, which presents the opportunity to receive an additional scholarship of \$50,000 and a brand-new vehicle.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit [www.youthoftheyear.org](http://www.youthoftheyear.org).

(Article prepared by Boys & Girls Clubs of America.)



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA**





Photo by Julee Katona

### Challenge Academy cadets visit RTS-Medical

Cadets with the Wisconsin Challenge Academy, a Fort McCoy tenant organization, visit an area of Regional Training Site-Medical on March 11 at Fort McCoy. The cadets of Class 54 received a tour of the field hospital and other areas that Regional Training Site-Medical has to offer. The cadets also received a CPR training class that was to help prepare the students for medical emergencies by providing real life examples and reinforcing the importance of taking care of self and others. The Challenge Academy offers youth 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.



**WHEN PARTICIPATING IN ANY TYPE OF**

**WATER-RELATED**

**ACTIVITY**

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS**

**AND TO KNOW YOUR LIMITS.**

**• WHY WOULD YOU GO WADING IN THE OCEAN ALONE?**

**• NO LIFE JACKET, WHY WOULD YOU RIDE ON A BOAT OR JET SKI WITHOUT IT?**

**• WHY WOULD YOU BE PARTICIPATING IN WATER-RELATED ACTIVITIES AFTER OR WHILE CONSUMING ALCOHOL?**

**SPRING INTO SUMMER WITHOUT MISHAPS!**



<https://safety.army.mil>

U.S. ARMY

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**READY FOR THE RIDE?**

**DON'T BE INDISCIPLINED!**

**27** • THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS KILLED IN MOTORCYCLE MISHAPS EACH YEAR SINCE FY16

**32%** • THE PERCENTAGE OF MOTORCYCLE MISHAPS THAT INVOLVE INDISCIPLINE: SPEED, ALCOHOL, FATIGUE, DISTRACTION, IMPROPER PPE

**STAY ALERT, STAY ALIVE**



U.S. ARMY

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<https://safety.army.mil>

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**PROCEED WITH CAUTION**

Like other activities involving high speeds and heavy machinery, riding an ATV can be risky. To help minimize the risks, follow these important tips for safer riding:

- Take a hands-on safety training course.
- Always wear protective gear — especially a helmet — when riding ATVs.
- Do not drive ATVs with a passenger or ride as a passenger.
- Do not drive ATVs on paved roads.
- Do not permit children to drive or ride adult ATVs.
- Do not drive ATVs while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.



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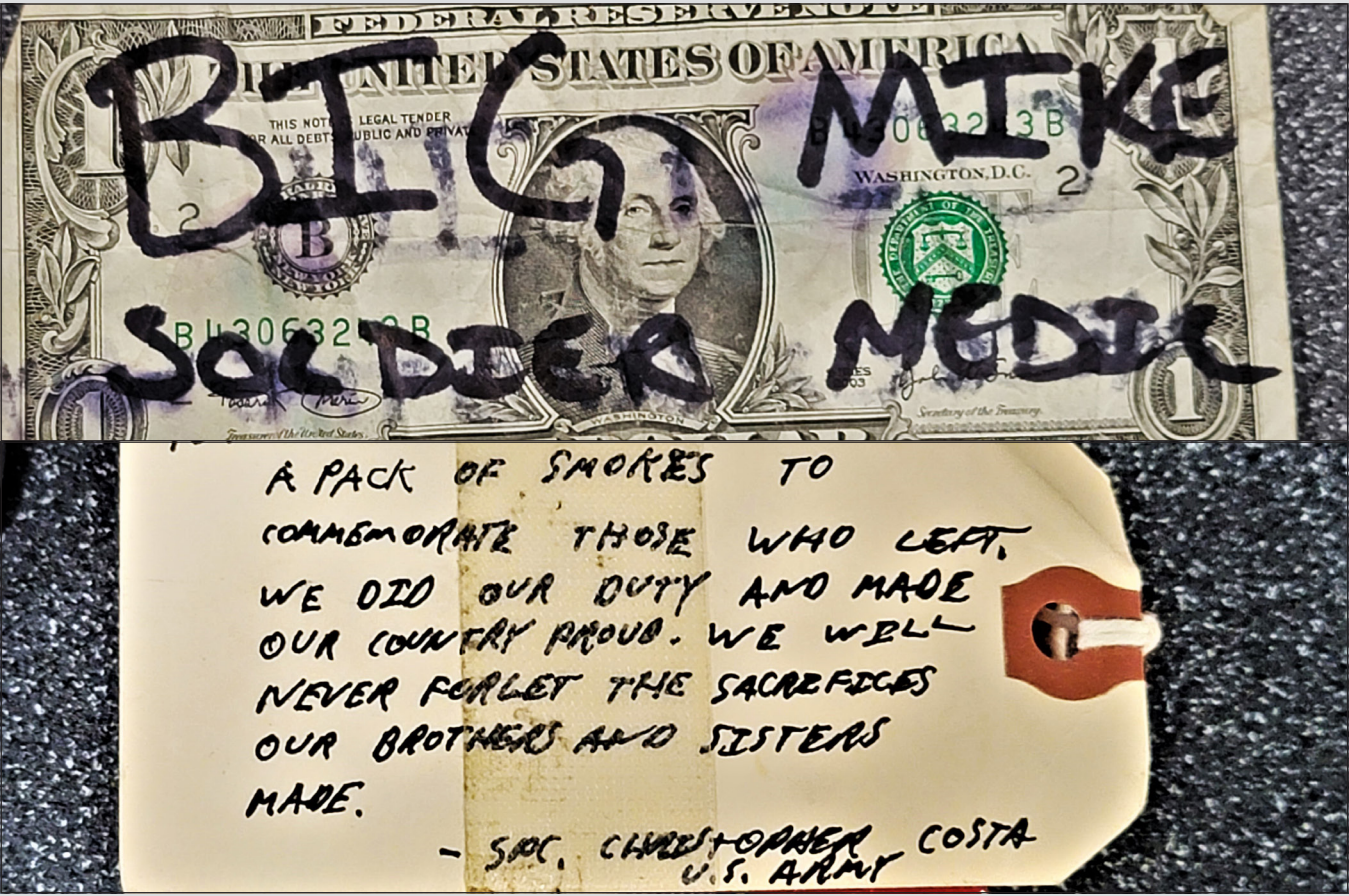
ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



FEATURE

# REMEMBERING TIME CAPSULE 20 YEARS LATER

## Item left by decorated Kentucky Guard MP unit, found in Fort McCoy barracks, was left 20 years ago after unit left of Operation Iraqi Freedom



Some of the items and a time capsule are shown at Fort McCoy. The time capsule was left by the Kentucky National Guard's 617th Military Police Company in November 2004. It discovered in late 2022 by contractors working on Fort McCoy barracks.

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

In November 2004, the 617th Military Police Company of the Kentucky National Guard was one of many military units completing their mobilization at Fort McCoy for deployment. It was in that month the unit wrapped up their training at Wisconsin's only Army installation and prepared to head off to Iraq for a year deployment for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Before they left, however, some members of the unit decided they'd put together a "time capsule" of sorts in a plastic drawer they got from the Fort McCoy Exchange, put some mementos in it, and stash it away in the walls of one of the hundreds of barracks on the installation's cantonment area.

"I think the concept was we believed when we got back, we were we were gonna be able to open it when we (got back)," said Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy F. Nein, battalion sergeant major of the 198th Military Police Battalion of the Kentucky Army National Guard at Louisville. At the time, Nein was a staff sergeant with the 617th.

But after their deployment, members of the unit never went back to find their time capsule. Whoever stashed the drawer of mementos into the wall did it well because it remained undiscovered for 19 years. The time capsule was found in fall 2022 when contractors were beginning major renovations on 200 of the barracks at Fort McCoy.

When workers discovered the capsule, they made sure to give it to members of the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works, who in turn presented it to the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office for eventual presentation into the Fort McCoy History Center.

Nein said he and probably everyone else probably never thought about the capsule until just recently when a member of the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office contacted him to ask if he was part of the team who left their names on items in the capsule. When they came back from their deployment where every member of the unit faced combat engagement on nearly a daily basis, Nein said the time capsule was the furthest thing from their minds.

"It was a very long year," he said.

### How they got to McCoy

The 617th Military Police Company is part of the Kentucky National Guard. Soldiers with the company arrived at Fort McCoy in October 2004 to begin their mobilization for 30 days before deploying to Southwest Asia for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Shortly after arriving, Nein's unit was included as part of a Rapid Fielding Initiative. In the Nov. 12, 2004, edition of the Fort McCoy Triad newspaper, in a story written by Karen Mast, Nein and the 617th were mentioned about being a part of the initiative.

"Among those issued equipment were more than 150 Soldiers from the 617th Military Police Company, a Kentucky Army National Guard unit headquartered in Richmond. Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein believes the additional equipment will help his unit better achieve its missions in Iraq. "The additional clothing and gear makes our job more comfortable," said Nein. "I expect we'll be better focused on our mission, not on the heat or how we feel."

"In addition to Nein, several other members of the unit returned from a 10-month deployment in Iraq last year and will deploy again with the 617th later this month," the story states. "SpC. Joseph Fields said the new equipment would give the Soldiers a definite advantage over last time."

Nein said the 617th trained hard while at Fort McCoy in all sorts of operations and skill sets. "I appreciated the mobilization process," he said,

And when they were wrapping up their time at McCoy, that's when they created the time capsule with the plastic drawer.

### What was in time capsule

Some experts say people in the past have created time capsules to give the people of the future an idea of what their lives were like at the time the objects were placed in the capsule itself.

In the case of what found in the McCoy barracks, as Nein said, it was something they had planned to recover a year after their deployment — not have everyone forget about it for two decades.

"I think it was a real surprise to everyone to hear about it," Nein said. "I posted pictures of it to the unit's Facebook page, and of course it created a lot of discussion."

On top of the white plastic drawer, someone wrote, "617th MP Co., 4th PLT DRAGONS, TIME CAPSULE, DO NOT OPEN TILL WE RETURN."

Then within the drawer is a mix of stuff that Soldiers from the unit randomly placed into it. Many things were signed or initialed or had messages. Included were dollar bills, military coins, a pack of cigarettes, a can of snuff, two small New Testament books, a ball cap filled with many signatures, an old Happy Birthday hat that was signed by three Soldiers who celebrated birthdays in October 2004, a plastic badge, candy, a Six Flags season park pass for 2004, a CD case, air freshener, and shaving cream.

Soldiers who left notes on items within the capsule that were identifiable included Nein, Sgt. Mike Adams, SpC. Christopher Costa, SpC. Jason Mike, Sgt. Dustin Morris, Sgt. 1st Class Clyde Henderson, Sgt. Kevin Riddell, Sgt. Joe Rivera, SpC. Chris McClure, and SpC. Casey Cooper.

And some of the notes were interesting.

For instance, Costa left the pack of cigarettes with a tagged note taped to it stating, "16 NOV 04: A pack of smokes to commemorate those who left. We did our duty and made our country proud. We will



never forget the sacrifices our brothers and sisters made."

On a \$1 bill, it states, "This is Sgt. Morris. I love my family & friends & I miss my dog. Lord, protect me."

Mike wrote on another \$1 bill, "Big Mike, Soldier Medic, OIF III, Medics Lead the Way."

"Jason was our medic and a guy bigger than life," Nein said. "Just a great guy overall."

For the ball cap that was in the cache of items, Nein said it wasn't anything special. He thinks it was probably something they would all end up having a laugh about when they returned for de-mobilization at McCoy in late 2005. But that never happened.

"I remember signing that," Nein said. "I don't know if it's something we found. I don't ever remember anyone wearing it."

Nein admitted there was probably no special meaning behind anything placed in the capsule, but now looking back it does bring back fond memories of his teammates who he trained with and fought with.

### The deployment

After leaving Fort McCoy and the time capsule behind, the Soldiers with the 617th went on to a deployment in central Iraq that was not only a year-long but was as Nein described as very intense and difficult.

"We deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, and we ran military police patrols for the most part," Nein said. "We did some convoy escorts but the majority of it was support to the main supply routes keeping them clear and free from enemy activity."

The daily patrols meant encountering improvised explosive devices (IEDs), enemy fire, and more, Nein said. In the time capsule, Sgt. Joe Rivera left his 2004 season pass for Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom as part of the mish-mash of items. Nein said Rivera is a leader and a fierce fighter and while out on one of those patrols in March 2005, Rivera received injuries in combat.

"He was injured during a gunfight and was medevacked," Nein said. "He later received a Purple Heart and an Army Commendation Medal with Valor."

And there were others, Nein said.

"So, of the 183 who went over, probably 50 percent received Purple Hearts," Nein said. "Also two Silver Stars, multiple Bronze Stars with valor ... multiple. I'm gonna tell you ... (this is) probably one of the most decorated National Guard units for combat action in the Iraq conflict."

Of the people mentioned who contributed items to the time capsule, in addition to Rivera, here's what a few of them earned from the deployment:

- Mike: Silver Star.
- Cooper: Bronze Star with valor, Army Commendation Medal with valor, and Purple Heart.
- Morris: Army Commendation Medal with valor.

Others receiving awards were SpC. Ashley Pullen who earned a Bronze Star with valor, SpC. William Haynes II who earned a Bronze Star with valor, and SpC. Jesse Ordunez who earned an Army Commendation Medal with valor. Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester was also awarded a Silver Star, becoming the first female Army Soldier since World War II to earn a Silver Star. And of course as time went on there were others who earned awards as well — more than can be listed.

But for Nein, he also earned a Silver Star in 2005. However, in 2007, that award was upgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross.

According to a Feb. 21, 2007, American Forces Press Service article, is states Nein became "the first Guard Soldier — and only the fifth servicemember overall — to receive the Distinguished Service Cross. The Distinguished Service Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor among awards for valor in battle."

"Staff Sgt. Timothy Nein received the medal from Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, at the National Guard Association of Kentucky's annual conference (in Louisville) Feb. 17," the story states.

"Nein originally received the Silver Star Medal for his actions as a squad leader with the 617th Military Police Company during an ambush in Iraq on March 20, 2005, but the award was upgraded, a process culminating with the presentation."

### Future of the capsule

After two decades of the capsule sitting in walls of a barracks building at Fort McCoy, the items, as basic and ordinary as they might be, will make their way to a permanent display in the Fort McCoy History Center as some point. The items are directly connected to a time in the installation's history where for a decade the installation mobilized tens of thousands of troops for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom between 2001 and 2011.

The time capsule also connects directly to a unit that spent its time at Fort McCoy, then went overseas to fight in a war like so many Soldiers had done before them.

In Fort McCoy's century-long history, units like the 76th Infantry Division and the famed 100th Infantry Division trained at Fort McCoy during World War II and went on to fight in the Battle of the Bulge and in Sicily and the Pacific. And now the 617th and the actions of Nein and his unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom continue that heritage of fighting spirit that Fort McCoy has supported for so long.

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Soldiers with the Kentucky National Guard's 617th Military Police Company are shown in November 2004 at Fort McCoy just prior to their deployment to Iraq.



SpC. Jeremy Eades, Sgt. William Baum and SpC. Casey Cooper, all military policemen, 617th Military Police Company, provide medical assistance to a wounded insurgent after a group of insurgents attacked a supply convoy March 20, 2005, about 18 miles southeast of Baghdad.

U.S. Army Photo

Photo by Anita Johnson/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office



## NEWS NOTES/FACILITIES



# SWIMMING LESSONS

\$40  
MILITARY

\$45  
CIVILIAN

## 8 WEEKS BEGINNING APRIL 15, 2025

### RUMPEL FITNESS CENTER

#### TUESDAYS

4:30pm: Youth Level 1 (Must be able to touch bottom of 3' shallow end)  
 5:05pm: Youth Level 2 (Learning swim strokes and building confidence in the water)

#### WEDNESDAYS

5:00pm: Adult Beginner  
 5:00pm: Parent & Child Aquatics (Parents are in the water with their children, Ages 0-4)

#### THURSDAYS

4:30pm: Youth Level 2 (Learning swim strokes and building confidence in the water)  
 5:05pm: Youth Level 1 (Must be able to touch bottom of 3' shallow end)

#### SATURDAYS

10:00am: Youth Level 2 (Learning swim strokes and building confidence in the water)  
 10:35pm: Youth Level 4 (Stroke refinement and learning dives and kick turns)

#### SUNDAYS

11:00am: Youth Level 3 (Must be able to touch bottom of 3' shallow end)  
 11:35pm: Youth Level 3 (Fine tuning swimming strokes, building endurance, and learning to dive)

**Payments are due at the time of enrollment and are non-refundable.**

**CALL 502-898-2290 TO REGISTER**

## Next issue of The Real McCoy

The May 2025 edition of The Real McCoy will be published May 9. The deadline for submissions or article ideas is April 30, 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 502-898-4128.

**\*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

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>.

**2024-25 FORT MCCOY GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE:** The 2024-25 Fort McCoy Guide is now available throughout the installation in news stands and at the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office. Call 502-98-2407 for extra copies. Also go online to <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/71107> to see the online version.

**facilities**  
**services**

This schedule is projected through May 8, 2025.  
Hours of operation and services can change frequently.  
Call facilities to verify hours before traveling.

**Bold, italic typeface** indicates a change since the last publication.

**Personnel Automations:** 502-898-4842.  
**Reassignments:** 502-898-4746.  
**Records Update:** 502-898-5677.  
**Centralized Promotions:** 502-898-5677.

Open: M-F: 6:30 am - 5:15 pm. Call: 502-898-2238. Childcare requests should be made at <https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome>.

**Multimedia/Visual Information:** Building 2113. Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. DA/command photos are by appointment only. Schedule at <https://vios.army.mil> or call 502-898-4520.

**Housing Office:** Building 6158. Open 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Family Housing, Single Soldier Housing, and referral services. Self-Help Warehouse open noon-3:30 p.m. Wed. and

**Official Mail Distribution Center:** Building 1009 (by Gate 20). Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 502-898-3205.

**Housing Office:** Building 6158. Open 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Family Housing, Single Soldier Housing, and referral services. Self-Help Warehouse open noon-3:30 p.m. Wed. and

**Patriot Outfitters:** Building 1538. Closed until further notice. Call 608-269-1115.

**Military Family Life Counseling:** Building 2111 MFLCs can provide short-term, nonmedical counseling at no cost and augment existing military support programs. Services can be provided on or off post. Call 502-898-8068 or 352-598-4972 or email [fischert@magellanfederal.com](mailto:fischert@magellanfederal.com) 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

**Permit Sales:** Building 2168. Hunting, fishing, and firewood permits. Open 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Check [ftmccoy.isportsman.net](http://ftmccoy.isportsman.net) for updates. Call 502-898-3337.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Personal Property Processing Office:** Building 200. Open 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call 502-898-3060, fax: 502-898-5634, email: [usarmy.mccoy.asc.mbx.lrc-pppo@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.mccoy.asc.mbx.lrc-pppo@mail.mil).

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Retirement Services Office:** Building 2187.  
Open 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Fri. By appointment  
only. Call 502-898-3716.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**R.I.A. Credit Union:** Building 1501. Open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Mon.-Fri. and 2-4 p.m. Tues. and Thurs. ATMs are located in building 1501 (available 24/7); McCoy's, building 1571; Exchange, building 1538; and IHG Army Hotels, building 51 (available 24/7). Call 502-898-2171.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Service Station/Express/Class VI:**  
Building 1538. Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-  
Sat. and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun. Call 502-  
898-4343. Pay-at-the-pump gas is open  
24/7.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Transition Service Center:** Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. By appointment only. Call 502-898-7956.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Visitor Control Center:** Building 35. Open 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Passes issued at Main Gate outside of VCC hours. Physical Security open for fingerprints Thur. only; call 502-898-2266. See ID/DEERS section for its hours.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Army Community Service:** Building 2111. Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 502-898-3505.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

**Child Development Center:** Building 1796.

**Red Cross:** Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services

## GIANT VOICE EMERGENCY-NOTIFICATION SIGNALS

CONDITION	IF YOU HEAR	THIS INDICATES	INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS
<b>Natural Disaster</b>	3- to 5-minute steady tone or voice announcement	Disaster imminent or in progress. Examples: Tornado, flash flood, hazardous-materials release, wildfire.	Be alert. Ensure all personnel are warned. Take cover by evacuating to a safe location or sheltering in place. Notify supervisor of location. Tune in to local radio or TV stations for emergency information.
<b>Attack</b>	30-sec. to 5-min. wavering tone or voice announcement	Attack imminent or in progress. Examples: Vehicle bomb, terrorist action, release of biological or radioactive materials.	Be alert. Ensure all personnel are warned. Implement force-protection condition (FPCON) procedures as indicated. Take cover by evacuating to a safe location or sheltering in place. Notify supervisor of location.
<b>All Clear</b>	Voice announcement	Immediate threat from disaster or attack is over.	Be alert for secondary hazards. Account for all personnel. Check building. Await instructions on FPCON level. Report fires, injuries and other hazards.



Send news items to the Public Affairs Office, ATTN: (IMMC-PA), 100 E. Headquarters Road, Fort McCoy, WI 54656-5263, or call 502-898-4128 or 2769 or send e-mail to [usarmy.mccoy.imcom-central.listpao-admin@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.mccoy.imcom-central.listpao-admin@mail.mil)

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Acting Public Affairs Officer/Editor .....	Scott T. Sturkol
Public Affairs Specialist/Community Relations .....	Melissa Dubois
Commemorative Area Caretaker .....	Robin Michalski
Editorial Content .....	502-898-4128

Read this publication online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>.

## FIREARM REGISTRATION POLICY

**All privately owned firearms brought on the installation must be registered through the Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) Police Department. Firearm registration is required by Army Regulation 190-11, 4-5, "Privately owned weapons and ammunition." 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.**



FEATURE

# 30-year veteran of Army Public Affairs retires from civil service at Fort McCoy

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Tonya Townsell gave her last presentation as the Fort McCoy public affairs officer March 27 as she gave her farewell remarks during her retirement ceremony at the Fort McCoy History Center at Fort McCoy, Wis.

Townsell started her career in Army Public Affairs in 1990 when she enlisted in the Army and completed the Defense Information School Basic Journalist Course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. From there her career took her to places all over the world, including assignments in the United States as well as Europe.

Her early days as a Soldier included supporting a presidential inauguration in the 1990s, and more. During 11 of her 30 years of service, Townsell served as a Soldier both on active and in the National Guard. After that, she transitioned to a career as a civil servant in Army Public Affairs.

Townsell said she spent the longest part of her career — nearly 10 years — as the Fort McCoy public affairs officer. She said many people helped her succeed along the way and that she had a great career.

“My mom and dad have been my biggest cheerleaders all my career, and I just can’t say enough about them,” Townsell said. “Then I decided to have my daughter, and they moved with me wherever I was going, and the Army has been just wonderful to me.

“I loved public affairs as an enlisted Soldier, so this is what I wanted to do, and this is what I was able to do,” Townsell said. “I kept getting moved back into garrisons, because apparently, I do garrisons well. I don’t regret anything about this, and it’s time to spend some time with my daughter. ... I’ve had some wonderful opportunities here at Fort McCoy. We got to see cold-weather training when it was going. We had this amazing mission of helping some evacuees (from Afghanistan) come and become new American citizens.

That’s probably going to be one of the huge highlights of my life — being able to help people out when they really needed it,” Townsell said. “It was an amazing thing that this installation pulled together. But I’m excited now to spend time with my family. ... I’m leaving a great team.”

Over the years, Townsell has been a part of a lot of professional awards too. At Fort McCoy, the number of awards received by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office staff has been significant during her leadership between 2015 and 2025.

During those 10 years, her office earned 16 Army Materiel Command public affairs awards, 40 Army Installation Management Command public affairs awards, and more than 150 monthly trophy awards on the Defense Visual Information and Distribution Service monthly recognition.

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez, who presided over Townsell’s ceremony, discussed her career.

“Today we are celebrating Tonya’s accomplishment for over 30 years of federal service,” Baez said. “We have many things to say about Tonya. ... For the last 10 years at Fort McCoy as the public affairs chief, things at Fort McCoy have taken a turn. When we look at social media, when we look at any type of ... media that is out there for the Army, Fort McCoy is all over the place.

“You and your team put Fort McCoy literally in the map,” Baez said. “Everything that we do here at Fort McCoy, from training to changes in infrastructure, from changes of command to initiatives that improve the environment, you and your team have been able to highlight that and get the word out.

“You can see all the wonderful things that our public affair team (has done) under your direction have been able to put out there,” she said. “Now people know about Fort McCoy. Now people understand the capabilities that we have at Fort McCoy, and all of that is thanks to you and your team. So, we are very thankful for everything that you have done to highlight the things that we have here at Fort McCoy.”

One of the biggest events Fort McCoy has every year is the Armed Forces Day Open House. Townsell was the public affairs leader during seven of those events as several were canceled because of the pandemic. Baez said it’s been impressive what Townsell, and her team were able to do, even at times when manning levels were lower than needed.

“We’re really thankful for all the work that you have done for the garrison,” Baez said. “We don’t get to the place we are today without help. And you have been part of that team. You have been part of that group that have pushed things forward within the garrison. ... So, thank you, Tonya, for all of your service, to the federal government.”

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.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

A scene from the retirement ceremony for Tonya Townsell, former public affairs officer for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, is shown March 27 at Fort McCoy. Townsell retires with 30 years of military and civil service to the U.S. Army. Townsell was the public affairs officer at Fort McCoy for nearly a decade where her team won dozens of awards at Army Installation Management Command and Army Materiel Command.



Photo by Aimee Malone

Former Fort McCoy Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell (right) hands a name for a door prize to Lt. Col. Jared Corsi, deputy garrison commander, during Community Appreciation Night on Aug. 31, 2017, at McCoy’s Community Center at Fort McCoy.

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.”



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Fort McCoy Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell provides a briefing about the post Sept. 20, 2018, during the Tomah (Wis.) Veterans Affairs Medical Center Mental Health Summit at Fort McCoy.

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.”

## Fort McCoy communicators earn award placings for graphics, community relations in Army Materiel Command competition

Kendra Pierce with the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office and members of the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office earned award placings in two categories for the 2024 Army Materiel Command (AMC) David G. Harris Public Affairs Competition that was announced in late-February.

The placings at AMC were the next level of competition for Pierce and the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office after they placed in the 2024 Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Public Affairs and Communications Awards competition in January.

### Graphics winner

Pierce earned a second-place Army Materiel Command award in Graphic Arts.

Category A: Layout and Design. Pierce’s entry was a special graphic created for the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

The entry competed with entries from across the Army that were from units under the AMC umbrella.

Pierce said she was happy to see the graphics item she created earn awards at both IMCOM and AMC.

“I was definitely surprised,” Pierce said. “I didn’t think it would place at all but happy see the project recognized.”

### Armed Forces Day Open House event recognized

As it also earned an award at IMCOM, the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office also earned an AMC third-place award in Category B: Community Relations Special Event for work done during the 2024 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House.

Contributors recognized for the award include now-retired 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.

“We had great weather for the event, and we had another fantastic turnout for the event,” Townsell said after the event.

“Thank you to everyone who supported the event to make it a success once again. It’s this team effort that makes it the great event that it is. Additionally, thank you to all who visited to see what we have here at Fort McCoy.”

In a command-wide email message, Col. Nichole L. Downs, director of AMC Public and Congressional Affairs, said competition was full of great work.

“AMC Public Affairs Professionals — Earlier this year, participants from across the AMC enterprise submitted entries for the 2024 David G. Harris Public Affairs Competition. Over the last month, we have carefully reviewed the submissions and selected 22 winners to advance to the Army’s Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware (KLW) competition,” Downs wrote.

“As in previous years, selecting the entries for the next round was a difficult task. I’m impressed by the quality of the submissions I’ve seen, and it’s evident that they continue to improve with each passing year.

“I would like to invite you to join me in congratulating all the winners of this year’s competition. Your hard work and commitment to sharing the stories of your commands, AMC, and the Army are truly commendable. Thank you for taking the time to showcase your best work and for submitting your products for consideration at the AMC level for the David Harris competition. Your ongoing support for readiness and lethality is greatly appreciated, and I wish you all the best in this next phase of the competition. I encourage you to keep

supporting this program because it truly showcases the important work of your teams and gives us a chance to recognize the talented Public Affairs professionals around AMC,” Downs said.

“Thank you for everything you do!” These two entries now compete at the Army level Keith L. Ware competition.

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



Graphic illustration by Kendra Pierce/Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office

This graphic illustration earned a second-place placing in the 2024 Army Materiel Command David Harris Competition for public affairs and communications awards. It also had previously placed at Installation Management Command.



## FEATURE

# Career biologist, endangered species expert retires with 40 years of service at Fort McCoy

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

In February 1985, Tim Wilder began a 40-year journey at Fort McCoy that he admits was a labor of love from start to finish. At that time, little did he know he would make an impact on the endangered species and natural resources programs at Fort McCoy that will last for generations.

On March 27, 2025, Wilder retired from the Army Civil Service with dozens of coworkers, friends, and family in attendance to pay tribute to his service and accomplishments. During his career, Wilder was a biological science student trainee from February 1985 to October 1987, wildlife biologist from November 1987 to June 1994, Fort McCoy's first endangered species biologist from June 1994 to March 2018, and chief of the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB) from March 2018 to March 2025.

Wilder recalled how it all started.

"I actually started out not even as a wildlife biologist, I was a student trainee when I first came in under the program," he said. "It wasn't a full-time position or anything, it was just an opportunity to work for a certain period of time, and then when you were done, the civilian personnel office would try to find you a job within the government system for 120 days."

I just lucked out that there was an opening here at the time for a seasonal position, 10 months seasonal, so I was selected for that, and then after a year that moved into a full-time position," Wilder said. "But again, I never expected to be here my whole career, and actually, I wouldn't have even applied for the position if it wasn't for my girlfriend at the time who is now my wife. ... I went to school at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and so it would have been the fall of 1984, we were walking through the university center, and she noticed a job posting on the wall. She said 'you should apply for that.'"

"Well, she convinced me and helped me write everything up, there was an old 171 form and everything, and I applied for it and got the position," Wilder said. "So, I started then in that spring of '85, and again, never dreamt I would be here my whole career."

## A career to be proud of

With his first job, Wilder said he did mostly field work — checking wood duck boxes, using chainsaws, doing habitat work, doing rough grouse surveys in the spring, going out and finding the rough grouse.

"I'm an avid hunter, so I couldn't believe I was getting paid for that," Wilder said. "I could go find the grouse in the spring, so I knew where most of them were to go hunt them in the fall. I was also involved with the stream fisheries projects, too, such as stream improvement and shocking streams and lakes (for fish surveys)."

That work early on also included capturing and banding juvenile osprey as part of a long-term monitoring program. He said he also maintained and monitored Eastern Bluebird and Kestrel nest boxes and banded young of the year. He also completed game and non-game habitat improvement projects through the implementation of an alder management plan.

"We used chainsaws to cut strips of alder to create uneven aged stands that benefited grouse, woodcock, and numerous songbirds," Wilder said.

His work changed when he became the installation's first endangered species biologist in 1994. This meant he had to build a program specifically to monitor and support listed endangered species at Fort McCoy.

In March 1995, Wilder drafted and had approved the first Fort McCoy Karner Blue Butterfly Endangered Species Management Plan.

"I eventually updated this plan several times and wrote management plans for both the bald eagle and gray wolf," Wilder said.

From 1994-2018, Wilder also routinely conducted consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on five federally listed species; developed and implemented management plans for the Karner Blue Butterfly, gray wolf, and bald eagle; collected biological data for federal and state listed species and developed; and implemented an awareness training program for Soldiers and government and contract employees. All of these actions allowed Fort McCoy to maintain compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

"One thing I really loved about this job is ... the species I got to work with," Wilder said. "As an endangered species biologist, you got to know that species. You're doing the research and the surveys and everything, too. Where a lot of wildlife biologists, if you've got a huge property you're managing, you're more managing habitat, but not individual species per se. So that was really neat to be able to do that."

"With the Karner program, you really got to know the butterfly," Wilder said. "And that's been one of the most rewarding things. I've got to work with a lot of different species, from the Blanding's turtles, wood turtles, to the bull snakes. We've had transmitters and telemetry projects going on with the turtles and the snakes. Again, the wolves and all that, and eagles. One of the most rewarding things, I think, is the work with the butterflies."

Thanks to his work with butterflies over the decades, he said Fort McCoy is becoming known for its thriving populations of endangered butterflies.

"McCoy's getting to be known for its rare butterflies," Wilder said. We've got one of the best populations of the Karner left under one ownership. But we've also got the Regal Fritillary Butterfly now that's going through the process of being federally listed. And we've got the best population of that left in the Upper Midwest. Monarchs are going to be listed, and we've got them here too."

## Heavily involved with community

As the endangered species biologist, Wilder regularly served as the NRB coordinator to support the annual Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House. Wilder often worked the NRB booth at open house. "I enjoyed educating the youth about McCoy's natural resources including a live display of snakes and turtles," he said.

In 1994, a Soldier was utilized to develop the first automated Permit Sales Program, and Wilder developed the user's manual for this program.

In July 2005, Wilder coordinated with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Veterinary Medical Hospital to surgically implant a transmitter within the first bull snake as part of a bull snake monitoring project. The university implanted the transmitters at a reduced cost as they used this as training for the veterinary students.

"Transmitters are still being implanted within bull snakes to learn more about how they are utilizing the habitat on Fort McCoy," Wilder said.

From 2013 through 2018, Wilder was responsible for all aspects of the management of invasive plant species at Fort McCoy. The program prioritized invasive species into high, medium, and low priority. In addition, McCoy's land area was divided into high, medium, and low priority areas. With limited budgets, this was a way to assist in determining which species would be treated and where they would be treated.

"I can remember when I first started working here in 1985, nobody talked about invasive species," Wilder said. "I think it was about the summer of 1987 that we noticed a plant out in some of the oak savannah areas. What's that pretty yellow plant out here? Well, it ended up it was leafy spurge, which is an invasive plant. And that kind of started it."

Wilder was also heavily involved in the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group, which is a group started by former Fort McCoy Biologist Kim Mello back in the 1990s.

"It died out for a little while, and then was resurrected about 10-15 years ago," Wilder said. "We've been a big player in that again, too. With not only sharing our knowledge of invasive species management, because we do far more than anybody else in the county, but it's also then, if others are doing it outside of Fort McCoy, hopefully some of these new species never reach McCoy because they're controlling them before they ever do. That's been a really good partnership working with them."

In 2016, Wilder also became a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources hunter education volunteer instructor to fill a need of providing hunter education courses for the Fort McCoy community. Since 2016, 16 courses have been held on Fort McCoy and 219 people have received their hunter education certificate.



*Contributed photo*  
**Tim Wilder with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division is shown in the 1990s holding a wood duck as part of his work as a biologist at Fort McCoy.**

## Working with a great team

Wilder said lots of the many accomplishments by the NRB were because of his team he worked with. Many people within the natural resources program at Fort McCoy were coworkers with Wilder for decades.

These people include Mello, former NRB Chief Mark McCarty, former Wildlife Biologist David Beckmann, former Fisheries Biologist John Noble, former Fort McCoy Forester James Kerkman, former Environmental Division Chief Jim Hessel, current Environmental Division Chief Brent Friedl, current Fort McCoy Forester Charles Mentzel, current Endangered Species Biologist Jessup Weichelt, current Wildlife Biologist Kevin Luepke, current Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood, Natural Resources Specialist Jessica Salesman, Archaeologist Ryan Howell, numerous contractor support staff, directorate and post leadership, and many more.

That team also were distinguished with many special awards. The Natural Resources Branch was recognized on numerous occasions for work accomplished in support of the natural resources and the military training mission.

Some awards include the 2016 Secretary of Defense Environmental Team Award; the 1995, 1998, and 1999 Chief of Staff Conservation Award; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Military Conservation Partner Award in 2019.

"Personally, I received the Superior Civilian Service Award (2001), Commander's Award for Civilian Service (2011), and letters of appreciation from both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for management dedicated to the conservation of the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly," Wilder said.

But his work throughout the years wasn't about the awards. It was about doing the best work for what was needed to be done. He also believes McCoy's training mission has been beneficial to managing endangered species.

"I have believed for many years that most military training activities, at least at the intensity they occur on Fort McCoy, inadvertently helped manage the wildlife on Fort McCoy and are part of the reason

why the installation is home to many of the rare and listed species that occur here," Wilder said. "We always tried to manage the natural resources in a proactive rather than reactive manner. We started research and monitoring projects for numerous species — golden-winged warbler, Karner Blue Butterfly, Frosted Elfin butterfly, Regal Fritillary butterfly, Otter Skipper butterfly, Blandings and wood turtles, and Northern Long-eared bats — to gather biological data before they became listed in order to have the necessary data available to write biological assessments if/when they are listed. Having the data to show that the disturbances caused by military training and land management activities benefited these species was critical. Zero training days have been lost to military training as a result of endangered species being on the installation."

## Praising his service

During his retirement ceremony in building 905 at Fort McCoy, Wilder received a 40 years of service to the government plaque and pin, a retirement flag (U.S. flag) with certificate signed by Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez that was flown on Feb. 3, the Public Service Commendation Medal, a certificate of appreciation for retirement from the garrison commander with a pin, and his official Army certificate of retirement.

But in addition to having these significant items presented to him, Wilder also received praise for his exemplary career serving the Army and Fort McCoy for 40 years.

"He has done amazing things throughout 40 years of federal service," Baez said. "Tim has been a major part of Fort McCoy, and he has helped to write Fort McCoy history. Forty years of service is a lifetime. ... Thank you for everything that you have provided to this installation. I know that there have been many commanders before me, but it's been many people who you have worked with. ... We heard about the amazing partnerships that you formed with the Wisconsin DNR, that you formed with school districts."

"I know that your love for the nature helped you and guided you to do this," Baez said. "I know that moving forward, you will continue to have that love for nature. ... When he's retired from Fort McCoy, he continues to plan to be a hunter education instructor. ... He's hoping that he can volunteer for the NRB. And of course, he wants to have all the time in the world to spend with his family."

Baez also thanked Tim's wife Nancy Wilder.

"I want to thank Nancy one more time, because as I look at the notes that I got here, you were the one who pushed him to apply for that position," Baez said. "And as we look here, 40 years later, he has dedicated his life to serve Fort McCoy and serve the federal government. That is no small task, and like I said, he could not have done that without your help and without your support so thank you so much. I always say that when we work for the federal government, for the Army, we are not the only ones who serve. Our entire families serve with us, and they live our happiness, they live our struggles, and like I said, we would not be here today, Tim, if you didn't have the support from your wife."

DPW Director Liane Haun also praised Wilder's support for the directorate, the Army, and the installation.

"I appreciate everything that you've done for the DPW and for the garrison," Haun said. "You have left a legacy here within the DPW with all the people who have come on board. And you're pretty much irreplaceable. So, it's going to be really hard to find somebody that is of your caliber and your experience who is going to continue to keep things going for the next 40 years. Thank you, Tim, for everything you've done."

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*Contributed photo*  
**Tim Wilder gives a tour to a school class early in his career as a wildlife biologist/endangered species biologist at Fort McCoy.**



*Photo by Scott T. Sturkol*  
**Tim Wilder is shown receiving his official retirement certificate from Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez on March 27 during Wilder's retirement ceremony in building 905 at Fort McCoy.**



*Photo by Scott T. Sturkol*  
**Tim Wilder speaks about his career March 27 during his retirement ceremony at Fort McCoy. Wilder served 40 years — all at Fort McCoy.**



## OUTDOORS

# Fort McCoy prepares to open Pine View Campground for 2025 on May 1

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

One of the Army's best kept outdoor recreation secrets — Pine View Campground — is getting ready to reopen for the 2025 recreation season May 1, said Supervisory Recreational Specialist Alex Karis with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR).

The Outdoor Recreation maintenance team is busy getting everything ready, Karis said.

"We are also coordinating with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works to get the comfort stations opened up and cleaned by the end of April.

As with every year, Karis said the reopen date depends on weather, but they are looking at being fully operational by May 1.

From 2020-2024, Pine View Campground has had very successful years, Karis said. For 2025, DFMWR officials hope to see that continued success.

Pine View Campground is part of the Pine View Recreation Area. Now celebrating 53 years of use, Pine View Recreation Area includes hundreds of acres of publicly accessible land with miles hiking trails, the La Crosse River that's home to several species of trout, Trout Falls on the La Crosse River, Suukjak Sep Lake and Suukjak Sep Creek, the campground, Whitetail Ridge Ski Area, and Sportsman's Range.

"Pine View Recreation Area offers four-season, year-round activities to include camping, hiking, fishing, and more," Karis said in previous news articles. "In ... the entire Pine View Recreation Area there's opportunities to enjoy some fantastic outdoor recreation opportunities."

One activity includes participating in Wisconsin's fishing season, which prospective anglers can partake in along the La Crosse River in the Pine View Recreation Area near the campground. Anglers must have the required Fort McCoy fishing license and related Wisconsin fishing license and trout stamp to be able to fish on the installation. Learn more about fishing rules and requirements for Fort McCoy by visiting the Fort McCoy iSportsman page at <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>.

"Suukjak Sep Lake also offers a place for anglers



(Above and below) Scenes at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy are shown Sept. 5 of one of the campground circles and the swimming beach.



to try their hand at fishing," Karis said. "It's stocked with rainbow trout every year and it's a popular fishing venue."

The lake was formerly known as Squaw Lake. The new name, Suukjak Sep, translates to "black

wolf" in the Ho-Chunk language and was renamed in recent years. The lake is a man-made impoundment on Suukjak Sep Creek, which was also recently renamed. The creek itself was named Squaw Creek sometime in the mid-1800s.

Great outdoor recreation opportunities for the public abound at Pine View, Karis said. Among them is to try out the Pine View Recreation Area hiking trails, Karis said.

"If you want to see something incredibly beautiful, then come see Trout Falls," Karis said. "There's no swimming or wading at the falls. However, it is very scenic and is a popular stop for our guests."

The equipment-issue operation at Recreational Equipment Checkout also will be fully available.

Also, some of the services that are available at the campground include:

- full-service campsites and cabins, including many new cabins.
- fishing and hiking trails (for guests only).
- lake/beach (no lifeguards on duty).
- rental equipment.
- shuffleboard.
- miniature golf.
- comfort stations (toilets/showers).
- camp store (retail items, such as wood, are available via delivery to sites).
- yurts, tent sites, and basic electric sites.
- playgrounds and pavilions.
- basketball, volleyball, and horseshoes areas.

"As with every year, we want to thank all our guests who come back every year to spend time at the campground," Karis said. "We're looking forward to having a successful, busy year once again at the campground. We invite new campers to come by. It's worth the trip."

The campground reservation office is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To reserve a site or a cabin, call 502-898-3517/2619. For additional information, such as rates and fees, go to <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/programs/pine-view-campground>.

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## Originator of Karner Blue Butterfly endangered species program reflects on its success

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

In 1994, Tim Wilder became the first endangered species biologist at Fort McCoy and was charged with developing a program that would improve habitat and numbers for endangered species.

More than 30 years since, the Karner Blue Butterfly program that came out of that effort has been a model for success across the United States.

Wilder said in March 1995, he and his team at the Natural Resources Branch drafted and had approved the first Fort McCoy Karner Blue Butterfly (KBB) Endangered Species Management Plan. In 1995 they were part of a different directorate. Today they fall under the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division.

On March 27, Wilder retired as the branch chief and ended his 30-plus years with the Karner program. He reflected on being able to support and build the program.

"The other thing I really loved about the job is the species I got to work with as an endangered species biologist," Wilder said. "You got to know that species. You're doing the research and the surveys and everything, too. Where a lot of wildlife biologists, if you've got a huge property you're managing, you're more managing habitat, but not individual species per se. So that was really neat to be able to do that with the Karner."

As time went on, the Fort McCoy Karner program grew to include working with outside partners, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and many others.

"When we got involved with the state, they started dealing with the Karner after we did," Wilder said. "They had what was called a habitat conservation plan that they were trying to develop. So, we weren't members of that, but we were partners, giving them advice and working with them. And we got benefits out of it, too.

"But it was just surprising when we started working (with the state)," he said. "We learned how many other people were dealing with the Karner and were already far behind us. I remember we were out on tours and I was pointing out, 'That's a Karner Blue Butterfly egg.' And they're thinking, 'I never saw one before.'"

Wilder said through lots of work in the program, they really got to know the butterfly.

"McCoy's getting to be known for its rare butterflies," Wilder said. "We've got one of the best populations of the Karner left under one ownership. We've also got the regal fritillary butterfly now that's going through the process of being federally listed. And we've got the best population of that left in the upper Midwest. Monarchs are going to be listed, and we've got them here too."

Wilder said the Frosted Elfin butterfly is another butterfly that's rare like the KBB and prevalent at Fort McCoy.

"It's host plant is wild lupine, just like the Karner, and we've got the best population of that left in Wisconsin," Wilder said. "It's almost range wide. There's a few spots that probably have more. But the one that's not even listed yet, but it probably will be in some days, is called the otto skipper butterfly. And that one, we're the only place left in Wisconsin that has them, I think, since 2015.

What they've also learned over the last three decades about the Karner are ways to better its habitat and to make natural resources decisions to continue improving the habitat so they can successfully reproduce. Wilder said also that Fort McCoy has never lost time for training troops because of habitat for the butterfly.

"I have always thought the levels of training that occur on McCoy, that disturbance caused by them is inadvertently helping manage this butterfly," Wilder said. "We had some research done ... here a few years ago. And what the findings came out with, again, show that at the levels that training is now, because it helps control the shrub layer, the bivouacking and that kind of stuff, it promotes the lupine (to grow) better."

And he said that's what the butterfly wants.

"So, our timber sales, our prescribed burning, our management, the training all goes in," Wilder said. "I was always under the perception when I started here that the Fish and Wildlife Service biologists ... were the experts on these species. That's not the case. We're the experts on the species and especially on the properties here. It took me a few years after I was the endangered species biologist to realize that."

Wilder said Fort McCoy now has USFWS and WDNR people coming to Fort McCoy to see what the installation does for butterflies, sees the species themselves because they can't see them in other places, and sees what kind of surveys Fort McCoy is doing.

But the success of the KBB and other endangered butterfly species at McCoy comes back to having the wild lupine throughout the installation, Wilder said.

"We've had a great working relationship with the USFWS and the DNR on all the species we deal with there," Wilder said. "But again, I think we've been a little bit lucky. McCoy is 60,000 acres, mostly sand, where that wild lupine plant does well.

"And ... when you look at how the lupine is scattered across the landscape, it looks like you just took paint and threw it up on the wall," he said. "I mean, there's patches of it kind of all over the place. And since there was no breaks in the habitat at McCoy where you've got farm fields, for example, the butterflies can naturally just move. All the wildlife can naturally move around the landscape."

Wilder said when they've done most of their presence-absence sur-



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

(Above and below) Karner Blue Butterflies are shown sitting on flowers in a prairie area July 15, 2024, at Fort McCoy. The butterfly is one of several rare species that have thrived well on the installation.



Photo by Claudia Neve

veys, they have good numbers.

"That's when we go out, and we're not counting butterflies," Wilder said. "We're just trying to document if they exist in those patches. Most of the time we're well over 90 percent, 95 percent of the patches hold butterflies."

He said the other thing Fort McCoy lands got going for the butterfly is the post has lupine that grows out in the open with no trees, no shade.

"Then we've got lupine that grows back in that ... scrub oak habitat," Wilder said. "There's plenty of sunlight still getting back in there. And so, we've got different microclimates where that butterfly can exist."

Wilder said Fort McCoy was also the place that developed an innovative, one-of-a-kind process to mitigate the permanent take of KBBs off the installation in 2013.

"The process included Fort McCoy moving funds (\$3,320/acre) to the USFWS who in-turn provided the funds to the WDNR to establish or manage KBB habitat on their lands.

"Since McCoy had already reached its conservation goals and the WDNR hadn't, this was a win for Fort McCoy in that we are assisting the WDNR to reach their goals. This species cannot be delisted until the WDNR reaches their conservation goals. In addition, as soon as Fort McCoy provided the funds to the USFWS, it was the USFWS responsibility to ensure the WDNR used the funds properly — not Fort McCoy. I was told by natural resource managers at the Pentagon that this was the first and only time this method had been used to mitigate

the incidental take of an endangered species off an installation, and they were surprised by the low cost of doing so.

Wilder said Fort McCoy briefed this method to other Department of Defense natural resource managers and to all natural resource managers at a National Wildlife Society meeting.

In 2025, Fort McCoy's current Endangered Species Biologist Jes-sup Weichelt continues what Wilder started by managing the KBB program and needs for other endangered butterflies at Fort McCoy.

"It's been some great work by everyone, and it's something Fort McCoy should be proud of," Wilder said.

See more about the Karner Blue Butterfly by visiting <https://www.fws.gov/species/karner-blue-butterfly-lycaeides-melissa-samuelis>.

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."



COMMUNITY

# Fort McCoy to have rainbow trout stocked in time for 2025 fishing season

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Annually, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) completes a fish stocking effort at Fort McCoy that averages approximately 15,000 rainbow trout in major waterways on the installation.

The trout stocking usually happens every April by staff from the USFWS Genoa National Fish Hatchery of Genoa, Wis., and is usually just in time for the start of the annual fishing season opener in Wisconsin and on post. That will be the case again in 2025, said Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

Rood said that rainbow trout are a preferred species of fish for anglers at Fort McCoy, and that's why they so many are stocked on post.

"Opening weekend is one of the busiest two days for angling on Fort McCoy as anglers pursue rainbow trout in some of the lakes," Rood said. "This year should not be any different, as Fort McCoy will again be stocking six lakes with rainbow trout. This is a tradition that began in 1963 and has been carried on a for more than 60 years and totaling over 1.2 million rainbow trout stocked over that period. Creel survey results show that over 60 percent of Fort McCoy anglers will pursue rainbow trout at some point throughout the season.

"Rainbow trout are only stocked into lakes, which gives anglers the opportunity to pursue native brook and brown trout in our streams," Rood said.



(Above and below) Rainbow trout released into Big Sandy Lake are shown April 23, 2204, on South Post at Fort McCoy, Wis. More than 4,000 trout were stocked in the lake in 2024 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Overall, workers with the USFWS' Genoa National Fish Hatchery of Genoa, Wis., stocked more than 15,000 rainbow trout in several waterways throughout the post in 2024.

The USFWS states they take pride in their fish stocking efforts, as shown at their website at <https://www.fws.gov/service/fish-stocking>, noting that "fish stocking supports conservation."

"The next time you go fishing, you might just catch a fish that was raised at a national fish hatchery," the USFWS website states. "Since 1871 we have been working to improving recreational fishing and restoring aquatic species that are in decline, at risk, and are important to the health of our aquatic systems. Across the country the network of national fish hatcheries work with states and tribes to conserve, restore, and enhance the fish and aquatic resources of America for future generations.

"Our national fish hatcheries restore and maintain healthy fisheries through carefully planned rearing and stocking programs. Fish are stocked for numerous reasons including the recovery of federally listed, threatened, or endangered species, the restoration of imperiled species, fulfillment of tribal partnerships and trust responsibilities, and fish stocking provides excellent recreational fishing opportunities that benefit local communities."

According to the USFWS, the Genoa National Fish Hatchery was established in 1932. The hatchery serves six Midwestern states and rears 23 species of fish to support high-priority federal management, restoration, and threatened and endangered species programs.

Overall, the USFWS states there are 71 national fish hatcheries. The USFWS also stated where all their fish go throughout the country.

No definitive dates have been set for the fish stocking, however Rood said it regularly takes place in the later part of April every year.

Anglers must have the appropriate Wisconsin licenses to fish on post, as well. This includes a general Wisconsin fishing license, a trout stamp if fishing for trout, and the Fort McCoy fishing permit.

The cost of a Fort McCoy annual fishing permit is \$13 for people aged 16 and older. Permits for youth under 16, seniors, and disabled anglers and



four-day fishing permits are \$8. All are available for purchase through the iSportsman website, <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>.

"All Fort McCoy permits, including the iSportsman Annual Access Pass expire on March 31 each year," Rood said. "This means anyone interested in participating in recreational activities on Fort McCoy will need to log into their iSportsman account and acquire new permits for the activity they

wish to participate in. For all hunting, fishing, and trapping permits, a state of Wisconsin license is required in addition to a Fort McCoy permit.

"Also, as a reminder, a free annual access pass is required for everyone participating in recreational activities including non-hunting/non-fishing activities such as hiking, dog walking, or berry picking," Rood said.

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."

## 2025 Fort McCoy, Wisconsin fishing season begins May 3

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

The 2025 Fort McCoy fishing season opens May 3, concurrent with the Wisconsin general inland fishing season opener.

Fishing on installation lakes and flowages is allowed May 3 through March 1, 2026, said Fisheries Biologist Steven Rood with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch. The general inland trout season on post and in Wisconsin is from May 3 to Oct. 15.

Fort McCoy has 10 installation lakes and impoundments and approximately 71.2 miles of Coldwater streams and tributaries, Rood said. Most of the streams are class I trout waters maintaining naturally reproducing brook and brown trout. The impoundments on Fort McCoy cold-water streams provide a variety of uses for recreation, military training, and habitat for fish and wildlife.

"The general inland waters fishing seasons opens on Saturday, May 3, at 5 a.m.," said Rood. "Opening weekend is one of the busiest two days for angling on Fort McCoy as anglers pursue rainbow trout in some of the lakes. This year should not be any different, as Fort McCoy will again be stocking six lakes with rainbow trout. This is a tradition that began in 1963 and has been carried on a for more than 60 years and totaling over 1.2 million rainbow trout stocked over that period.

"Creel survey results show that over 60 percent of Fort McCoy anglers will pursue rainbow trout at some point throughout the season," Rood said.

Like previous years, over 15,000 rainbow trout will be stocked into six waterways at Fort McCoy, including Sparta Pond, Swamp Pond, Stillwell Lake, Big Sandy Lake, Sandy Lake, and Suukjak Sep Lake at Pine View Campground.

Rood said the fishing outlook looks good as well for installation anglers.

"In 2024, stream surveys again showed brook and brown trout abundance to be near all-time highs for the fourth year in a row," Rood said. "This will provide stream anglers with a great opportunity to catch some really nice fish."

Anglers must have the appropriate Wisconsin licenses to fish on post, as well. This includes a general Wisconsin fishing license, a trout stamp if fishing for trout, and the Fort McCoy fishing permit.

The cost of a Fort McCoy annual fishing permit is \$13 for people aged 16 and older. Permits for youth under 16, seniors, and disabled anglers and four-day fishing permits are \$8. All are available for purchase through the iSportsman website, <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>.

"All Fort McCoy permits, including the iSportsman Annual Access Pass expire on March 31 each year," Rood said. "This means anyone interested in participating in recreational activities on Fort McCoy will need to log into their iSportsman account and acquire new permits for the activity they wish to participate in. For all hunting, fishing, and trapping permits, a state of Wisconsin license is required in addition to a Fort McCoy permit.

"Also, as a reminder, a free annual access pass is required for everyone participating in recreational activities including non-hunting/non-fishing activities such as hiking, dog walking, or berry picking," Rood said.

All anglers are also reminded to check the iSportsman system each day for lake and training area closures to ensure the water they intend to fish is open for that day, Rood said.

All permits for hunting, fishing, and firewood cutting at Fort McCoy must be purchased through iSportsman and an iSportsman account is required to purchase any of these permits.

"Anglers are also asked to please remember to display a card or sheet of paper with your iSportsman account number on the dashboard of your vehicle," Rood said.

Anglers have plenty of options for fishing too. North Flowage and Lost Lake on Fort McCoy's North Post are open year-round for pan-fish, such as bluegill, and are available for the Wisconsin bass catch-

and-release season all throughout the year at times outside the regular fishing season.

For trout fishing, with the exception of Silver Creek, there is a bag limit of five trout with no size restrictions. There is a special regulation for trout caught at Silver Creek from the western installation boundary to the bridge at the West Silver wetland (bag limit is three trout, no minimum length, artificial lures only).

The Fort McCoy fishing map, also available on the Fort McCoy iSportsman website, is highlighted in orange along Silver Creek to distinguish the special regulation area.

There also will be a Free Fishing Weekend on June 7-8 in Wisconsin and at Fort McCoy. No licenses or permits are needed, but all bag limits and other rules apply. Fort McCoy rules and regulations can be found online using the Fort McCoy iSportsman web site, <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>, and selecting the "Regulations" tab from the menu. Rules and regulations and maps are also available at the Hunter Information Point (HIP) located along State Highway 21 at the intersection of South J Street and State Highway 21 and will be open year-round.

"The Free Fishing Weekend is an excellent time for people to come

out and see all the fantastic fishing areas we have here," Rood said.

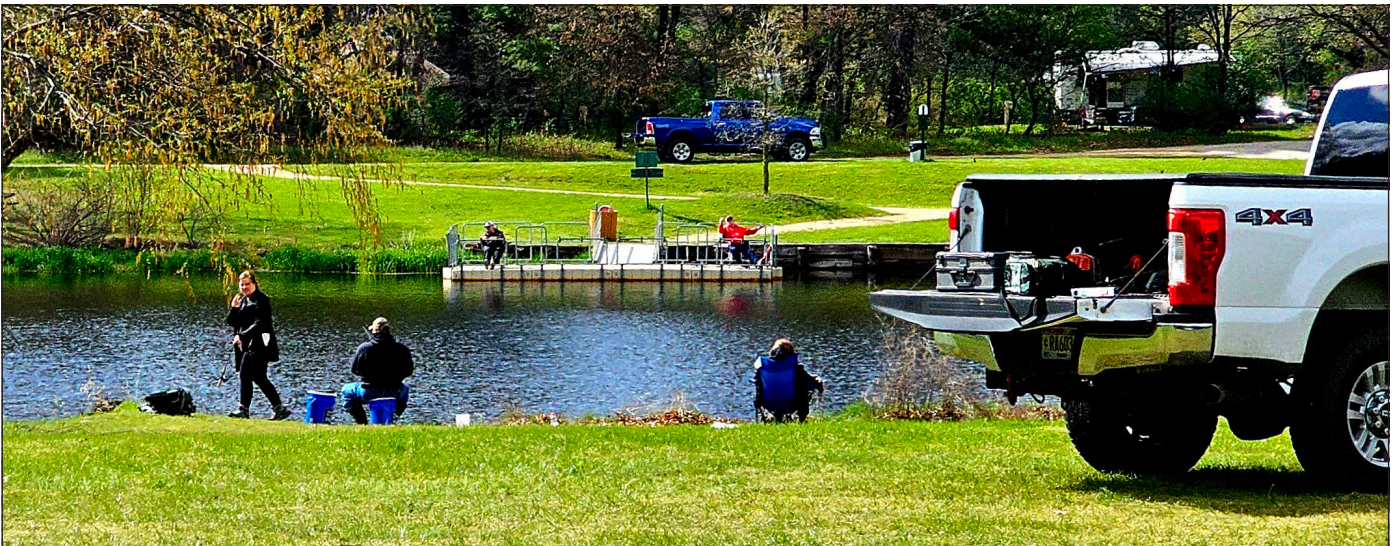
Anglers are required to call the iSportsman Game Line at 866-277-1597 or visit the iSportsman website for updated fishing area closures before going out.

People interested in renting fishing equipment at Fort McCoy can do so through Recreational Equipment Checkout with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Pine View Campground.

Available equipment includes fishing poles, kayaks, canoes, and boats. Varying rates apply. To find out more, visit <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/programs/recreational-equipment-checkout-out-door-recreation> or call the Pine View Campground office at 502-898-3517/2619.

To see the latest Wisconsin fishing information, go to <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/seasons>. And for more about Fort McCoy fishing rules, review the fishing regulation at <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>. All fishing, hunting and related Fort McCoy regulations were updated as of September 2024.

*(The Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch contributed to this article.)*



Visitors to Fort McCoy do some fishing at Suukjak Sep Lake by Pine View Campground on May 4, 2024, at Fort McCoy



A visitor to Fort McCoy does some fishing at Swamp Pond on South Post on Aug. 30, 2018, at Fort McCoy.



## HISTORY



Contributed Army Historical Photos

### New historical photos shared with Fort McCoy

(Left) Soldiers march in a training area at Fort McCoy in 1942. (Above and below) Construction of the New Camp is shown in 1942 at Camp McCoy. All three photos are from Suzanne Baker-Young who shared them with Fort McCoy Archaeologist Ryan Howell. All the photos were taken at a time before the installation's cantonment area was completed but after World War II began.



# Fort McCoy ArtiFACT: La Crosse River maps

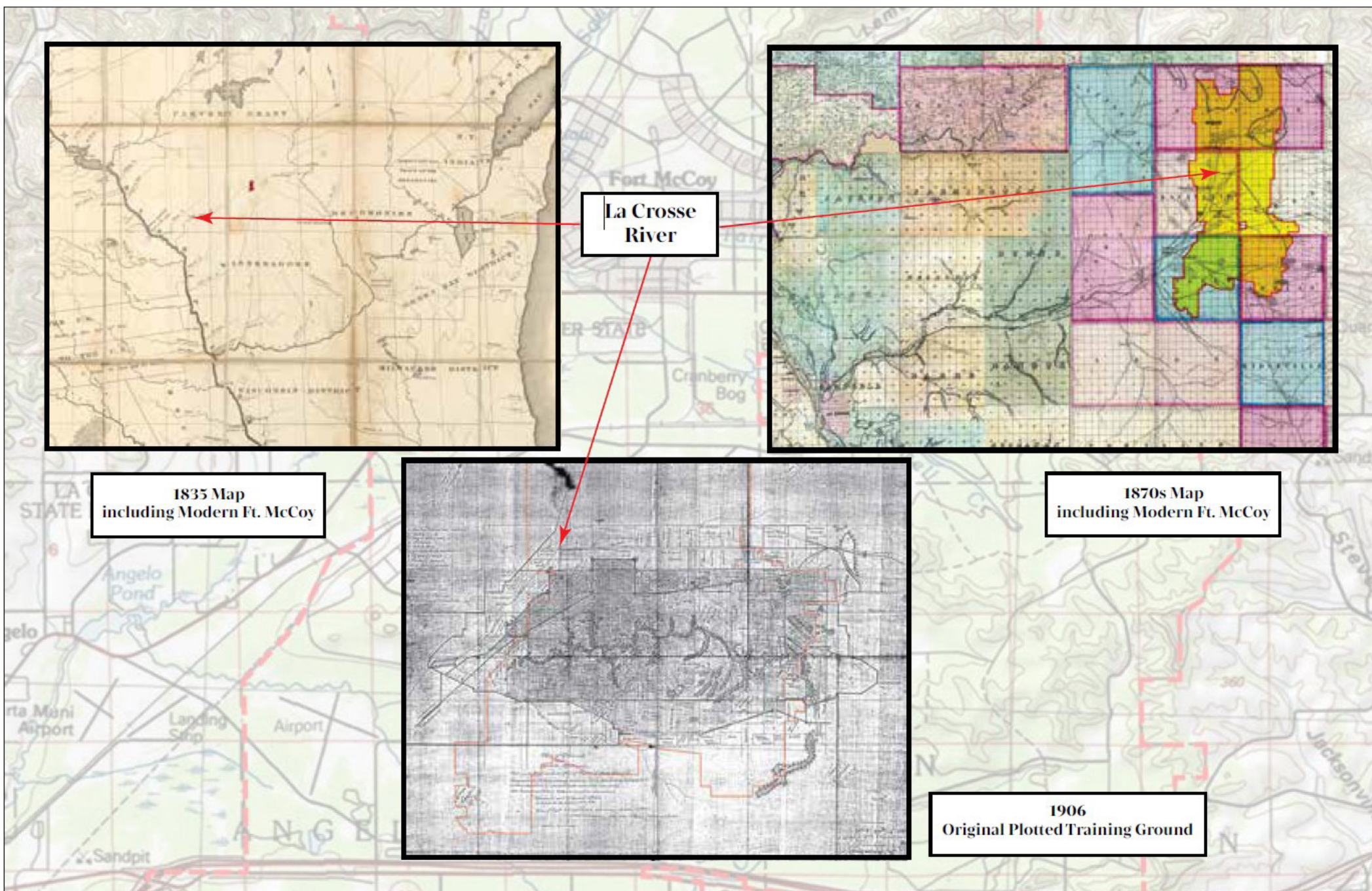


Illustration courtesy of the Fort McCoy Archaeology Team

Maps of the La Crosse River which runs through Fort McCoy, Wis., are shown. These early maps have one thing in common: They all depict the La Crosse River in detail as far as Sparta, Wis., and even its headwaters on what is today Fort McCoy.

Maps have been around since humans could communicate through drawings to describe the location of a specific place. Some of the earliest maps were found on carved stone tablets created over 2500 years ago to identify the ancient city of Babylon.

As the knowledge of the world increased, so did maps. One of the earliest maps known to depict what would later become Wisconsin is Claude Bernou's 1681 Carte de l'Amerique Septentrionale which details expeditions of Father Marquette and L. Jolliet in 1673 and the Cavalier de La Salle Expedition of the Mississippi River Valley.

Bernou's map shows the Black River just north of Fort McCoy. The next monumental map to display the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest in greater detail was Guillaume de l'Isle's and Philippe Buache's map Carte du Canada qui comprend la partie septentrionale des États Unis d'Amerique, first issued in 1783.

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Lewis and Clark and countless others explored and mapped more of the western frontier. Some of the earliest identifications of the area known as La Crosse, Wis., or "Prairie La Crosse" were by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806) and Zebulon Pike's first expedition (1805).

During the Lewis and Clark Expedition, William Clark created a detailed map of the Louisiana Purchase land through accounts he obtained while interacting with the Native populations, fur traders, and the Army.

Clark's detailed map identifies the Prairie La Crosse River or the La Crosse River between the Black River and the Ouisconsin (Wisconsin) River and across from the Root River near La Crescent, Minn.

Zebulon Pike's first expedition in 1805 also identified the La Crosse River. In 1835, the first United States geologist George William Featherstonhaugh set out from Green Bay, Wis., with his son George Jr. and mapped the Wisconsin River as well as the headwaters of the

Mississippi River down to Keokuk, Iowa.

The 1836 map published by the Featherstonhaugh Expedition identifies the La Crosse River as the Ball-game River, as La Crosse was a traditional Native American sport and the modern La Crosse/Onalaska area was a primary game field for the surrounding tribal nations.

These early maps have one thing in common: They all depict the La Crosse River in detail as far as Sparta, Wis., and even its headwaters on what is today Fort McCoy. The numerous maps used during the transition from territory to statehood also identify major waterways like the Wisconsin River, the Black River, the St. Croix River, and even the smaller Root River south of La Crescent in Minnesota.

After Wisconsin became a state in 1848, it opened more of the western part of the state to the non-Native population. Even though the La Crosse River area was explored by Europeans, the city of La Crosse or Prairie La Crosse did not become a permanent settlement until 1841.

As the La Crosse River flows east, it comes to a crossroads where in 1849 and 1851 state roads connected Wisconsin north to south and east to west. The new state roads increased travel through the area of present-day Fort McCoy's cantonment area, then known as "Best Point," according to the 1858 Map of Monroe County Wisconsin.

As we know, Col. Robert Bruce McCoy allowed military training on his property. One of the earliest maps of Fort McCoy that can be found in the archives is a 1906 map "Plot of Grounds" where the future sites of Camp Robinson and Camp Emery Upton would be situated. Today, this area is referred to as South Post.

The same state road drawn on the 1858 Monroe County map appears on the 1906 map as well as the La Crosse River and its tributaries. Numerous features on the earliest maps can also be identified in

archived maps ranging from 1858 to the present.

With modern Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, most of the maps can be overlaid onto current aerial imagery to identify points of interest for archaeology to investigate, including points of interest from before European contact to the present day.

The La Crosse River is a feature that drew Native Americans and Europeans into the Fort McCoy area throughout history. It has abundant wildlife, flora, and other natural resources which allowed them to establish an ideal place to live.

No matter if it was 10,000 years ago or 100 years ago, Fort McCoy was a perfect environment to live in.

All archaeological work conducted at Fort McCoy was sponsored by the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

Visitors and employees are reminded they should not collect artifacts on Fort McCoy or other government lands and leave the digging to the professionals.

Any individual who excavates, removes, damages, or otherwise alters or defaces any post-contact or pre-contact site, artifact, or object of antiquity on Fort McCoy is in violation of federal law.

The discovery of any archaeological artifact should be reported to the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch at 502-898-8214.

See more ArtiFACT articles by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/search/?q=ArtiFACT&filter%5Bunit%5D=FMPAO>.

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Archaeology Team that includes the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch and representatives with the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands who partner with Fort McCoy.)



HISTORY

THIS MONTH IN FORT MCCOY HISTORY

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

80 Years Ago — April 1945

FROM THE APRIL 7, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Former McCoy sergeant earns bars in battle (By Newspaper Staff)* — Word of the winning of a battle-field commission in the Philippines by a former station complement sergeant was received at the post supply division headquarters this week.

Sgt. Felix Hunter of Milwaukee, chief of the supply division message center until about 18 months ago, won a second lieutenant commission while serving with the 11th Airborne Division, Miss Muriel Lurs of the supply office learned.

FROM THE APRIL 7, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Ex-McCoy officer helping Chinese; Capt. Shearer tells of work (By Newspaper Staff)* — Former Camp McCoy officers and enlisted men are serving in all corners of the world, but this week came the first news of an “alumnus” in China.

The ex-McCoy man is Capt. V.H. Shearer Jr., former signal officer, who wrote Capt. Benjamin S. Harris, personal affairs officer, that he is now a liaison officer to a Chinese infantry division.

He relates: “I have my own interpreter which enables me to deal directly with the Chinese. I advise the Chinese signal officer on his signal training and help him get his signal equipment. At present I have my hands full supervising a radio and wire school and fairly often I take the class myself with the help of my interpreter.

“Each of our regiments is out quite a distance and each in a different direction. Until a few days ago only one could be reached by Jeep, so I was really getting my share of horseback riding, what with three hours going and three hours returning.

“Our elevation is about 5,700 feet above sea level and there are tall mountains all around us. This mountain air is really invigorating and the temperature has been staying in the 50s and 60s.”

Capt. Shearer also told of some duck hunting he engaged in. He (also) enclosed \$20 in Chinese money.

FROM THE APRIL 14, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Young pheasants released on post; conservation program on (By Newspaper Staff)* — An extensive conservation program under the direction of Col. George M. MacMullin, post commander, is being continued this year as in the past, it was revealed this week with the release of young pheasants.

It is hoped several hundred pheasants will be released on the reservation, Col. MacMullin stated.

For the past three years, he pointed out that as many as 35,000 fingerling trout have been planted in McCoy streams annually.

This year a similar number will be planted. In addition, other game will be turned loose on the reservation.

FROM THE APRIL 14, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Farm mechs' back to crops after helping LaX shop; aided in repairs of half-tracks, work praised (By Newspaper Staff)* — The success of a unique employment plan utilizing skilled workers part-time after their regular jobs and farmers during their slack winter season in vital war work at the ordnance service command shop, La Crosse, was summarized this week in a report to Col. George M. MacMullin, Camp McCoy commanding officer who also commands the ordnance shop, from Maj. Stanley L. Kaufman, personnel division director.

Maj. Kaufman revealed that 75 farmers who served at the shop have now returned to their farms to take up again their important food production. The only previous mechanical experience they had had was repairing farm machinery, but Maj. Kaufman said it was sufficient to make them adapt in the shop.

“With the completion of the half-track repair program Mach 1, these men returned to their farms justly proud to made another real contribution to the war effort in a field of endeavor new to them,” Maj. Kaufman declared. He expressed his appreciation to the U.S. Employment Service offices in Winona, Minn., and Decorah, Iowa, for their original help in securing the farm workers.

FROM THE APRIL 21, 1945, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY: *Inspectors praise McCoy's nurses' training program (By Newspaper Staff)* — Camp McCoy's nurses' training facilities received high praise from two officers from the surgeon general's office, Washington, D.C., who made an inspection here Thursday and Friday.

The officers were Maj. Gertrude Roberts, ANC, and Capt. Murray E. Harden.

Maj. Roberts praised the seriousness of purpose displayed by the officer faculty and nurses in training at McCoy's school for nurses at the



RECEIVE BATTLE HONORS AT CAMP MCCOY — Two wounded fighting men convalescing at Camp McCoy's station hospital this week were presented battle honors by Col. George M. MacMullin, post commander, shown pinning a distinguished unit badge on Staff Sgt. Carl E. Nave, ex-45th Infantry division soldier, after having presented the Bronze Star medal to Sgt. Harry E. Muzzey, ex-7th Infantry division, who earned the award during the Kwajalein invasion.

U.S. Army Military Photos

This is a news clip from the April 7, 1945, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper.

station hospital. “It’s a well-administered program,” she declared.

Capt. Harden was impressed by the complete training facilities and personnel to prepare the nurses for overseas service. “The program seems to be well carried out,” he commented.

The inspecting officers were escorted through the camp and hospital by Lt. Col. Nellie McGovern, chief of nurses, and Maj. Jensen, nurses’ training director.

40 Years Ago — April 1985

FROM THE APRIL 4, 1985, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *Post directorates get new names (By Crystal Laureano)* — Several Fort McCoy organizations changed their names this week. The changes were the result of an Army-wide standard installation organization (SIO) project.

“This is an attempt by the Department of the Army to organize all installations the same way throughout the Army,” explained Al Fournier, McCoy administrative executive officer. “It will result in some name changes and, in other areas, realignment of functions,” he added.

Having all similar functions organized under the same directorate throughout the Army and using the same title for each directorate or activity will have a significant impact on the flow of information Army-wide.

“The alignment of like functions will facilitate program planning, improve control and introduce cost efficiency,” said Fournier.

The approved changes now in effect are:  
— The title garrison commander is to be used instead of installation commander.

— The Law Enforcement Activity is now the Provost Marshal Office.

— The Comptroller is now the Directorate of Resource Management.

— The Directorate of Industrial Operations is now the Directorate of Logistics (DOL).

— The Directorate of Facilities Engineering is now the Directorate of Engineering and Housing (DEH) and the family housing function is transferred to that directorate. The bachelor housing and furnishings management functions will remain with DOL.

— The Automated Management Office is now the Directorate of Information Management (DOIM).

The scope of SIO is much broader than these changes now in effect. “There are still SIO issues that have not been decided,” said Fournier.

Fournier added that a special study committee, of which he is chairman, is addressing those issues. The committee will evaluate the impact of remaining DA reorganization proposals on mission accomplishment at Fort McCoy. In those areas where operating effectiveness and efficiency will be affected, exemptions to the SIO will be requested by the Garrison Commander.

30 Years Ago — April 1995

FROM THE APRIL 14, 1995, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *88th EOD workshop focuses on safety (By Rob Schuette)* — Bomb disposal may seem like a fast-paced, high-profile job, but in truth, it is careful, tedious work, done step-by-step in a low-key manner to ensure everything goes according to plan.

“If you know your very next step may be a wrong step and kill you, you’re going to take your time and do it right,” said 1st Lt. John Williams, incoming commander of the 88th Ordnance Detachment Explosive Ordnance Disposal (88th EOD).

Members of the 88th EOD sponsored a two-day workshop March 30-31, which was attended by about 50 law-enforcement personnel from Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota.

The purpose of the seminar was to familiarize the civilians with military explosives and improvised explosive devices. A highlight of the training was hands-on experience in detecting and disarming simulated military and civilian explosive devices in fields and in buildings. The exercise was conducted near the former residence of the post commander, building 5050.

Jim Huff, a police officer with the Kenosha, Wis., Police Department, said the seminar was valuable because his department doesn’t often deal with military explosives. The explosive devices they see most often are land mines and bottle bombs.

“It’s nice to learn a little bit about military explosives,” he said. “They are out there in the general public.”

Mike Keefe, of the State of Iowa Fire Marshal Office, said the training provided good hands-on experience for members of the police departments or bomb squads.

One of the highlights was a chance to see the \$71,000 EOD robot, Andros, in action. Andros is

an electrically powered, tracked all-purpose “vehicle.” It can travel up to 2mph and is equipped with a video camera that monitors its movements.

FROM THE APRIL 14, 1995, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *Era of coal heat comes to a close (By Rob Schuette)* — One warm day in the near future a fire at Fort McCoy will go out for the last time, and with it, a 50-year era will end — the era of coal heat and boiler tenders.

Fort McCoy will install gas heating or tear down the last three buildings that rely on coal heat later this year Dean Potter, a Directorate of Public Works (DPW) boiler tender, is the last boiler tender from a work force that once totaled more than 100 seasonal employees. The boiler tenders watched over heat 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week in more than 400 buildings during their heyday.

“It could be cold, dirty work along with fighting the weather elements, but I worked with a lot of great guys in the almost seven years I was here,” Potter said. “It was a lot of fun, even when it was cold.”

Steve Pedersen, Heating Equipment Mechanic supervisor, said the boiler tenders encountered and overcame many obstacles keeping people on post warm. The heating season generally ran from late September to mid-May. A few people were kept on during the summer to do maintenance work.

Since they were seasonal, temporary employees, it wasn’t unusual to have to train 50-60 new employees — a turnover of 50 percent — for a new heating season.

“It always amazed me that we trained these people in the basics, and they could go out and do the job efficiently,” he said. “Their actions affected their trucks, the buildings and the boilers, worth many thousands of dollars.”

Potter said the work remained constant. Boiler tenders drove trucks to check the boilers and the fires in them. If their trucks wouldn’t start in cold weather, they would have to walk to get help or to complete the rounds of their buildings.

The work also was physical and required carrying coal from the bins and shoveling it into the boilers. Cold weather and darkness also played a role in the work. Potter said cold weather could cause slippery areas to work in, as well as icicles hanging from the buildings.

20 Years Ago — April 2005

FROM THE APRIL 22, 2005, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *724th Engineers concentrate on weapons firing during split AT (By Rob Schuette)* — Concentrated weapons training was the focus for members of the 724th Engineer Battalion during the first week of a split annual training (AT) session, which was held in early April.

Members of the combat engineer and heavy equipment Army National Guard unit headquartered at Hayward, Wis., benefited greatly from the concentrated training, said Staff Sgt. John Quednow, a heavy equipment operator and equipment section sergeant for the 724th.

“This is the first time we’ve ever done a split AT,” Quednow said. “We saw a lot less nonqualifiers on the weapons because of the training.”

Quednow said the unit served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and returned to the United States in 2004, so the training helped keep their skills current in the weapons they used overseas.

Mark Stelzner, Fort McCoy supervisory scheduling specialist, said the training also benefits McCoy’s scheduling because it brings training to the installation at a nonpeak time.

“It allowed us to offer them many weapons training opportunities not normally available at peak training times,” Stelzner said. “It helps fill a training void for us, and it’s good customer service to give the customer the latitude to do weapons training at their convenience.”

Sgt. 1st Class Steve Sitte, the 724th Operations sergeant and an Active Guard/Reserve Soldier, said the battalion commander planned the split AT to allow unit members to spend one less weekend training and spend more time with their families.

“It’s nice to block out a week where we did nothing but fire weapons,” Sitte said. “Soldiers can never have enough of weapons firing.”

During the next week of the AT, to be held later this summer, the unit will conduct troop projects and a team-building event, he said.

The team-building exercise will include training on the confidence course, land navigation and a rucksack march. Scores from the weapons qualifications and the unit’s Army Physical Fitness Test scores also will be included.

Unit personnel will go through the Soldier Readiness Center to have their records reviewed and updated as necessary, Sitte said.

“We haven’t gone through the procedure since we returned in 2004,” Sitte said. “This will allow

Soldiers to get everything ready to go and to maintain a high standard of readiness.”

The activities also allow newer Soldiers to get their paperwork in order so they are prepared for any potential future deployment, he said.

Pfc. Amber Frost of the 724th said she gained valuable experience firing the .50-caliber machine gun and the M-16 during the training.

“I had never shot the .50-caliber before,” Frost said. “It’s good to have a lot of time on the weapons.”

15 Years Ago — April 2010

FROM THE APRIL 9, 2010, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *McCoy's economic impact exceeds \$1.4 billion (By Newspaper Staff)* — The total economic impact of Fort McCoy for fiscal year (FY) 2009 was an estimated \$1.416 billion, up from an estimated \$1.127 billion for FY 2008.

Fort McCoy supported a training population of 105,736 personnel for FY 2009, which ran from Oct. 1, 2008-Sept. 30, 2009. The training population included reserve- and active-component personnel from throughout the military and troops processing for mobilization/demobilization.

Workforce payroll, operating costs and other expenditures were \$442.4 million compared to \$352.3 million for FY 2008.

The total FY 2009 work force payroll was \$188.96 million, operating costs were \$242.55 million, and other expenditures were \$10.88 million.

The work force payroll broke down to \$85.21 million for civilian employees and \$103.75 million for military personnel. Operating costs included utilities, physical plant maintenance, repair and improvements, new construction projects, and purchases of supplies and services.

Salaries for civilian contracted personnel working at McCoy also are included in operating costs.

Other expenditures included \$309,863 to local governments (including land permit agreements and school district impact aid) and \$10.57 million Soldier discretionary spending in local communities. An additional \$54.9 million was spent on facility maintenance and repair in FY 2009. New construction projects from FY 1990-2009 have totaled \$230.1 million.

A gross multiplier index (GMI) of 3.2 was used to determine the overall effect of the expenditures in the local economy. The GMI the number of times a dollar turns over within a region. About 4,300 personnel worked at Fort McCoy in FY 2009 — 1,687 civilians, 1,250 military and 1,366 contracted employees.

10 Years Ago — April 2015

FROM THE APRIL 10, 2025, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY: *Iowa engineer battalion completes weapons qualification at McCoy (By Scott T. Sturkol)* — Soldiers from the Iowa Army National Guard’s 224th Engineer Battalion completed four days of unit training at Fort McCoy in late March.

The 224th, headquartered in Fairfield, Iowa, brought more than 400 Soldiers — the entire battalion — to complete mandatory qualification training on both individual (M16 and M4 rifles, M9 pistol, and M249AR squad automatic weapon) and crew-served weapons (M249 light machine gun, M240B medium machine gun, and M2 .50-caliber automatic rifles).

In the past, the battalion Soldiers completed individual weapons qualifications at Camp Dodge, Iowa, and the crew-served weapons training at Fort McCoy. Th is year, all of the training was done at Fort McCoy, said Battalion Training Officer Capt. Kiel Archer.

“For us, this was a huge training event,” Archer said. “It allowed us to maximize our time and effort.”

The battalion occupied several of Fort McCoy’s 31 live-fire ranges to complete qualification with the M16, M4, M9, M249, M240B, and M2. “Completing this training is an annual requirement for us, but we chose Fort McCoy because we get treated so well here,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brandon McElwee, battalion supply sergeant. “For us, this also is one of the closest areas for us to convoy into and get our qualification training done. We could go (to other installations) but this place serves us well.”

The seven-hour convoy from Iowa to the installation included more than 60 tactical vehicles. Archer said the drive provided an additional training opportunity.

“Not only were we able to get all of our weapons training done, we were also able to cover other topics of training we might have been able to do in Iowa on a larger scale,” Archer said. “This included convoy training, which is very important for platoon leaders.”

Sgt. Deyla Sanders, 224th property book non-commissioned officer (NCO), said she qualified on the M16 and M249. As a new NCO, she said the battalion-level training provided good insight into her new responsibilities.

“It’s always a new opportunity (when we) come here,” she said. “During this trip, I learned to further my skills as a leader.”

Mild weather helped the unit make sure everyone qualified on their weapon systems, said 2nd Lt. Thomas Bentley, platoon leader for the 832nd Mobility Augmentation Company (MAC) of Keokuk, Iowa. Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching “fmccoy,” on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching “usagmccoy.”

### Troop projects to span from May to October

Fort McCoy's 724th Engineer Battalion is currently conducting a series of troop projects to improve the installation's infrastructure. The projects will span from May to October and include the construction of a new maintenance building, the renovation of the old mess hall, and the construction of a new parking lot. The projects are being conducted by the 724th's maintenance company, the 724th's construction company, and the 724th's engineering company. The projects are being conducted by the 724th's maintenance company, the 724th's construction company, and the 724th's engineering company. The projects are being conducted by the 724th's maintenance company, the 724th's construction company, and the 724th's engineering company.

### CVSS caregiver training builds foundation for best care

The 724th's medical company is currently conducting a series of caregiver training exercises to improve the quality of care provided to the installation's personnel. The exercises will include training on the use of medical equipment, the use of medical supplies, and the use of medical procedures. The exercises are being conducted by the 724th's medical company, the 724th's medical company, and the 724th's medical company. The exercises are being conducted by the 724th's medical company, the 724th's medical company, and the 724th's medical company.

### 88th EOD workshop focuses on safety

**By Rob Schuette**  
Triad Staff

Bomb disposal may seem like a fast-paced, high-profile job, but in truth, it is careful, tedious work, done step-by-step in a low-key manner to ensure everything goes according to plan.

"If you know your very next step may be a wrong step and kill you, you're going to take your time and do it right," said 1st Lt. John Williams, incoming commander of the 88th EOD.

Mike Keefe, of the State of Iowa Fire Marshal Office, said the training provided good hands-on experience for members of the police departments or bomb squads.

A highlight of the training was hands-on experience in detecting and disarming simulated military and civilian explosive devices in fields and in buildings. The exercise was conducted near the former residence of the post commander, building 5050.

Jim Huff, a police officer with the Kenosha, Wis., Police Department, said the seminar was valuable because his department doesn't often deal with military explosives. The explosive devices they see most often are land mines and bottle bombs.

"It's nice to learn a little bit about military explosives," he said. "They are out there in the general public."

Mike Keefe, of the State of Iowa Fire Marshal Office, said the training provided good hands-on experience for members of the police departments or bomb squads.

One of the highlights was a chance to see the \$71,000 EOD robot, Andros, in action. Andros is an electrically powered, tracked all-purpose "vehicle." It can travel up to 2 mph and is equipped with a video camera that monitors its movements. An operator can maneuver its extended mechanical arm by remote (See EOD, page 12)

This is a news clip from the April 14, 1995, edition of The Triad newspaper.