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# The Real McCoy®

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## Army Reserve 2025 Best Squad Competition held at McCoy

BY CAPT. ELIZABETH POLK  
Army Reserve

This year, 75 warriors divided into 15 squads to endure six grueling, challenge-filled days during the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) Best Squad Competition at Fort McCoy.

The 200th Military Police (MP) Command's squad emerged victorious. The squad, consisting of Staff Sgt. Christian Leonard, Sgt. Aaron Court, Spc. Serge Fenn, Pfc. Luke Griguolo, and Pvt. 2nd Class Seth Stetz, demonstrated resilience and exceptional teamwork to secure the annual top honor.

Before arriving at Fort McCoy, each Soldier fought to qualify at the brigade and command level competitions. The winners then became a part of the 200th MP Command's best squad and sent to Wisconsin.

"We were taken from our individual battalions or our individual brigades, and we created the best squad from those brigades. From there, we came here to the USARC level, and it's been a journey the whole way. We literally competed last month," said Leonard, the squad leader.

Command Sgts. Maj. Judd Musso and Subretta Pompey presented each squad member with the Army Commendation Medal for their distinguished achievement.

### Planning, execution

The success of the 2025 Army Reserve's Best Squad Competition hinged on meticulous planning and coordination at all echelons, planners said. Immediately following the conclusion of last year's competition, preparations for the 2025 event began, collaborating logistics, support, equipment, and personnel. Soldiers assigned to these tasks dedicated long hours to meet critical deadlines and ensured the seamless execution of the competition.

Sgt. 1st Class Corey LaFramboise, assigned to the USARC G-3/5/7 Competitive Programs, was (See **BEST SQUAD**, Page 4)



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

A competitor in the 2025 Army Reserve Best Squad Competition jumps from the back of the CH-47 Chinook helicopter May 15 during the helocast event at Big Sandy Lake on South Post at Fort McCoy.

## Fifth World War II-era barracks moved at Fort McCoy in May 2025; completes historical effort to save 80-year-old buildings



A barracks building from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy is shown being moved May 13 from the 1600 block to another area of the installation. Contractors moved five buildings in 2025.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

The \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project in Fort McCoy's 1600 block now has its full construction space open after the fifth and last World War II-era barracks was moved from the area to the 500 block on May 13.

Four World War II-era barracks buildings were already moved on Jan. 22, Feb. 12-13, March 18, and April 16. The movement of the last building went as fast as the fourth — less than a day. Devooght 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 (DPW) 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 these moves. The buildings are temporarily set in that block until new locations are determined.

In this fifth move, the movers had ideal weather to get it done with partly sunny skies and moderate temperatures.

DPW officials have said the movement of these buildings is historical in that it's only the second time that 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.

Built in 1942, these buildings were "state-of-the-art" and made then-Camp McCoy one of the "premier training facilities" preparing troops for the war effort. The Aug. 28, 1942, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper talked about the new barracks 83 years ago.

In an article entitled, "Soldiers await moving orders to new McCoy," they stated service members were getting ready to move.

"Trees to the right of them, trees to the left of them; barracks in front of them; with Mother Nature casting her magic spell all around such will be the future surroundings of those who will move to the new camp area," the article states.

"One of the largest and most modern Army camps, the new Camp McCoy, located further inland than the old one, will offer its person-

(See **BARRACKS MOVE**, Page 3)

## Soldiers hold slingload training at McCoy; Black Hawks, crews assist

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment held slingload training at Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport on May 22 at Fort McCoy with the support of two UH-60 Black Hawks and crews from the Wisconsin National Guard.

Leading the preparations for the training was Sgt. 1st Class Colter Lee Kincaid with the 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment. Kincaid, who said the slingload training they were completing best could be described as "cross-level" training for unit personnel who aren't associated with the 89B military occupational specialty (MOS) of ammunition supply specialist.

"I'm here ... to present to some different MOS' to do some cross-level training and also try to share our experience and our knowledge base with what we do and why we do it," said Kincaid, who regularly serves as an 89B instructor, during the training. "So that way, not just our MOS gets it, but other MOS' understand why we do what we do, and how we put it together. So, it's kind of a knowledge sharing experience."

Kincaid said they started the training operation's planning process several months in advance. That included working out having the correct equipment in places as well as working with the Wisconsin National Guard to have the Black Hawks and crews participate.

(See **SLINGLOAD**, Page 5)



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Helicopter crews with the Wisconsin National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment utilizing UH-60 Black Hawks combine with the Army Reserve's 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment for slingload training won May 22 at Fort McCoy.

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NEWS

# Installation Management Command-Readiness director makes June 2025 visit to Fort McCoy

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Patrick J. Appelman, director of Installation Management Command (IMCOM)-Readiness made a visit to Fort McCoy on June 3 to interact with the Fort McCoy workforce, meet with Fort McCoy Garrison leaders, and more.

According to his biography, as the director of IMCOM-Readiness, he is responsible for installation management activities at 24 active- and reserve-component U.S. Army installations and joint bases located in 16 states, Puerto Rico, and Honduras.

“Appelman and the IMCOM-Readiness team provide support for approximately 1.4 million service members, family members, retirees, and civilians as well as oversight for an annual budget exceeding \$2.9 billion for programs across several appropriations and non-appropriated funds,” his biography states. “He oversees 9.1 million acres of land and 347.4 million square feet of facilities with a replacement value of over \$182 billion and annual contracts totaling more than \$1.4 billion.”

This was Appelman’s first visit to Fort McCoy in 2025. As part of this visit, the IMCOM-Readiness director held a town hall with the installation workforce to discuss current events and news, held a luncheon with garrison directors and leaders, and went to various garrison offices and agencies to meet personally with workforce members.

At the town hall meeting for Appelman, Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon welcomed and introduced the director.

“With this workforce, you can see (the success) every day,” Cantlon said. “(It) is really kind of overwhelming to stand back and look at what we get done on a daily basis. So, thank you to everybody in the room.”

“Mr. Appelman comes to us from Fort Bragg (N.C.) at the IDR Headquarters,” Cantlon said. “So, he’s been working this job for almost two years now. ... We were fortunate to get him on a trip as he goes across the country.”

During the town hall, Appelman gave workforce members an update on ongoing personnel issues, and more.

Appelman said leaders at IMCOM and elsewhere are now more than ever understanding the Army’s workforce in greater detail.

“I’ve seen there’s ... more respect from Army leadership for what you all do than I’ve ever seen at any moment in the last 30 years,” Appelman said. “And I think there’s more understanding of what you do.”

The director’s visit also came at a time where the installation began one of its busiest months for training. During June, the installation is doing what it has done for decades — supporting the preparing of troops for deployment.

In this case, it’s Wisconsin National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment. According to the Wisconsin National Guard, approximately 700 Soldiers with the 2nd, 127th are mobilizing to the Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

June is also packed with weekend training, institutional training, and more at Fort McCoy.

After his one-day visit to Fort McCoy, Appelman visited a few other installations before returning to Fort Bragg.

Learn more about IDR-Readiness by visiting their page on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/u-s-army-installation-management-command-idr-readiness>.



(Above and below) Installation Management Command-Readiness Director Patrick Appelman speaks to workforce members June 3 at a town hall meeting at Fort McCoy. Appelman visited for the day and held the town hall, had a special luncheon with Fort McCoy Garrison leaders, and visited workcenters.



pany/u-s-army-installation-management-command-idr-readiness.

Learn more about IMCOM by visiting their page at <https://home.army.mil/imcom>. Also, check out IMCOM’s week online publication, The IMCOM Sampler, at <https://home.army.mil/imcom/contact/public-affairs/imcom-week>.

ly-news-sampler.

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.”

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## Wisconsin Challenge Academy supports traveling memorial display at Fort McCoy

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Cadets with the Wisconsin Challenge Academy’s Class 54 held a special event May 21 in McCoy’s Community Center at Fort McCoy with the setup and support of the War Memorial Center Medal of Honor traveling exhibit.

The Milwaukee County War Memorial Center is located in Milwaukee and has been a fixture of the military history community in Wisconsin since 1957, according to its website at <https://warmemorialcenter.org>.

“Dedicated on Veterans Day 1957 and designated a Milwaukee landmark in 1974, The War Memorial Center is the stunning architectural achievement of renowned Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen, whose work also included the St. Louis Gateway Arch, New York’s John F. Kennedy Airport, and Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. Most importantly, Saarinen’s design and the memorials throughout the facility stand as a lasting testament to those who lost their lives defending the freedoms that we all cherish,” the website states.

“In addition to standing as a testament to those whose made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, the War Memorial Center is a hub for veteran activities,” the website states.

“We work to ensure each veteran knows their service is appreciated as we inspire patriotism in our youth and honor the 3,481 men and women from Milwaukee County who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.”

At Fort McCoy, the traveling exhibit from the center’s education department was set up for four hours at McCoy’s. In addition to the exhibit, the Challenge Academy cadets displayed artwork created by the cadets that were “propaganda posters” meant to reflect the feeling of the displays of the exhibits, according to Challenge Academy officials.

Visitation to the exhibits was free and dozens of people attended to view the works.

According to the center’s description for the Medal of Honor traveling exhibit, it is meant to show some of Wisconsin’s recipients of the nation’s highest medal for valor and heroism.

“The Medal of Honor is the highest US military



The Milwaukee County War Memorial Center’s Medal of Honor traveling exhibit is shown May 21 at McCoy’s Community Center at Fort McCoy. The exhibit, along with artworks from Wisconsin Challenge Academy cadets, were set up at McCoy’s Community Center for four hours as part of a special event.

decoration, awarded by Congress to a member of the armed forces for gallantry and bravery in combat at the risk of their own life, above and beyond the call of duty,” the website states.

“Students will be introduced to the symbolism and meaning behind the Medal of Honor and the Wisconsin Soldiers who earned it.”

During the event, guests were greeted by cadets who would guide them to its location in the McCoy’s Community Center ballroom. Other cadets were on hand to answer questions. All of the cadets took time to see the entire display.

The Challenge Academy, a Fort McCoy tenant organization, offers youth the opportunity to change the direction of their lives and develop the

strength of character and life skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens.

The program begins with a 5 1/2-month residential phase, followed by a one-year, post-residential phase.

According to its website, <https://challengeacademy.org>, the academy was founded in 1988.

“The Wisconsin Challenge Academy is an alternative education program designed to reclaim the lives of at-risk youth and produce graduates with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults,” the website states. “The academy is part of the (Wisconsin) National Guard Youth Challenge Program, a community-based program that leads, trains, and mentors 16–18-year-

olds so that they may become productive citizens in America’s future.”

Learn more about the War Memorial Center by visiting <https://warmemorialcenter.org>.

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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## NEWS

## BARRACKS

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nel the best that any Army camp can afford with its two spacious service clubs, its numerous theaters with its large seating capacity, its chapels, and its unlimited recreational facilities,” the article states.

“The greatest innovation to the personnel no doubt will be the opportunity to dwell in the most modern barracks with the privilege of taking a shower in one’s own home instead of hiking to distant points to cleanse oneself,” according to the story. “So, it is with great impatience...that those who are soon to dwell in this Army paradise are awaiting impatiently for their migration to the new Camp McCoy.”

In the Sept. 4, 1942, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper, in another article, “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.”

Fort McCoy DPW officials will determine the next course of action with the five moved buildings at a later date, they said. In the meantime, construction will now continue on the officer’s quarters project. That project is coordinated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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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(Above and below) A barracks building from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy is shown being moved May 13 from the 1600 block to another area of the installation.



## South Barracks Project at Fort McCoy surpasses 90 percent complete as June 2025 starts

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Fort McCoy’s South Barracks Project has surpassed 90 percent complete in his May 30 update about the project.

Butts said in the update that the project is 92 percent completed and should be at a higher percentage of completion in the near future.

The contractor for the project, BlindermanPower (Construction), received the notice to proceed with construction on Sept. 26, 2023, and has 780 calendar days to complete the project. At this point, Green said the project is on time and is scheduled to be completed by Aug. 20.

As stated in previous news updates, the project requires building a four-story, 60,000-square-foot barracks that can house 400 people. Two other barracks of the same specifications have already been built in the same block at the installation since 2019.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials said overall this project is part of a big transformation taking place at the 1600 block that includes the building of four barracks — two of which are already done, three brigade headquarters buildings, and two planned transient training officer quarters, according to the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works.

In the May 30 update, Butts also wrote everything that is getting completed on the project.

“Contractor was working on their punch-list items,” Butts wrote. “Interior finishing continued.

Painting continued. Commissioning continued. Exterior continued. Exterior concrete. Final grading continues.”

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

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

Read more about about Fort McCoy’s economic impact by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/496366/fort-mccoys-total-economic-impact-16-billion-during-fiscal-year-2024>.

The South Barracks Project is one of three major projects currently happening at Fort McCoy. Another barracks project — the \$27.3 million Fort McCoy East Barracks Project — and the \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project.

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The construction area for a new \$28.08 million barracks building is shown June 3 (above) and June 9 (below) at Fort McCoy as progress on the facility continues.





NEWS

BEST SQUAD

among the many Soldiers who contributed to the competition planning and execution. He spoke about how national competitions like this offer Army Reserve Soldiers unique opportunities and experiences that they might not gain anywhere else.

“Have you conducted a nine-line UXO? How many times have you done any transitional live fire? A lot of personnel don’t have that experience. They may do it once or twice in their career.”

Reserve Soldiers typically fulfill their army obligations one weekend a month plus two weeks of annual training. However, there are other training events and competitions Reserve Soldiers can participate in to focus on their lethality while incorporating civilian skill sets to support the army warfighter.

Day one: Army basics

Identical to previous years, each squad consisted of a squad leader, a team leader, and three squad members. This year, the challenges the squads had to navigate consisted of individual and group fitness tests, weapons qualification, day and night land navigation, multiple weapons ranges, obstacle course, rappel tower, water survival assessment, patrol lanes, ruck marches, water insertion, professional board, and a written exam.

The event spanned seven days, each packed with mentally and physically demanding tasks designed to push competitors to their limits.

Day one started at 0400 with an individually graded ACFT which tested each competitor’s combat fitness.

Next, Soldiers qualified on different weapons systems, helping them prepare for upcoming marksmanship and range events. Moving off the range, the squads prepared and executed their day and night land navigation requirements.

Tactical skills were tested as each squad had to find five points with only a map, compass, and protractor. Land navigation teaches Soldiers how to maneuver through unfamiliar geographic terrain without modern technology.

“Hey, we are the Army. We are meant to be walking around, finding where we need to go, finding what we need to do. Set the standard, be the standard.

Land navigation is a part of the Army warrior tasks that we are supposed to be training on every year,” said Staff Sgt. Dannys Marrero Caballero from Army Reserve Aviation Command, squad leader for squad 13.

During the day portion of the event, Soldiers navigated uncertain terrain by themselves. Once twilight faded and the moon rose, the Soldiers navigated in their squads, marking their first team-based event.

Day two: marksmanship

The second day consisted of various weapon ranges. The competitors qualified on multiple weapons to include the M17, M320, and the M240 Bravo. Additionally, competitors were presented a chance to compete for a marksmanship badge. After the weapon ranges, the Soldiers completed a base defense range — a realistic training area where they practiced protecting a mock base under simulated threats — and returned to their barracks tired and sweaty.

Day three: Let’s get physical

On day three, the squads actively rotated between the obstacle course and the rappel tower. The obstacle course tested the squads’ problem-solving skills, physical endurance, and their ability to maneuver efficiently under pressure.

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Meanwhile, squads also climbed up the 55-foot rappel tower requiring three perfect jumps down to pass. The tower tested trust in both Army equipment and battle buddies, while also overcoming any possible fear of heights.

“Going down the tower, the only thoughts I had going through my head was... just being focused on doing what my training (taught me). Emotionally though, there was a lot of adrenaline...especially when I was bound up and starting to slip because it feels like you are falling when you are not,” said Sgt. Antonio Aguilera from the 95th Training Division.

The final event for day three soaked the competitors in Big Sandy Lake for a water survival assessment. This event tested the competitors’ ability to make a floating raft out of a set of materials then swim across the lake with a casualty dummy. Some Soldiers welcomed the coolness of the lake as it reset their body temperatures from the Wisconsin heat. Others were anxious due to having weak swimming skills.

Day four: Patrol base operations

In the morning, the squads went through more weapons ranges to include the sniper rifle and M67 hand grenade ranges. By late afternoon, the squads were inserted in a heavily forested area of Fort McCoy to set up a patrol base.

At the patrol base, Soldiers built their tents and prepared for the next day. Sleep was welcome as they knew they would have to wake up early to complete patrol lanes as a squad.

Day five: Patrol lanes

The competitors commenced a series of patrol lanes designed to test their tactical proficiency. Throughout these exercises, squads engaged in simulated military operations, including reconnaissance missions, offensive maneuvers, and tactical responses to enemy fire.

Warfighting scenarios require each squad to apply basic Soldier tasks and battle drills in real time, reinforcing each squad’s ability to operate cohesively under pressure. Anxious, stressed, fatigued, excited, and sore are some of the words Soldiers mentioned feeling during their journey to complete the lanes.

As Soldiers move through the patrol lanes, they learn to think and act as one unit. The emotions, surprises, and shared struggles along the way forge a deeper bond of trust within the squad.

Day six: A big jump

On day six, the soldiers woke up at 3 a.m. to march 12 miles back to Big Sandy Lake for the helocast challenge.

The helocast challenge is a combat water insertion via a CH-57 Chinook helicopter into the battlefield. Soldiers dove into the water wearing their usual Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) uniform, boots and black life jackets, swam up to the surface gasping for air, and were picked up by cadre-filled Zodiac boats.

“Four days of horribleness... no sleep... just to do that jump alone, I would do it all over again,” said Sgt. Aaron Court from the 200th Military Policy Command.

Far from a reprieve, this event served as both recognition and an additional challenge, highlighting the mental and physical fortitude demanded throughout the competition.

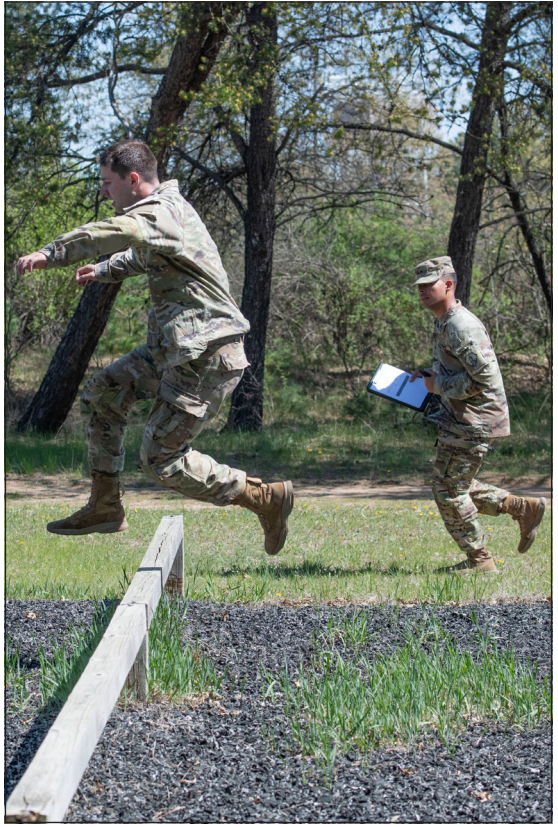
Day seven: Knowledge is power

On the last day of the competition, each individual Soldier went through a board, a formal evaluation process where the Soldier’s knowledge of army



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

(Above and below) Competitors in the 2025 Army Reserve Best Squad Competition compete May 12 in the confidence course event at Fort McCoy.



regulations and procedures are tested by multiple command sergeants major.

Prior to arriving at the building where the boards were being conducted, the Soldiers changed into either the Army Service Uniform or the Army Green Service Uniform, which made the competitors look extra sharp and professional.

Finally, the competitors left the board and went on to the final event: a written exam. The exam consisted of 50 questions based on the U.S. Army Reserve Study guide.

2025 Fort McCoy competitions

This year, Fort McCoy held four U.S. Army Reserve competitions concurrently. These competitions include the Best Squad Competition, Best Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year, Best Soldier of the Year and the Best Medic Competition.

Capt. Kevin Roman Tirado from the 7458th Medical Operations Readiness Unit became this year’s USARC Best Medic. Both Capt. Tirado and squad 4 will advance to represent their respective

commands at the Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) level.

Squad 4 will compete for the title of Best Squad in the U.S. Army in October 2025, while Tirado will compete for the title of Best Medic during the HQDA-level Best Medic Competition in February 2026.

The commands represented in the Best Squad Competition included 1st Mission Support Command, 76th Operational Response Command, 79th Theater Sustainment Command, 200th Military Police Command, 377th Theater Sustainment Command, 412th Theater Engineer Command, 416th Theater Engineer Command, U.S. Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command, 7th Mission Support Command, 9th Mission Support command, 807th Medical Command Deployment Support, 99th Readiness Division, Army Reserve Aviation Command, 3rd Medical Command Deployment Support, 84th Training Command, 108th Training command, Army Reserve Careers Group, 311th Signal Command, and Army Reserve Medical Command.

CH-47 Chinook crews help Army Reserve competitors for Best Squad competition

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

AircrewS with the 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment of New Century, Kansas, operated CH-47 ChinookS during the helocast event May 15 for the 2025 Army Reserve Best Squad competition at Big Sandy Lake on South Post at Fort McCoy, Wis.

According to an Army Reserve article by Capt. Elizabeth Polk at <https://www.usar.army.mil/News/News-Display/Article/4190517/200th-mp-command-named-best-squad-at-army-reserve-competition>, the Army Reserve Best Squad competition for 2025 included 75 warriors divided into 15 squads to endure six grueling, challenge-filled days” of competition.

The helocast event was on the sixth day of competition.

“On day six, the Soldiers woke up at 3 a.m. to march 12 miles back to Big Sandy Lake for the helocast challenge,” the article states. “The helocast challenge is a combat water insertion via a CH-47 Chinook helicopter into the battlefield. Soldiers dove into the water wearing their usual Operational Camouflage Pattern (OCP) uniform, boots, and black life jackets; swam up to the surface gasping for air, and were picked up by cadre-filled Zodiac boats.”

“Four days of horribleness... no sleep... just to do that jump alone, I would do it all over again,” said Sgt. Aaron Court from the 200th Military Police Command in the article by Polk.

“Far from a reprieve, this event served as both recognition and an additional challenge, highlighting the mental and physical fortitude demanded throughout the competition,” the article states.

The CH-47 is the Army’s only heavy-lift cargo helicopter supporting critical combat and non-combat operations, according to the Army fact sheet on the helicopter. The CH-47 has an empty weight of 24,578 pounds and a maximum gross weight of 50,000 pounds. The helicopter also can lift intra-theater payloads up to 16,000 pounds in high/hot environments.

In a further defined space discussing the helocast on Wikipedia at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helocast>, it states “helocasting is an airborne technique used by small unit, special operations forces, also practiced extensively by the U.S. Army’s light infantry units, to insert into a military area of operations. The small unit is flown, by helicopter, to a maritime insertion point. Once there, the aircraft assumes an altitude just above the water’s surface and an airspeed of 10 knots ... or less. Team members then exit the aircraft and enter the water.

“In some cases, depending upon the mission parameters and the aircraft used, personnel may be inserted along with an inflatable boat for over-the-horizon operations,” the website states.

“When a fully inflated boat is transported and inserted with personnel, this type of operation is known as a ‘hard duck.’ In cases where a fully inflated boat cannot be accommodated by the aircraft, it can be partially deflated for transit and inflated at the insertion point by means of a foot pump. This type of operation is known as a ‘soft duck.’ If inflation to any degree is not feasible, a ‘rolled duck’ may be performed.”

Crews and Chinooks from the 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment have completed training support like this many times in the past at Fort McCoy. That has included past years’ Best Squad competitions as well as slingload training with the 89B Ammunition Supply Course taught by instructors at Regional Training Site-Maintenance at Fort McCoy.

For the May 15 event at Big Sandy Lake, the 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment crew and Chinook did make many passes over the lake for the competitors to complete their jump. Weather for the event proved to be excellent as well, providing a safe operating environment for everyone involved.



A U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter and crew with the 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment of New Century, Kansas, supports an event May 15 at Big Sandy Lake on South Post at Fort McCoy for the 2025 Army Reserve Best Squad competition. Dozens of Soldiers participated in this competition.



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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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NEWS

SLINGLOAD

from Page 1

Kincaid also explained why knowing how to complete a slingload is an important thing for a Soldier to have the skills to complete.

“So, getting bullets to the fight keeps Soldiers alive,” Kincaid said. “Bottom line, that’s what’s important. Experience, we’ve gotten to the stagnation where we don’t think about slingload a lot but for those areas like Afghanistan, Vietnam ... areas in which we do not have the ability to transport assets in a fast, effective manner, has led us to forget about this option, this very effective option to get something that is needed to the Soldiers on the front line in a fast, rapid deployment process.”

Kincaid added that the slingloads adds an important capability to get ammunition where it needs to be.

“That’s why slingload is very crucial to how we continue our effectiveness towards making ordnance a legal aspect of the Army’s operations holistically and throughout our contingency operations around the world,” Kincaid said.

“This training is, for us, was to knock the rust off a lot of skills,” he said. “That’s going to be what’s going to make us so much more effective, so much more knowledgeable, and that way we can relate those experiences to these new Soldiers so that we’re sharing and creating that stewardship. I’m a wholehearted believer in reprocessing, redoing, and reworking the training so that you’re always bringing back and not losing knowledge.”

Both officer and enlisted members of the 13th, 100th completed the training. Many members also received a ride on the Black Hawks after the training was completed.

Lt. Col. John Venner, commander of

the 13th, 100th, discussed the importance of the training as well, stating his unit’s Soldiers “are some of the most technically skilled professionals in the U.S. Army today.”

“Most of these Soldiers are certified instructors in their MOS craft with multiple deployments and active-duty experience that accentuates their effectiveness on the podium teaching the next generation of Soldiers’ important concepts and ideals to maintain and expand our edge on the battlefield,” Venner said. “High value training events like partnering with the Wisconsin National Guard UH-60 unit to execute live slingload operations simulating pushing logistics packs to forward areas are aligned with current doctrine and emphasize the very real understanding for each of these Soldiers that it may be them in the near future who is the senior Soldier on the ground orchestrating these types of movements in an austere environment. These perishable skills must be regularly practiced with different airframes and under variant conditions to hone skills and protect capabilities on the battlefield.”

Venner also noted how these training events build camaraderie with unit members.

“As an instructor unit, it is very common for my Soldiers to be spread across multiple states, so coordinating mass training events for the entire battalion is critical to develop team cohesion, identity and improve our soldiering culture,” Venner said. “The facilities at Fort McCoy facilitate these critical needs for my unit; completing weapon’s qualification, spending extra time on the ranges to improve technique and allow mentoring opportunities for senior NCO’s to teach

others is extremely important to passing on knowledge in the Army Reserve where engagements are limited by time.

“Spending a week at Fort McCoy is a great way to execute the Army fitness test, weapons training, slingload operations, and have newer Soldiers spend quality time on the podium under the mentorship of senior instructors,” Venner said. “The battalion is already making plans for next cycle to include vehicle recovery and ammunition demolition range operations, which are also highly perishable skills that bring tremendous value to the combatant commander which Fort McCoy also has quality ranges available.”

The 13th, 100th is aligned under the 3rd Brigade, 94th Division of the 80th Training Command, and has been at Fort McCoy since about 1995.

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Photo by Melissa Dubois

A helicopter crew with the Wisconsin National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment utilizing a UH-60 Black Hawk combines with the 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment for slingload training May 22 at McCoy.



Photo by Melissa Dubois

(Above and below) Helicopter crews cycle through rounds of completing slingload connections May 22 at Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport with 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment Soldiers.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol



Photo by Melissa Dubois



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Soldiers with the 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment, a Fort McCoy tenant organization, stop for a group photo May 22 prior to completing slingload training at Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport on South Post at Fort McCoy.



NEWS

Fort McCoy hosts National Guard 2025 Region IV Best Warrior Competition

STORY & PHOTOS BY SPC. JACK SCHAVE  
112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Fourteen Army National Guardsmen competed in the 2025 Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy from April 30 to May 3. The seven noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and seven Soldiers represented Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. They put their Soldier skills to the test for the opportunity to advance to the national level.

The four-day event challenged the Guardsmen, pushing them to their limits while measuring their proficiency in warrior skills, military procedures, physical fitness, and mental fortitude. To earn a place in the regional competition, each service member first competed in and won at their respective state-level competitions.

Michigan Army National Guard Spc. Logan J. Rutledge, an infantryman with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 38th Infantry Division was named Region IV Soldier of the Year.

Wisconsin Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Brandon M. Byrne, a recruiting and retention NCO with Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion was named the Region IV NCO of the Year.

Runners up for Soldier and NCO of the Year respectively were Minnesota Army National Guard Spc. Daniel P. Whited, an infantryman with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 194th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division; and Illinois Army National Guard Sgt. Luke A. Birch, a combat medic NCO with the Illinois Army National Guard's Joint Force Medical Detachment.

Participants were evaluated on their proficiency in the Army Combat Fitness Test; M4 rifle, M17 pistol, and M249 squad automatic weapon qualification; a weapons assembly during a secret event; an appearance board; day and night land navigation; Army Warrior Tasks; combat water survival training; a call-for-fire scenario; a written exam; a confidence course; and a 12-mile foot march.

Maj. Gen. Matthew Strub, Wisconsin's adjutant general, spoke about what it means to compete.

"This is a grueling competition for many many reasons," Strub said. "Representing your units, your states is remarkable... know you've gone further than you thought you could before."

Strub also highlighted the hardships competitors went through.

"This is about building endurance," Strub continued. "As we build for potential large-scale combat operations, a fight that we hope we never have to do. This grit you went through, is going to be what it takes."

Rutledge, the 2025 Region IV Soldier of the Year, demonstrated his endurance and expressed his love of competitiveness and the training.

"I'm happy to take the good memories with me, with fellow Soldiers from the Midwest," Rutledge said. "The call-for-fire was something new I learned, it's a basic skill but it's great to revisit the basics."

Byrne, the 2025 Region IV NCO of the Year, expressed a similar passion for training and comradery, as well as a chance to 'get out of the office.'

"I wanted to go out and get some trigger time, to be back in the field," Byrne said. "You miss that, you miss the time with the guys."

Byrne and Rutledge expressed their excitement to compete at nationals.

"I am excited to become a more lethal Soldier, to be better at my job, and to get tested and prove myself," Rutledge said.

Byrne shared Rutledge's sentiment.

"To be able to represent Wisconsin, at such a high level, is so cool," he said.

Byrne and Rutledge will compete in the 2025 National Guard Bureau's Best Warrior Competition, scheduled for July 11-20 in Maryland.



Photo by Sgt. Cesar Salazar Jr./112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Iowa Army National Guard Sgt. Spencer C. Gull, a cavalry scout team leader with Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, jumps into the water May 2 and begins his water treading evaluation during the combat water survival test event of the National Guard Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy.



Photo by Spc. Jack Schave

Indiana Army National Guard Spc. Josiah E. Bowen, an automatic rifleman with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 38th Infantry Division, shoots at his target May 1 with the M17 pistol during the Region IV Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy.



Photos by Sgt. Cesar Salazar Jr.

(Inset) Wisconsin Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Brandon M. Byrne, a recruiting and retention non-commissioned officer with Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, maneuvers an obstacle May 3 during the confidence course portion of the National Guard Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy. (Outset) Indiana Army National Guard Spc. Josiah E. Bowen, an automatic rifleman with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 293rd Infantry Regiment, 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 38th Infantry Division, descends from an obstacle May 3 during the confidence course.



Photo by Spc. Jack Schave

Wisconsin State Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Brandon M. Byrne (foreground), a recruiting and retention non-commissioned officer with Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion and Spc. Vincent A. Bird (background), a military police officer with the 32nd Military Police Company, 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, check their grouping May 1 of the M4 rifle during the Region IV Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy.



Photo by Spc. Jack Schave

Wisconsin State Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Brandon M. Byrne (foreground), a recruiting and retention non-commissioned officer with Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion and Spc. Vincent A. Bird (background), a military police officer with the 32nd Military Police Company, 157th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, check their grouping May 1 of the M4 rifle during the Region IV Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy.



## NEWS

# May 2025 a busy training month at Fort McCoy; weekend training, events bring thousands to post

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Thousands of troops took to Fort McCoy training areas during May 2025 to complete weekend training, extended combat training, institutional training, or participate in major training events.

Troops included Guard, Reserve, and active-duty personnel, and a lot of varied activity was taking place.

In early May, Army Reserve Medical Command officials said a new field hospital was shown at Regional Training Site (RTS)-Medical at Fort McCoy.

“Product Manager Soldier Medical Devices, capability and materiel developers, and RTS-Medical personnel collaborated on the new design for a standard medical shelter in support of Soldier hospitalization (at Fort McCoy) on May 1,” states an Army Reserve Medical Command Facebook post on May 3 at <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1106221858211625&set=a.470326441801173>.

“Takeaway initiatives included opportunities for standardization, optimization of patient care and safety, and modifications to current obstacles of the legacy shelters,” the post states. “The proposed shelter design will be utilized across the U.S. Army medical force, affording mobility and survivability in future conflicts.”

Training also included the U.S. Army Reserve Command E3B (Expert Soldier Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, Expert Field Medical Badge) competition the took place between April 27 and May 10 at Fort McCoy.

According to the Army Reserve at <https://www.usar.army.mil/E3B>, a “total of 109 candidates from all three U.S. Army components (active, Reserve, and National Guard) started the E3B” competition. Command Sergeant Major of 3rd Medical Command, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert T. Priest, and Commanding Sergeant Major of 352nd Civil Affairs Command, Command Sgt. Maj. George H. Conklin, spoke to the 14 Soldiers who emerged as 2025 badge recipients having satisfactorily completed all required tasks.

“The E3B promotes unity and readiness across the Army Reserve aligning the opportunity for all Soldiers the chance to become experts in their profession and set themselves apart from their peers,” the website states.

The Army Reserve also held its Best Squad Competition from May 8-19 at Fort McCoy. In a story by Capt. Elizabeth Polk, it states “75 warriors divided into 15 squads to endure six grueling, challenge-filled days” during the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) Best Squad Competition.

“The success of the 2025 Army Reserve’s Best Squad Competition hinged on meticulous planning and coordination at all echelons,” the story states. “Immediately following the conclusion of last year’s competition, preparations for the 2025 event



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

(All photos) Soldiers participate in a U.S. Army Reserve Command E3B event May 1 at Fort McCoy. The E3B combines the Expert Soldier Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, and Expert Field Medical Badge. That event was held at McCoy from April 27 to May 10.

began, collaborating logistics, support, equipment, and personnel. Soldiers assigned to these tasks dedicated long hours to meet critical deadlines and ensured the seamless execution of the competition.”

May 2025 also saw the National Guard hold its 2025 Region IV Best Warrior Competition at Fort McCoy from April 30 to May 3.

“The seven noncommissioned officers and seven Soldiers represented Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin,” states a story by Spc. Jack Schave with the 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. “They put their Soldier skills to the test for the opportunity to advance to the national level.

“The four-day event challenged the Guardsmen, pushing them to their limits while measuring their proficiency in warrior skills, military procedures,

physical fitness, and mental fortitude,” the story states. “To earn a place in the regional competition, each service member first competed in and won at their respective state-level competitions.”

From mid- to late-May, Soldiers from across the Army Reserve’s 649th Regional Support Group “successfully executed Defender University 25-2, a five-day mission-focused training designed to certify promotion eligibility for sergeant and staff sergeant at Fort McCoy,” states a Facebook post at <https://www.facebook.com/649RSG/posts/pf-bid06dzsm4t84H3VcMEMsuiRexGpRpKfZNRG-GJ3PPP2ikAsCqdJXqGqryzzWdK87DYZel>.

“Through hands-on instruction, scenario-based lanes, and rigorous evaluations, our Soldiers demonstrated proficiency in 29 Warrior Tasks and battle drills (skill levels 2 & 3), reinforcing their

technical and tactical readiness,” the post states. “Defender University not only enhances individual Soldier development but also strengthens our force with leaders ready to meet the Army Reserve’s evolving challenges.”

No matter what type of training, all of it contributes to the economic impact Fort McCoy has on local communities. Fort McCoy’s total economic impact for fiscal year (FY) 2024 was an estimated \$1.6 billion, Fort McCoy Garrison officials announced, which is up from FY 2023’s total impact of \$1.38 billion. The data was compiled by Fort McCoy’s Plans, Analysis and Integration Office.

Workforce payroll, operating costs, and other expenditures totaled more than \$398 million for FY 2024. A total of 1,934 personnel worked at Fort McCoy in FY 2024 — 1,061 civilians, 495 military, and 378 contract employees.

Fort McCoy also supported training for 73,991 troops in FY 2024, which ran from Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024. During FY 2024, training included battle-assembly (weekend) training; annual training; mobilization; institutional training; and numerous exercises, including a Warrior Exercise, Combat Support Training Exercise, Global Medic, Spartan Warrior military police exercise, Mobilization Support Force — Exercise 24, and numerous other training events.

More of the same kind of training is expected as 2025 continues.

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Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

Training operations are shown May 12 (above left) and May 15 (above right) at Fort McCoy.

## Spiritual readiness: Army Reserve chaplains train for battlefield

STORY & PHOTOS BY SGT. NATAJA FORD  
88th Readiness Division

U.S. Army Reserve chaplains and religious affairs specialists are stepping beyond the classroom and into the field to better prepare for the realities of large-scale mobilization. The 88th Readiness Division is spearheading this initiative — hosting and leading the training at Fort McCoy.

Army Reserve Chaplain Battle Focused Training (ARC BFT) is an Army Reserve program that increases readiness among unit ministry teams. Each readiness division (RD) conducts its own version of ARC BFT across the country, drawing chaplains and religious affairs specialists within their regional footprint. However, in an ever-changing world, the 88th RD Religious Support Team decided the training needed a change too, adding a one-day field exercise in conjunction with the regular classroom training that is typically seen in ARC BFT.

“What we’re doing here is revolutionary in the sense that we’ve recognized that just talking about this stuff in the classroom doesn’t cut it, Chaplain (Maj.) Pete Moseman, 88th RD training and resource management chaplain, explained. “(Classroom instruction) is not enough to really help people become proficient in their job and be prepared for war.

“What we have here today is folks from all across the Army Reserve, primarily from our 19-state region,” Moseman said. “A majority of folks here come from the 807th Theater Medical Command, but we have Soldiers, chaplains, and religious affairs specialists or NCOs from all over the country that are here to train with us.”

The day-long exercise was divided into four lanes: religious support planning and operations, memorial events, casualty collection points, and force protection. Each lane is designed to simulate the core responsibilities of chaplain teams during large-scale combat operations.

Chaplains are categorized as non-combatants, a distinction that profoundly shapes their battlefield role.

“The Army has two types of non-combatants, technically speaking, medics and chaplains,” Moseman noted. “But what’s different is that chaplains don’t actually carry a weapon, whereas medics are allowed to.”

Still, chaplains are expected to go wherever their units go, even into combat zones. Moseman describes the Chaplains as “bearers of peace and hope on the battlefield.” This is an evergreen theme in the Chaplain Corps. It’s written in their history and guides their future.

“The role of the chaplain is to serve and minister to the Soldiers in their assigned unit,” he continued. “And chaplains need to be able to go where the Soldiers are and too, figuratively speaking, be in the fight.”

The force protection lane aims to prepare unit ministry teams for this reality. Teaching them how to integrate into a team and move tactically within it effectively. Although not every battlefield function can be mastered in a one-day field exercise, the training serves as a personal checkpoint for each Chaplain and Religious Affairs specialist, allowing them to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and train accordingly.

“Being able to assess where I am really at,” Moseman emphasized. “If I was thrust into a large-scale combat operation, would I be effective? Could I even stay alive?” These are the questions the 88th RD team hopes participating unit ministry teams reflect on.

To help them survive, chaplains are part of Unit Ministry Teams, paired with religious affairs specialists, and religious affairs noncommissioned officers, support military personnel and their families by assisting with religious needs, helping plan and carry out religious programs, services, and provide crisis intervention. They also ensure the safety of chaplains by offering force protection, as they are armed while chaplains are not.

“That enlisted counterpart is there to be the subject matter expert on force protection for the unit ministry team,” Moseman said. “That really enables chaplains to provide a very critical role during large-scale combat operations, which is to minister to the heart and spirit of the warfighter.”

Looking ahead, Moseman sees the field-based approach to ARC BFT as essential to the future of the Chaplain Corps. His vision extends beyond the 88th RD’s one-day field exercise, but it starts here.

“We’re trying to solve the problem by creating this space where chaplains can focus on these critical tasks they need to be good and proficient at,” he said.

“Hopefully, we can start producing more ready and capable unit ministry teams that are prepared to head out the door and support our warfighters wherever they go.”

As the nature of warfare evolves, so too must the training that prepares Soldiers for its challenges, including those tasked with caring for spiritual welfare in the midst of conflict.

The 88th RD’s innovative approach to ARC BFT is more than just a logistical update; it’s a cultural shift toward a more immersive, resilient, and mission ready force, officials said. By taking chaplains and religious affairs specialists straight from the classroom to the field, the Army Reserve is ensuring its unit ministry teams are holding true to the Army standard of train as you fight.

For the Army Reserve Chaplain Corps that means standing alongside the warfighter — wherever duty calls.

Learn more about the 88th Readiness Division by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/88RSC>.



(Above and below) U.S. Army Reserve chaplains and religious affairs specialists assigned to the 88th Readiness Division lead a Army Reserve Chaplain Battle-Focused Training field exercise for the 88th Readiness Division on April 10 at Fort McCoy.





## NEWS

# U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy welcomes new command sergeant major during May change-of-responsibility ceremony

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy team members witnessed a change-of-responsibility ceremony May 16 for a new command sergeant major for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy in building 905 at Fort McCoy.

During the ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. James J. Riddle assumed duties as garrison command sergeant major (CSM) from Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, who has retired from the Army. Immediately prior to this assignment, Riddle served as the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command G-3/5/7 sergeant major from July 2023 to April 2025 at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

During the ceremony, Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon welcomed Riddle and said thanks to Calarco for his service.

"Tom, thank you for being there for both the military and civilian workforce all the time," Cantlon said. "You took a positive spin on everything. You participated. And you made the formation your priority. Thank you. From the bottom of my heart, I sincerely appreciate it. Tom and Sharon, you will be missed."

"Command Sgt. Maj. Riddle ... (and) family, welcome to a great team," Cantlon said. "Can't wait to spend the next two years with you here. I'll look forward to each and every day."

Riddle said he looks forward to serving at Fort McCoy.

"It is truly, deeply, an honor to be here, humbled to stand before you to assume the responsibility of Fort McCoy Garrison (CSM)," Riddle said. "This moment is a moment of great pride, not only for me, but for my family, and for those who have supported me throughout the years and the journey."

The new garrison CSM thank many of his friends and family for their support, leadership, and more. He said in his short time at McCoy, so far, he's learned a lot about the people and the installation.

"Over the past two weeks, as I've been processed and transitioned in, I've had the opportunity to enjoy many of the Fort McCoy services as a customer," Riddle said. "And I can tell you, they're absolutely incredible."

"During my recent time at the ... Garrison Pre-Command Course, down at the (Installation Management Command) headquarters, Fort McCoy is mentioned often," he said. "The reoccurring theme was, if you want to see it done right, see what they're doing at Fort McCoy. And after being here and seeing it firsthand, I can tell you those words are absolutely true."

"For that, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Command Sergeant Maj. Calarco. I truly believe that is just a small representation of your leadership, so thank you. To the workforce leaders here at Fort McCoy, I'm honored to join this exceptional team. I look forward to working with you to build upon the strong foundation already in place. We remain committed to excellence, to the Soldiers and families, and to ensuring Fort McCoy continues to be the model for what right looks like," Riddle said.

According to his biography, Riddle is a graduate of the University of Louisville with a Master of Science in Human Resources and Organizational Development and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Washburn University in Health Services Administration as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Leadership and Workforce Development from the Army Command and General Staff College.

Riddle's military education includes Brigade Pre-command Course, Command Sergeant Major Development Course, Garrison Pre-command Course, Sergeants Major Course Class 71, How the Army Runs Course, Company Leadership Development Course, Master Resilience Trainer Course, Modern Army Combatives Program Courses I, II, and III, Unit Movement Officer Deployment Planning Course, Transportation Deployment/Distribution Senior Leader Course, Observer, Coach,



(Above) Command Sgt. Maj. James J. Riddle receives the garrison flag from Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon as he assumes the duties as garrison command sergeant major during a ceremony May 16 at Fort McCoy. (Below) Riddle addresses attendees for the first time as the garrison command sergeant major. Immediately prior to this assignment he served as the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command G-3/5/7 sergeant major from July 2023 to April 2025 at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.



Trainer Academy, Motor Transport Operator Re-classification, Army Cavalry Scout BNCOC, Army Warrior Leader Course, and several other functional courses.

Riddle's previous assignments include G-3/5/7 sergeant major for SDDC; Transportation Proponent sergeant major for the Office of the Chief of Reserve Affairs; platoon sergeant, truckmaster, senior truckmaster, and first sergeant of the 369th Transportation Company; observer-coach/trainer at 2/383rd Training Support Battalion; movement supervisor at 821st Transportation Battalion; senior scout at 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment; cavalry scout team leader at 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment; and cavalry scout team member with 1st

Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment.

Riddle has deployed three times to Iraq during the Transition of Iraq and Iraqi Governance, Iraqi Surge, and Iraqi Sovereignty campaign phases.

Command Sgt. Maj. Riddle's awards and decorations include Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Army Commendation Medal (eight awards), Army Achievement Medal (four awards), Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Award (two awards), Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, and Army Good Conduct Medal (five awards).

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lation in Wisconsin.

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## Three 88th Soldiers receive Army Master Combat Badge

BY KALEEN HOLLIDAY  
88th Readiness Division Public Affairs

After decades, the Army finally approved brand new Master Combat Badges to recognize Soldiers with Combat and Expert Badges.

The 88th Readiness Division pinned three Soldiers with newly authorized Master Combat Badges during their annual training at Fort McCoy on April 23.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi recognized and proudly pinned, 1st Sgt. David Boots, Master Sgt. David Shimota, and Sgt. Major Richard Trujillo.

Boots and Shimota were awarded the Master Combat Infantryman Badge, and Trujillo was awarded the Master Combat Action Badge.

The establishment of the Army Master Combat Badges (MILPER 25-093) was published in March, authorizing three new badges: Master Combat Infantryman Badge, Master Combat Medical Badge, and Master Combat Action Badge.

Master Badges are distinguished from their standard counterparts by gold wreaths instead of silver. They are awarded to recognize Soldiers who have earned both a Combat Badge and any Expert Badge — signifying the Soldier has actively engaged in ground combat against enemy forces and demonstrated superior mastery of Soldier skills under rigorous testing conditions.

Combat badges and expert badges fall under the same badge category, meaning only one may be worn on the uniform at a time. The approval of the Master Combat Badges now incentivizes many Soldiers with Combat Badges to pursue and test for their respective expert badges — something previously discouraged, as they would be awarded a badge they could not wear.

Learn more about the 88th Readiness Division by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/88RSC>.



The 88th Readiness Division pinned three Soldiers with newly authorized Master Combat Badges during annual training April 23 at Fort McCoy. Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, 88th commanding general, recognized and proudly pinned, 1st Sgt. David Boots, Master Sgt. David Shimota, and Sgt. Major Richard Trujillo. Boots and Shimota were awarded the Master Combat Infantryman Badge, and Trujillo was awarded the Master Combat Action Badge.

Photo by Lt. Col. Justin Heinze/88th Readiness Division



NEWS

# McCoy’s East Barracks Project reaches 45 percent complete as June 2025 begins

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy’s East Barracks Project was reported 45 percent complete as of May 30, said Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the Army Corps of Engineers at Fort McCoy.

In his May 30 update, Butts said the contractors with L.S. Black Constructors were steadily making progress on the project.

“Masons were building a mock-up wall,” Butts wrote in the update. “Dry-wall installation continues. Air barrier spray continued. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in continues.

“Brick ledge installation continues. Door frame installation on all floors continues. Drywall finishing and painting continues with the mechanical, electrical, (and other) rooms. Interior spray foam insulation continues in the bays,” Butts wrote.

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

As the workers with L.S. Black Constructors work on this project, they can look over at two other barracks they constructed in the same block. They are a familiar name in the construction history at Fort McCoy, having not only built the first two of the 60,000-square-foot transient training troops barracks, but they also built the new brigade headquarters building located in the same block as the barracks buildings.

The contract duration is scheduled for completion in 780 calendar days, Army Corps of Engineer contract documents show.

“Current contract completion date is April 24, 2026,” Butts also wrote in the May 30 update.

From the building description, when complete, the building will be able to house up to 400 people like the other completed barracks in the same block. According to the scope of work, it’s going to be “made of permanent construction with reinforced concrete foundations; concrete floor slabs; structural



Contractors work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, on June 4 (above) and June 9 (below) at Fort McCoy.



steel frames; steel stud infill; masonry veneer walls; prefinished standing seam metal roofing; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning capabilities; plumbing; mechanical systems; and electrical systems. Supporting facilities include land

clearing, concrete sidewalk paving, general site improvements, and utility connections.”

Work also continues in 2025 by contractors to prepare a large swath of the 1600 block on Fort McCoy’s canton-

ment area to construct the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project by contractor BlindermanPower (Construction).

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public

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

This project and others like it also have in economic impact on local economies.

For the past six years, and even before that, millions of dollars in construction dollars have been counted by the Fort McCoy Plans, Analysis, and Integration Office as a key factor and contributor to the installation’s annual economic impact each fiscal year.

Since fiscal year (FY) 2019, more than \$310 million has been calculated in new construction of buildings and ranges alone, reports show.

Over that same time, more than \$1.4 billion has also been applied to operating costs that included utilities, physical plant maintenance, repair and improvements, other new construction projects, purchases of supplies and services, and salaries for civilian contract personnel working at Fort McCoy.

Projects at Fort McCoy like the current \$27.3 million East Barracks Project, \$28.08 million South Barracks Project, and the \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project, are among those projects adding to the economic impact currently.

These projects are on top of recently completed projects like the \$20.6 million and \$18.8 million barracks projects as well as the \$11.96 million brigade headquarters building that was fully completed in 2024.

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.”

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# Actual construction starts to make progress in May 2025 on \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

With the last of the World War II-era barracks moved from the work site May 13, more actual construction of the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project has taken hold, stated Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy in his May 16 update on the project.

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, 2024. 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 the five World War II-era barracks in January, February, March, April, and May in support of the project so more space could 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 May 16 update, Green gave the latest actions.

“Demo continued,” Green wrote. “Fifth building was relocated. The tie down for two buildings continues. And footing/columns/stem wall placements continued on the west building.”

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 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. By August that will lower to two projects when one of the barracks projects is completed.

All of this work continues with the master plan



Contractors work on infrastructure emplacement and more June 4 (above) and June 2 (below) for the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy.



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, said Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials.

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

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# Fort McCoy leaders meet with local school board as part of community engagement

STORY BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
& MELISSA DUBOIS  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Garrison leaders Cameron Cantlon, the deputy to the garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, participated in the May 27 meeting of the Sparta, Wis., Board of Education.

The meeting was held at Sparta High School, an institution that has educated many Fort McCoy family members over the years. The board includes Pat McKenna, Colin Burns-Gilbert, Ashley Berendes, Todd Wells, Amy Lopez, David Burnett, and David Gaunky.

During the visit, the Fort McCoy leaders showed the April Month of the Military Child video produced by Fort McCoy staff.

Cantlon also discussed his family's experiences of having children in multiple school districts.

He also introduced Riddle who was attending his first meeting with the school board members.

Riddle spoke on his three school-age children, and his spouse who is a new high school history teacher in the Sparta Area School District.

Sam Russ, superintendent for the Sparta Area School District, mentioned to the Fort McCoy leaders that the Month of the Military Child luncheon that was held in April in Sparta was a great event. He also said they are grateful for their partnership with Fort McCoy.

On the school district's website, <https://www.spartan.org/district/about/index>, they discuss more about the school district.

"We are very proud and have a passion for academic, social, and emotional excellence, while focusing on personal growth, positive relationships, collaboration, and curiosity," the website states. "Our district holds strong traditions from every level K4-12, while also being open to making changes to meet the needs of our students. Our highly qualified and outstanding staff have enabled our students to be ready and prepared for the next step in their own personal



Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, Fort McCoy Garrison command sergeant major, speaks with the Sparta (Wis.) Board of Education on May 27 in Sparta.



Cameron Cantlon, Fort McCoy Garrison deputy to the garrison commander, speaks with the Sparta Board of Education on May 27 as well.

journey. "With an infusion of instructional technology, a challenging curriculum, and student access to industry standard learning tools, we believe Sparta students are prepared to compete in this changing society and global market," the website states. "Our district is committed to developing the whole child,

through a strong commitment to not only the core subject areas, but the arts, physical education, (science, technology, engineering and math), music, technology, world languages, and a large after school and co-curricular program.

"Our staff, buildings, facilities, and instructional technology will continue to meet the needs of all our learners through our curriculum, assessments, activities, and other learning opportunities. Our schools also follow the Spartan Way (respectful, responsible, and safe) which helps us establish common expectations to ensure our learning environments foster collaboration, creativity, communication, and problem solving," according to the website.

Cantlon's and Riddle's involvement with the school board is part of an Army garrison's command team's regular effort to have community engagement and to meet with local leaders as part of Army community relations.

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."

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# Fort McCoy Forestry continues managing logging, tree planting efforts across post

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy's Forestry Office continued to manage a significant effort during April 2025 with many activities designed to improve Fort McCoy's thousands of acres of forest land.

During the month, forestry and related work was coordinated by then-Forester Charles Mentzel and Forestry Technician Tim Parry who both work within the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

As part of their monthly work, they share work completed with the personnel supporting the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resources Committee. Some of those completed work items include:

— The Forestry team administered six timber sales during April.

"We typically have six to nine timber sales a year, or about 600 acres worth," Mentzel said. "Some get cut the following year."

Timber sales are administered by the Omaha District of the Army Corps of Engineers and are sold by sealed bid, said Mentzel.

The timber harvest activities also support Fort McCoy's strategic objective of enhancing the post's military training value through improved area utilization and land use initiatives, Mentzel said.

— The Forestry team also collected \$30,936.00 in revenue for timber sale payments during April. Timber sale bidding is held once each year, typically in December, Mentzel said. Revenue from the timber sales goes into an Armywide forestry account and is returned to fund forestry projects on Fort McCoy.

— Work on an environmental review request for fiscal year 2027 timber sale possibilities were also completed. And maintaining the environment after a timber sale is important, Mentzel said.

When a timber harvest is complete, a Land Rehabilitation and Maintenance (LRAM) crew will use a severe-duty shredder to grind the tree tops and branches left over from logging (called slash) and knock down the smaller trees the logger did not take, in areas where the military needs clear ground or to reduce fire hazard.

The LRAM crew is part of the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security Integrated Training Area Maintenance program, which co-



Logs are shown in piles on April 16 on South Post at Fort McCoy. The logs were part of a timber harvest. Timber sales at Fort McCoy are administered by the Omaha District of the Army Corps of Engineers and are sold by sealed bid. Timber sale bidding is held once each year, typically in December.

ordinates natural resource management and training activities.

— In preparation for an April 25 tree planting event, Forestry staff pruned roots for 500 trees to be planted on the cantonment area.

The 500 trees planted April 25 were the major replanting effort for 2025. In 2024, Parry said the post planted 5,000 trees — 500 on the cantonment area and 4,500 in Training Area B-05 on Fort McCoy's South Post.

Mentzel also noted that the Department of the Army is the steward of the land and the natural resources at Fort McCoy, which are being held in trust for the American people. Trees are one of the most important natural resources contained on Fort McCoy, either singularly, in groups, or forests. These trees benefit Fort McCoy by providing qual-

ity training, watershed protection, wood products, food and shelter for wildlife, outdoor recreation opportunities, clean air, noise buffers, and beautification.

— During April, Mentzel said the Forestry team, who is part of the Fort McCoy prescribed burn team, completed prescribed burns that covered 1,133 acres and was done in three different days in five units.

Forestry personnel have long managed the prescribed burn program at Fort McCoy and each year their work helps prepare training areas for safe use.

— Forestry members also announced that firewood areas were closed, however special collection firewood piles were opened for people to get firewood. New maps were created to direct firewood permit holders to the locations of the firewood

available.

Learn more about how Fort McCoy's forestry program helps improve training capabilities and helps create healthy forests by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/493260/fort-mccoy-timber-harvest-improves-training-capabilities-environment-training>.

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Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Contributed photo

## NCOA ceremony at Commemorative Area

Members of the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy and others hold a retirement ceremony for one of their own May 30 at the Commemorative Area at Fort McCoy. Sgt. 1st Class Shelia Stennis retired from the Army with 34 years of service. The Commemorative Area has been for several years now a location for official ceremonies.



TRAINING

# Fort McCoy team members attend May 2025 workforce collaborative meeting with area leaders

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL & MELISSA DUBOIS  
Public Affairs Staff

Leaders with Fort McCoy Garrison and installation agencies met May 15, 2025, with community leaders and workforce professionals in Sparta, Wis., during the Fort McCoy Workforce Collaborative Meeting, which promotes relationships and employment opportunities.

The meeting brought together people who are working to improve employment opportunities in the region, including at Fort McCoy. Attending from Fort McCoy included Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Mike Corkum; Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major; Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office personnel, and others.

From the civilian side, representatives from the Tomah Chamber of Commerce, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Western Technical College, and more were present.

Officials at the meeting noted the collaboration is helpful in filling jobs at Fort McCoy and also helps people like military family members learn about opportunities for employment.

Also, during the meeting, participants developed ideas and ways ahead to tell military family members more about jobs available in the area as well as events to complete that effort, such as . Also discussed were plans for several other events planned for the installation as well as open employment opportunities with contractors and non-appropriated funds channels.

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 see the installation that provides a significant economic impact to their communities. Fort McCoy’s total economic impact for fiscal year (FY) 2024 was an estimated \$1.6 billion, Fort McCoy Garrison officials announced, which is up from FY 2023’s total impact of \$1.38 billion. The data was compiled by Fort McCoy’s Plans, Analysis and Integration Office.

Workforce payroll, operating costs, and other expenditures totaled more than \$398 million for FY 2024. A total of 1,934 personnel worked at Fort McCoy in FY 2024 — 1,061 civilians, 495 military, and 378 contract employees.

Approximately 66 percent of the workforce lives within Monroe County. The total FY 2024 workforce payroll for civilian and military personnel was \$270.4 million.



Leaders with Fort McCoy Garrison and installation agencies meet May 15 with community leaders and workforce professionals in Sparta, Wis., during the May 2025 Fort McCoy Workforce Collaborative Meeting.

Fort McCoy also has several ongoing construction projects which directly support employment of local contractors.

Taking a closer look, following are the year-by-year breakdowns of economic impact numbers for new construction and operating costs at Fort McCoy.

— FY 2019 — \$27.6 million in new construction of buildings and ranges; operating costs of \$120.56 million.

— FY 2020: \$50.3 million in new construction of buildings and ranges; operating costs of \$194.4 million.

— FY 2021: \$39.4 million in new construction of buildings and ranges; operating costs of \$249.88 million.

— FY 2022: \$42.5 million in new construction of buildings and ranges; operating costs of \$391.46 million.

— FY 2023: \$58 million in new construction of buildings and ranges; operating costs of \$346 million.

— FY 2024: \$92.6 million in new construction of buildings and ranges; operating costs of \$170 million.

And through FY 2024 and into FY 2025, construction projects continue to provide economic impact to local communities from those projects in tens of millions of dollars, officials said.

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## Post personnel support, give updates during May 2025 meeting of local natural resources committee

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy personnel once again provided updates about the installation’s natural resources-related efforts May 12 during the May 2025 meeting of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee.

The monthly committee includes members Nodji VanWychen, Joey Esterline, Cedric Schnitzler, Doug Rogalla, Todd Sparks, and Paul Zastophil 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 May meeting, 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 April 2025 were:

— NRB fisheries personnel collected water samples from three runoff events and two baseflow events.

— Fisheries staff also had eight sediment traps excavated in waterways that removed 228 yards of material.

— Fisheries team members also conducted temperature and dissolved oxygen surveys on all 10 lakes.

— Six creel surveys were conducted by fisheries personnel during early catch-and-release trout and largemouth bass seasons. Early largemouth bass season is only open on the North Flowage and Lost Lake at Fort McCoy. All the other lakes were closed until May 3 until the start of the regular fishing season.

— Fisheries staff conducted fish population surveys on North Flowage, Stillwell Lake, Sparta Pond, Sandy Lake, and West sandy Lake. Surveys will be wrapping up in May. See related story at <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/496274/fort-mccoys-fisheries-team-completes-2025-fish-surveys-helps-maintain-improve-options-anglers>.

— Staff conducted stream fish surveys at eight locations to determine overwinter growth and spatial movement. Staff tagged 56 new brown trout and recaptured 41.

— Completed the first draft of the Fort McCoy Watershed Report. The final version should be completed by June 1.

— Coordinated the stocking of 15,000 rainbow trout into six lakes on Fort McCoy by the staff of the Genoa National Fish Hatchery with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. See related story on this effort at: [https://www.dvidshub.net/news/496294/us-fish-and-wildlife-](https://www.dvidshub.net/news/496294/us-fish-and-wildlife-service-completes-2025-stocking-more-than-15000-rainbow-trout-fort-mccoys-waterways)



Members of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee meets in Sparta, Wis., on May 12. The mission of the Monroe County Natural Resource Committee is to manage, conserve, and protect our natural resources.

service-completes-2025-stocking-more-than-15000-rainbow-trout-fort-mccoys-waterways.

— Forestry team members at NRB administered six timber sales and collected \$30,936 in revenue for timber sales.

— Forestry members also submitted its fiscal year 2027 timber sale environmental review request.

— Forestry led prescribed burn efforts where 1,133 acres were burned on three days in April in five different units.

— Forestry members root-pruned 500 trees for an on-post tree-planting event April 25.

— Forestry team members also coordinated and led an on-post tree-planting event that included nearly 50 people with the installation workforce, installation family members, and installation leadership. Read more about that event at: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/496899/fort-mccoy-continues-annual-tree-replenishment-efforts-earns-36th-tree-city-usa-award-process>.

— In invasive species management, NRB personnel began scheduling times for goats to be brought back to the post for summer grazing re-treatments in training areas to knock back invasive species. See more about goats being utilized for invasive species management at Fort McCoy by going to: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/899508/energy-action-month-fort-mccoy-uses-goats-save-resources-fight-against-invasive-plant-species>.

— NRB members also began making updates to the Invasive Plants Management Plan for a later review by staff. Members are also conducting planning for the annual Fort McCoy Invasive Species Field Day at Pine View Campground on June 26.

— In wildlife management, NRB members began overseeing the spring turkey season that began on April 16. More information on the

spring turkey season, Fort McCoy hunting regulations, firearm registration, and other topics can be found at the Fort McCoy iSportsman page at <https://mccoy.sportsman.net>.

— NRB staff are also continuing the annual process of updating the Fort McCoy hunting, fishing, and trapping rules and regulations.

— NRB staff also worked with Permit Sales staff to begin to build the permits, harvest authorizations, and applications for the fall hunting and trapping seasons in iSportsman.

— Jessup stated that blue bird volunteers will be checking 400-plus boxes on a weekly basis now through the summer documenting use, success, number of blue birds fledged, and more.

— Staff completed drumming grouse/gobbling turkey surveys in April as well. Staff completed four surveys of each of the three routes. Surveys started around March 15.

“We have seen roughly a 50 percent decrease in drumming grouse compared to last year, and are waiting to see (state) drumming grouse survey results to see how Fort McCoy compares to the rest of the local regions and state overall,” Jessup said at the meeting.

“We have also seen an increase in turkey gobbling activity compared to last year, but gobbling birds per stop has remained consistent.”

— NRB staff also reviewed and updated the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan for wildlife, pest management, and Permit Sales program information, processes, and work plans.

— Jessup stated that a new seasonal technician was brought on.

— NRB staff completed 14 turtle surveys. Five Blanding turtles were captured and processed as a result of survey efforts. Two new captures were noted.

— Staff finished 10 bull snake surveys as well.

Thirteen bull snakes were captured and processed as a result of survey efforts. One bull snake was captured and processed as a result of incidental capture. They implanted transmitters in eight of the bull snakes. Also, seven bull snakes were observed but not captured during survey efforts.

— Staff also conducted biweekly telemetry tracking on five Blanding’s turtles, one wood turtle, and one bull snake.

— Staff also conducted eagle nest checks. Six eagle nest checks and four osprey nest checks were completed. An eagle nest on North flowage has activity, and they’ll continue monitoring.

— Frosted elfin butterfly spot checks were also held. One frosted elfin check was done in in training area C-19 on April 30 but no significant activity yet.

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 June 2025.

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(Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch staff contributed to this article.)

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OUTDOORS

# Anglers flock to McCoy to catch stocked rainbow trout; biologist says they're a preferred species

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

Every year, anglers have 15,000 reasons to go fishing at Fort McCoy. Every year, 15,000 rainbow trout are stocked in several Fort McCoy waterways so those who fish at the post have a game fish they enjoy catching, said Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

"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 is not any different, as Fort McCoy again stocked six lakes with rainbow trout. This is a tradition that began in 1963 and has been carried on 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 that since rainbow trout are a preferred species of fish for anglers at Fort McCoy, and that's why they so many are stocked on post, it's important to keep a strong relationship with the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Genoa, Wis.

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which operations the Genoa hatchery, states on their website at <https://www.fws.gov/species/rainbow-trout-oncorhynchus-mykiss> that rainbow or steelhead trout are one of the top five recreational fish species in North America and are culturally important to Native American tribes.

"Steelhead trout have been known to jump 11 feet into the air when climbing waterfalls on migration runs and can go from zero to 25 miles per hour in one second," the website states.

"The oldest steelhead trout ever captured was 11 years old, and there have been reports of steelhead weighing up to 55 pounds."

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources states at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov>

[consin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/Fishing/Species\\_rainbowtrout.pdf](https://consin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/Fishing/Species_rainbowtrout.pdf) that annual stocking of rainbow trout is necessary because poor natural spawning habitat results in little successful natural reproduction. Once stocked, the trout will survive feeding on fish, insects, and crayfish.

At the opening weekend of the 2025 fishing season at Fort McCoy, which began May 3, many anglers were spotted throughout post trying for and catching rainbow trout at places like Suukjak Sep Lake by Pine View Campground, Sparta Pond on North Post, and Stillwell Lake, Sandy Lake, Swamp Pond, and Big Sandy Lake on South Post.

Anglers must have the appropriate Wisconsin licenses to fish on post. 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.

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



(Above) Anglers try their hand at catching some rainbow trout in Suukjak Sep Lake on May 4 at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy. (Below) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees stock rainbow trout April 23 in Stillwell Lake on South Post at Fort McCoy.



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."



Contributed photo

## Mother-son event at La Crosse Loggers game

Fort McCoy family members have a photo taken May 29 with mascots of the La Crosse Loggers baseball team in La Crosse, Wis. The group attended a Loggers game as part of a mother-son event coordinated by the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office.





# FORT MCCOY 2024 WATER QUALITY REPORT

The following information is from the 2024 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Consumer Confidence Report data for Fort McCoy — 64203029 North Post and 64203073 South Post.

For more details about the information contained in this report, call 608-388-2323.

## Health information

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants.

The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's safe drinking water hotline (800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population.

Immuno-compromised people, such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections.

These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Environmental Protection Agency's safe drinking water hotline.

### Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
AL	Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
MCL	Maximum Contaminant Level: The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
pCi/l	picocuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)
MCLG	Maximum Contaminant Level Goal: The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
ppm	parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/l)
ppb	parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (ug/l)

### Source(s) of Water

Source ID (North and South Post)	Source	Depth (in feet)	Status
24	Groundwater	202	Active
25	Groundwater	204	Active
27	Groundwater	217	Active
28	Groundwater	220	Active
29	Groundwater	N/A	Active
30	Groundwater	250	Active
21	Groundwater	169	Perm. abandoned as of 3/9/2020
26	Groundwater	N/A	Active
31	Groundwater	262	Active

To obtain a summary of the source water assessment or these related reports, call 502-898-2323.

## Educational information

The sources of drinking water, both tap water and bottled water, include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs and wells.

As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations

and wildlife.

- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.

- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff and residential uses.

- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff and septic systems.

- Radioactive contaminants, which

can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. FDA regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which shall provide the same protection for public health.

## Additional health information

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily

from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Fort McCoy South Post is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components.

When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking.

If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at [www.epa.gov/safewater/lead](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead).

# WATER REPORT ITEMS

### INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
ARSENIC (ppb) (SP)	N/A	10	N/A	0	0-0	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Runoff from orchards. Runoff from glass and electronics products wastes.
ARSENIC (ppb) (NP)	N/A	10	N/A	0	0-0	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Runoff from orchards. Runoff from glass and electronics products wastes.
BARIUM (ppm) (NP)	N/A	2	2	0.008	.004-.008	N/A	No	Discharge from drilling waste. Discharge from metal refineries. Erosion of natural deposits.
BARIUM (ppm) (SP)	N/A	2	2	0.019	.013-.019	N/A	No	Discharge from drilling waste. Discharge from metal refineries. Erosion of natural deposits.
CADMIUM (ppb) (SP)	N/A	5	5	0	0-0	N/A	No	Corrosion of galvanized pipes. Erosion of natural deposits. Discharge from metal refineries. Runoff from waste batteries and paints.
CHROMIUM (ppb) (NP)	N/A	100	100	2	0-2	N/A	No	Discharge from steel and pulp mills. Erosion of natural deposits.
FLUORIDE (ppm) (NP)	N/A	4	4	0.1	0.0-0.1	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Water additive which promotes strong teeth. Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
NICKEL (ppb) (NP)	N/A	100	N/A	2.2	0.49-2.2	N/A	No	Nickel occurs naturally in soils, ground water, and surface waters and is often used in electroplating, stainless steel, and alloy products.
NICKEL (ppb) (SP)	N/A	100	N/A	0.55	0-0.55	N/A	No	Nickel occurs naturally in soils, ground water, and surface waters and is often used in electroplating, stainless steel, and alloy products.
NITRATE (NO3-N) (ppm) (NP)	N/A	10	10	0.41	0.00-0.41	N/A	No	Runoff from fertilizer use. Leaching from septic tanks, sewage. Erosion of natural deposits.
NITRATE (ppm) (SP)	N/A	10	10	0.57	0.55-0.57	N/A	No	Runoff from fertilizer use. Leaching from septic tanks, sewage. Erosion of natural deposits.
SELENIUM (ppb) (SP)	N/A	50	50	1	0-1	N/A	No	Discharge from petroleum and metal refineries. Erosion of natural deposits. Discharge from mines.
SODIUM (ppm) (NP)	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	4.10-17	N/A	No	N/A
SODIUM (ppm) (SP)	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	2.50-11.00	N/A	No	N/A
THALLIUM (ppb) (NP)	N/A	2	0.5	0.2	0.0-0.2	N/A	No	Leaching from ore processing sites. Discharge from electronics, glass, and drug factories.

### LEAD AND COPPER

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Action level	MCLG	90th percentile level found	# of results	N/A	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
COPPER (ppm) (NP)	AL=1.3	1.3	0.9640 Range: 0.0099-1.389	1 of 15 results were above the action level.	N/A	N/A	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching from wood preservatives.
COPPER (ppm) (SP)	AL=1.3	1.3	0.4475 Range: 0.0210-.5110	Zero of five results were above the action level.	N/A	N/A	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching from wood preservatives.
LEAD (ppb) (NP)	AL=15	0	8	1 of 15 results were above the action level.	N/A	N/A	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits.
LEAD (ppb) (SP)	AL=15	0	2.04 Range: .04-3.90	Zero of five results were above the action level.	N/A	N/A	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits.

### DISINFECTION BYPRODUCTS

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
HAA5 (ppb) (NP)	DBP-8060	60	60	0	0	N/A	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.
HAA5 (ppb) (SP)	B-5026	60	60	4	4	8/14/2023	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.
TTHM (ppb) (NP)	DBP-8060	80	0	5.1	11.7	N/A	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.
TTHM (ppb) (SP)	B-5026	80	0	4.5	4.5	8/14/2023	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.

### RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS

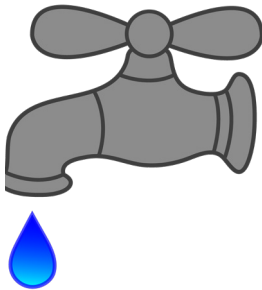
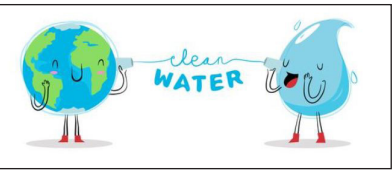
Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
GROSS ALPHA, EXCL. R & U (pCi/l) (SP)	N/A	15	0	3	1.3-3	1/27/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
GROSS ALPHA, EXCL. R & U (pCi/l) (NP)	N/A	15	0	2.1	0.0-2.1	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
RADIUM, (226 + 228) (pCi/l) (NP)	N/A	5	0	1.5	0.0-1.5	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
RADIUM, (226 + 228) (pCi/l) (SP)	N/A	5	0	2.1	0.4-2.1	5/19/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
GROSS ALPHA, INCL. R & U (n/a) (NP)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	0.6-2.0	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
GROSS ALPHA, INCL. R & U (n/a) (SP)	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	1.3-3	1/27/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
COMBINED URANIUM (ug/l) (NP)	N/A	30	0	0.9	0.2-0.9	N/A	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
COMBINED URANIUM (ug/l) (SP)	N/A	30	0	0.1	0-0.1	5/19/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.

### PFAS CONTAMINANTS WITH A RECOMMENDED HEALTH ADVISORY LEVEL

Contaminant (units) South Post (SP)	Site	RPHGS or HAL (ppt)	Level found	Range	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
PFHXS (ppt) (parts per trillion)	N/A	40	0.94	4.3	0-.94	11/15/2023		Drinking water is one way that people can be exposed to PFAS. In Wisconsin, two-thirds of people use groundwater as their drinking source. PFAS can get into groundwater from places that make or use PFAS and release from consumer products in landfills.

### UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2023)
CHLOROMETHANE (METHYLCHLORIDE) (ppb) (NP)	1.7	0.0-1.7	5/24/2023













HISTORY

Army Heritage Month: Many famous units have trained at Fort McCoy

June is observed as Army Heritage Month, and looking at Fort McCoy, it is more than a century old. During this time, Fort McCoy has hosted numerous famous and historically significant military units for training, especially during World War II and beyond. Here are some notable ones:

10th Mountain Division

- When: Trained at Fort McCoy during World War II (WW II).
- Significance: Renowned for its specialized mountain and winter warfare training, the 10th Mountain Division went on to fight in the Italian Campaign, where their skills in rugged terrain were critical.

100th Infantry Battalion

- When: Trained at Fort McCoy in 1942.
- Significance: A unit composed mostly of Japanese-American Soldiers from Hawaii, later integrated into the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. They became one of the most decorated units in U.S. military history.

442nd Regimental Combat Team

- When: Passed through training phases including Fort McCoy during WW II.
- Significance: Composed almost entirely of Japanese American soldiers, they earned fame for extraordinary bravery in Europe and are considered the most decorated unit for its size and length of service.

101st Airborne Division (Screaming Eagles)

- When: Various training exercises post-WW II and during the Cold War.
- Significance: Famous for airborne operations during WW II (Normandy, Bastogne), they have used Fort McCoy for training and mobilization exercises.

1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One)

- When: Various periods including post-WWII mobilizations.
- Significance: One of the oldest and most storied divisions, it has used Fort McCoy for training and preparation for deployments.

2nd Infantry Division

- The 2nd Infantry Division, known as the “Indianhead Division,” relocated from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to Camp McCoy in November 1942. There, the division underwent intensive winter warfare training to prepare for operations in the European Theater, according to the Second Indianhead Division Association.
- After nearly a year of preparation, the division deployed to Ireland in October 1943 for further training. On June 7, 1944 (D-Day +1), the 2nd Infantry Division landed at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France. They played a crucial role in the liberation of several French towns, including Trevieres, and were instrumental in the capture of the port city of Brest on Sept. 18, 1944, according to the 2ID Memorials Foundation and Second Indianhead Division Association.
- The division continued its advance across France and into Belgium, participating in key operations such as the Battle of the Bulge. Notably, the 38th Infantry Regiment, part of the division, demonstrated exceptional bravery during this period, reminiscent of their valor in World War I.

76th Infantry Division

- The 76th Infantry Division began its training at Camp McCoy in September 1943, focusing on winter warfare techniques. Training included the use of skis, snowshoes, toboggans, snow tractors, snow goggles, winter camouflage suits, and Eskimo parkas. An advanced training group also moved to northern Michigan near Watersmeet in



U.S. Army photo illustration

November 1943 for specialized winter training provided by experts from the Mountain Training Center at Camp Hale, Colo., Army history shows.

After nearly a year of rigorous preparation, the division departed Camp McCoy in November 1944, heading to Camp Myles Standish in Massachusetts before deploying to Europe. They arrived in England in December 1944 and landed in France in January 1945. The 76th Infantry Division participated in several key operations, including breaching the Siegfried Line and advancing through Germany until Victory in Europe Day in May 1945.

Fort McCoy’s role in preparing these divisions underscores its significance as a premier training facility during World War II. The rigorous training programs implemented there were instrumental in equipping Soldiers with the skills necessary for success in the European Theater.

National Guard and Reserve units mobilized post-9/11

- Numerous National Guard and Reserve units across the country, including specialized military police, engineering, and support units, have mobilized and trained at Fort McCoy for operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other missions worldwide.

617th Military Police Company

- In November 2004, as the Kentucky National Guard’s 617th Military Police Company mobilized at Fort McCoy.
- During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 617th Military Police Company distinguished itself as one of the most highly decorated combat National Guard military police units. Their missions included convoy

security, detainee operations, law enforcement, and force protection in some of the most dangerous and volatile areas in Iraq.

- Awards and decorations received by the 617th MP Company and its Soldiers:
  - Meritorious Unit Commendation: For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services.
  - Bronze Star Medals: Awarded to several individual Soldiers for heroic or meritorious achievement in combat operations.
  - Combat Action Badges: Earned by many members for direct engagement with enemy forces.

— Army Commendation Medals and Army Achievement Medals: For exceptional service and achievements during deployment.

— Purple Hearts: Awarded to Soldiers wounded in action.

The unit’s exemplary performance earned respect and recognition both from the Department of Defense and Kentucky’s National Guard leadership. Their dedication under challenging combat conditions reflected the professionalism and resilience of the citizen-soldiers who mobilize through Fort McCoy.

Fort McCoy’s strategic location, comprehensive training facilities, and large size have made it a preferred site for training diverse units, from frontline combat divisions to support and specialty forces.

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.”

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

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

from Page 15

use. The administrative facility, dining facility and one barracks will be set up to represent each facility’s use during the World War II era. Display items include bunk beds, foot lockers, and pot belly stoves.

The other two barracks will be used for informational displays highlighting the events of World War II.

To conserve energy, the buildings will not be heated, nor will they have a water supply.

There will be no established hours of operation for the commemorative area complex. Group tours of the interior displays can be arranged by contacting the Public Affairs Office.

20 Years Ago — June 2005

FROM THE JUNE 10, 2005, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *Sentinella becomes new commander* (By Rob Schuette) — Col. Derek J. Sentinella became Fort McCoy installation commander during a change-of-command ceremony June 3 at Parade Field No. 1.

Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, chief, Army Reserve, presided over the ceremony. J. Randall Robinson, director of the Northwest Region of the Installation Management Agency in Rock Island, Ill., under which McCoy is aligned, was a guest speaker and participated in the ceremony, as well.

Sentinella assumed command from Col. Danny G. Nobles. Nobles received the Legion of Merit award from Helmly and the Wisconsin National Meritorious Service Medal from Maj. Gen. Albert Wilkening, the Wisconsin State Adjutant. The awards covered Nobles’ command from June 2003 to the present.

Helmly told the crowd that the U.S. military, including its civilian employees and other support personnel, is the strongest in the world. He gave a special welcome to Nobles and Sentinella’s wives.

“It should not be lost on anyone in this audience that the strength of the United States of America lies in a lot of things, but one of them is our families and in our armed forces,” Helmly said.

“The strength behind each of us as members of the Army, the armed forces of the United States is in those who love, support and stand beside all of you.”

In each of the 230 years the Army has been in existence since 1775, the Army and the other services as they came into existence always have stood ready to defend the nation and carry out the will of the American people, he said.

Change is never easy, for example, a change-of-command ceremony can be unsettling and uncomfortable, he said. There’s always a tinge of sadness in saying goodbye to a revered and cherished leader such as Nobles who has led the installation with distinction for the past two years. Meanwhile, there is an eagerness anticipating the leadership of Sentinella.

“Change is a constant in life and indeed in the Army and armed forces,” he said. “Our Army, Army Reserve and National Guard and our armed forces are changing in deep and profound ways. And Fort McCoy will be a leader in front of those changes.”

10 Years Ago — June 2015

FROM THE JUNE 12, 2015, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER:



Setting up shop

Soldiers with the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, a Wisconsin National Guard unit, begin building a temporary headquarters shelter June 2 at Fort McCoy.

The 32nd Soldiers were setting up for training and testing for Expert Infantryman Badge certifications.

Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

U.S. Army Historical Photo

10 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 12, 20156, edition of The Triad newspaper at Fort McCoy.

*Guardian Justice MP exercise underway at McCoy* (By Scott T. Sturkol) — More than 1,400 Army Reserve military police (MP) are participating in the Guardian Justice exercise at Fort McCoy in June and July.

“This is one of the biggest 200th Military Police Command (MPC) internal exercises,” said Capt. Joshua Frye, operations officer for the exercise with the 290th MP Brigade in Nashville, Tenn.

“We are excited to be at Fort McCoy for the exercise. Last year we had a fantastic experience here, so being able to come back here and use (this installation) is great. Fort McCoy is a robust (training complex) with a lot of options, which is really something special.”

In 2014, MP units held a smaller exercise called Guardian Warrior at the installation. This year, the exercise has grown and will include a variety of training.

“We have three rotations of MPs coming through,” said Capt. Jonathan Bradley, scheduling manager for the exercise and also with the 290th MP Brigade. “The first rotation arrived June 5, and we’ll continue with the remaining rotations into July. Each rotation will conduct 15 days of training in two different tracks — combat-support and detainee operations.”

Among the Soldiers training in the exercise are MPs who will be deploying in the near future to support overseas detainee operations. Cpl. Jasper Dampier, exercise detainee-operations instructor with the 324th MP Battalion of Fresno, Calif., said the focus of detainee operations training will be about getting “back to doctrine” and preparing Soldiers for deployment.

“We are bringing the training and the skills back to what the Army regulations and field manuals show for detention operations,” Dampier said. “We are not teaching theater-specific operations ... we are looking more at the broad picture.”

The Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW) 2 training area on South Post will be central to the exercise’s detainee-operations training. During the past year, improvements to EPW 2 were made specifically for this exercise, said Range Officer Mike Todd of the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) Range Management Branch.

“We worked with planners from the 200th (MPC) to determine the requirements necessary to support this exercise,” Todd said. “The (new) structures in EPW 2 provide the training platform for the 200th MPC to achieve their training objectives.”

Frye said EPW 2 is arranged perfectly for the exercise.

“A lot of resources have flowed into EPW 2,” Frye said. “Like Cpl. Dampier said, we are going back to doctrine and EPW 2 represents that for us. EPW 2 was primarily built by U.S. Army engineer construction assets, and that is a realistic thing that would happen. An MP force would follow on (after construction) and occupy an area very much like that regardless of where we would operate in the world.”

For the combat-support track of the exercise, Soldiers will beef up their skills in Army Warrior Tasks, communications, and related MP duties. “One of the first training subjects we hit hard is their communications training,” Bradley said. “(Squads) will be issued radios (for tactical vehicles) which they will learn how to load and operate.”

Combat-support training also will include use of two live-fi re shoot houses on North Post, which are part of the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility complex.

“The shoot houses are great because we can leverage a lot of (Soldiers) through for training,” Frye said. “We also are using the urban environment training areas that are available, which also are valuable training venues.”

5 Years Ago — June 2020

FROM THE JUNE 12, 2020, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Construction of seven new military family homes continues at Fort McCoy* (By Scott T. Sturkol) — Construction of seven new homes in military family housing continues to make progress with the project being 78 percent complete, said Nathan Butts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy. Contractor Relyant Global LLC of Maryville, Tenn., began work on the \$6.6 million U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-led project in summer 2019. Since then, the contractor has continued to steadily make progress even though everyone associated with the project has had to adjust their operations because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of June 5, workers were completing drywall and tile installation, doors and trim work were being completed, and painting and exterior work continued.

“Work to prepare the road for asphalt placement was also getting done,” Butts said.

The construction includes building three

four-bedroom and four three-bedroom houses, Butts said.

In 2017, Fort McCoy accepted the completion of 56 new homes, which brought the total in the housing area to 113. This project will increase the housing area’s total to 120 homes when completed.

An Army Housing Market Analysis completed in 2017 determined Fort McCoy has a housing requirement of 134 units based on personnel needs for housing.

A housing deficit was created when Fort McCoy discontinued a lease for 80 homes in Tomah, Wis., in 2011.

According to Housing Manager Zachery Hynes with the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Housing Division, 22 of the current 113 homes are officer homes (nine three-bedroom and 13 four-bedroom), and 91 are enlisted homes (55 three-bedroom and 36 four-bedroom).

“All of these new units will be officer housing,” Hynes said. “We’re glad the work is being completed to get us to the 120 homes we are authorized. It will help minimize our lengthy waiting list.”

The DPW Housing Division will be in charge of the new units once complete.

The division consist of three branches, including the Army Family Housing Office (on-post housing), Housing Services Office (off-post housing), and Unaccompanied Personnel Housing (single Soldier barracks for E-1 to E-5 ranks).

Hynes said they are always available for their customers.

“Being here in the South Post Housing area, close to our customers, and serving as a hub for them is extremely important for our ability to provide great service,” Hynes said.

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

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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ort McCoy is also part of Army’s Installation Management Command where “We Are The Army’s Home.”