

SPECIAL INSERT TO THE REAL MCCOY

JANUARY 2025

## Fort McCoy 2025 year in review:

### First half of year included new construction, building moves, retirements

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

The year 2025 was another busy time at Fort McCoy with tens of thousands of troops training at the installation along with many new construction projects taking place, plus much more.

The first half of the year meant a focus on moving five World War II-era barracks for later repurposing plus it also saw many longtime installation employees reach the end of their Army careers. All at the same time, training ramped up as the year went on with Army Reserve, Army National Guard, and other active- and reserve-component forces coming to the installation.

#### JANUARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— As one of three major construction projects ongoing at Fort McCoy, the East Barracks Project has been continuing to see plenty of progress as the projects nears closer to 20 percent complete as January 2025 continues. As of Jan. 8, contractors with L.S. Black Constructors on the project could be seen continuing to build the frame of the building even as January's bitter cold temperatures take hold.

Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the Army Corps of Engineers at Fort McCoy said in his Dec. 20, 2024, update about the project that progress was at 16 percent complete, and likely it will be closer to 20 percent complete during the first January update.

"Structural steel and steel decking deliveries are ongoing," Butts wrote Dec. 20. "Steel erection and decking continues in the center section of the building. Metal framing on the first and second floor of the south wing continues. Contractor has enclosed and is heating areas where concrete placement is occurring to maintain required temperatures," he wrote.

— Fort McCoy held its first meeting of the Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council for calendar year 2025 and the second quarter of fiscal year 2025 on Jan. 14 at the installation.

The SOHAC is an installation wide council that shares ideas and concerns about all things safety for not just garrison team members but also tenant



**A barracks building from the 1600 block at Fort McCoy is shown being moved Jan. 22, 2025, from the 1600 block to another area of the installation. Contractors moved five buildings from January to May 2025.**

organization members, Installation Safety Office (ISO) officials said. The council doesn't just discuss basic safety subjects, they also discuss infrastructure, climate, and weather. They also discuss the potential risks and hazards the post could see in coming months or even years.

Leadership present at the meeting included Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez; Fort McCoy Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Mike Corkum; Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon; office and directorate leaders; and other installation personnel.

Installation Safety Manager Ed De Leon led the discussion during the meeting. De Leon talked about facility inspections the ISO is completing. He said the office has completed 140-plus facility inspections for fiscal year 2025.

De Leon also discussed accidents. During fiscal year 2025, he said of the five recordable accidents that have been documented during this time, four were vehicle accidents.

— Plans and Programs Specialist Travis Todd with the Fort McCoy Resource Management Office was presented with the Army Materiel Command Employee of the Quarter award Jan. 15 while he was attending the Army's Civilian Education System Intermediate Course at Fort McCoy.

Todd was presented the award by Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez. The award was announced for Todd and 11 other Army Materiel Command employees for the third quarter of fiscal year 2024.

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez and Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon held a "lunch and learn" session Jan. 15 with students during the Army Civilian Education System (CES) Intermediate Course being held for the first time in session on post. The hour-long information exchange featured Baez and Cantlon answering questions about their leadership experience as well as their opinions on leadership situations.

Baez discussed some of her experience of working with civilian employees during her Army career, and what she has learned.

"I have worked with civilian employees at all levels — very junior level to very high level. ... I have been in the Army Reserve for many years, and I know that ... your GS-7s, 9s, and 11s are the people who carry the water, who carry the bulk of the work that is done in the Army Reserve. And I know that when I was company commander, I had a (unit admin employee), she was a GS-7, and she ... worked super hard every day."

— Leaders with Fort McCoy Garrison and installation agencies met Jan. 17 with community leaders and workforce professionals in Sparta, Wis., during the Fort McCoy Workforce

#### Collaborative Meeting

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 to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon, Lorie Retzlaff with the Fort McCoy Army Community Service team, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Officer Tonya Townsell, and others.

From the civilian side, representatives from the Sparta Chamber of Commerce, Tomah Chamber of Commerce, Black River Falls Chamber of Commerce, La Crosse Chamber Commerce, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Western Technical College, and more were present.

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez made a special evening visit Jan. 20 to visit with the Tomah School District Board of Education in Tomah, Wis., during their monthly January meeting.

Members on the board include Michael Gnewikow, Spencer Stephens, Ricky Murray, Susan Bloom, Teresa Devine, Cathryn Rice, and James Newlin.

During the nearly three-hour meeting, Baez was given time to introduce herself and discuss education items regarding Fort McCoy.

"We have many programs that we are part of," Baez said. "One of them is the Wisconsin Council of the Interstate Compact for Military Children. For those of you who might not be in the military, as military families transition from one state to the other, one of the things that they face every couple of years is changing their children from one school to another."

"So this only creates stress in the family, but also stress in the children," Baez said. "So as we look at what things we can do to improve those transitions from state to state, the council here in Wisconsin has done an outstanding job creating policies that help those transitions from one state to the other."

— More than 20 students — all Army civilian supervisors in grades GS-10 to GS-12 — participated in the first on-post session of the Army Civilian Education System Intermediate Course at Fort McCoy from Jan. 6-24.

Workforce Development Officer Mike Modawell with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Human Resources (DHR) said the training is helping many Fort McCoy employees get the training they need, and it's helping provide an additional avenue for training.

According to a course description available at <https://armyuniversity.edu/amsc/courses/intermediate>, the course "prepares current and aspiring Army civilian leaders (GS 10-12) to become more innovative, self-aware, and prepared to effectively lead and care for personnel and manage assigned resources at the organizational level."

The description also states the course is required per Army Regulation 350-1 for Army civilian su-

pervisors in those grades and provides effective leadership training.

— Contractors successfully moved a barracks building Jan. 22 from its resting area of 80-plus years to a new location on Fort McCoy's cantonment area.

It was the first of five barracks buildings on the installation cantonment area's 1600 block that are being moved during January and February 2025 while the ground is frozen, Army Corps of Engineers officials said.

Devooght Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., is the contractor doing the building moves.

These buildings will eventually be reset at another area of the post so new construction can begin in their current location on new officer quarters.

Four other barracks buildings also were moved from the 1600 block to other areas in 2023. Those four buildings are now operational in their new locations in the 1700, 1800, and 2100 blocks on the post.

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

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez led the first Fort McCoy Garrison town hall meeting of 2025 on Jan. 23 in building 905 at the installation to inform the post workforce about the latest news, directives, and recognize award winners.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, 88th Readiness Division commanding general and the Fort McCoy senior commander, also provides comments during the start of the meeting. Ricciardi provided an update about some important Army changes and thanked the workforce for what they do for Fort McCoy.

"I've been trying to make my way around to all the agencies on the installation," Ricciardi said. "First thing I want to say is thank you everyone for what you do. I spent two years in the G9 and a year at (Installation Management Command). I am intimately familiar with what you do, the challenges that you have in doing what you do every day, the constraints, and all the stuff that you do behind the scenes very unselfishly and that you do not get recognition all the time, which is even more impressive. Especially here, when you're pushing training units through ... they come and go."

"There's never a 'thank you, hey, that was fun,'" Ricciardi said. "They're just ready to get out of here. So, thank you for what you do and for the mission that you prepare to do. We have an incredibly important mission here at Fort McCoy."

Baez took time first to discuss the Defense Organizational Climate Survey, or DEOCS, that Fort McCoy personnel took in fall 2024. According to the Department of Defense (DOD) Office of People Analytics, the survey is a Congressionally mandated unit-level climate survey that is available to all military commanders and Department of Defense civilian organization leaders. The survey collects information on unit climate, harassment and discrimination, and other aspects of organizational climate.

— Retired Army Col. Chris Kolenda held a "lunch and learn" event at Fort McCoy on Jan. 21 at McCoy's Community Center that focused on leadership.

The event focused on the topic of leadership at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels in a blended (military and civilian) organization. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, helped organize the event.

During his presentation, Kolenda discussed completing a 1,700-mile bicycle trip. Kolenda started the trip in September 2022. He cycled from Spalding, Neb., to Arlington National Cemetery, Va. Along the way he stopped to visit six gravesites of troops who died and served under his command in Afghanistan.

"I set up ... that bike ride and raised enough

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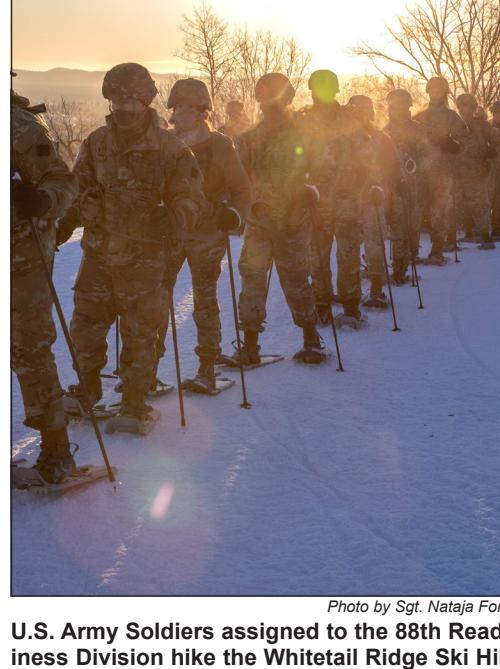


Photo by Sgt. Nataja Ford



ROTC cadets compete in the Northern Warfare Challenge on Feb. 21, 2025, at Fort McCoy. ROTC teams with U.S. Army Cadet Command came from all around the United States as they battled through a wide variety of challenges and long ruck marching courses in cold and snow to fight for the top spot as challenge champion.

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money to set up the Saber 6 Foundation," said Kolenda, a Nebraska native who now resides in Milwaukee. "And what we do in Saber 6 is we help veterans turn (with) post-combat stress.

"Now, when you're riding 1,700 miles ... it took me 24 days of pedaling ... I had a couple of break days so 27 days total, you have some time to think," Kolenda said. "I think I averaged 74 miles a day, which is about somewhere between six to eight hours a day. And so, you just pedal. And since I do leadership a lot, I was like, I bet there's some leadership lessons I could derive from this bike ride. And one of the first ones is that just like you have to fit the bike to the rider, you should fit the role to the person."

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez and Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon were two of the garrison command team members from Fort McCoy who toured the Western Technical College campus Jan. 27 in Sparta, Wis.

Baez and Cantlon were among several Fort McCoy team members — others from the Fort McCoy Army Community Service Office and Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office — who visited the campus to learn more about the facility and meet with staff. The campus borders Fort McCoy's South Post, and the staff there works regularly with Fort McCoy workforce members in numerous capacities.

The visit was organized between Fort McCoy and Western's Kevin Ruetten, the college's business services coordinator. Those meeting with the Fort McCoy members from Western were Ruetten; Western President Roger Stanford; Kevin Dean, Western's dean of health and public safety; Josh Gamar, Western's dean of integrated technology; Brian Barquist, veterans affairs coordinator with Western; Angie Martin, Western's director of business and industry services; and John Zimprich, Western's business and industry sales lead/training consultant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

— Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez made her first visit to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse on Jan. 22 in La Crosse.

During the visit, Baez met specifically with the university's newest president/chancellor, Chancellor James Beeby. Beeby became the new chancellor in 2024 — just as Baez became Fort McCoy Garrison's commander in 2024.

In an hour-long meeting at the university, Baez and Beeby discussed Fort McCoy's partnership with the university. "Fort McCoy is a huge part of the community here (in this region)," Baez said during the meeting. "We are also good partners with school districts. ... We also take part in community activities (with educational institutions). ... And we like to expand our partnerships."

Baez completed the visit with support from members of the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office.

— A special ceremony was held Jan. 29 at Fire Station 1 to honor Fire Chief Timothy Jorgenson with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services Fire Department as he retired from Army Civil Service with more than 32 years of service.

Jorgenson began his service as a civil servant at Fort McCoy in 1992, and has worked in various positions within the fire department. He ascended to fire chief and served in that position for many years.

Assistant Fire Chief Brady Brever opened the ceremony.

"Today we honor Chief Tim Jorgenson on his retirement from the Fort McCoy Fire Department with over 32 years of distinguished federal service for Fort McCoy," Brever said. "Thank you to everyone for being here to honor Chief Jorgenson."

Also there to honor Jorgenson was the Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez. Also present was Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, Fort McCoy Garrison's command sergeant major. And perhaps most appreciated by Jorgenson, dozens of firefighters and police personnel were in attendance to honor him as well.

"When we look at some of the things that he accomplished through his 32-year career, (there were many) major events that happened during those 32 years," Baez said. "We had flood responses, we had COVID, we had Operation Allies Welcome, and

more ... So, when we look at the experience and everything that happened through those major events, we also have Chief Jorgenson's leadership."

"We have Chief Jorgenson not only guiding the fire department here, but also mentoring all those new members that are part of the fire department," Baez said. "It takes patience and experience to do a good job. It takes patience and experience to be a good leader. ... Thank you for being here with us."

— Pam Severson has helped thousands of people in her 31 1/2 years at Fort McCoy, which might be why dozens of people showed for her retirement from government civil service Jan. 31 at the building 50 dining facility at Fort McCoy.

During her ceremony, she had guest speakers touting her successful career, including Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez, Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center (LRC) Director Tanya Morene, Fort McCoy LRC Plans & Operations Division Chief David "D.J." Eckland, and Wisconsin State Senator Patrick Testin.

Baez followed Severson's introduction by Eckland with praise for Severson's career as well.

"Every time that we recognize the caliber of the employees at Fort McCoy, I am .... Not surprised," Baez said. "When we look at employees like Pamela here, that have dedicated over 30 years of her life to the Fort McCoy community, this is commendable. This is a great thing."

## FEBRUARY

— The fiscal year 2022-funded Fort McCoy Transient Training Troop Barracks Project, also referred to as the South Barracks Project, has made continuous progress, and by the beginning of February 2025 has reached 70 percent completion.

The contractor BlidnermanPower (Construction) got the building to 70 percent complete by Jan. 31, said Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy in his Jan. 31 update on the project.

In his update, Green said the contractor has completed many items on the list of work needing done and continues to move forward.

"Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in continued," Green wrote in the update. "Interior sheet rocking continued. Interior sound battening continued. Interior finishing continued, and painting continued. Latrine/senior leaders tile work continued. Exterior canopy work continued. Ceiling grid also continued."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

A scene from a patching ceremony held March 13, 2025, is shown in building 905 at Fort McCoy. Soldiers with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy traded out the Army Materiel Command patches on their uniforms for the blue clover patch of the 88th Readiness Division. Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division and Fort McCoy's senior commander, presided over the ceremony. Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez served as the top leader representing the garrison. The patching ceremony was prompted by January 2025 Execute Order 123-25 from the Secretary of the Army, "Update to U.S. Army Installation Management Structure," which designates all uniformed personnel at the garrison as being under tactical control, or TACON, of the senior commander, who is Ricciardi at Fort McCoy. And because of the new TACON, a new patch was now needed for Fort McCoy Garrison Soldiers.

(DPW) and Xcel Energy continued to work together to finish the process of changing the electrical grid on post from a Delta Electrical System to a Wye Electrical System, Fort McCoy DPW officials said.

Work on this switchover has been ongoing since 2022, officials said, and during February 2025, workers continued to work on the project.

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

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

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

## Open house event recognized

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

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

## The Real McCoy newspaper wins

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

This category is for printed Department of Defense publications — including newspapers, newsletters or magazines — that support the command's information mission.

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

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

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

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

## MARCH

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

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

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

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

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

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

For this prescribed burn, the team met on near the installation border not far from family housing



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

on South Post, then carefully started the burn in sections to be able to manage it successfully and be able to adjust to any wind conditions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Devoight Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., is the contractor doing the building moving with wheels and remote control powered by a generator. Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works planners have said a plan was previously worked out with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the contractor to move the five old barracks buildings to the 500 block of Fort McCoy in this move. The buildings will be temporarily set in that block until new locations are determined.

— Fort McCoy personnel took time to be a part of the March 10, 2025, meeting of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee in Sparta, Wis. As part of Monroe County, Fort McCoy has a part supporting

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

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

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

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

- \* Reported life history of 46 tagged fish to anglers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- \* Current housing situation in Monroe County;

- \* Reviewing where the greatest need for housing is;

- \* Defining “affordable” housing;

- \* Looking at what other counties are doing to address a lack of housing;

- \* Funding opportunities for housing the committee might be missing;

- \* How can all the varying agencies collaborate to address housing issues in Monroe County;

- \* And what are some actions Monroe County can take to address housing concerns.

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

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

Her early days as a Soldier included supporting a presidential inauguration in the 1990s, and more. During 11 of her 30 years of service, Townsell served as a Soldier both on active and in the National Guard. After that, she transitioned to a career as a civil servant in Army Public Affairs. Over the years, Townsell has been a part of a lot of professional awards too. At Fort McCoy, the number of awards received by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office staff has been significant during her leadership between 2015 and 2025.

During those 10 years, her office earned 16 Army Materiel Command public affairs awards, 40 Army Installation Management Com-

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Photo by Scott T. Sturk

**Army ROTC cadets complete field training April 11, 2025, at Fort McCoy.** They are among more than 70 other cadets from seven universities completing field training. ROTC training leaders said the training was a combined field training exercise.

mand public affairs awards, and more than 150 monthly trophy awards on the Defense Visual Information and Distribution Service monthly recognition.

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

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

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

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

Pierce earned a second place Army Materiel Command award in Graphic Arts Category A: Layout and Design. Pierce’s entry was a special graphic created for the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

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

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

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

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

## APRIL

— **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 and announced in April 2025.

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.

FY 2024 operating costs of \$170 million included utilities, physical plant maintenance, repair and improvements, new construction projects, purchases of supplies and services, as well as salaries for civilian contract personnel working at Fort McCoy.

Other expenditures accounted for \$21.2 million and covered \$511,296 in payments to local governments (including land permit agreements, school district impact aid, etc.) as well as \$20.7 million in discretionary spending in local communities by service members training and residing at Fort McCoy. Other factors of economic impact for the fiscal year included more than \$92.6 million in military construction on post.

— **Seventy-one cadets and nearly a dozen staff members with Army ROTC units at seven universities in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan trained at Fort McCoy on April 11 in field training lanes to build their skills.**

“The cadets were participating in a combined field training exercise,” said Maj. Michael Centola, associate professor of military science and executive officer for the Badger ROTC Battalion at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “Schools came together to train on small unit tactics, troop leading procedures, and land navigation.”

“This was the last large-scale training exercise for the third-year cadets prior to their formal assessment at Fort Knox (Ky.) later this summer,” Centola said.

Cadet Grace Sandretti with the University of Wisconsin-Madison ROTC Program, who is a senior cadet, served as an opposing forces person to help train the junior cadets during the field training. She described how important this effort was.

“The field training exercise (FTX) is a great opportunity for cadets to make mistakes,” Sandretti said. “I find that in this environment we’re able to talk about any mistakes that are made and talk through the missions. That creates a really great space for cadets to learn.”

— **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 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.

— **From April 11-13, Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment of the Wisconsin National Guard brought more than a dozen helicopters as well as crews and support personnel to hold a drill training at Fort McCoy.**

Helicopters included UH-60 Black Hawk medevac helicopters from

the battalion’s West Bend, Wis., location as well as Light Utility Helicopters (UH-72A Lakota) from the same location. Personnel and equipment also were on hand from the 147th location in Madison, Wis.

“We were doing a field training exercise to help get ready for an upcoming mobilization,” said Capt. Cole Hamilton, operations officer and more with the 147th who helped organize and conduct the drill training.

Hamilton said the training focused on a wide variety of scenarios, training lanes, and even hot and cold load training for moving patients in a medevac situation.

James L. Hubbard, airport manager with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security Airfield Division, said the 147th had people and aircraft operating from the Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport, Young Air Assault Strip, and other training locations on the installation’s South Post.

Members of the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment regularly complete training operations at Fort McCoy, and the unit also supports numerous training events at the installation each year. In 2024, the unit supported training on Fort McCoy nearly every month, and it’s been similar with their training in 2025.

— **Leaders with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy took time April 24 to hold a pair of town hall meetings with the installation workforce where they took questions, provided updates about ongoing personnel programs, and discussed upcoming construction that will affect installation personnel.**

Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon led the effort on both meetings. Cantlon gave updates on news and information within the garrison.

In discussing an ever-changing environment in the workplace currently facing the workforce, he offered some encouragement.

“Please continue to do what you do every day,” Cantlon said. “Let’s focus on that. Those are the things that make us what we are here at Fort McCoy. We have a great reputation. We have a great ethic. We do good work.”

Cantlon also took numerous questions about personnel actions. One included about whether or not restructuring within the garrison is likely.

“The question is, will there be restructuring looked at before October, because clearly after October, we will be doing restructuring,” Cantlon said. “The answer is yes, we will be looking at restructuring and where we have the ability within the hiring freeze restraints for moving personnel and doing things on personnel actions, where we have flexibility and some agility, we will take action. Planning has already started.”

— **Building movers doing work at Fort McCoy proved that a fourth time can be a charm, too, as they successfully moved a fourth World War II-era barracks April 16 at Fort McCoy.**

Three World War II-era barracks buildings were already moved on Jan. 22, Feb. 12-13, and March 18. This fourth building was moved to the same area as the first two.

Army Corps of Engineers officials and the contractor are working to complete the movement of five 80-plus-year-old buildings, although the contractor now has the route to move the buildings built up to better move around corners and along roadways. It’s so well set up that moving the fourth building was the fastest yet.

Devoight Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., is the contractor doing the building moving with wheels and remote control powered by a generator. Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works planners have said a plan was previously worked out with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the contractor to move the five old barracks buildings to the 500 block of Fort McCoy in these moves. The buildings are temporarily set in that block until new locations are determined.

— **Fort McCoy held a community event April 25 to plant 500 trees in a designated planting area to establish a forested area on the installation’s cantonment area.** In doing so, the effort also earned the post its 36th Tree City USA designation.

Forester Charles Mentzel with the Forestry Office of the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch unveiled the installation’s newest Tree City USA designation flag during the event, and participants in the effort also took a group photo.

The flag later found its home on a flagpole right next to Fort McCoy’s old Main Gate on the cantonment area near State Highway 21.

Tree planting is an annual effort at Fort McCoy where the Forestry Office coordinates what areas need planting, and where they will best improve lands which are also used as part of the post’s training and maneuver space.

“Fort McCoy has more than 46,000 acres of forested land managed by the Forestry Office, and it’s important to maintain those forested areas,” Mentzel said.

The 500 trees planted April 25 were the major replanting effort for 2025. In 2024, Forestry Technician Tim Parry, also with the Forestry Office, 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.

— **Fort McCoy’s prescribed burn team held a final burn for the spring season April 23 along Badger Drop Zone on the installation’s South Post covering dozens of acres to reduce wildfire risk in that area.**

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

This burn started in the center of the drop zone and covered the more well-used areas of the drop zone and

## FORT MCCOY'S 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

## YEAR IN REVIEW 2025

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The students also utilized Badger Drop Zone to complete specific training events. "The drop zone was much bigger and much better for our students to kind of see that," Baker said.

Baker described the types of training the AMLO students focused on during their week at McCoy.

"During the week, we focused on ... drop zone control and also landing zone safety officer (training)," Baker said. "The drop zone control was essentially just calling airdrops in, directing the aircraft to a point of release, and then they threw out a 15-pound sandbag. That would score how well the student directed that aircraft to a release point. It's called verbally initiated release system, or VIRS."

— Fort McCoy team members took time to support the April 2025 meeting of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee in Sparta, Wis.

As part of Monroe County, Fort McCoy has a part is 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 meeting held April 14, 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 March 2025 were:

\* In fisheries, personnel collected temperature and oxygen profiles on all 10 lakes at Fort McCoy.

\* Fisheries personnel installed batteries and fuses in aerators at Stillwell and Swamp Pond.

\* NRB personnel led "go/no go" burn meetings mornings of possible prescribed burns. Also, conducted prescribed burns on eight days in March on 22 units completing 7,196 acres. This included Ranges 6, 18, 32, 33, 100, 101, 102, 105, and all of the North Impact Area.

\* Forestry personnel administered six timber sales on post taking in \$23,583.20.

\* With invasive species management, the NRB team provided comments to the NEPA coordinator on two proposed projects in April.

— Just in time once again for the 2025 fishing season, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Genoa National Fish Hatchery of Genoa, Wis., stocked more than 15,000 rainbow trout in several waterways throughout the post.

USFWS personnel delivered the trout April 23 and 25, said Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood who works with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB). Trout were stocked in Suukjak Sep, Sandy, Stillwell, and Big Sandy lakes and Sparta and Swamp ponds.

"Each year we purchase and stock the same number of rainbow trout into each lake," Rood said in a past news article about the same process. "The average length of the rainbow trout that were stocked this year were just under 11 inches. These quality fish will provide an exciting opportunity for all anglers to pursue."

## MAY

— 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.

— 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>.

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

According to the Army Reserve at <https://www.usa.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 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 di-

vided into 15 squads to endure six grueling, challenge-filled days" during the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) Best Squad 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.

— Leaders with Fort McCoy Garrison and installation agencies met May 15 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.

— The 2025 Fort McCoy fishing season opened May 3, concurrent with the Wisconsin general inland fishing season opener. Fishing on installation lakes and flowages is allowed May 3 through March 1, 2026, said Fisheries Biologist Steven Rood with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch. The general inland trout season on post and in Wisconsin is from May 3 to Oct. 15.

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

— Fort McCoy held its first May 1 National Prayer Brunch at the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office fellowship space at the installation.

The event followed the presidential proclamation that established May 1 as a National Day of Prayer. In the 2025 proclamation available at the Federal Register at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/05/07/2025-08132/national-day-of-prayer-2025>, it states in 1988, the Congress, by Public Law 100-307, as amended, "called on the president to issue each year a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as a National Day of Prayer, 'on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals.'

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Amy Noble opened the event with an invocation and prayer.

Maj. Randy Downs, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, then took the time to introduce the guest speaker.

Downs said Boland remained on active duty for 30 years with notable assignments that also included being a battalion commander and the Fort McCoy Garrison commander from 1988-1991.

— 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.

Riddle said he looked 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 \$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. Devco Building Movers of Manitowoc, Wis., is the contractor doing the building moving with wheels and remote control powered by a generator.

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

— Leaders and staff from Fort McCoy, the To—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, BlidnermanPower (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.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol  
Contractors work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, on May 21, 2025, at Fort McCoy.

and service members."

— 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 June 18 update about the project.

Butts said in the update that the project is 92 percent completed and the contract completion date is currently Aug. 20.

"Contractor is working on their punch-list items," Butts wrote. "Interior cleaning continued. Painting continued with touch-ups being completed. Sod, grass seeding, and blanketing continued. Exterior parking lot grading continued. Exterior concrete work also continues. Fourth floor pre-furniture inspection was also held."

— 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.

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.

— Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, completed training at Fort McCoy in early June and among the many Soldiers in the unit completing training were Army medics and related medical personnel.

Soldiers with the 127th were getting ready for deployment, and more, said Staff Sgt. Mitchell Fromm, a 127th medic who helped lead the training.

"So as a platoon of medics, we cover an infantry battalion," Fromm said about what his medic platoon will do while deployed. "We've got about 45 medics in total. Of that we disperse them among five different companies, and we run a (field) hospital."

— The Army Reserve's 204th Army Band of Fort Snelling, Minn., performed for hundreds of participants on June 13 during the 2025 Fort McCoy Army Birthday Celebration at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.

This celebration highlighted the U.S. Army's 250th birthday. The band played to all of the people who visited McCoy's for a free lunch and a cake-cutting ceremony and of course — the music.

— Fort McCoy celebrated the Army's 250th birthday with several events June 13 throughout the installation.

The celebration, coordinated by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, kicked off with the Army Birthday 5k Run/2-Mile Walk at 7 a.m. June 13.

For the run/walk in 2025, approximately 150-plus people took part in all ages, and all those participants received free Army Birthday t-shirts as well. At the same time as the run/walk, a free breakfast was provided for all the run/walk participants at the front of Rumpel Fitness Center. Breakfast items included juice, water, bars, donuts, and more.

Later the same day, beginning at 11:30 a.m. at McCoy's Community Center, the birthday celebration continued with a free lunch, cake-cutting ceremony, and on-site band entertainment from the Army Reserve's 204th Army Band of Fort Snelling, Minn.

— Hundreds of people visited Fort McCoy's Pine View Campground on June 29 to take part in the Clydesdales Parade and Show at the campground for the installation community and campground guests.

The Clydesdales are the famous Budweiser Clydesdales. The team of horses and staff and equipment set up on a campground perimeter road not far from the campground office and then held a show for the visitors on how they set up the wagon and on how each Clydesdale is connected to the wagon.

Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) led the installation's effort to hold the parade event at the installation. The Clydesdales were in the area for another event in Tomah, Wis., and it worked out that the team could also be part of an event at Fort McCoy, DFMWR officials said.

— American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. and others with the national level American Legion team made an office visit June 26 with members of the Fort McCoy Garrison leadership.

LaCoursiere was elected national commander of the

— Thousands of troops trained at Fort McCoy in June 2025, including Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, and more. Some of the units with larger numbers of troops training on post were with the Illinois National Guard.

— Yet again, the Monroe County (Wis.) Invasive Species Working Group held their annual 2025 Field Day on June 26 at Whitetail Ridge Ski Area and at Pine View Campground at Fort McCoy.

More than 40 people participated in this event.

— Boy Scouts and troop leadership with Boy Scout Troop 301 of Danville, Ind., visited Fort McCoy's Commemorative Area on June 18 to get a first-hand learning experience about the U.S. military, the Army, and Fort McCoy.

The group was less than 10 people but was fully engaged in all of what the area had to offer. Army Historian Ward Zischke with the 88th Readiness Division led the effort to engage with the visitors, discussing many of the artifacts in the Fort McCoy History Center and historical buildings in the area.

## JUNE

— Organizers with the Wisconsin Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) held their 2025 Boss Lift event on June 4 at Fort McCoy that included Wisconsin National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters flying in employer representatives, static displays, a Commemorative Area visit, and more.

According to their website at <https://www.esgr.mil/About-ESGR/Contact/Local-State-Pages/Wisconsin>, the ESGR, a Department of Defense office, "is comprised of dedicated and trained volunteers and staff. They develop and promote employer support for Guard and Reserve service by advocating relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of applicable laws, and resolving conflict between employers

and employees."

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## FORT MCCOY'S 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

# Fort McCoy 2025 year in review:

## Second half of year included more construction, thousands of troops training

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL  
Public Affairs Staff

As 2025 progressed, the second half of the year included more training with thousands of troops coming to post and the big construction projects continued to grow in progress.

The second half also saw work begin on renovating the U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters, a successful Retiree Appreciation Day, hundreds of visitors to Fort McCoy's Commemorative Area, a government shutdown, and more.

### JULY

— Fort McCoy conducted a July session of the Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council (SOHAC) on July 8 that included Fort McCoy Garrison representatives from all directorates and offices.

This meeting, led by the Fort McCoy Installation Safety Office (ISO) was presided over by Fort McCoy's Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon, Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, also was present for the meeting as well as directorate and special staff leaders.

Installation Safety Manager Ed De Leon led the discussion throughout. He began discussing the Army Safety and Occupational Health System, citing the importance for leaders, supervisors, and the workforce to complete necessary safety training. De Leon also discussed the 101 Days of Summer Safety awareness campaign and why this awareness is important.

— Getting warrior tasks, weapons training, and completing troop projects were among the many things Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 389th Engineer Battalion and associated units did during their annual training in the second half of July 2025 at Fort McCoy.

The 389th Engineering Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Scott Lardinois said he appreciates it when his unit can complete some work for Fort McCoy and get their training done as well.

“(Fort McCoy) is a great facility for us,” Lardinois said. “You guys actually let us do construction and get after our combat side. So, we appreciate being here. We appreciate the hospitality.”

Lardinois said 389th troops, including many with the 411th Engineer Company, were training all throughout the post. The majority of troops with them set up their training operations from Tactical Training Base Valor on Fort McCoy's North Post.

“Usually when we come up here we occupy this whole area ... because we're the only ones,” Lardinois said. “It's a good area to train in.”

— Actor/musician Gary Sinise and his fellow members of the Lt. Dan Band held a concert July 13 in front of nearly a thousand concert-goers in front of McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.

The two-hour free concert by the 20-plus years old band included free food for the guests, courtesy of the Gary Sinise Foundation, and more. Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) as well as Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) provided direct support on the day of the event.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, 88th Readiness Division commanding general and Fort McCoy senior commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, Fort McCoy Garrison command sergeant major, provided opening remarks at the beginning of the concert.

“Thank you for coming out to this incredible event,” Ricciardi said. “I'd like to take the opportunity very quickly to thank the Fort McCoy MWR and DES for this setup and keeping us safe today.”

“We are very fortunate to have Mr. Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band performing us today,” Ricciardi said. “For nearly 40 years, Gary Sinise has stood as an advocate for America's servicemen and women. Beginning with his support of Vietnam veterans in the early 80s and his portrayal of Lt. Dan Taylor in the landmark film, *Forrest Gump*, 30 years ago, he's formed an enduring connection with servicemembers throughout the military community.”

“After the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, he began a full-on mission to serve and support our first responders and military personnel, lending his services to charities across the country,” the major general said. “He formed Lt. Dan Band in 2003, and in the last 20 years, Gary and the band have played more than 580 concerts in support of active duty-troops, veterans, Gold Star families, wounded servicemembers, and our first responders. Tonight's concert is generously supported and sponsored by the Gary Sinise Foundation. So ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band.”

The band plays a wide variety of pop and rock music as well as some country selections. In addition to Sinise, band members also include Gina Gonzalez, Mari Anne Jayme, Jeff Vezain, Kirk Garrison, Danny Gottlieb, Beth Gottlieb, Dan Myers, Ernie Denov, Ben Lewis, Mitch Paliga, Julie Dutchak, Molly Callinan, and Tom “Bones” Malone.

During the show, Sinise discussed more about his history and why he and everyone with the band and his foundation take time to support military members, veterans, and their families.

— Leaders with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy took time July 24 to hold a pair of town hall meetings with the installation workforce where they took questions, provided updates about ongoing personnel programs, and reviewed upcoming events with the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon led the effort on both meetings. Cantlon gave updates on news and information within the garrison. He discuss the ever-changing environment in the workplace that continues to face the workforce.

The meetings also gave people a chance to further meet the new garrison command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle. This was Riddle's first town hall with the Fort McCoy workforce.

— U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) received a new commander July 11 during a change-of-command ceremony in building 905 at Fort McCoy.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Bob Yarbrough

Members of the 203rd (Welsh) Multi-Role Medical Regiment, a unit of the Royal Army Medical Service within the Army Reserve of the British Army that's based in Wales, and members of the Royal Canadian Medical Service visit the historic Commemorative Area on Aug. 14, 2025, at Fort McCoy.



Members of the Lt. Dan Band, including actor/musician Gary Sinise, play a song selection July 13, 2025, during a concert by the band at Fort McCoy, Wis. Hundreds of people attended the free concert. Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Directorate of Emergency Services worked to ensure the concert went well. The band is part of the Gary Sinise Foundation which has been supporting military members and their families for nearly 15 years.

During the ceremony, Maj. Zachary Daugherty took the reins of command from Maj. Randy Downs. Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon presided over the ceremony. First Sgt. Thomas Ninkovich, company first sergeant, also participated in the ceremony.

— Soldiers with the Iowa National Guard's 248th Aviation Support Battalion and Detachment 1, Company A, 1st Battalion, 376th Aviation Regiment held training July 14 at Fort McCoy's Young Air Assault Strip on South Post as well as other areas on South Post.

The aviation Soldiers were not only utilizing the Forward Air Refueling Point (FARP) at Young airstrip but also were operating a UH-72A Lakota helicopter for training as well.

The aviation Soldiers were among hundreds of Iowa-based troops completing annual training at Fort McCoy in July. Training like this often takes place at Young Air Assault Strip, too, according to officials with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

— Soldiers at Fort McCoy for training conducted convoy training practice as they drove military trucks in a convoy throughout the installation.

The trucks and Soldiers were with the 411th Engineer Company of the 389th Engineer Battalion — which are Army Reserve engineer units based in Iowa. These engineers were at Fort McCoy for annual training as well as supporting troop projects for training.

— Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 389th Engineer Battalion literally moved earth during training on July 25 as part of an ongoing troop construction project just outside the cantonment area fence at Fort McCoy, Wis.

The project work is located in an area of land near the old Gate 20 and Logistical Support Area Liberty and the cantonment area fence, said Larry Morrow, troops projects coordinator with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works (DPW).

The site plan is to make it into a base operations support site for installation service contractors, such as facility maintenance, roads and grounds, solid waste, custodial, pest management, and more, Morrow said in a previous news article.

— Soldiers with the 372nd Engineer Company, an Army Reserve unit out of Pewaukee, Wis., worked on a troop Project replacing broken sidewalk sections on J Street during their annual training in June at Fort McCoy.

The 372nd Soldiers worked for several days to prepare the area as well as manage the concrete pours to set in the new sidewalk. Through

this work, engineer troops get the training they need, and the installation benefits from the work they do to improve Fort McCoy training ranges and quality-of-life programs, post officials said.

This isn't the first time the 372nd has completed work at Fort McCoy either. In previous years the unit's Soldiers have completed a wide variety of work on post. Fort McCoy Troop Projects Coordinator Larry Morrow with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works said it was a significant amount of work. Soldiers with the 372nd team put in new aggregate on the base, and set in forms to pour concrete for the new stretch of sidewalk.

— Ever since late-June, construction on the \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy has included the contractor building the framework for the first building on the site.

Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy said the project is now 13 percent complete and rising daily. In his July 18 update, Green gave the latest actions.

“On the west building, slab prep/placement continued,” Green wrote in the update. “The west building structural steel also continued, and Nelson stud placement started on deck #2.”

“East building electrical rough-in continued,” Green stated. “And also on the east building, footings and pier rough-in and placements continued.”

— As of mid-July 2025, Fort McCoy's South Barracks Project was edging ever closer to completion with a variety of work being completed.

Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Fort McCoy's South Barracks Project has reached 94 percent complete in his July 11 update about the project.

In the July 11 update, Butts also wrote everything is getting completed.

“Contractor is working on their punch-list items,” Butts wrote. “Interior cleaning continued. Painting continued with touch-ups being completed. Exterior parking lot concrete continued.”

— The Army Community Service's 60th birthday was celebrated among dozens of Soldiers and civilian workforce members July 25 at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.

The event, organized by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) and the Fort McCoy Army Community Service Office, featured opening words by several Fort McCoy leaders as well as a cake-cutting ceremony and free food for all in attendance.

During the opening comments, a lot of praise was made about what ACS has done the last 60 years as well as how the organization continues to be an integral form of support for Soldiers and their families.

“It's fantastic to have all of you here,” said Fort McCoy ACS Director Sylvia Lopez. “For six decades, ACS has been the cornerstone of support for our military community. We've adapted to the changing times, evolving needs, and the challenges faced by those we serve.”

— Two crews from Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WisCorps) made a special visit to Fort McCoy's Commemorative Area on July 11 during one of the open hours' days at the area where people at Fort McCoy can go see all the area has to offer.

The nine people in the crews were accompanied by Natural Resources Specialist Jessica Salesman with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch. Together they walked through all the areas of the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area.

— Leaders with U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy's leadership team as well as other garrison members attended a special “Business after 5” event July 23 to continue Army community engagement efforts with local elected and business leaders.

The event was held at the Monroe County Fairgrounds in Tomah, Wis., and included members of both the Tomah Chamber of Commerce as well as the Sparta (Wis.) Chamber of Commerce. The event was part of the opening day for the 2025 Monroe County Fair.

Attending for Fort McCoy were Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon as well as Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major. Also attending were members of the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office as well as the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

— Leaders with Fort McCoy Garrison and installation agencies met July 17, 2025, with community leaders and workforce professionals in Sparta, Wis., during the Fort McCoy Area Workforce Collaborative Meeting.

The meeting brought together people who are working to improve employment opportunities in the region, including at Fort McCoy. Among those attending were Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, Fort McCoy Garrison command sergeant major; Maj. Zachary Daugherty, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company; and representatives from

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Soldiers with the Wisconsin National Guard operate a M109A6 Paladin on the cantonment area Aug. 5, 2025, at Fort McCoy. They were moving the vehicle near the Guard's Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site where they store all different types of military equipment and vehicles like this.

Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

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several other post agencies to include Army Community Service, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, and Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

— Approximately 45 people over two tours from the Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) of Wisconsin visited Fort McCoy on July 14 to participate in a butterfly field day at the installation for a third straight year.

The Fort McCoy coordination for the field trip was again led by Endangered Species Biologist Jessup Weichelt with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRF) and supported by Natural Resources Specialist Jessica Salesman, also with the NRF.

"We mostly observed various common skippers like the Dun and Tawny Edge Skipper as well as a good amount of Regal Fritillary, Gorgone Checkerspot, Eastern Tailed Blue and Spring Azure butterflies," Weichelt said. "The weather did get a little hotter than you would like for butterfly surveys, but it didn't completely deter butterflies from being out. We were able to see the rare Ottoe Skipper with both groups as well as Karner Blue Butterflies and the Regals, which are what I consider the big three for this tour."

— An interesting artifact, a 100-plus-year-old panoramic photograph, was donated to the Fort McCoy History in July 2025 by a Wisconsin resident who believes she had family descendants in the photograph.

That resident, Joyce Thorson from Augusta, Wis., brought the long panoramic photo to the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area and the History Center. Augusta is located near Eau Claire, Wis., and Joyce visited Fort McCoy on July 11 with her husband Delton Thorson.

The photo shows the 1st Regiment, 10th Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard. The picture also shows that it was taken at "Camp Bruce E. McCoy."

According to installation history, Camp Bruce E. McCoy — named in honor of Robert Bruce McCoy's father — was the official designation of the site from 1910 until it was renamed "Camp McCoy" on Nov. 19, 1926.

In 1909, the U.S. War Department purchased about 14,000 acres in west-central Wisconsin, creating the Sparta Maneuver Tract. This tract was split by a railroad into two sites: Camp Emory Upton (north) and Camp Robinson (south). In 1910, following \$40,000 in improvements, the combined site was renamed Camp Bruce E. McCoy, honoring the Civil War veteran and father of Maj. Gen. Robert B. McCoy.

From 1910-1919, the camp expanded significantly, hosting artillery training during World War I and constructing new facilities, the history states. Training paused from 1919 to 1923 when the site served as the Sparta Ordnance Depot.

— In June 2025, Linda (Wendel) Dehaven contacted the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office by email to discuss some old photos she found taken by her father while serving in the Army at then-Camp McCoy.

The photos and the time her father served were during the 1950s. Her father, former Sgt. Donald Wendel with the 110th Engineer Battalion of the Missouri National Guard, served within the Army engineer field during his entire service in the National Guard.

"My dad was a lifelong Missouri resident," Dehaven said. "He was born in Raytown, Mo. Then bought the family farm in 1952. He owned and operated Wendel Dairy Farm his whole life. My dad passed away in 1990, he was 55. He died from an aneurysm."

"He had four children, Bill, Bob, me, and Mary," Dehaven said. The photos were donated by Dehaven and the Wendel family to Fort McCoy to be included in the installation's historical archives, which are located within the Fort McCoy History Center at the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area.

— The 19th Wisconsin Government Opportunities Business Conference (GOBC) kicked off at Fort McCoy on July 30 at building 905 giving an opportunity for businesses to engage with federal and state government agencies.

Fort McCoy Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, top enlisted leader to U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, both participated in discussing Fort McCoy and federal opportunities for the businesses. Also included was a representative from Mission Installation Contracting Command-McCoy.

— On July 23, the Fort McCoy Fisheries Program partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the La Crosse County (Wis.) Land Conservation Department to collect mottled sculpin from Fort McCoy waters and then restock them into a Brook Trout Reserve Stream in La Crosse County where mottled sculpin are absent.

## AUGUST

— Soldiers with the 469th Combat Engineering Company (Infantry) and 402nd Combat Engineering Company held a large detonation on Fort McCoy on Aug. 3 on the installation's impact area on North Post.

Both engineer companies are with the Army Reserve and train regularly at Fort McCoy. Staff Sgt. Nathan Schulke said in an interview with Greg Mason of the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office right before the blast what they had planned to do.

"Today we'll be firing off a MICLIC, or a Mine Clearing Line Charge," Schulke said. "This is a

breaching tool that the Army and the Marine Corps use to breach minefields.

"Basically, it's going to be firing a rocket followed by a line of over 2,000 pounds of explosives, and that will clear a path through the minefield," Schulke said. "It's a pretty big deal because firing a live rocket and a live charge is rarely seen in a training environment."

The pre-planned effort was completed in the pre-determined location just as expected. The resulting explosion could be heard not just on the installation but in areas outside the post's borders as well.

The 469th and 402nd Soldiers were at Fort McCoy for two weeks of annual training and this event was one of the main highlights of their training.

— First Army's 181st Infantry Brigade (Multifunctional Training Brigade), responsible for partnering with the reserve component to advise, assist, and train units to mobilize and meet combatant commander requirements, hosted a change of command to welcome a new commander Aug. 5.

U.S. Army Col. Stewart U. Gast assumed command from Col. Charles W. Wells of the 181st MFTB during a ceremony presided over by Lt. Gen. Mark Landes, commander of First Army.

Gast is arriving to Fort McCoy from South Korea, where he served as the Combined Forces Command Assistant Chief of Staff Deputy Engineer and the U.S. Forces Korea Engineers Chief of Plans and Operations. Gast also brings a wealth of experience in training from serving as a Brigade Engineer Battalion Senior OC/T at JRTC.

"It is an honor and a privilege of a lifetime to be standing here today, taking command of such an important organization at this time in our history," said Gast. "I understand our mission, its importance, and I will ensure we meet our goals."

— Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery Regiment, a Wisconsin Army National Guard unit that operates the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), conducted training at Fort McCoy, Wis., on Aug. 25, 2025, at a live-fire range at Fort McCoy.

The unit conducts training and live-fire exercises with HIMARS regularly at Fort McCoy as well as Camp Ripley, Minn.

The unit has been involved in international training, such as rapid deployment operations with the Swedish armed forces.

— Approximately 7,000 U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers, alongside allied and partner forces, converged on Fort McCoy for Global Strike and Global Medic during the 2025 Combat Support Training Exercise (CSTX), a large-scale, multi-domain training event designed to prepare units for the transforming battlefield of the future.

Led by the 78th Training Division, in coordination with the 412th Theater Engineer Command and the Medical Readiness and Training Command (MRTC), CSTX sharpened skills across engineering, medical, sustainment, security, and logistics operations. The exercise replicated complex, high-intensity combat scenarios that challenged both technical proficiency and tactical decision-making, while integrating modern threats such as unmanned aircraft systems, cyber, and robotics.

Brig. Gen. Sandra Martin, deputy commander of the 412th Theater Engineer Command and senior trainer for the event, oversaw planning and execution.

"I'm responsible for working with the observer-coach-trainers; getting information and feedback on how the units are doing every day with achieving their training objectives," Martin said. "We spent a year of planning that led up to CSTX, and during that planning, we worked closely with the 78th Training Division to understand what challenges Soldiers would benefit from the most."

— Thousands of service members, most of them Army Reserve Soldiers, descended on Fort McCoy for the 78th Training Division Combat Support Training Exercise (CSTX) 78-25-02 from Aug. 2-15, and that meant the Fort McCoy food-service team had a big task in front of them to ensure all those people had food and other supplies for their training.

The installation's food-service team ensures that need is always met, said Food Service Specialist Jim Gouker with the Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center (LRC).

That team includes the LRC Food Program Management Office (FPMO) and the LRC Subsistence Supply Management Office (SSMO); the full food-service contractor DCT Inc.; and food suppliers, such as Sysco Foods of Baraboo, Wis.

This exercise also included related exercises Global Strike 2025 and Global Medic 2025. It was a diverse group of service members training and their needs for items stretched to all areas of the post.

Gouker said for food service the SSMO supported CSTX/Global Medic/Global Strike with Class I in the following quantities: Meals, Ready-to-Eat (MREs), 80,4242 standard meals; MREs Kosher, 192 meals; MREs Halal, 1,380 meals; Unitized Group Rations (UGRs)-As, 12,650 meals; UGRs H&S, 134,550 meals; UHIT milk, 48,330 containers; bagged ice, 202,000 pounds; and additional enhancements such as fresh fruit, salad mix, salad dressings, and bread.

— Dozens of representatives of Fort McCoy Garrison staff as well as personnel with installation tenant organizations met Aug. 5 in building 905 for a special postwide meeting.

The Garrison-Tenant Staff Meeting is an important opportunity for all who attend, garrison



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

Soldiers with the 469th Combat Engineering Company (Infantry) and 402nd Combat Engineering Company conduct operations for a Mine Clearing Line Charge on Aug. 3, 2025, at Fort McCoy.

officials said.

Fort McCoy Garrison Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Chad Holder, who took over as deputy commander in July, led the meeting. Also attending from the garrison leadership team was Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major. The meeting is an opportunity for open dialogue and discussion between the garrison staff and tenant organization partners, Holder said during the meeting.

— The roar of engines from UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters could be heard for nearly two weeks in August 2025 throughout Fort McCoy as the aircraft and their crews supported the 78th Training Division's Combat Support Training Exercise (CSTX) 78-25-02 at the post.

CSTX 78-25-02 took place from Aug. 2-14 at areas all throughout Fort McCoy. There were eight Black Hawks and three Chinooks that operated from Fort McCoy were from the 8th Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment at Fort Knox, Ky.

During the exercise, training officials said the helicopters supported troop movements across North Post and South Post at Fort McCoy and numerous special training events. Chinooks also supported a special exercise at Big Sandy Lake on South Post on Aug. 11 where Soldiers with the 647th Regional Support Group under the 416th Theater Engineer Command completed bridging operations during Global Strike 2025.

— Soldiers with the 279th Engineer Utilities Detachment, an Army Reserve unit out of Weldon Spring, Mo., worked on a troop project replacing broken sidewalk sections on J Street during their annual training with the 78th Training Division's Combat Support Training Exercise (CSTX) 25-02 in August at Fort McCoy.

The 279th Soldiers worked for several days to prepare the area as well as manage the concrete pours to set in the new sidewalk. Through this work, engineer troops get the training they need, and the installation benefits from the work they do to improve Fort McCoy training ranges and quality-of-life programs, post officials said.

— Nearly 50 members of the British armed services as well as nearly 30 members of the Canadian armed forces visited the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area on Aug. 14 for a tour of the area that included stopping at the Fort McCoy History Center, Equipment Park, Veterans Memorial Plaza, and more.

Members of the 203rd (Welsh) Multi-Role Medical Regiment — a unit of the Royal Army Medical Service within the Army Reserve of the British Army that's based in Wales — made their way to the Commemorative Area following participation in the 2025 Global Medic exercise on post.

Also included were members of the Royal Canadian Medical Service (RCMS) who were also visiting the area after serving in Global Medic.

— More than 30 members of the 223rd Support Maintenance Company (SMC), 363rd Quartermaster Battalion (Petroleum Pipeline), visited the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area on Aug. 14 after finishing regular operations supporting the 78th Training Division's Combat Support Training Exercise 25-02.

The 223rd SMC is an Army Reserve unit headquartered at Grand Prairie Armed Forces Reserve Complex, Texas. Soldiers with the unit made the visit on the end of their time at Fort McCoy after supporting the exercise.

— The Predictive Index (PI) is a scientifically validated talent optimization tool designed to help organizations understand what drives their people — and how to align those drives with business strategy.

It measures behavioral tendencies and cognitive ability, offering insights into how individuals work, communicate, and contribute to team dynamics. PI is widely used across industries to enhance hiring, leadership development, and organizational effectiveness, said Workforce Development Specialist Nicholas Kletzien with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works.

On Aug. 21, Fort McCoy Workforce Development, in partnership with Viterbo University, hosted a Predictive Index Behavioral Assessment Small Team Training on post.

## SEPTEMBER

— Fort McCoy, Wis., held its 2025 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 5 in building 905, giving military retirees a chance to catch up with one another and learn more about their benefits.

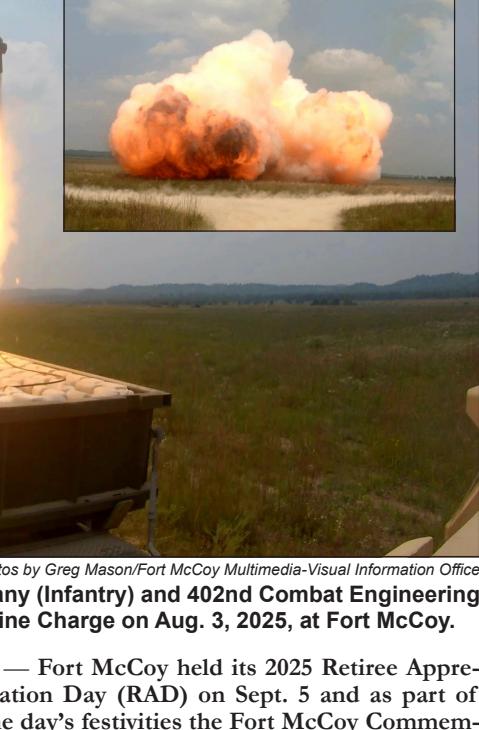
The first part of this year's event was a prayer breakfast that began at 7:30 a.m., said Fort McCoy Retirement Services Officer Nicholas Gimson with the Directorate of Human Resources. The breakfast is organized by the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office and the guest speaker will be Father Conrad Targonski, Viterbo University chaplain.

Following the breakfast, speakers also included a welcome from Fort McCoy Garrison leadership and briefings from related agencies. Participating community partners include the Fort McCoy Retirement Services Office, TriCare, Fort McCoy's transition assistance advisor, Military One Source, County veteran service officers, and many others.

Additionally, flu shots will be available for attendees through Walgreens.

"This event was open to all military retirees, those transitioning into retirement, and their spouses," Gimson said.

The ultimate goal of a Retiree Appreciation Day was to bring together military retirees and give them an opportunity to receive some of the most up-to-date information on the benefits they are entitled to with a seminar setting, Gimson said. Attendance to the 2025 Fort McCoy Retiree Appreciation Day was free.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Avery Cunningham

(Left to right) Col. Charles W. Wells, the outgoing commander of 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade; First Army Division East, Lt. Gen. Mark Landes, commander of First Army; and Col. Stewart U. Gast, the incoming commander of the 181st, salute during the playing of the national anthem Aug. 5 during the brigade's Change of Command Ceremony at Fort McCoy.

— Fort McCoy held its 2025 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) on Sept. 5 and as part of the day's festivities the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area was opened to the RAD attendees who were in the main event in nearby building 905.

The area was open for approximately six hours and nearly 100 of the RAD attendees stopped by to see the historical displays and learn more about Fort McCoy's and the Army's history.

— Led by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS), U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy held an Integrated Protection Exercise (IPE) on Sept. 11 at the installation.

Fort McCoy's September IPE focused on a natural disaster event. The scenario started with an activation of the Installation Emergency Operations Center along with a call out to action officers to report to the center.

— Hundreds of military retirees and family members participated in a prayer breakfast Sept. 5, 2025, at the start of the 2025 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) at Fort McCoy, Wis.

Attendees received a free breakfast and received a presentation from guest speaker Father Conrad Targonski, university chaplain at Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wis.

During his talk, Targonski talked about pilgrimage and personal experiences.

He talked of one pilgrimage to Camino de Santiago.

"It's since the 8th century that people would go on pilgrimage to kind of like get their minds set," Targonski said. "So I went with another Marine who was actually assigned to go with me because I had a problem getting lost. I drove my sergeant major crazy in Iraq. ... But anyways, I wanted to go on this pilgrimage. It's the destination. You're away from everything."

"Pilgrimage is different," he said. "You go to the pilgrimage and it's all about the journey. It's day by day."

— The founder of Fort McCoy, formerly Camp McCoy — Maj. Gen. Robert B. McCoy — was honored during a special ceremony Sept. 5 on what would have been his 158th birthday.

The Maj. Gen. Robert Bruce McCoy Remembrance Ceremony was held at Woodlawn Cemetery in Sparta, Wis., with McCoy family members present as well as students from Sparta Montessori School. The ceremony was led and organized by the 88th Readiness Division and U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy personnel.

Included in the event were a team of four Fort McCoy Soldiers who made up a color guard. Also included were guest speakers who included Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez; Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Dieckman, 88th Readiness Division command sergeant major; and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, Fort McCoy Garrison command sergeant major.

Chaplain (Maj.) Walter McCall, Fort McCoy Garrison chaplain, then gave the invocation. He was followed by Dieckman who spoke about Maj. Gen. McCoy's history.

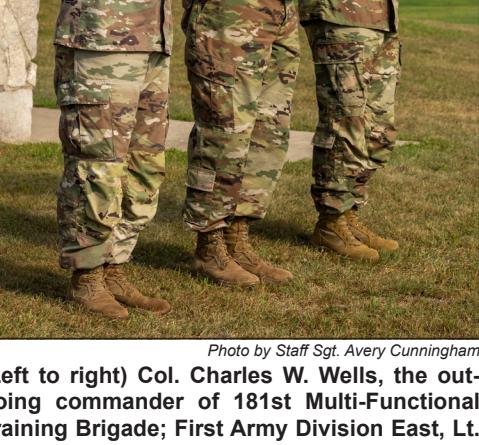
"Today we honor a man whose experiences while serving in the National Guard and the U.S. Army gave him insight into the future of military training and what would be necessary to prepare Soldiers for future conflict," Dieckman said.

— Dozens of Soldiers, veterans, civilian workforce members, family members, Wisconsin Challenge Academy cadets, and others lined up in the dark, foggy, early morning hours Sept. 11 to pay honor to the victims of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, on the United States as they participated in the 2025 Fort McCoy 9/11 Memorial Run and Stair Climb.

The 2.975-mile run/1.34-mile walk started and ended in the parking lot of one of the new four-story barracks at Fort McCoy — the tallest buildings on post. The stair climb, which also was meant to resemble the firefighters climbing the stairs of the World Trade Center, also took place inside the barracks building. Nearly every participant also did the stair climb.

Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) led the coordination.

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nation efforts once again. In the early morning darkness, DFMWR Director Scott Abell welcomed the many participants, especially the Fort McCoy Fire Department participants.

"Thank you for the Fort McCoy Fire Department's presence here today," Abell said. He also passed the microphone to a Fort McCoy Soldier who gave the invocation to begin the event.

After the invocation, Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez also gave opening comments about remembering what happened 24 years ago.

"Today is the 24th anniversary for an act that changed our nation forever," Baez said. "And the main reason why we are here is because we are not forgetting the people who lost their lives. They're not forgotten. We are honoring their life. We are honoring their family. And three points that I'd like to make this morning is, as a nation, we don't have to wait for the worst moment to come united and be better to each other. That is part of who we are as Americans. That is part of the values that we have. And we don't have to wait for another 9-11 to come together."

— Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician Brandon Perron with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services Fire Department completed the 2025 Fort McCoy 9/11 Memorial Run and Stair Climb wearing his full firefighter suit along with carrying more than 100 pounds of gear.

This was the second year straight that Perron volunteered his Patriot Day morning to complete the event in a way that memorialized the firefighters and emergency responders from their response on Sept. 11, 2001.

The 2.975-mile run/1.34-mile walk started and ended in the parking lot of one of the new four-story barracks at Fort McCoy — the tallest buildings on post. The stair climb, which also was meant to resemble the firefighters climbing the stairs of the World Trade Center, also took place inside the barracks building.

In 2024, Perron described his reasons for putting himself through such a physically demanding effort.

"It's to honor the 343 firefighters who perished on 9/11 and those who have perished since because of cancer related issues," Perron said. "But it's also just in the totality of the circumstances that everybody who has either fought in the wars following and lost their lives or the civilians who lost their lives. Police officers ... everybody who was involved with 9/11 ... just to honor and respect them for what they've gone through and what their families are going through currently."

— On Sept. 24, Fort McCoy leaders and representatives with the housing contractor Cadence Communities took to the streets to hold the post's first "walking town hall" where they met with South Post Housing community members to address concerns and ask questions.

Participating in the effort were Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez-Ramirez; Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major; Maj. Zachary W. Daugherty, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company; Zach Hynes, Fort McCoy Housing Division chief with the Directorate of Public Works; and others. Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Betty, the 15th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, also attended the town hall to learn more about Fort McCoy housing.

The first main stop included meeting with family members at a housing area playground. That was followed with several stops at residences to talk with residents about any questions they might have for post leaders about the housing area, and more.

At each stop they received feedback and walked away with information to follow-up on for the residents. Hynes said the overall effort was very productive.

— Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Betty, the 15th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, attended "walking town hall" Sept. 24 in South Post Housing at Fort McCoy.

Betty's participation was to not lead the town hall, that was done by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy command staff and personnel. His participation was to learn more about the installation housing area and to hear from Soldiers and families in housing.

At the beginning of the housing town hall, Betty and others received a familiarization of what the housing units look like.

Zach Hynes, Fort McCoy Housing Division chief with the Directorate of Public Works, took the lead to explain what's in the units and to respond to any questions about the units.

Over the course of nearly an hour, Betty met with many of the housing area residents — both adult and younger — and learned firsthand why many Fort McCoy housing residents have rated this installation's housing as one of the best in housing satisfaction surveys.

— The contractor for the \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy has been busy finishing framing and more on one building and is set to soon erect steel framing on a second building as September comes to an end.

Ken Green with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Resident Office at Fort McCoy said the project is now 22 percent complete and rising daily. In his Sept. 19 update, Green gave the latest actions.

"Structural steel continued section B. Sleeve rough-in continued section B. Rebar was placed for elevated deck section B. Exterior wall framing continued section A," Green wrote in the update.

"Elevated slab placements continued sections A & B," Green stated. "Imbeds spray foam started section A. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in started. Exterior sheeting started in section A. And a truss package arrived on site."

— Fort McCoy personnel once again provided updates about the installation's natural resources-related efforts Aug. 11 during the September 2025 meeting of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee.

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 August 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 August 2025 were:

— Fort McCoy fisheries personnel conducted base flow, runoff, and monthly phosphorus stream water quality sampling.

They also conducted monthly lake oxygen and temperature profiles.

Oxygen levels and temperatures are consistent with late summer surveys, with some lakes showing signs of oxygen deficiencies at deeper depths, although levels are not concerning.

\* Fisheries employees supporting Fort McCoy natural resources efforts also removed 50 meters of invasive brush along Stillwell Creek and placed 26 meters of brush bundles to reduce erosion.

\* Fort McCoy natural resources personnel completed the second draft of the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan and sent copies to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for review.

\* In forestry management, forestry personnel assisted Land Rehabilitation and Management (LRAM) members in identifying nine Oak Wilt treatment sites.

\* Fort McCoy invasive species management personnel stated the weather for August was good for treatments of invasive species on the installation.

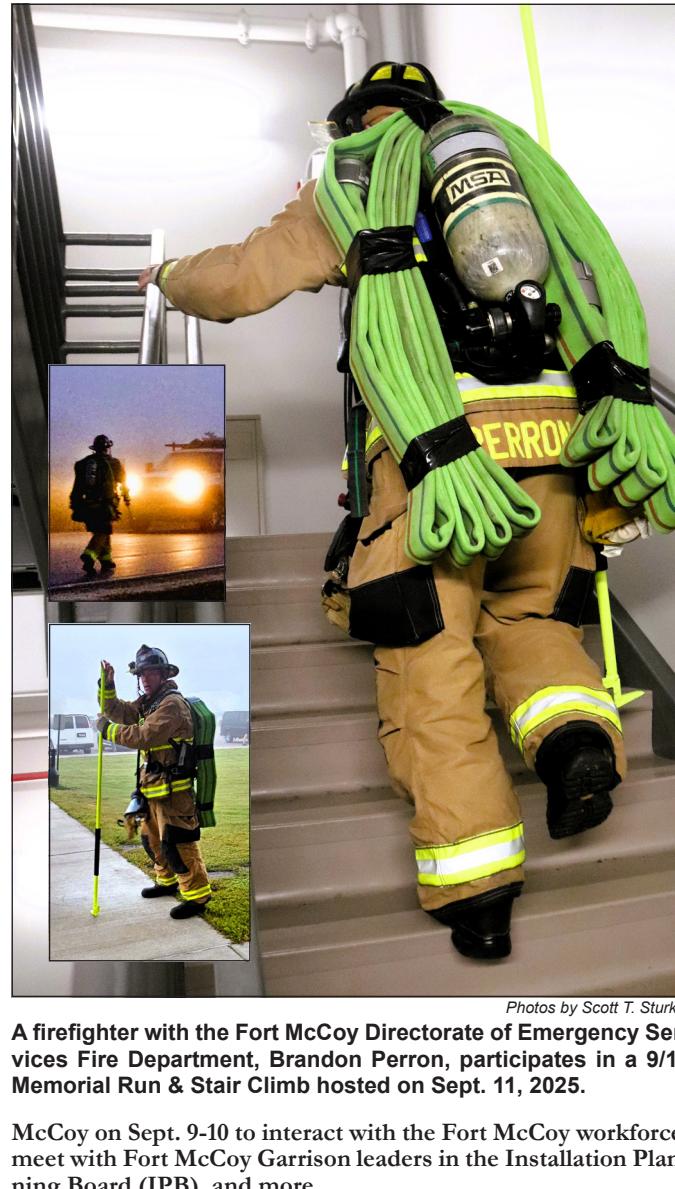
— Fort McCoy's fourth transient training troops \$27.3 million barracks project, also known as the East Barracks Project, is approaching nearly 70 percent completion, said Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the Army Corps of Engineers at Fort McCoy.

In his Sept. 12 update, Butts said the contractor, L.S. Black Constructors, were steadily making progress on the project. As of Sept. 12, the project was at 68 percent complete and work was scheduled to be 60 percent finished at this time.

Butts wrote in the update, "Masons continue working on the north and northwest side of the building. Drywall installation continues. Bathroom tile on the first floor continued. Window installation continues."

"Ceiling grid continues to be installed throughout the building. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in continues. Drywall finishing and painting continues throughout the building. Parking lot curb and gutter continued. Parking lot concrete paving placement continued," Butts wrote.

— Patrick J. Appelman, director of Installation Management Command (IMCOM)-Readiness made an official visit to Fort



Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

A firefighter with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services Fire Department, Brandon Perron, participates in a 9/11 Memorial Run & Stair Climb hosted on Sept. 11, 2025.

McCoy on Sept. 9-10 to interact with the Fort McCoy workforce, meet with Fort McCoy Garrison leaders in the Installation Planning Board (IPB), and more.

This was Appelman's second visit to Fort McCoy in 2025. As part of this visit, the IMCOM-Readiness director participated in the 2025 Installation Planning Board meeting on Sept. 9.

— Fort McCoy's South Barracks Project has been completed with the final inspection for the facility having been completed at the end of September 2025.

Nathan Butts with the Resident Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Fort McCoy's South Barracks Project has reached 99 percent complete in his Sept. 12 update about the project.

The contractor for the project, BlinderPower (Construction), received the notice to proceed with construction on Sept. 26, 2023, and had 780 calendar days to complete the project. Butts said the project was completed on time.

In the Sept. 12 update, Butts also wrote everything that was being finalized.

"Contractor continues final cleaning and working on punch-list items," Butts wrote in the update. "Exterior site work continues around the USO building. USO temporary parking lot removed. Top-soil elevations were addressed and seeding followed. Parking lot concrete sealant and striping is complete."

## OCTOBER

— Work was completed in October 2025 by contractors to improve the guest experience at the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area with the construction of concrete pads for placement of benches, picnic tables, and garbage cans throughout the historic area at Fort McCoy.

The work was done despite the government shutdown in October because this project was a contracted effort.

Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works (DPW) coordinated the completion of the work with support from the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, Fort McCoy Garrison leadership, and the Fort McCoy Resource Management Office.

Overall, 14 concrete pads were completed in different sizes throughout the historical area, DPW officials said. Work on the project took approximately two weeks. Fort McCoy Public Affairs officials said the project improved numerous areas of the Commemorative Area to allow for more seating and easier maintenance of the grounds.

— For years on end, Fort McCoy has had a significant economic impact with the local economies around the installation, particularly in Monroe County, Wis.

One big contribution to that impact is new construction at the post. Construction dollars counted by the Fort McCoy Plans, Analysis, and Integration Office show to be a key factor and contributor to the installation's annual economic impact each fiscal year.

Fort McCoy's total economic impact for fiscal year (FY) 2024 was an estimated \$1.6 billion, Fort McCoy Garrison officials stated in April 2025, which was up from FY 2023's total impact of \$1.38 billion. That impact is expected to be around the same or higher for FY 2025.

As a matter of fact, 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 \$1.47 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, the recently completed \$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 going into FY 2026.

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.

The FY 2025 contribution will be calculated by early 2026. But as FY 2026 continues, the construction projects continue around the installation, and the economic impact to local communities from those projects also continues.

— Training operations took place throughout October for service members at Fort McCoy.

During October 2025, hundreds of troops trained at Fort McCoy for annual training, weekend training, institutional training, and for other military training.

Annually, Fort McCoy has trained around 100,000 troops nearly every year since 1984. National Guard, Army Reserve, active-duty Army, and other service members trained at Fort McCoy during October.

— Contractors continued working on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, throughout October 2025 at Fort McCoy.

Contractors began in May 2024 getting the site set up for the fourth transient training troops barracks project at Fort McCoy, which was awarded in February 2024 to L.S. Black Constructors, LLC, for approximately \$27.3 million.

L.S. Black Constructors is a familiar name in the barracks construction history at Fort McCoy, having built the first two of the 60,000-square-foot transient training troops barracks on post. They also recently built the new brigade headquarters building located in the same block as the barracks buildings.

The exact contract amount for the project was \$27,287,735. In the award announcement, it states it was "for the construction of the barracks, which will provide housing for enlisted service members undergoing training at the installation."

— Contractors also completed work throughout October 2025 for the fiscal year 2024-funded \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project at Fort McCoy.

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

The project calls for the construction of two new 48,000-square-foot, four-story Collective Training Officers Quarters buildings.

The contract duration is scheduled for completion in 1,260 calendar days, according to the Army Corps of Engineers.

— As October arrived at Fort McCoy, the sight of leaves changing from green to the vibrant colors of red, orange, and yellow were seen throughout the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area and Equipment Park.

The Equipment Park was established in the mid-1990s to complement the Commemorative Area's historical representation, documentation shows. What began as an initial outdoor display of five pieces of equipment ("macro-artifacts") increased over time to what is today a display of 70 different items of equipment and vehicles and is still growing.

Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office officials said the park is traditionally open throughout the year between May and September, but every October the park has drive-in access for people to check it out.

— Other activity at Fort McCoy during October 2025 was limited due to the Fort McCoy Garrison civilian workforce being furloughed during the entire month because of a government shutdown.

## NOVEMBER

— Fort McCoy completed another busy year supporting troop training with 109,962 troops training at the installation in fiscal year (FY) 2025.

The FY 2025 number is more than the 73,991 troops who trained on post during FY 2024 and the 86,090 troops who trained at the installation in FY 2023, said Brooks Lundeen, range officer for the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS).

"The increase in numbers was from the addition of the strength report for units that utilized facilities in cantonment," Lundeen said. Training support by Fort McCoy included not just ranges and training areas but also use of barracks, food, buildings, and more.

"Overall, a very successful year," Lundeen said.

DPTMS officials said the training numbers include Army Reserve Soldiers; National Guard service members; and active-duty troops from not just the Army but also other services, such as the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

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

During fiscal year 2025, training included battle-assemble (weekend) training; annual training; mobilization; institutional training; and numerous exercises, including a Combat Support Training Exercise, Global Medic, and numerous other training events.

Lundeen said the training numbers were split as 46,047 troops completing annual training, and 63,915 troops completing battle assembly training.

Exercises are counted as annual training, and institutional training is also mixed in, officials said.

— The Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) held a community dinner on Nov. 20 that was open to military members and their families as well as government civilian employees.

The dinner was established as a Thanksgiving buffet-style dinner with turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, sweet potatoes, stuffing, salad, pie, and drinks.

According to DFMWR, the dinner was free for participants and was paid for by one of DFMWR's regular sponsors.

DFMWR Director Scott Abell said he was very pleased with the turnout of more than 270 people.

"It was great getting the community together after a stressful period, and to properly kick off the holiday season," Abell said.

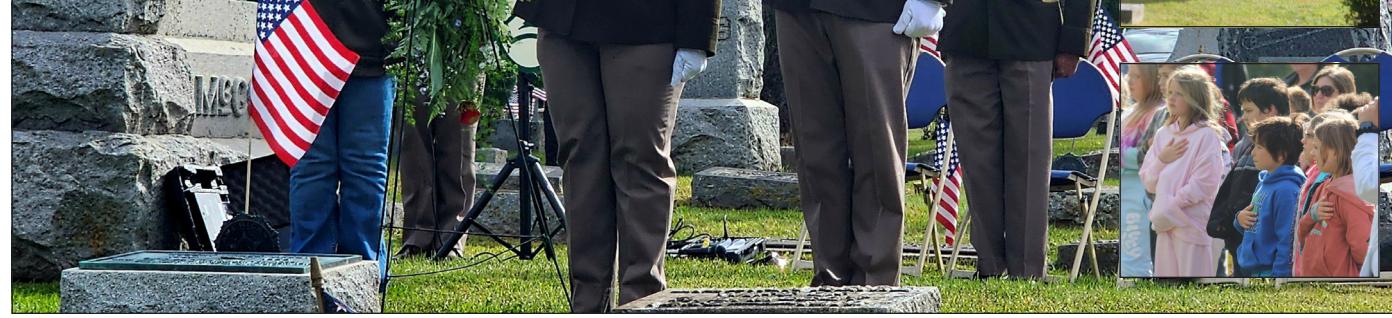
The dinner took place from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Nov. 20 and at times nearly all the seating in McCoy's Community Center was completely filled.

Military families brought their children, who could be seen coloring pages in one section of the center. Government civilian employees could also be seen with their spouses participating as well.

In the serving line, several leaders served up the dinner to guests, including U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez; Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major; Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon; Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Kirkman, commandant of the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Academy; and 1st Sgt. Derek Willis and Master Sgt. Brian Weinberger, also with the Fort McCoy NCO Academy.

— In July, the Wisconsin Challenge Academy, a tenant organization of Fort McCoy, held its annual summer camp.

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## FORT MCCOY'S 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

## YEAR IN REVIEW 2025

from Page 7

nization at Fort McCoy, welcomed their 55th class of cadets to train in the academy. Since then, the students have been active in all facets of academy training.

By November 2025, class 55 cadets continued in the residential phase until graduation in December. They've been completing all types of training, learning, community participation, and more.

— **Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez**, with the assistance of the garrison Religious Support Office team, and volunteers from Resource Management Office, cooked and served 50 free hot meals consisting of stewed chicken, steamed broccoli, rice and dessert to Fort McCoy furloughed civilian personnel and their families Nov. 5 from the RSO building.

The event ran from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. with personnel showing up with their families as early as 4 p.m.

All were given the option to pick-up their meal, eat in the RSO Fellowship Hall, or have their meals delivered to their workplace or home.

Many families opted to eat-in with meal organizers.

The meals that were delivered were done so by Garrison Chaplain (Maj.) Walter McCoy to the Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) Police Department offices at the DES headquarters as well as the Main Gate.

"That was immediately followed up with a call to Col. Baez expressing gratitude," McCall said.

On the way out the RSO gave grocery bags of dry good items to all attendees in addition to their meals. In the informal after-action review, Baez and the RSO team agreed to doing the event again if the shutdown continued.

— **Fort McCoy members took time Nov. 20 to engage with the Tomah (Wis.) Chamber of Commerce during their monthly meeting at a business in Tomah.**

Fort McCoy Garrison Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Chad Holder and other representatives from the installation talked and engaged with dozens of members of the chamber.

According to its website at <https://www.tomah-wisconsin.com>, the Tomah Chamber of Commerce welcomes a variety of organizations and businesses to be a part of their group.

"The Tomah Chamber and Visitors Center invites businesses, organizations, and not-for-profit organizations to become a member and grow with the Tomah community," the website states. "We work to create an environment where it is desirable to do business, raise a family, and explore the area. Investing in the chamber is investing in Tomah."

Meeting with chambers of commerce and other civic organizations allows Army leaders like Holder to have direct engagement with community leaders, and more.

— **Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, engaged with the school board of the Tomah (Wis.) School District on Nov. 17 in the Robert Kupper Learning Center in Tomah.**

Both leaders discussed installation news as well as other information in the "service to the Tomah community" segment of the board meeting. The participation was part of regular Army community engagement efforts by Fort McCoy.

## DECEMBER

— **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.

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.

— **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 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."

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.

— **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.

— **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.

— **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.**

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.

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.

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

\* Invasive species management, with treatments, personnel treated 102.5 acres and surveyed 266.4 acres.

\* 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



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

Work is shown Oct. 15, 2025, where contractors prepared areas of the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area for installation of concrete pads for placement of benches, picnic tables, and garbage cans throughout the historic area at Fort McCoy, Wis. The project improved numerous areas of the Commemorative Area to allow for more seating and easier maintenance of the grounds.

quota was 450 tags. Bonus antlerless tags issued were 450 tags. Bonus antlerless tags purchased were 244.

— **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 began passing out the trees on Dec. 6 during events taking place at McCoy's Community Center.

— **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. 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 sheeting 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."

— **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.

— **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 in December the renovation construction began on Oct. 1 and continues now.

The contract to complete the renovation was awarded to R.J. Jurowski 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."

— **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.

— **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 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.

— **Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works (DPW) and Xcel Energy continue to work together to finish the process of changing the electrical grid on post from a Delta Electrical System to a Wye Electrical System, Fort McCoy DPW officials said.**

Work on this switchover has been ongoing since 2022, officials said, and during November and December 2025, workers continued to work on the project.

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

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

— **Leaders with Fort McCoy Garrison and installation agencies met Dec. 11, 2025, with community leaders and workforce professionals in Sparta, Wis., during the Fort McCoy Area Workforce Collaborative Meeting.**

The meeting brought together people who are working to improve employment opportunities in the region, including at Fort McCoy. Among those attending the meeting were Maj. Zachary Daugherty, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company; and representatives from several other post agencies to include Army Community Service, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, and Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

— **Fort McCoy saw its first significant snow of the winter season in late November, and then continued to see snowfall throughout December, including a significant snow event Dec. 28-29 which has kept the Fort McCoy snow-removal team busy.**

Equipment operators with the Fort McCoy snow removal contractor, Kayuh Services LLC of Anchorage, Alaska, were busy clearing the new snow Dec. 28 and 29 at Fort McCoy. Fort McCoy also held a late reporting of personnel on Dec. 29 due to deteriorating driving conditions.

Fort McCoy's motto is to be the "Total Force Training Center." Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin. The installation has provided support and facilities for the field and classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi/>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching "usagmccoy." Also try downloading the My Army Post app to your smartphone and set "Fort McCoy" or another installation as your preferred base.



Photos by Scott T. Sturkol

U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy leaders serve guests Dec. 4, 2025, 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.

Scenes from the 2025 Fort McCoy Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony are shown Dec. 4, 2025, at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy. Hundreds of community members participated.

Photo by Scott T. Sturkol