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Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

2025 Canadian Pacific Holiday Train rolls through Fort McCoy

(All photos) The 2025 Canadian Pacific Holiday Train rolls through Fort McCoy, Wis., on Dec. 11 on its way from Tomah to Sparta, Wis. The 2025 CPKC Holiday Train tours Canada and the U.S. Nov. 19 through Dec. 21, raising money, food and awareness to support food banks across. Professional musicians play free concerts from the brightly decorated train's stage. CPKC donates to the local food bank at each stop and encourages all attendees to make a monetary or heart-healthy food donation. Since its inaugural journey in 1999, the CPKC Holiday Train has raised more than \$26 million and collected approximately 5.4 million pounds of food for community food banks in Canada and the U.S.

Fort McCoy kicks off holiday season with 2025 Tree Lighting Ceremony

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

More than 300 Fort McCoy community members participated in the 2025 Fort McCoy Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 4 at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.

Hundreds gathered to celebrate the annual event, which signals the start of the holiday season for the installation.

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

This year's celebration featured not only the iconic tree lighting but also an array of festive activities, including holiday crafts for children, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and a short play featuring garrison staff.

The ceremony also included remarks from the Garrison Command Team. Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez said welcome to all the hundreds of people in attendance. Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, also spoke to the attendees.

Director Scott Abell of the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) said he was happy to see so many people at the event.

"It was wonderful to see the community together enjoying the holiday season," Abell said.

After the tree was lit by the family members of the deployed Soldier, the festivities continued well into the evening with photos from Santa and interactive booths where children and families could create holiday-themed crafts and gifts.

(See **TREE LIGHTING**, Page 2)



(All photos) Scenes from the 2025 Fort McCoy Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony are shown Dec. 4 at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy. Hundreds of community members participated in the event.



(Above and below) U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy leaders serve guests Dec. 4, in Dining Facility 1362 during a special holiday meal for installation personnel at Fort McCoy. More than 150 people took part in the event that coincides with the start of the holiday season at Fort McCoy.



Fort McCoy Garrison leaders support special dining facility holiday meal for installation team

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Approximately 156 people took part in a special holiday meal served by leaders of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy in Dining Facility 1362 on Dec. 4 at Fort McCoy.

The meal, organized by the Fort McCoy food service team aligned with the Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center, included a wide variety of menu items to feed the military and civilian guests of the meal.

The menu included roast turkey, pit ham, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, savory dressing, corn on the cob, green beans, deviled eggs, cranberry sauce, turkey gravy, dinner rolls, coleslaw, salad bar, apple pie, pumpkin pie, variety of ice cream treats, chips, raisins, dried fruit, snack mixes, and a special decorated cake with a holiday theme.

The Fort McCoy food service team includes the Food Program Management Office and the LRC Subsistence Supply Management Office (SSMO); Southern Premier Foodservice Management; and food suppliers.

Jim Gouker with the Fort McCoy Food Program Management Office said he was happy with the attendance at the event.

"The turnout was awesome," Gouker

said. "Very glad to have so many personnel that could enjoy a special meal. The Southern Premier Foodservice Management and staff knocked it out of the park. Due to the government shutdown, we originally planned on not having a holiday meal this year. When we had a few units get on the schedule, we re-implemented the holiday meal plan.

"They had very little time to get everything together for the meal," he said. "However, that was completely invisible to the customers. Everything went seamlessly and the foods they served was wonderful. Southern Premier Foodservices is made up of top-notch leadership and personnel."

Serving the food was Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez; Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Chad Holder; and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major.

The work continues the strong effort by the food service team, Gouker said.

During fiscal year 2024, with support from other members of the team, the SSMO put up some impressive support numbers, Gouker said.

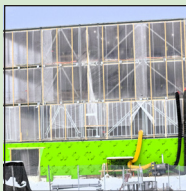
For food service in FY 2024, excluding three major exercises, the SSMO supported training with Class I in the following quantities: Meals, Ready-to-eat (MREs), Ready-to-heat (RTH), and Ready-to-serve (RTS). (See **MEAL**, Page 3)

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TREE LIGHTING from Page 1

DFMWR Commercial Sponsorship, Advertising Manager and Special Events Coordinator Ashley Sivert described in an after-action report what they did to coordinate and hold the event.

The ... ceremony ... successfully brought together approximately 320 patrons to celebrate the holiday season, supported by 19 sponsors,” Sivert wrote. “The event kicked off with a lively themed skit based on ‘Elf,’ leading to the official lighting of the Christmas tree, which illuminated the festivities. Attendees enjoyed 16 sponsored booths offering a variety of Christmas crafts, along with activities such as photos with Santa, Santa’s Workshop, Outdoor Recreation season pass sales for the ski hill, an Elfie Selfie station, a hot cocoa bar, and several food and drink specials. The event fostered community spirit and joy, and planning for next year’s ceremony will begin in early 2026, with an emphasis on enhancing activities and community involvement.”

“The staff went above and beyond to deliver a great family event,” Abell added.

Learn more about Fort McCoy DFMWR activities by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com> or their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/mccoymwr>.

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(All photos) Scenes from the 2025 Fort McCoy Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony are shown Dec. 4 at McCoy’s Community Center at Fort McCoy. Hundreds of community members participated in the event.



NEWS

MEAL

from Page 1

Eat (MREs), 8,684 meals; Kosher meals, 38; Halal meals, 118; Sun Meadow meals, 6,580; Unitized Group Rations (UGRs), 1,450 cases; UHT milk, 2,506 cases; bagged ice, 1,238 bags; and additional enhancements such as cereal, fresh fruit, salad mix, and salad dressings.

For food service for the 86th Training Division's Combat Support Training Exercise 86-24-02 as well as the 2024 Global Medic exercise, the SSMO supported with Class I in the following quantities: MREs, 100,992 meals; UGRs, 99,316 servings; UHT milk, 51,840 containers; bagged ice, 110,140 pounds; and additional enhancements.

For the 87th Training Division's Warrior Exercise 87-24-02, the SSMO supported the exercise with Class I in the following quantities: MREs, 17,964 meals; UGRs, 62,844 meals; UHT milk, 19,602 containers; bagged ice, 42,000 pounds; and additional enhancements.

For the Mobilization Support Force — Exercise '24, the SSMO supported training with Class I in the following quantities: MREs, 1,104 meals; Kosher meals, 6; Halal meals, 8; UGRs, 942 cases; bagged ice, 90 bags; and additional enhancements.

"And in the garrison dining facilities in buildings 1362 and 50, during FY 2024, we served 201,179

meals," Gouker said.

The meal was served the same day as the Fort McCoy Tree Lighting Ceremony, which is another holiday event coordinated by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

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(All photos) Scenes are shown Dec. 4 in Dining Facility 1362 during a special holiday meal for installation personnel at Fort McCoy.



NEWS

Fort McCoy senior commander holds Lunch & Learn event

Maj. Gen. Joseph A. Ricciardi, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division and Fort McCoy's senior commander, gave a presentation Dec. 2 for a Lunch & Learn event for the Fort McCoy military force and civilian workforce.

The event was the first Lunch & Learn coordinated by the U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company since earlier in 2025.

The major general spoke significantly on topics such as training, and Fort McCoy being a "training center of excellence."

He also reviewed commander priorities, such as those from Lt. Gen. Robert D. Harter, 35th Chief of Army Reserve and 10th Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command.

The 88th RD leader talked of how Lt. Gen. Harter is challenging members of the Army Reserve and elsewhere to come up with ideas, and more, to make the Army better.

According to his biography, Ricciardi was commissioned through the U.S. Military Academy. He obtained master's degrees in strategic studies from the Army War College and Purdue University. He additionally obtained a doctorate from Benedictine University.

His additional command assignments include the 303rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, Fort Shafter, Hawaii; 3rd Battalion, 304th Infantry Regiment, Saco, Maine; 605th Engineer Detachment, Darien, Ill.; 863rd Engineer Battalion, Darien, Ill.; and A/863rd Engineer Battalion, Kankakee, Ill.

Ricciardi has served in a variety of military assignments spanning his career of more than 30 years, his biography also states. Some of his additional assignments include Deputy Commanding General, 81st Readiness Division, Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Deputy Chief of Staff, G3, 416th Theater Engineer Command, Darien, Ill.; Deputy Chief of Staff, G7, 9th Mission Support Command, Fort Shafter, Hawaii; Deputy Brigade Commander, 3rd Brigade, 104th Division, Fort Belvoir, Va.; and Assistant Professor of Military Science, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.

Ricciardi's operational deployments include serving as the Operations and Logistics Officer for Combined Joint Task Force 180 from November 2002 to June 2003 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan; Operations and Intelligence Officer for the 172nd Corps Support Group in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq; and Commander of the 863rd Engineer Battalion, Task Force Line Backer, from October 2010 to August 2011 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom,



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Maj. Gen. Joseph A. Ricciardi, commanding general, 88th Readiness Division, and Fort McCoy senior commander, gives a presentation Dec. 2, 2025, at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy, Wis. The major general's presentation was part of a "Lunch and Learn" event coordinated by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy. Ricciardi not only discussed leadership, management, and more, but also answered questions by many of the more than 60 attendees.

Afghanistan.

Ricciardi's military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and Army Staff Identification Badge.

According to the Army Reserve, the 88th Readiness Division is headquartered at Fort Snelling, Minn., and Fort McCoy and is a two-star command which provides services and Base Operations Support (BASOPS) to more than 46,500 Army Reserve Soldiers, 2,594 Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) Soldiers and 2,524 civilians serving in 525 units at 277 sites with 579 facilities totaling 10,341,955 square feet of facility space on 18,113 acres of land throughout 19 states in the northwestern U.S. from the Ohio River Valley to the Pacific Coast.

The 88th manages 14 local training areas across

11 states covering 7,795 acres. Local training areas provide Soldiers opportunities to perform in their jobs, train close to home, and make the most out of battle assemblies by offering units the use of facilities, grounds, and training venues to include convoy operations, organizational maintenance, engineer equipment dig sites, as well as field training exercises.

The most recent addition to 88th's services and support is the 88th Fort McCoy Draw Yard. The Draw Yard is a set of common military equipment (mostly vehicles and generators), available at Fort McCoy for exercise and transient training unit use. The goal is to reduce transportation costs and Reception, Staging, Onward movement, and Integration (RSOI) time for exercise and transient training units during their rotation.

Accomplishing the 88th's mission is a full-time support force of 42 AGR Soldiers, 1,227 military technicians, 105 Department of the Army civil-

ians plus 42 Troop Program Unit Soldiers as well as contractors assigned throughout the northwest region.

Additionally, the 88th coordinates Army Music support to the 19-state-region with the command and control of four U.S. Army Bands in seven locations.

The history and lineage of the 88th Division began a century ago in August of 1917.

The 88th Division was created following the passage of the Selective Service Act of 1917 and the registration of approximately 10 million men. National Army draftees from North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois, became the 88th Division at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Learn more about the 88th by visiting <https://www.usar.army.mil/88thRD>.

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office and the 88th Readiness Division Public Affairs Office.)

Fort McCoy personnel support December 2025 meeting at local chamber of commerce

STORY BY SCOTT T. STURKOL & MELISSA DUBOIS

Public Affairs Staff

Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, senior enlisted leader for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy and another installation member participated in the Dec. 10 meeting of the Sparta (Wis.) Area Chamber of Commerce as post representatives.

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

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

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

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

Fort McCoy's total economic impact for fiscal year (FY) 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, including Sparta. The total FY 2024 workforce payroll for civilian and military personnel was \$270.4 million.

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

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Photo by Melissa Dubois

Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, senior enlisted leader for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, talks with members of the Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce during their December meeting on Dec. 10, 2025, in Sparta, Wis.

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

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HOME WINTER FIRE SAFETY

HOME FIRES HAPPEN MORE DURING THE WINTER THAN IN ANY OTHER SEASON.

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heat sources.
- Never leave heat sources unattended.
- Never plug heaters into an extension cord.
- Plug only one heat-producing appliance into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Don't overload power strips -- use power strips that have internal overload protection.
- Keep portable generators outside, away from windows and as far away as possible from your house.
- Have a qualified professional clean and inspect your chimney, vents and heat sources annually.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Ensure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working order with fresh batteries.

WINTER SAFETY:

BE AWARE, PREPARE, TAKE CARE!

<https://safety.army.mil>

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NEWS

Fort McCoy supports December 2025 meeting with 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 Dec. 8 during the December 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 December meeting, NRB Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood 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 Rood mentioned from November 2025 were:

— In fisheries at Fort McCoy, personnel collected water samples from one runoff event in November. Conducted base flow water sampling for baseline monitoring.

— Fisheries personnel also continued instream temperature monitoring at 11 locations to assess winter temperature and the relationship with trout overwinter habitat. The conducted four creel surveys. Zero anglers were interviewed this month, which is not uncommon for November.

— Updated fishing regulations and signs on lake information kiosks.

— Team members removed six beaver dams that were blocking trout spawning migration or that were blocking culverts.

— Fisheries personnel conducted 36 redds (trout spawning beds) surveys. Overall, most sites contained average or above average amounts of spawning trout. This should lead to good trout recruitment in 2026.

— They performed maintenance on lake aerators and made sure they were ready for winter.

— Personnel measured water levels on three occasions at Sandy, West Sandy, and Big Sandy Lakes. Water levels were at the lowest points so far in 2025, although they were similar to the month of November in past years.

— Forestry personnel administered contract oversight on four timber sales on the installation.

— Forestry personnel also participated in a wildland fire working group's spring planning meeting with the U.S. Forest Service.

— In invasive species management, with treatments, personnel treated 102.5 acres and surveyed 266.4 acres.

— In wildlife management, personnel had wrapped up deer dusk/spotlight surveys that took place from September to early November. These surveys are used in conjunction with truckbook surveys that run from July through August. The survey data helps determine buck-doe and doe-fawn ratios which are plugged into the SEX-AGE-KILL model to estimate the size of the deer herd.

Estimated deer herd size prior to hunting seasons was at 24-25 deer per square mile, or roughly 1,800 deer on the installation. To meet the



Members of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee meets in Sparta, Wis., on Dec. 8. The mission of the Monroe County Natural Resource Committee is to manage, conserve, and protect our natural resources. 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. Fort McCoy personnel regularly support the committee.

goal of 15-20 deer per square mile or 1,100-1,500 deer on the installation, the harvest goal over the fall/winter would be roughly 300-700 deer over all seasons (excluding cantonment archery).

— Gun-deer season statistics: 313 total deer harvested. There were 167 Chronic Wasting Disease samples (54 percent of harvest) taken. Permit quota for 2025 was 1,800. Permits issued were 1,798. Permits purchased were 1,364. Bonus antlerless tag quota was 450 tags. Bonus antlerless tags issued were 450 tags. Bonus antlerless tags purchased were 244.

— Fort McCoy Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Rules and Regulations (Fort McCoy Regulation 420-29) were signed and approved on Nov. 17. The regulations have been distributed and made available to the public.

— Wildlife management personnel attended the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Wild Turkey Advisory Committee meeting to set spring turkey tag levels for the seven wild turkey zones in Wisconsin. The committee is continuing to update the WDNR 2025-2035 Wild Turkey Management Plan.

— The WDNR approached Fort McCoy about the possibility of Fort McCoy allowing elk hunting on the installation. Talks will be ongoing but no definite decision has been made. If McCoy would allow elk hunting, it would not be for another couple years as approvals are received and details hammered out.

— Some wetland habitat work took place in Training Area D-4 in removing encroaching woody plants from the wet sedge meadow/marsh. Woody plants included buckthorn, maple, white pine, etc.

— In endangered species management, they continued work on bat data; two bat deployments reported and uploaded to a national database.

— Personnel also found hibernation locations for snakes and turtles; assisted in finding an injured black bear; submitted Monarch tagging data; and completed other general data management.

The Fort McCoy personnel who support the Monroe County committee help the entire county have its best possible support for effectively managing natural resources and supporting education for natural resources, cultural history, and more, officials said.

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

Trees for Troops deliver dozens of Christmas trees for Fort McCoy families

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy military members and their families were treated to 106 free Christmas trees Dec. 5 courtesy of the Trees for Troops effort as a FedEx truck delivered the trees to McCoy's Community Center at the installation.

Staff with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) began passing out the trees on Dec. 6 during events taking place at McCoy's Community Center.

According to www.christmasspiritfoundation.org, the Trees for Troops program has provided a total of 326,273 free Christmas trees to military members and families over the past 20 consecutive years.

"Fresh cut Christmas trees are collected at farms and retail lots before being picked up by the program's partner, FedEx Freight," the website states. "As the Trees for Troops program continues to grow since it first started in 2005, the (Christmas Spirit Foundation) Board of Trustees recognized that success of the program depends on both civilian and military volunteers and leaders being involved. These individuals support the program in various ways throughout the year, including sourcing trees to donate, coordinating volunteer efforts to load/unload trees, raising funds to support the program and/or just creating crucial awareness."

Also according to www.christmasspiritfoundation.org, thousands of trees were picked up from dozens of locations in 2025 and given to more than 90 total bases, including Fort McCoy.

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

Also on the website, it states: "Trees for Troops, a program of the Christmas Spirit Foundation, provides free, farm-grown Christmas Trees to United States armed forces members in all branches of the military and their families through donations, sponsorships, grants, and the work of many volunteers. ... Christmas tree growers have been providing free trees for military families for years.

"In 2005, FedEx contacted the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, the 501(c)(3) charitable branch of the National Christmas Tree Association and wanted to be involved in the foundation's mission. Together the two organizations expanded the idea of providing Christmas trees to military families, and Trees for Troops was born, the website states.

"Since 2005, FedEx Freight has supported the Trees for Troops program, an initiative that delivers farm-grown Christmas trees to domestic and international U.S. military bases," an organization news release states. "This long-standing collaboration has become a cherished tradition for FedEx Freight, with drivers logging over 600,000 miles for tree deliveries over the years."

Fort McCoy has been a recipient of Trees for Troops Christmas trees for many years, excluding 2024, and they have previously been delivered to the South Post Housing area.

The feedback is always appreciative from the troops who receive them, DFMWR officials said.

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Photos by Ashley Sivert

(Above and below) Military members gather a Christmas tree during the 2025 Trees for Troops event Dec. 6 at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.



NEWS

Fort McCoy's \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project nearly 35 percent finished as December 2025 began

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

The \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy is nearly 35 percent complete, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The project includes two buildings being constructed in a sizeable construction space of the installation's 1600 block of the cantonment area. On the west building, the contractor has been busy finishing framing and more, and on the east building more and more of the walls is being finished.

The contractor for the project, BlindermanPower (Construction), which has also completed 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.

For numerous months, actual full construction of the new buildings had to wait for another contractor to move five World War II-era barracks buildings. 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."

Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy said the project is now 33 percent complete and rising daily. In his Nov. 21 update, Green gave the latest actions.

"In the west building, exterior wall framing continued. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in continued. Exterior sheathing continued," Green wrote. "Fluid applied air barrier continued. Interior spray foam continued. Roofing continued. Interior rough-in framing continued. Masonry continued at southside section A."

"At the east building ... structural steel erection continued for section A," he wrote. "Winterization continues. Exterior stud framing continued in section A. Third deck section A concrete placed. Structural steel started in section B."

The project description, also 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 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 an 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. All this work also continues with the master plan for the 1600 block that will include not only the four barracks but also three



Contractors complete work Dec. 4 (above) and Nov. 21 (below) for the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy.



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.

Contract completion date is currently is Dec. 31, 2027.

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

Fort McCoy East Barracks Project nearly 90 percent done at beginning of December

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Contractors working on Fort McCoy's East Barracks Project were greeted on their jobsite Dec. 1 with a healthy amount of snow on the ground after the area received just under a foot of snow during the Thanksgiving weekend, yet they continue to make strides in completing the project.

In his Nov. 14 update, Butts said the contractor, L.S. Black Constructors, was steadily making progress on the project. And as of Nov. 14, the project was at 88 percent complete, and work was scheduled to be 75 percent finished at this time.

Butts wrote in the update, "Masons were finishing up working on the east side of the building. Bathroom tile on the third and fourth floors continued. Floor tile setting continued. Ceiling grid continues to be installed throughout the building."

"Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in continues," he wrote. "Drywall finishing and painting continues throughout the building. Concrete mow strips and sidewalk continued to be placed. Site work included topsoil placement."

Since its initial construction phase 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 to the 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 Nov. 14 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 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 cantonment area to construct the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project by contractor BlindermanPower (Construction).

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

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.

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>.



Contractors work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, on Dec. 11 (above) and Dec. 3 (below) at Fort McCoy.



NEWS

U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters building renovation under way; work began Oct. 1

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

All of the garrison staff moved out of building 100 at Fort McCoy in late September to make way for a full renovation of the building that has been the U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters for decades.

Engineering Division Chief Dan Coburn with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works said renovation construction began on Oct. 1 and continues now.

The contract to complete the renovation was awarded to R.J. Jurovski Construction, headquartered in Whitehall, Wis., for \$5.4 million.

“It is a complete gut and repair of the entire facility,” Coburn said. “Construction ... is expected to take one year.”

The headquarters building was one of hundreds built at then Camp McCoy for what was known as the “New Camp.”

In 1942, as the United States braced itself for the full mobilization of World War II, the quiet rolling landscape of central Wisconsin transformed almost overnight. What had long been a patchwork of farms, forests, and the smaller training areas of Camp McCoy became the site of one of the most rapid and consequential construction efforts in the region’s history — the creation of the New Camp, a massive expansion that would reshape both the installation and the communities around it.

Construction began in the tense months following the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the War Department recognized the urgent need for expanded training capacity across the country. McCoy’s location — strategic yet secluded, with terrain well suited for infantry maneuvering — made it an ideal site. The decision was made not merely to enlarge the existing cantonment, but to build an entirely new one: a self-contained military city.

Thousands of civilian laborers, engineers, carpenters, electricians, and contractors poured into the area. Many were locals answering the call; others were skilled workers traveling from across the Midwest to shoulder their part in the national war effort. They worked at a pace that would be unthinkable in peacetime.

Winter winds cut across the job sites. Mud swallowed machinery in the spring thaw. Lumber, steel, fuel, and equipment were all carefully rationed — but the work continued without pause.

What rose from the ground was staggering in scale: hundreds of barracks, mess halls, administrative buildings, warehouses, motor pools, and training facilities. Roadways extended like a grid across the once-rural land. Utility lines, wells, heating plants, and hospitals were built with remarkable speed yet enduring craftsmanship. The New Camp could house and train tens of thousands of Soldiers — men who would soon find themselves deployed to North Africa, Europe, the Pacific, and every theater of the widening global conflict.

For many who lived through it, the construction period left lasting memories. Local residents recalled the hum of machinery late into the night, the flood of new faces in nearby towns, and the sense — both heavy and proud — that they were witnessing history in motion.

Workers remembered long days, frozen hands, and the camaraderie forged under pressure. Soldiers arriving in the newly built barracks found a camp that felt both brand-new and urgently alive, humming with the energy of a nation preparing for war.

By late 1942, the New Camp at Fort McCoy stood completed — a testament to American industrial resolve, to the determination of ordinary workers, and to the profound moment in history it served. It became one of the most important training hubs in the Midwest during World War II, shaping the experiences of countless service members who would carry its memory with them across oceans and battlefields.

Today, the New Camp’s construction remains a defining chapter in Fort McCoy’s long story. It stands as a reminder that behind the movements of armies and the turning of global events are the hands of the builders — the men and women who, in 1942, raised a city of wood and steel in the Wisconsin hills to meet the demands of a world at war.

And with this renovation, the remembrance of that history will continue on for decades to come.

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(Above and below) Contractors work on a renovation of the U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters on various dates in October, November, and December at Fort McCoy, Wis. Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works said renovation construction began on Oct. 1 and continues. The contract to complete the renovation was awarded to R.J. Jurovski Construction, headquartered in Whitehall, Wis., for \$5.4 million.



NEWS

World War II-era photos of McCoy donated to Fort McCoy History Center

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Judy and Scott Gill of Prairie du Chien, Wis., made a special visit to Fort McCoy on Dec. 2 to deliver 26 vintage photos of Army activities around then-Camp McCoy during World War II and before.

Judy first contacted the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office by email on Nov. 17 asking if she could donate some photos.

"Is there a historical museum at Ft McCoy?" Judy wrote in the email. "I have a number of photos from the 1940s that were taken at Fort McCoy that I'd like to donate. Please let me know if you are interested."

And the interest was definitely there. Public Affairs Specialist Melissa Dubois responded to the Gill email and set up a date and time to have the Gills visit the Fort McCoy History Center to drop off the 26 unique black-and-white photos.

Judy explained how she received the photos.

"I was talking to a woman who said she had a bunch of pictures from Camp McCoy from the 1940s, and she didn't know what to do with them," Judy said.

Judy made the connection to get them to Fort McCoy. "I enjoy finding places for these things to go," she said.

The photos, she said, she believes originated from a collection in McGregor, Iowa.

A few photos predate World War II. For example, there's three photos that show the old Camp McCoy headquarters, guard house, and officer's mess of the "Old Camp" of the installation that was located on South Post of present-day Fort McCoy. The photos are from 1940.

Main operations of Camp McCoy switched to the "New Camp" in 1942 after completion of the cantonment area. Not long after the New Camp was established, the many buildings that were located on the Old Camp began to be taken down.

A set of four photos displays camp life at Fort McCoy around the camp motor pool in 1944 with an undetermined month but 1944 was written on the back of each of the photos.

Another set of seven photos shows what appears to be different scenes from a series of training demonstrations around Camp McCoy training areas in June 1944.

Three photos show Soldiers with the 304th Infantry completing a bayonet drill. Another photo shows Soldiers completing the "infiltration course."

Yet another photo shows people visiting displays of captured equipment from the Japanese army.

Another photo shows Jeeps that were used for the press corps for an event, and another shows "business men leaving weapons demonstration," which appears to be in the same vicinity of what is today's impact area on North Post.

Also in the collection there are five photos taken in La Crosse, Wis., in 1943. It features a parade for War Salvage Day, although no particular date is highlighted for 1943. The pictures do show Soldiers with the 2nd Infantry Division as well as members of the Women's Army Corps.

According to post history, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) had a presence at Camp McCoy, where members served in support roles such as librarians, statisticians, clerks, and typists during World War II. WACs also served in the Korean War era, with a detachment from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, arriving at Camp McCoy in the early 1950s after completing medical school. Camp McCoy was one of many locations where WACs were active and filling non-combat jobs to allow male Soldiers to focus on combat roles.

Local history also describes how La Crosse participated in national "Salvage for Victory" campaigns during

1943, with specific large-scale collection drives. The efforts orchestrated by the War Production Board to collect critical scrap materials like metal and wastepaper to support the war effort.

Additionally, in November 1943, a significant wastepaper drive took place. Ten trucks and drivers from Camp McCoy assisted 15 Boy Scout troops in collecting paper throughout the city. The La Crosse Ordnance Repair shop also provided trucks for the effort.

Records show the parade was likely a "Salvage for Victory" parade in La Crosse, showcasing the community's collective spirit and effort.

And one additional photo in the collection, dated May 1, 1944, shows three Soldiers deployed to New Guinea. It's a photo sent "To Elsie" and signed "From Daddy With Love." According to the U.S. Army Center for Military History, available at <https://history.army.mil>, the New Guinea Campaign of World War II took place from January 1943 to December 1944.

"The campaign on New Guinea is all but forgotten except by those who served there," states the publication "NEW GUINEA, 24 JANUARY 1943-31 DECEMBER 1944" by Edward J. Drea. "Battles with names like Tarawa, Saipan, and Iwo Jima overshadow it. Yet Allied operations in New Guinea were essential to the U.S. Navy's drive across the Central Pacific and to the U.S. Army's liberation of the Philippine Islands from Japanese occupation."

The remorse-less Allied advance along the northern New Guinea coastline toward the Philippines forced the Japanese to divert precious ships, planes, and men who might otherwise have reinforced their crumbling Central Pacific front."

And lastly four photos show several Japanese-American Soldiers posing in front of the old courthouse in La Crosse, Wis., in 1944. One of the four photos indicates the Soldiers were with the 34th Infantry Division.

History shows those Soldiers were part of the storied Nisei Soldiers who trained at Camp McCoy in 1943 and later became among the most decorated Soldiers of World War II.

The 133rd Infantry Regiment of the 34th Division had Nisei Soldiers from the 100th Infantry Battalion attached to it. These Soldiers volunteered for service in the U.S. Army to prove their loyalty.

Eventually all of the photos will be set up for a display at the Fort McCoy History Center, located in the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area. They'll also be shared online and with local history organizations to document World War II history in Wisconsin.

Read more about Army history by visiting <https://history.army.mil>.

Read more about Fort McCoy history by visiting <https://home.army.mil/mccoy/about/history>, or read the installation's monthly "This Month in Fort McCoy History" articles. Past articles are available at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FMPAO>.

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U.S. Army Historical Photos

(All photos) This is a collection of photos from Camp McCoy and surrounding areas donated to the Fort McCoy History Center on Dec. 2.



NEWS

Fort McCoy supports late-September Air Force AMLO training at Young Air Assault Strip



Photos by Kevin Clark

(Above and bottom photos) A C-130 Hercules completes operations in support of the Air Force’s Air Mobility Liaison Officer Qualification Course on Sept. 26 at Young Air Assault Strip at Fort McCoy. Lt. Col. Andrew Baker, course director with the 435th Training Squadron at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., said the class previously conducted this training in Colorado, but for the first time brought the AMLO students to Fort McCoy earlier in 2025 because of the capabilities found on the post. During their training, they focused on drop zone control and landing zone safety officer training. C-130s with the Air Force Reserve’s 934thAirlift Wing and the 41st Airlift Squadron supported the training. (Below, remaining photos) Personnel complete training in the course Sept. 26.



NEWS

Consider a 2025-26 winter stop to Fort McCoy’s Pine View Recreation Area

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy’s Pine View Campground may have mostly closed Dec. 1, 2025, but there’s still plenty to do in the overall Pine View Recreation Area through the rest of winter 2025-26, said Supervisory Recreation Specialist (Facility Manager) Alex Karis with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR).

Now an active outdoor recreation area for 50-plus years, Pine View Recreation Area includes hundreds of acres of publicly accessible land with miles of hiking trails, the La Crosse River that’s home to several species of trout, Trout Falls on the La Crosse River, Suukjak Sep Lake and Suukjak Sep Creek, Pine View Campground, Whitetail Ridge Ski Area, and more.

“Pine View Recreation Area offers four-season, year-round activities to include hiking, fishing, skiing, snowtubing, and more,” Karis said. “In winter, the ski area becomes its own fantastic recreation activity, but we also want people to know that around the entire Pine View Recreation Area there’s opportunities to enjoy some fantastic outdoor recreation opportunities.

One activity includes participating in Wisconsin’s early inland trout waters catch-and-release fishing season, which prospective anglers can partake in along the La Crosse River in the Pine View Recreation Area near the campground. Anglers must have the required Fort McCoy fishing license and related Wisconsin fishing license and trout stamp to be able to fish on the installation.

The early inland trout waters catch-and-release fishing season takes place from 5 a.m. on the first Saturday in January to the Friday preceding the first Saturday in May at midnight.

In 2026, that means the season starts on Jan. 3. Learn more about fishing rules and requirements for Fort McCoy by visiting the Fort McCoy iSportsman page at <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>. All of Fort McCoy’s hunting and fishing regulations were updated in November 2025.

“Suukjak Sep Lake also offers a place for anglers to try their hand at ice fishing,” Karis said. “As long as there is enough ice, the lake is easily accessible from our cabins at the campground which are available to rent all winter long.”

Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch said only artificial lures may be used during the early catch-and-release trout season, and all fish caught must be released immediately.

Access to Fort McCoy’s trout streams, such as the La Crosse River in Pine View Recreation Area, and tributaries is fairly easy. There are many trout fishing opportunities available within close proximity of several major roadways at Fort McCoy, Rood said.

“The 2024 stream surveys found trout abundance (measured in the number per mile) was at the fourth highest and trout biomass (measured in pounds per acre) was at an all-time high,” Rood said. “This follows the trend from the previous five years with trout abundance and biomass well above average. These extraordinary numbers and size of trout will provide anglers with a great opportunity to pursue some quality fish.”

Suukjak Sep Lake was formerly known as Squaw Lake. The new name, Suukjak Sep, translates to “black wolf” in the Ho-Chunk language and was



A wintry scene of Trout Falls on the La Crosse River in the Pine View Recreation Area is shown Dec. 16, 2022, at Fort McCoy.

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

Every spring the lake is stocked with hundreds of rainbow trout, and it has a natural population of other species of fish to include bluegill and bass. Fort McCoy fishing rules also apply for Suukjak Sep Lake and all permits and licenses are required. Refer again to the Fort McCoy iSportsman website, <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>, for more information.

Another great outdoor recreation opportunity for the public to see and visit are the Pine View Recreation Area hiking trails, Karis said.

“If you want to see something incredibly beautiful in the winter, then come see Trout Falls in the winter,” Karis said in previous news article. “When we have some snow cover, you can rent some snowshoes or cross-country skis from Whitetail Ridge and ski your way to the falls along our many hiking trails. Or if there’s little or no snow, go see the falls anyway. They are a sight to see.”

The hiking trails also follow along the La Crosse River above and below the falls along both sides of the river and there are bridges that cross over the river.

“If you’ve stayed at our campground before, then you know how nice our hiking trails are, and

they are just as nice to hike on in the winter,” Karis said. “And on weekends, when you’re done being outside, you can head on over to the Whitetail Ridge Ski Area chalet and warm up and maybe get yourself a meal.”

Karis said guests can also rent cross-country skis and snowshoes from Recreational Equipment Checkout, and more.

“Overall, we have three miles worth of cross-country trails for those who just kind of want to get out,” Karis said. “Those are open seven days a week and its all-natural snow when they are covered. So, if you’re looking to go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, we advise you to call so you can get conditions on the trails.

“But even if there isn’t snow, and people just want come out and get some fresh air and go for a walk, and of course the hiking trails,” Karis said. “There’s a great chance to see some beautiful, wooded areas, the wildlife within, and so much more.”

So as winter happens, the fun doesn’t stop, Karis said.

Cabins are also available to rent throughout the winter at Pine View Campground.

“Cabins are still open and available during the winter months, and they are some nice cabins,” Karis said. (See related article at <https://www.dvid-shub.net/news/553427/fort-mccoys-pine-view-campground-closed-2025-dec-1-cabins-remain->

available.)

Cabins at Pine View Campground range from one bedroom with loft (park model type) to two-bedroom units. Learn more about cost and availability by contacting the campground office.

See more about the Pine View Recreation Area by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/categories/outdoor-recreation> or by calling the Pine View Campground office at 502-898-3517.

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Fort McCoy’s Pine View Campground closed for 2025 on Dec. 1; cabins remain available

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

The majority of Pine View Campground in Pine View Recreation Area at Fort McCoy closed Dec. 1, said officials with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR).

Supervisory Recreation Specialist (Facility Manager) Alex Karis said campsites will not be available between Dec. 1 and April 30, 2025.

“Every year, come Dec 1, the campsites are closed for the winter,” Karis said. “We do this to prevent issues with the water hydrants and limit the amount of snow removal needed.

“Cabins are still open and available during the winter months,” Karis said. “Campsites will open back up on May 1, 2026. Obviously, if weather’s a little bit nicer, we’ll look at opening it up earlier. Our Directorate of Public Works has 30 days to get the comfort stations open. And I don’t want to put those requests in too early and all of a sudden they open up and then we get that big April freeze or snowfall and have damages.”

May 1, 2026, falls on a Friday and also coincides with the opening day of fishing season on post so that will be the goal to reopen the campground for the next season, Karis said.

Cabins at Pine View Campground, which are available year-round, range from one bedroom with loft (park model type) to two-bedroom units.

The Pine View Campground office and the Fort McCoy Equipment Check-out will also remain open, Karis said.

“The office will be manned as we’ll have cabin guests, and they’ll handle reservations for camping in spring/summer. Equipment check-out will be available, but business volume in that area is very low in the winter.”

Following are the latest cabin rental rates at Pine View Campground that were updated Oct. 1, 2025, for fiscal year 2026:

- duplexes — military or Department of Defense (DOD) employee rate, \$110 Sunday-Thursday, \$125 Friday-Saturday; general public, \$120, Sunday-Thursday, \$145 Friday-Saturday.
- lakeside two-bedroom cabins — military or DOD employee rate, \$130 Sunday-Thursday and \$145 Friday-Saturday; general public, \$150 Sunday-Thursday and \$165 Friday-Saturday.
- park model cabins — military or DOD employee rate, \$125 Sunday-Thursday, \$140 Friday-Saturday; general public, \$140 Sunday-Thursday, \$160 Friday-Saturday.
- east side two-bedroom cabins — military or DOD employee rate, \$140 Sunday-Thursday and \$155 Friday-Saturday; general public, \$165 Sunday-Thursday and \$180 Friday-Saturday.

Get additional information about cabin rates by stopping by the campground office or calling the office at 502-898-3517.

People can also find out more about DFMWR at Fort McCoy by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com> or by going on Facebook to <https://www.facebook.com/mccoymwr>.

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(Above and below) Cabins available for rent are shown Feb. 13 at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy. Note: Rates for the Fort McCoy cabin rentals changed on Oct. 1.



COMMUNITY

Ski area staff continue work preparing to open Whitetail Ridge for 2025-26 season

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

With snow already on the ground and more being made every day, Supervisory Recreational Specialist (Facility Manager) Alex Karis with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) said the staff at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area should be able to open the area by desired open date of Dec. 27.

"Our target goal is the 27th right now, but Mother Nature has definitely been good to us so far," Karis said. "You know, we've had snowmakers running since ... the 30th of November. We started making snow and we have not had to shut down yet."

The first area to see snowmaking and preparation is the snowtubing hill, Karis said. In the past, the hill had four to five main lanes for tubers. But thanks to offseason work on the hill that last several years, Karis said they may be able to set up six to seven lanes for tubing.

"We redid the bottom of the tubing hill this year," Karis said. "We extended that out. We don't know how much extra snow we're going to need. With those couple of changes, we're ahead of the game, but we still have some work to do. And the 27th is the target date."

Once the tubing hill is fully prepared, more effort will be put into building a snow base on the skiing/snowboarding hill areas.

"The rule of thumb is for every 12 inches of real snow we get, it adds an inch of layer once the groomer goes over it," Karis said. "So if we can get our 10- to 15-foot base down, and then you get that natural snow to come in and fluff and everything up, that makes for better skiing, better tubing conditions. It's much safer conditions if we can get three inches, four inches of snow here, six inches there ... after we get the base layers down."

Karis said in the 2024-25 ski area season, they had over 9,000 customers.

"We're hoping with more natural snow this year to get back into that 12,000, 13,000 range of patrons out at the hill," Karis said. "Our record year was the 2022-23 season with 14,465 customers. The couple of years before that is when we were averaging that 12,000 to 13,000 per season. So that's kind of like the happy zone. Obviously, you always like to set records, but it can be a little stressful too when you have that many people out there."

Whitetail Ridge also offers cross-country skiing and snowshoe trails. Trails are groomed and free to use, but equipment is available to rent, if needed, Karis said.

The chalet and Ten Point Pub offer a warm break from outside activities. Relax inside and take advantage of the snack bar menu, which features sandwiches, appetizers, pizza, and drinks.

"So, for people who don't necessarily want to go out in the cold, but if they still want to bring the family, we have food and beverage options inside," Karis said. "We also have a deck that overlooks the ski hill with propane heaters out there. But we do have areas for people who might not want to come to tube or ski, and they can come and enjoy themselves at the Ten Point Pub."

The snowtubing hill also saw had also received an upgrade earlier in 2024 when Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 702nd Engineer Company, which is based in Johnson City, Tenn., spent six days in early to mid-August working on a troop project that "significantly" improved the hill.

In a previous news article at <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/478880/army-reserves-702nd-engineers-upgrades-fort-mccoy-whitetail-ridge-ski-area-with-troop-project>, Karis said the work the Army engineers completed reshaped the tubing hill in a way that will save time and effort by ski area staff.

"They brought in a lot of dirt and completed some significant excavating," Karis said. "They helped reshape the hill and make it a little less steep." He said there was a section of the hill that needed more dirt and was an issue when it came to snowmaking.

"There was spot where we had to fill in with between 10 to 25 feet of manmade snow on that hill," Karis said. "But they fixed that. Now it only needs 5 to 10 feet of manmade snow."

Combined with the work completed by the installation grounds contractor to the tubing hill in 2025, Karis said the tubing experience on Whitetail will be better than ever.



(Above and below) Whitetail Ridge Ski Area is shown Dec. 1 at Fort McCoy as snow is being made at the area. Whitetail Ridge, part of Fort McCoy's Pine View Recreation Area, offers a variety of activities for the whole family. The ski hill offers snowtubing, downhill skiing, and snowboarding.



Whitetail Ridge is typically open through mid-March, weather permitting. Information about tubing, skiing, snowboarding, and equipment rental costs can be found at the web page for the area at <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/programs/whitetail-ridge-ski-area>.

Pine View Recreation Area facilities are open to the general public. Discounts are generally offered to military members or Department of Defense civilian employees. A visitor's pass, military ID, or Department of Defense ID is not required to access the recreation area or Whitetail Ridge.

Call 502-898-4498 for more information. Also, keep track of hours and the latest special offers at Whitetail Ridge by visiting <https://mccoy.armymwr.com/programs/whitetail-ridge-ski-area>, Karis said.

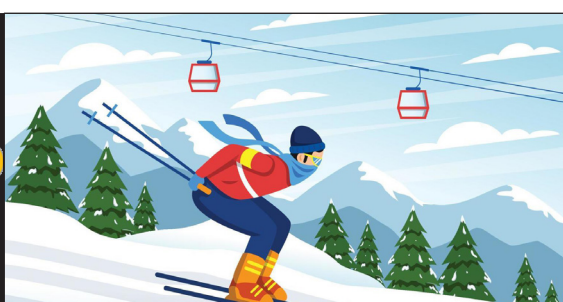
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WHITETAIL RIDGE SKI AREA'S GRADE **A** SNOW DAYS

ATTENTION STUDENTS!

Bring in your current report card with at least one A (or equivalent) and

Get a FREE Tubing Pass!

JAN 9 4-8PM | FEB 6 4-8PM | MAR 6 4-8PM

WHITETAIL RIDGE SKI AREA FORT MCCOY, WI

One free pass per child, per season (Grades K-12). Not valid with any other offer or promotion. Offer ends March 6, 2026.

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FortMcCoyMWR) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/FortMcCoyMWR) [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@FortMcCoyMWR) @FortMcCoyMWR

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SKIESUnlimited
Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration & Skills



SKI & SNOWBOARD LESSONS

Does your child want to learn to ski or snowboard?

Lessons will be taught by trained instructors at the Whitetail Ridge Ski Area. Parents or Guardians are responsible for providing transportation to and from lessons.

Thursdays from
Jan 8-Mar 5, 2026

Beginners:

4:30 - 5:30 PM

Advanced:

6:30 - 7:30 PM

Grades:

1st - 12th

Location:

Whitetail Ridge

Cost:

\$130 | \$100

With equipment rental

Without equipment rental. Must bring your own

Cost of \$100 SKIES lessons can be applied to a Family Season Pass. Please call Pine View Campground at 502-898-3517 for Season Pass sales.

TO ENROLL IN LESSONS CALL
502.898.8956

Youth must be registered with Child and Youth Services prior to enrolling in lessons. Call **502-898-8956** to register with CYS!

Enrollment ends Dec 31, 2025. Space is limited to 10 children per class so sign up today! Payment due at the time of registration and is non-refundable.



COMMUNITY/OUTDOORS

313 deer taken during Fort McCoy's 2025 gun-deer season

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Wisconsin's and Fort McCoy's 2025 nine-day gun-deer season took place Nov. 22 to 30, and hunters saw some warmer weather to start the season and ended the season seeing 313 deer harvested.

There were 167 Chronic Wasting Disease samples (54 percent of harvest) taken, said said Wildlife Program Manager and Biologist Kevin Luepke with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch. Permit quota for 2025 was 1,800. Permits issued were 1,798. Permits purchased were 1,364. Bonus antlerless tag quota was 450 tags. Bonus antlerless tags issued were 450 tags. Bonus antlerless tags purchased were 244.

Also, Fort McCoy Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Rules and Regulations (Fort McCoy Regulation 420-29) were signed and approved on Nov. 17, just before the season. The regulations were distributed and made available to the public.

Luepke said overall the deer herd looked to be in good condition heading into the season. "There (were) no new cases of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease ... reported or found this fall," Luepke said. "In addition, Fort McCoy has only had the one positive Chronic Wasting Disease case from the 2024 Archery season. Through the 2024 gun-deer season, when a majority of the CWD sampling occurs, no additional CWD positive results were received.

"During the fall of 2025, there were no additional CWD positive results received from the youth gun-deer, gun-deer for hunters with disabilities, or early archery seasons," Luepke said.

"We have also seen lower fawn numbers this summer, so our herd recruitment has been a bit lower than normal. The acorn production is higher than last year (little to no acorn production in 2024). 2025 has not seen a bumper crop of acorns by any means, but there has been some acorn production associated with white and black (scrub) oak," he said.

For the 2025 gun-deer hunt, the deer data collection point was also in full operation on South Post in the same location just off Highway 21 as previous years. Hunters were required to bring their harvested deer through the deer data collection point. Biological data was collected, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) sampling offered, and a dumpster was available to discard any carcasses. Collected CWD samples were sent to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and all successful hunters were encouraged to have their deer tested.

"That biological data we collect at the station is important to evaluate the herd health and calculate the installation deer population," Luepke said. "We also collect lymph nodes for CWD testing."

Fort McCoy's deer population continued to show it had larger bucks available to hunters, as well, Luepke said.

"There were several big bucks that came through again this year," Luepke said.

Learn more about deer hunting at Fort McCoy by visiting the installation iSportsman page at <https://ftmccoy.isportsman.net>.

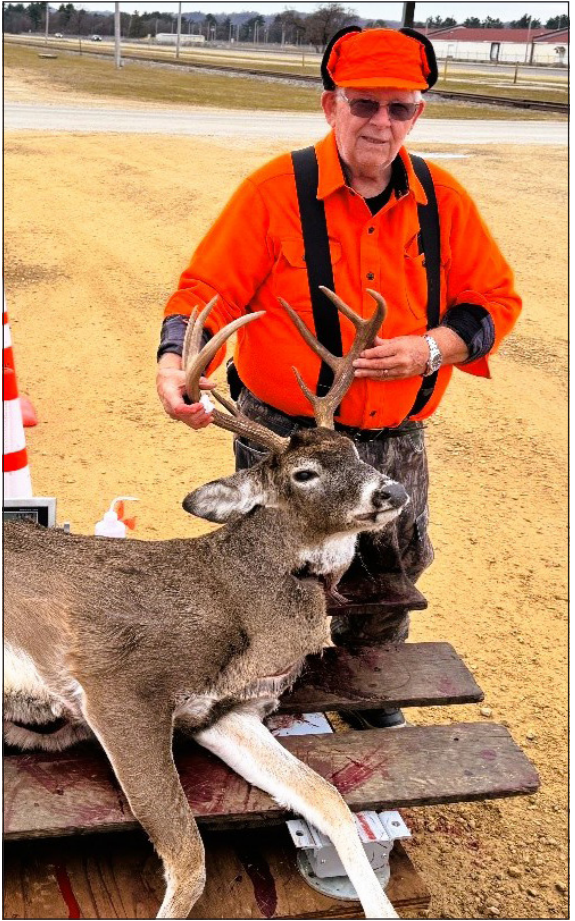
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(The Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch contributed to this article.)



(All photos) Successful hunters get a photo with the deer they harvested during their stop at the deer check station during the 2025 gun-deer season at Fort McCoy. During the season, 313 deer were harvested and in turn helping the installation meet its minimum harvest goals.



Garrison commander learns about documenting deer harvest data



(Left and above) Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez receives briefings about deer data collection Nov. 25 at the deer data collection point at Fort McCoy. The 2025 Fort McCoy gun-deer season took place from Nov. 22-30 at the installation, and 313 deer were documented through the point.

HISTORY

Fort McCoy ArtiFACT: Siam transfer print ironstone rim fragment

During the spring of 2019, archaeologists with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Cultural Resource Management (UWM-CRM) program were monitoring a project on Fort McCoy lands.

While observing a dirt pile created from topsoil stripping, the UWM-CRM archaeologists recovered various post-contact artifacts including ten ceramic sherds (six whiteware, three ironstone, and one earthenware) and one piece of glass.

One of the ceramic pieces had a unique and identifiable design referred to as the Siam pattern.

The Siam pattern was manufactured by Joseph Clementson between 1839 and 1864 at the Phoenix Works in England. Phoenix Works specialized in earthenware and ironstone pottery. Clementson and Phoenix Works not only made their pottery for the residents of England but also exported their pottery to Canada and the United States of America.

The pottery type that the Siam pattern is transfer printed onto is called ironstone.

Ironstone is a type of stoneware that was developed in England in the early 19th century. It is non-porous, hard, and more durable than earthenware which is porous and soft.

Ironstone and porcelain are fired at higher temperatures than earthenware, which allows for thinner pottery with better durability while making it non-porous.

Ironstone was used as a substitute for porcelain because it could be mass produced at a lower cost.

Ironstone is also known as semi-porcelain, opaque porcelain, English porcelain, stone China, and new stone. Contrary to its name, there is no iron in ironstone. It was named based on its durability.

The Siam pattern is characterized by an "oriental" theme using blue and white transfer print.

This artistic style is also referred to as chinoiserie which means Chinese. Transfer prints are made using engraved printing plates to print



Shown is Siam transfer print ironstone rim fragments and actual full ironstone wear.

designs onto tissue paper which is then placed onto the piece of pottery, and the design is fixed in place during firing.

The ceramic sherd pictured here was most likely part of a handle-

less cup which would have had an accompanying saucer for it to rest on. This particular sherd is part of the rim and has a design on both the interior and exterior.

The Siam pattern for a handleless cup is characterized by a paneled rim with three unframed vignettes (decorative designs) of domed temples and minarets (slender, tower-like structures) with trees set within a reticulated (interlacing lines) background and a band of spearpoint located under two narrow lines on the interior surface of the rim.

The exterior of the cup is decorated with an "oriental" scene divided by a body of water. The banks of the river are covered with domed temples and minarets. The left side has two palm trees while the right side has two elm trees.

The banks in the foreground of the scene are covered with flowering vines, while the background depicts mountains and clouds. A similar scene as the exterior would be found at the bottom of the cup on the interior surface.

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

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

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

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

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Archaeology Team that includes the Colorado State University's Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands and the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.)

HISTORY

from Page 16

for the Wisconsin State Patrol, it's a good location for all of the handlers from throughout the state to meet up."

McCarthy said having accommodation at Fort McCoy also allows for more opportunities for training. "It allows us to get a lot more training completed in a shorter amount of time," he said.

5 Years Ago — December 2020

FROM THE DEC. 11, 2020, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *2020-21 Cold-Weather Operations Course training season starts at Fort McCoy (By Scott T. Sturkol)* — The 2020-21 season of the Fort McCoy Cold-Weather Operations Course (CWOC) started Dec. 4 at the installation, beginning officially the fifth season of the course.

This season, the CWOC training team of instructors — Hunter Heard, Joe Ernst, Manny Ortiz, and Brian Semann — is prepared to hold five, 14-day training sessions of CWOC as well as two, three-day sessions.

Class dates are: class 21-01, Dec. 4-17; class 21-02, Jan. 4-17, 2021; class 21-03, Jan. 21 to Feb. 7; class 21-04, Feb. 15-28; and class 21-05, March 8-21. Dates for the three-day short courses are Jan. 22-24 and March 5-7.

At the end of the 2019-2020 CWOC training season at Fort McCoy in March, the CWOC staff and students experienced the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and had to adapt and adjust training, said Heard, who works for contractor Veterans Range Solutions, which supports the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, or DPTMS. And since the pandemic is still going on at the start of this new season, COVID-19 safety precautions are in place for students and staff.

"We are just hoping to get a full and successful training season this year while still abiding by the safety guidelines for COVID-19," Heard said.

In addition to social distancing, hand washing/sanitizing, and mask requirements, Heard said they reduced the class size from 50 students per class to 30.

"We will do everything we can to ensure our students are safe," Heard said. "Since the pandemic started, we have all learned a lot about how to increase the safety measures in our training program, and what we have in place should help us have a successful training season."

During the 2019-20 season, the CWOC training program trained dozens of Soldiers, Sailors,

and Marines, and — for the first time — Airmen.

"I believe we will continue to see another diverse collection of students from all the services this season," Heard said. "As word has spread about how Fort McCoy is a great place to hold this training, we've had continued interest from active duty, Guard, and Reserve service members from all the military branches. CWOC training has truly become a Total Force training environment."

The CWOC is modeled after the Cold-Weather Leader Course taught by the Army Northern Warfare Training Center at Black Rapids, Alaska. During training, students learn about a wide range of cold-weather subjects, including skiing and snowshoe training, how to use ahkio sleds and the Arctic 10-person cold-weather tent, and how to build improvised shelters.

For each class, students start with classroom training and then move into various aspects of field training. Ernst said some students come to the course having never been on skis or snowshoes.

"It's amazing to see how they adjust and learn throughout the training experience," Ernst said. "Every season, our students are tested in tough conditions. And in the feedback we receive from every class, most students are appreciative of everything they have learned."

Students complete miles of ruck marching in the snow and cold during the season. Sometimes students move in snowshoes and skis covering dozens of miles. Students also complete training terrain and weather analysis, camouflage and concealment, and risk management. They also learn about properly wearing issued cold-weather clothing and how to prevent cold-weather injuries.

"An important part of the training and understanding operations in the cold weather is how to identify and understand what causes cold-weather injuries," said Ortiz, who was a combat medic in the Army. "Continuing in this year's training, we will have training that will include scenarios on how students can respond to help a victim of hypothermia. This will help them build confidence and knowledge in understanding cold-weather injuries as well."

Semann will be working his first full season as an instructor. "I'm definitely looking forward to supporting this training," he said.

And the training should continue to help students help their own units be prepared for winter operations. Sgt. Jacob Larson, a past student in CWOC Class 20-05 with the 950th Engineer Company at Superior, Wis., completed training in

Saved Wounded, Discharged GI Won Bronze Star

Saving the lives of several wounded comrades won the Bronze Star medal for Pfc. Clayton C. Shanka, Hopkins, Minn., who was discharged this week.

During action against the enemy in Germany April 7, Shanka observed seven wounded men lying in a field exposed to enemy fire. Disregarding his own safety under heavy fire he quickly advanced across an open field to rescue the casualties, making two trips. After firing diminished he also secured assistance in the evacuation of the remaining soldiers.

A member of the 84th Infantry division, he spent 15 months in the ETO, taking part in three campaigns. In addition to the Bronze Star he wears the distinguished unit citation and Combat Infantryman's badge.

March. He said he'll be able to share what he has learned and that Fort McCoy was the right place to be for the training.

"I feel like I have learned a lot of skills I can take back to teach the Soldiers on my team," Larson said. "I can help teach the proper way to wear the Army's cold-weather gear as well as fire-starting tricks. ... Also, completing this training at Fort McCoy was excellent."

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

Br-r-r! These Badger Winters

Even LaCrosse Native Finds Cold Too Much After Tropical Climes

Thirty months of tropical weather without a winter has made Capt. Lyman J. Earney, La Crosse, Wis., who has been assigned to the Camp McCoy hospital, just a trifle concerned over the climate of his home state.

The recent cold wave has kept him inside longing for the warmth of the Virgin Islands' sun, where he was stationed for over two and one half years with the medical unit on St. Thomas island.

Currently residing in Sparta with his wife, Capt. Earney is attached to the surgery section of the camp hospital, which he states is "very active and well staffed."

While in the Virgin Islands he was assigned to a coast artillery unit which kept constant vigil to protect against enemy submarines lurking in the Caribbean waters. The captain's main duties on the island were in preventing and treating tropical diseases, predominantly malaria and filariasis.

Previous to entering the service, Capt. Earney graduated from Marquette university and received his commission in the U.S. Army.

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CAPT. LYMAN J. EARNEY

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Fort McCoy Triad, Friday, December 22, 1995

PEOPLE

Post archaeologist back from Laos

1-month humanitarian mission examines crash site for remains

By Rob Schuelte
Triad Staff

A final determination of the fate of the crew member(s) of an F-4C fighter jet that crashed into a jungle area in Laos 25 years ago during the Vietnam War may be one step closer to being resolved.

Del Greek, the Fort McCoy archaeologist, said his one-month humanitarian mission to Laos in October and November was everything he thought it would be — long plane rides, hot weather, painstaking work in primitive conditions and long days.

The mission to find the remains of military servicemembers missing in action was sponsored by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting Team, an Army organization headquartered in Hawaii.

"I know if it were a member of my family in that aircraft, I would want to know for sure," Greek said. "Proper identification allows the family to put the issue to rest and give the servicemember a proper burial."

Greek, the only civilian member on the mission, said the final stages of a monsoon greeted the group upon its arrival to Laos. The weather delayed work for four days before the sun came out and it reached 105 degrees the next day, which is normal for that time of the year.

A previous group had started excavating the triple-canopy jungle site, which is surrounded by mountains, but was forced to stop by monsoon rains.

Greek said his pre-mission briefings included



U. S. Army photo by Sgt. John Paul Ruch

Fort McCoy Archaeologist Del Greek (far right) assists with excavation of a site in Laos where an F-4C fighter jet that crashed into a jungle area 25 years ago during the Vietnam War.

which included a logistics specialist, mortuary affairs specialists, a medic and a linguist, make the painstaking search for aircraft and human remains," Greek said. Americans performed quality control on

experience to search for and recover remains," Greek said. "My training as an archaeologist was invaluable in determining if recovered material was human remains."

COMMUNITY

Dozens take part in 2025 Breakfast with Santa, Gingerbread House Showdown event at Fort McCoy

Dozens of Fort McCoy community members gathered Dec. 6 at McCoy's Community for the Breakfast with Santa and Gingerbread House Showdown event — part of the ongoing celebration of the holiday season at Fort McCoy.

The event, organized by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR), saw many of the guests take time to have their photo taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Many of the visitors also enjoyed a specially priced buffet breakfast prepared by DFMWR staff.

In a DFMWR Facebook post Dec. 6, the directorate team thank community members for participating.

"A huge thank you to everyone who came out for Breakfast with Santa at McCoy's Community Center today," the post states. "We had an incredible turnout, and it was wonderful to see families enjoying delicious food, festive fun, and holiday cheer. Guests were treated to a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, a cozy showing of Elf, and a creative gingerbread house building contest.

"Your laughter, smiles, and holiday spirit made the event truly magical," the post states. "Thank you for spending your morning with us — we loved celebrating the season together."

At least a couple dozen Gingerbread House Showdown items were created by the guests. In a separate Facebook post, DFMWR officials highlighted the gingerbread house-building effort.

"Today during Breakfast with Santa, our community brought the creativity, holiday cheer, and some seriously sweet skills," the post states. "Each contestant had one hour to build their festive gingerbread masterpiece."

A sponsor for the showdown provided all of the gingerbread house kits, DFMWR officials said.

"Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this event sweet, spirited, and full of holiday cheer," the Facebook post stated.

DFMWR officials will continue supporting holiday-themed events through December.

On Dec. 4, the directorate also organized the 2025 Fort McCoy Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Learn more about Fort McCoy DFMWR by visiting their website at <https://mccoy.armymwr.com> or their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/mccoymwr>

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(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office and the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.)



(Above and all photos below) Fort McCoy community members participate in the 2025 Breakfast with Santa, Gingerbread House Showdown event on Dec. 6 at Fort McCoy. Dozens of people took part in the event and were able to get a buffet breakfast while attending.



