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The Real McCoy

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Fort McCoy hosts 2026 E3B event; tests Soldiers for some of Army's prestigious expert skill badges

Soldiers from across the Army's Total Force converged on Fort McCoy in spring 2026 to compete in one of the military's most demanding professional-development and readiness programs as the U.S. Army Reserve conducted its 2026 Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB), Expert Soldier Badge (ESB), and Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB) assessment, collectively known as E3B.

According to the U.S. Army Reserve Competitive Programs Office, the event was held from April 27 through May 8 and brought together Soldiers from the active Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard to train and test for expert qualification in their respective military specialties.

Army Reserve officials describe the E3B program as a readiness-focused initiative designed to develop technically proficient Soldiers while enhancing interoperability across all Army components.

The event followed a familiar format that has become a staple of Army Reserve training at Fort McCoy. Candidates completed a week of intensive preparation before facing a demanding series of graded evaluations.

Army Reserve coverage of the event showed Soldiers being tested across 30 separate lanes involving weapons proficiency, tactical tasks, medical skills, physical fitness assessments, and warrior tasks and battle drills. Competitors also faced day and night land navigation requirements and a culminating road march designed to assess endurance, resilience, and attention to detail under pressure.

The challenge proved formidable.

In remarks following the event, the U.S. Army Reserve Command senior en-

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

(All photos) Soldiers from across the Army's Total Force participate in the U.S. Army Reserve 2026 Expert Infantryman Badge, Expert Soldier Badge, and Expert Field Medical Badge assessment — collectively known as E3B — in April at Fort McCoy.

More than 800 attend 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

More than 800 visitors enjoyed sunny skies and temperatures in the 80s during Fort McCoy's 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House on May 16, continuing a long-standing tradition of strengthening relationships between the military installation and the surrounding communities while offering the public a firsthand look at Army readiness, history, and service.

Held in Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area, the free public event featured military displays, historical exhibits, interactive activities, live music, and a special recognition ceremony honoring Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm-era veterans.

Organized by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy with support from numerous installation partners, the event reflected a mission that extends beyond military training — building and maintaining strong community relationships that have been essential to Fort McCoy's success for generations.

Military open houses and public

engagement events have long served as important bridges between military installations and the communities that support them. For installations such as Fort McCoy, those connections are especially important.

As Wisconsin's only U.S. Army installation, Fort McCoy has played a central role in training America's armed forces for more than a century. Since its establishment in 1909, the installation has supported training and mobilization efforts through World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Global War on Terrorism, and ongoing readiness missions.

For many decades, public open houses, Armed Forces Day observances, military appreciation events, and historical celebrations have given community members opportunities to see firsthand the people, equipment, and missions that support national defense.

Armed Forces Day itself traces its origins to 1950, when the newly

(See OPEN HOUSE, Page 8)



Photo by Mike Volpe/Fort McCoy Garrison

A scene from the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House is shown May 16 at Fort McCoy. More than people participated in the event that included multiple military vehicle equipment displays, food, games, information booths, and access to Fort McCoy's historical Commemorative Area. Participation included support from active-duty Army personnel, National Guard and Army Reserve forces, and more. This was the first event like this at Fort McCoy since 2024.

Army Reserve's 2026 Best Squad crowned during premier Reserve readiness competition



Photo by Pfc. Anastasia Addis, U.S. Army Reserve

Army Reserve Best Squad competitors react to enemy contact during the Best Squad Competition at Fort McCoy Wisconsin, May 23, 2026. Ninety-eight Soldiers from around the nation compete in the 2026 BSC, an annual competition that brings together the best Soldiers and squads from across the U.S. Army Reserve to earn the title of "Best Warrior" and "Best Squad" among their peers.

Soldiers from across the U.S. Army Reserve deployed to Fort McCoy in May 2026 to compete in the U.S. Army Reserve Command Best Squad Competition — a demanding week-long event designed to identify the Reserve's top squad while testing physical fitness, tactical proficiency, marksmanship, leadership, and teamwork under challenging conditions.

At the conclusion of the competition, Squad 20 from the 807th Theater Medical Command (TMC) earned the title of U.S. Army Reserve Best Squad for fiscal year 2026, according to results released by the U.S. Army Reserve at <https://www.facebook.com/usarmyreserve/posts/pfbid0hGatD6tjBHE93fjv6M-LSUnxEfHhPcFGDHQxjXS0ETbDitAncc4MjPBPMEH4mPmvl>.

The winning squad consisted of Staff Sgt. David Kratky, Spc. Grace Libby, Spc. Campbell King, Pfc. Aidan Chilson, and Pfc. Joseph Varcoe.

In addition to helping lead the winning squad to victory, Kratky was named the Army Reserve's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, while Libby earned honors as the Soldier of the Year. The competition's Top Marksman award was earned by Staff Sgt. Eduardo Lemos-Mederos of the 377th Theater Sustainment Command.

The competition brought together nearly 100 Soldiers representing Army Reserve commands from across the nation and challenged them through a series of events that evaluated warrior tasks, physical endurance, tactical decision-making, weapons proficiency, and

leadership abilities, organizers stated. The event also highlighted the Army Reserve's emphasis on readiness and lethality while identifying the Soldiers who best exemplify Army standards.

Fort McCoy served as an ideal venue for the competition due to its extensive training infrastructure and long-standing role as one of the Army's premier readiness platforms, according to Fort McCoy's Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

Located in the heart of the Upper Midwest, the installation routinely supports training for active-duty, Reserve, National Guard, and joint-service forces. Fort McCoy's ranges, maneuver areas, urban operations facilities, and specialized training sites allow units to conduct

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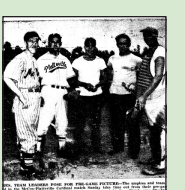
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NEWS

Fort McCoy opens new microgrid to strengthen energy resilience at Main Gate

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy leaders, community partners, and distinguished guests gathered May 19 for a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the official opening of the installation's new \$1.4 million Main Gate Microgrid with Battery Backup Project, a major investment in installation resilience, readiness, and energy modernization.

The project, completed through a partnership between U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy and Xcel Energy, is designed to ensure uninterrupted operations for critical facilities near Fort McCoy's Main Gate in the event of a commercial power outage. Installation officials said the microgrid can provide a minimum of 14 days of continuous operations and allows the Main Gate and surrounding mission-essential facilities to continue functioning independently in "island mode" when the primary electrical grid is unavailable.

In addition to enhancing emergency preparedness, the system is expected to generate approximately \$20,000 in annual energy savings by reducing electricity use during Xcel Energy's peak demand periods and offsetting utility power imports when the commercial grid is operating normally.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Director Liane Haun served as narrator and emcee for the ceremony, welcoming attendees and describing the project as a milestone in the installation's history.

"Today we mark a significant milestone in our installation's history, a testament to our commitment to energy resilience and innovation," Haun said during her opening remarks. "This project, the first of its kind at Fort McCoy, and a pioneering effort within the Department of the Army, ensures that our critical operations continue without interruption, regardless of external conditions."

Fort McCoy Chaplain (Maj.) Walter McCall delivered the invocation, offering a blessing for the installation, those who serve there, and the new infrastructure supporting Fort McCoy's mission.

Featured speakers included Fort McCoy Senior



A scene from the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the official opening of the installation's new \$1.4 million Main Gate Microgrid with Battery Backup Project is shown May 19 at Fort McCoy.

Commander Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division, and Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez.

Ricciardi highlighted the strategic significance of the project, calling it far more than a facility improvement.

"Today we celebrate a landmark achievement, the successful completion of Fort McCoy's first microgrid," Ricciardi said. "This is not just a techno-

logical upgrade — it is a fundamental enhancement of our strategic readiness."

Ricciardi also noted the project's innovative financing structure, describing it as the first in the Army to use third-party financing for this type of energy resilience infrastructure.

Baez Ramirez emphasized the project's role in strengthening installation security and readiness.

"This microgrid directly supports our mission and readiness," Baez Ramirez said. "Its indepen-

dent island mode capability is a critical portion of our continuous security."

She also recognized the work of Fort McCoy's Directorate of Public Works, project lead Brandon Gronau, and Xcel Energy for helping bring the project from concept to completion.

Following the remarks, leaders and project partners participated in the ceremonial ribbon cutting, including Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, Xcel Energy representatives, and Gronau.

Attendees were then invited to view the new microgrid installation and attend a reception in the nearby inspection building.

The new microgrid supports Fort McCoy's ongoing efforts to modernize infrastructure, strengthen installation resilience, and ensure uninterrupted mission support for training, mobilization, and homeland defense operations.

Fort McCoy's motto beginning in 2026 is "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909."

The installation's mission: "Fort McCoy strengthens Total Force Readiness by serving as a training center, Mobilization Force Generation Installation, and Strategic Support Area enabling warfighter lethality to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars."

And Fort McCoy's vision is, "To be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces."

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/mccooy>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccooy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccooy/>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching "usagmccooy." Also try downloading the My Army Post app to your smartphone and set "Fort McCoy" or another installation as your preferred base. Fort McCoy is also part of Army's Installation Management Command where "We Are The Army's Home."

Fort McCoy holds U.S. Army Reserve 118th Birthday Celebration

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy community members gathered April 23 at McCoy's Community Center to celebrate the 118th birthday of the U.S. Army Reserve, honoring more than a century of service by the Army's Citizen-Soldiers and recognizing the Reserve's enduring importance to national defense and military readiness.

The celebration, organized by Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR), included remarks from installation leaders, a ceremonial cake-cutting, and free food for attendees following the ceremony.

The event marked another milestone for a force whose origins date to April 23, 1908, when Congress established the Medical Reserve Corps — the official predecessor to today's Army Reserve. Over the past 118 years, the Army Reserve has evolved into an essential component of the Total Army, providing trained and ready forces for overseas combat operations, homeland response missions, disaster support, and countless other operations around the globe.

Scott Abell, director of Fort McCoy's DFMWR, opened the celebration by highlighting the Reserve's long legacy and its connection to Fort McCoy's mission.

"It's an honor to stand before you today as we celebrate the 118th birthday of the United States Army Reserve, a force whose legacy of service, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment has shaped the strength of our Army and the safety of our nation," Abell said.

Abell noted Fort McCoy's especially close relationship with the Army Reserve as one of the Army's premier training installations.

"Here at Fort McCoy, the Army Reserve plays an especially significant role," Abell said. "As a premier training installation and a hub for Reserve component readiness, Fort McCoy supports thousands of Army Reserve Soldiers each year, providing the facilities, ranges, and resources they need to maintain combat readiness and operational excellence."

He added that Fort McCoy's role goes far beyond simply serving as a training location.

"This installation is more than just a training ground," Abell said. "It's a launch pad for deployments, a site for vital joint exercises, and a critical asset in preparing our Reserve forces for the challenges of today and tomorrow."

Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, also addressed attendees, speaking on behalf of herself and Fort McCoy Senior Commander Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division.

"Thank you for joining us as we celebrate the 118th birthday of the United States Army Reserve," Baez Ramirez said. "Today, we honor the enduring legacy of the warrior citizen."

Referencing this year's Army Reserve birthday theme, Twice the Citizen, Baez emphasized the unique dual role of Reserve Soldiers.

"A fitting tribute to the remarkable individuals who expertly balance their civilian careers, their family life, with dedicated service to our nation," Baez said. "The theme connects today's Soldiers to the 118 years of dedicated service and contributions to our nation."

She noted that since the Army Reserve's founding, more than 1.3 million citizen-Soldiers have answered the nation's call.

"They have deployed to every major combat operation around the world," she said. "They have responded to natural disasters here in the homeland and also abroad, and they have demonstrated unwavering commitment whenever the Army needs them."

Baez also underscored the modern Army Reserve's continued relevance in an increasingly complex global environment.

"The U.S. Army Reserve is an essential part of the Total Army force," she said. "They are the teachers, the nurses, the engineers, the cybersecurity professionals whose civilian skills are carried into their military formations, making the entire workforce stronger and more



(Above and below) Fort McCoy community members participate in the 118th Army Reserve Birthday Celebration on April 23 at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.



adaptable."

She said that same adaptability has defined the Army Reserve throughout its history.

"As we celebrate our history, we also are transforming the future," Baez said. "In an era of continuous transformation, the Army Reserve is actively adapting the way we train, the way we equip, the way that we organize to meet the threats of the future."

That ability to evolve, she said, is exactly what has sustained the force for 118 years.

"The same adaptability has defined our force for 118 years, and it's precisely what will carry it forward," she said.

The ceremony concluded with a traditional birthday cake-cutting ceremony, a longstanding military custom symbolizing continuity between generations of service members, followed by food and fellowship among attendees.

For Fort McCoy, the celebration served as both a tribute to Army Reserve history and a recognition of the installation's continuing partnership with the Reserve force.

As one of the Army's most significant training and mobilization platforms, Fort McCoy remains deeply connected to the Army Reserve mission — helping prepare citizen-Soldiers to answer the nation's call whenever and wherever needed.

Garrison commander presents certificates of appreciation to Sparta and Tomah school districts

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez presented certificates of appreciation to leaders of the Sparta (Wis.) Area School District and the Tomah (Wis.) Area School District during separate school board meetings in May in recognition of their continued support of military-connected students and families at Fort McCoy.

Baez presented certificates May 12 during a Sparta Area School District Board of Education meeting in Sparta to Superintendent Sam Russ and the Sparta Area School District. She later presented similar certificates on May 26 to Superintendent (Dr.) Mike Hanson and the Tomah Area School District during a Tomah school board meeting.

In total, four certificates were presented — one to each superintendent and one to each district.

The certificates recognized the districts' ongoing dedication to supporting military children and families connected to Fort McCoy and acknowledged the strong partnerships built between the installation and surrounding communities.

During her time as garrison commander over the last two years, Baez has emphasized the importance of community partnerships, and the role area schools play in supporting military readiness and family resilience. She has regularly highlighted how

educational support systems help military families remain connected and successful while serving at Fort McCoy.

Military-connected students often face unique challenges, including frequent moves, transitions between schools, and family separations during training or deployments.

Leaders at Fort McCoy said the support provided by local school districts helps create stability and a welcoming environment for military families living and working in the region.

"The partnerships Fort McCoy has with the Sparta and Tomah school districts are incredibly important to our military families," Baez said. "The care, understanding, and support shown to military-connected students help strengthen our entire community and contribute directly to the well-being of our Soldiers and families."

Fort McCoy serves thousands of Soldiers, civilian employees, contractors, retirees, and family members throughout the year.

Many military families in the area have children attending schools in both the Sparta and Tomah districts.

Installation officials said the recognition reflects Fort McCoy's appreciation for the continued collaboration between the installation and local education leaders in helping military children succeed both academically and personally.



Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, presents a special certificate of appreciation May 12 to Superintendent Sam Russ of the Sparta Area School District during meeting in Sparta, Wis.



Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, presents a special certificate of appreciation May 26 to Superintendent (Dr.) Mike Hanson of the Tomah Area School District during meeting in Tomah, Wis.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccooy>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccooy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccooy/>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching "usagmccooy." Also try downloading

the My Army Post app to your smartphone and set "Fort McCoy" or another installation as your preferred base. Fort McCoy is also part of Army's Installation Management Command where "We Are The Army's Home."

NEWS

Fort McCoy community gathers to remember fallen service members at 2026 Memorial Day Prayer Luncheon

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Beneath patriotic songs, prayers, and reflections on sacrifice, members of the Fort McCoy community gathered May 21 at McCoy's Community Center for the 2026 Fort McCoy Memorial Day Prayer Luncheon — an annual observance focused on honoring America's fallen service members and remembering the meaning behind Memorial Day.

The event, coordinated by the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office, brought together Soldiers, civilians, veterans, clergy members, community leaders, and family members for a luncheon centered on remembrance, faith, and service. The program included patriotic music, community prayers, remarks from leaders, and a keynote presentation by retired Army Chaplain (Col.) Ephraim Garcia.

The luncheon opened with the National Anthem and later included performances of "America the Beautiful" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" by Michelle Jones, chapel pianist and cantor for U.S. Army Garrison Fort McCoy. Chaplain Jacqueline Gay of the Tomah VA Staff Chaplain Office delivered the invocation, while several clergy members led prayers for service members and families, police officers and firefighters, and national leaders.

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez also provided special thanks during the event, which continued a long-standing tradition at the installation of holding a Memorial Day prayer luncheon ahead of the national holiday.

Memorial Day traces its roots to the years following the Civil War, when communities across the country began holding tributes to fallen Soldiers by decorating graves with flowers and flags. Originally known as Decoration Day, the observance evolved into Memorial Day and became a federal holiday in 1971. Today, the holiday honors all U.S. military personnel who died while serving the nation.

That spirit of remembrance remained at the center of the Fort McCoy observance.

Garcia, who retired in March 2025 after a distinguished 40-year military career that included service in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, New York Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, shared reflections about faith, leadership, and difficult moments experienced during deployments.

In one story from Afghanistan, Garcia described how people unexpectedly gathered around him during a tense situation.

"I won't go into the details, but it was amazing how God puts you in situations, and no matter how difficult they may be, you could become a hero, an inspiration to other people," Garcia said.

"You know what happened that day in Afghanistan? I didn't sleep, I began to feed people, and then I realized that everywhere I went, there was a crowd around me. I said, 'Well, are you guys okay? What's going on?' They said, 'If God's protecting the chaplain, I'm hanging with the chaplain.'"

Garcia's remarks blended humor, humility, and personal testimony while emphasizing hope and service during difficult times.

According to the luncheon program, Garcia previously served as the Senior Reserve Chaplain for the U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains Strategic



Photos by Melissa Dubois

Fort McCoy community members participate in the 2026 Memorial Day Prayer Luncheon on May 21 at McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy. The event, coordinated by the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office, brought together Soldiers, civilians, veterans, clergy members, community leaders, and family members for a luncheon centered on remembrance, faith, and service.



Initiatives Group at Fort Hamilton, N.Y. His deployments and assignments included support to operations in Kuwait and Afghanistan as well as hurricane response missions.

The luncheon also reflected Fort McCoy's broader connection with community faith leaders and local organizations. Rev. Dr. John D. Emmart of Mercy Health, Pastor Bryan Johnson of Lighthouse Assembly of God Church in Tomah, and Pastor David Dahl of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Tomah all participated in the event through prayer and remarks.

A portion of the program also featured "George Washington's Prayer for His Country," adapted from a 1783 circular letter written by Washington following the Revolutionary War, emphasizing national unity, humility, justice, and peace.

Over the years, Fort McCoy's Memorial Day Prayer Luncheon has become a recurring observance designed not only to honor those who died in military service but also to provide a moment of reflection for the installation and surrounding communities.

Previous luncheons have similarly included guest

speakers, clergy-led prayers, patriotic music, and discussions focused on sacrifice, remembrance, and faith. Installation officials said the annual event continues to provide an opportunity for the community to pause and reflect on the true meaning of Memorial Day before the start of the holiday weekend.

Fort McCoy, located in west-central Wisconsin, serves as a Total Force Training Center and supports the training and readiness of active-duty, Reserve, and National Guard military personnel from across the nation.

Garrison commander continues century-long tradition at Sparta Memorial Day observance

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez continued a tradition that stretches back more than a century when she served as the featured speaker during the Sparta (Wis.) Memorial Day observance May 25, 2026, honoring the nation's fallen service members and reinforcing the enduring relationship between Fort McCoy and the community where the installation's history began.

The annual observance, organized by Sparta VFW Post 2112 and American Legion Post 100, brought together veterans, military members, community leaders, residents, and visitors for a day of remembrance. The event began with a parade through downtown Sparta and concluded with ceremonies recognizing the sacrifices of those who died in military service to the United States.

The schedule for the observance included:

- 10 a.m. — Memorial Day parade begins on South Water Street in Sparta.
- Following the parade — Memorial Day ceremony at Blyton Park.
- Following the park ceremony — Traditional wreath-laying ceremony at Perch Lake honoring service members lost at sea.
- Noon — Official observance concludes.

During the ceremony at Blyton Park, Baez addressed attendees and joined local veteran organizations and community members in paying tribute to the nation's fallen heroes.

Her participation reflected a longstanding commitment by Fort McCoy leaders to support community Memorial Day events throughout the region. The relationship between the installation and Sparta is especially significant because the city is closely tied to the history of Fort McCoy and its founder, Maj. Gen. Robert Bruce McCoy.

McCoy, a Sparta attorney, judge, civic leader, military officer, and later mayor of Sparta, played a leading role in establishing the military training grounds that eventually became Fort McCoy. In the early 1900s, he worked with community leaders and state officials to secure land near Sparta for military training, laying the foundation for what would become one of the Army's premier training installations.

Historical records and Fort McCoy historical programs have documented McCoy's active participation in civic and veterans-related events in Sparta. His leadership helped establish a tradition of cooperation between the military and the community that continues today. More than 100 years later, Army leaders still participate in community observances in the same city where McCoy lived, worked, and advocated for military readiness and public service.

The connection remains visible through Fort McCoy's ongoing engagement with local governments, schools, veteran organizations, and community groups throughout Monroe County and the surrounding region. Baez Ramirez has continued that outreach during her tenure as garrison commander, participating in numerous community events and partnership initiatives involving Sparta and neighboring communities.

Army leaders often describe community engagement as an essential component of maintaining strong relationships with the citizens and organizations that support military installations.

Participation in events such as Memorial Day observances provides an opportunity to honor military service, recognize veterans and Gold Star families, and strengthen ties between the Army and the communities it serves.

For Fort McCoy, those relationships are particularly important because of the installation's deep roots in western Wisconsin. The installation's history is intertwined with Sparta's history, making Memorial Day observances in the city especially meaningful for military leaders.

As parade participants moved from South Water Street to Blyton Park and later to Perch Lake for the wreath-laying ceremony, the day's events served as a reminder of both sacrifice and continuity. The observance honored those who gave their lives in defense of the nation while also highlighting a partnership between Sparta and Fort McCoy that has endured for generations.

More than a century after Maj. Gen. Robert Bruce McCoy supported community and veteran events in Sparta, Fort McCoy's senior leadership continues to stand alongside residents in remembrance. Baez's participation in the 2026 observance represented the latest chapter in that enduring tradition of service, partnership, and respect for the nation's fallen heroes.



Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, gives a speech May 25 during the 2026 Memorial Day observance in Sparta, Wis.

Deputy garrison commander serves as featured speaker at Tomah VAMC Memorial Day ceremony

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Chad Holder served as the featured speaker during the 2026 Memorial Day ceremony held May 22 at the Tomah VA Medical Center, continuing a longstanding partnership between Fort McCoy and the Department of Veterans Affairs in honoring the nation's fallen service members.

The ceremony took place at 10 a.m. on the steps of Building 400 at the Tomah VA Medical Center and was open to veterans, family members, staff, and members of the community. Organizers gathered attendees to remember and honor the men and women who gave their lives in military service to the United States.

Holder's participation as the keynote speaker represented more than a ceremonial appearance. It reflected the enduring relationship between Fort McCoy and the Tomah VA Medical Center, two organizations that regularly work together to support veterans, military families, and the surrounding communities of western Wisconsin.

Fort McCoy leaders routinely participate in Tomah VA events, including Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances, health-care initiatives, and community programs.

The Memorial Day observance at the Tomah VA Medical Center followed a simple but meaningful schedule:

- 10 a.m. — Memorial Day ceremony begins outside Building 400.



Photo by Tomah VA Medical Center Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Chad Holder (right on stage), deputy commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, is shown with other participants in the Tomah Veterans Affairs Medical Center Memorial Day observance on May 22 in Tomah, Wis.

— Community members, veterans, families, and staff gather to honor fallen service members.

— Featured remarks by Holder and other participants recognizing the sacrifices of America's military dead.

Memorial Day traces its origins to the years following the Civil War when communities across the nation began decorating the graves of fallen Soldiers.

Originally known as Decoration Day, the observance gradually evolved into a National Day of Remembrance for all U.S. service members who died while serving their country. Congress later estab-

lished Memorial Day as a federal holiday, and it is now observed annually on the last Monday in May.

For Fort McCoy, participation in events such as the Tomah VA Memorial Day ceremony is an important component of Army community engagement.

Army outreach efforts emphasize building relationships with the communities that support military installations and the men and women who serve. Fort McCoy has long maintained strong ties with veteran organizations, local governments, educational institutions, and the Tomah VA Medical Center as part of that mission.

The relationship between Fort McCoy and the Tomah VA Medical Center extends beyond ceremonial events. Personnel from the installation and the medical center frequently collaborate on veteran wellness initiatives, training opportunities, volunteer projects, and community service activities.

In 2024, for example, Fort McCoy personnel worked alongside Tomah VA staff and volunteers during a community project to improve facilities and therapeutic spaces for veterans receiving care at the center.

Community engagement opportunities such as Memorial Day observances also provide military leaders an opportunity to connect with veterans and their families while reinforcing the Army's commitment to honoring military service and sacrifice. By participating in local ceremonies, Fort McCoy leaders help strengthen relationships with community partners and demonstrate the Army's continued support for veterans long after their active-duty service has ended.

Holder's role in the 2026 ceremony continued that tradition. Standing before veterans, family members, VA employees, and community residents gathered outside Building 400, he represented Fort McCoy's ongoing commitment to remembrance, service, and partnership.

As Memorial Day ceremonies took place across the nation, the observance at the Tomah VA Medical Center highlighted the shared mission of Fort McCoy and the VA — honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice while continuing to serve the veterans who carried the nation's defense forward.

NEWS

E3B

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listed leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Betty, reported that 22 Soldiers successfully earned their badges after the completion of testing.

Army Reserve social media coverage also noted that more than 250 Soldiers initially entered the testing process, highlighting the exceptionally selective nature of the program and the prestige associated with earning one of the Army's expert skill badges.

The significance of the badges themselves is rooted in decades of Army history. The EIB traces its origins to 1943 during World War II when Army leaders established the award to recognize infantry Soldiers who demonstrated mastery of combat-focused skills and battlefield tasks, history shows. Since its creation, the badge has become one of the Army's most respected symbols of tactical proficiency and infantry excellence.

The EFMB was established in 1965 to recognize Army medical personnel who demonstrate expert competence in combat medicine, casualty care, evacuation procedures, and battlefield survival skills, Army history shows. Military medical professionals often regard the EFMB as one of the most difficult and prestigious qualifications available within military medicine.

More recently, the Army established the Expert Soldier Badge in 2019 to provide Soldiers outside infantry and medical specialties the opportunity to earn an expert-level qualification, according to Army.mil sources. The ESB recognizes proficiency in common warrior tasks, weapons handling, physical fitness, land navigation, and tactical skills that are fundamental to Soldier readiness regardless of military occupational specialty.

Army officials have consistently emphasized that the badges are not participation awards. Rather, they serve as visible symbols of excellence that signify a Soldier has demonstrated mastery of critical tasks under rigorous testing conditions.

Additionally, Fort McCoy has become an important home for the Army Reserve's E3B program over the years. The installation has hosted multiple iterations of the event and offers the infrastructure necessary to support a large-scale assessment that requires extensive maneuver space, road march routes, land navigation courses, training facilities, ranges, and logistical support.

Army Reserve officials have repeatedly selected Fort McCoy because of its ability to provide a realistic and challenging environment for testing Soldiers from across the force.

The event also aligns closely with Fort McCoy's broader role as one of the Army's premier training centers.

The installation annually supports tens of thousands of service members representing active Army, Army Reserve, National Guard, joint-service, and multinational organizations. Its extensive range complexes, urban-training facilities, maneuver areas, and support infrastructure make it one of the few installations capable of hosting complex, multi-component events such as E3B, Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security stated.

The competition further reflects Fort McCoy's recently adopted strategic direction. The installation's new motto, "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909," underscores its longstanding role in preparing military forces for operational success, Fort McCoy Garrison officials said. Likewise, Fort McCoy's mission statement emphasizes strengthening Total Force readiness by serving as a training center, Mobilization Force Generation Installation, and Strategic Support Area that enables warfighters to deploy, fight, and win the nation's wars.

That mission was clearly on display throughout the 2026 E3B event as Soldiers from across the Army gathered at Fort McCoy to test themselves against some of the service's most demanding standards.

The installation's vision statement calls for Fort McCoy to be "the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces." The successful execution of the 2026 E3B assessment demonstrated that vision in action by providing the facilities, expertise, and training environment necessary to develop and validate Soldier proficiency at the highest levels.

As the final road march concluded and successful candidates were awarded their badges, Fort McCoy once again demonstrated why it remains a cornerstone of Army Reserve readiness and one of the nation's premier venues for developing expert Soldiers, garrison leaders said. For the select group who earned their EIB, ESB, or EFMB, the accomplishment represented far more than a badge — it possibly signified membership in a distinguished tradition of Soldiers who have proven their skills under some of the Army's most rigorous standards and joined a legacy of excellence that spans generations.

See related video coverage at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/1007869/standard-army-reserve-e3b> and <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/1008228/e3b-2026-fort-mccoy>.

Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only



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

(Both photos) Soldiers from across the Army's Total Force participate in the U.S. Army Reserve 2026 Expert Infantryman Badge, Expert Soldier Badge, and Expert Field Medical Badge assessment — collectively known as E3B — on April 28 at Fort McCoy.



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 "fmccoy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by

searching "usagmccoy." Also try downloading the My Army Post app to your smartphone and set "Fort McCoy" or another installation as your preferred base. Fort McCoy is also part of Army's Installation Management Command where "We Are The Army's Home."

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office and through Army Reserve coverage by Staff Sgt. Cameron Hershberger and by Kevin Clark with the Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office.)

SQUAD

from Page 1

realistic, large-scale training across a wide range of military occupational specialties and mission requirements.

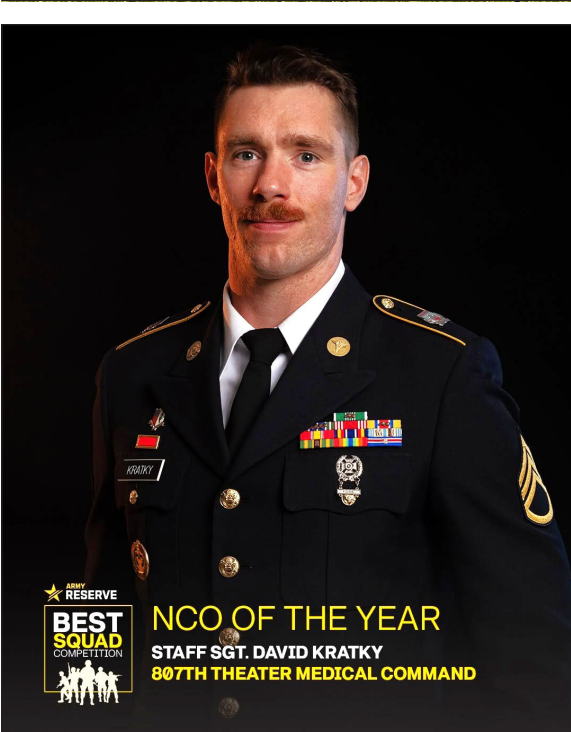
The competition also reflected Fort McCoy's recently updated strategic direction. In 2026, the installation adopted a new motto: "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909." Installation leaders noted the motto reflects both Fort McCoy's more than century-long history and its continued focus on modernization and future readiness.

The installation's new mission statement further emphasizes that role, stating Fort McCoy "strengthens Total Force Readiness by serving as a training center, Mobilization Force Generation Installation, and Strategic Support Area enabling warfighter lethality to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars."

Likewise, its vision statement calls for Fort McCoy "to be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces."

The success of the 2026 Army Reserve Best Squad Competition demonstrated that vision in action. By providing the facilities, resources, and training environment necessary to challenge the Army Reserve's best Soldiers, Fort McCoy once again showed why it remains a critical readiness platform for the Total Force and a premier destination for military training across the nation.

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office and U.S. Army Reserve coverage by Pfc. Anastasia Addis, Staff Sgt. Paul Anthony, Staff Sgt. Dylan Grace, Sgt. 1st Class Tom Wade, Sgt. 1st Class Monte Swift, Master Sgt. Crystal Harlow, and Capt. Tyler Rickenbach.)



NEWS

Fort McCoy hosts thousands of troops during major spring training operations in May 2026

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

As training accelerated in May 2026, thousands of service members from across the active component, Army Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air Force trained at Fort McCoy, demonstrating the installation's critical role as one of the Department of War's premier Total Force training centers.

According to the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS), units conducting training throughout May represented a diverse cross-section of military specialties, ranging from infantry, artillery, cavalry, aviation, engineers, logistics, medical, legal, public affairs, and firefighting personnel to Air Force airlift and training organizations. The broad mix of units highlighted Fort McCoy's ability to simultaneously support multiple mission sets across its extensive training lands, ranges, airspace, and cantonment facilities.

Among the Wisconsin Army National Guard units training during the month were elements of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team — Wisconsin's largest combat formation. Soldiers assigned to the brigade's 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment; 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment; and 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery Regiment conducted training designed to maintain combat readiness and prepare for future missions. Together, the infantry, reconnaissance, and artillery formations showcased Fort McCoy's ability to support the full range of combat-arms training required by modern brigade combat teams.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion also trained at the installation, bringing specialized engineer capabilities that included construction, route-clearance, mobility, and sustainment operations. Fort McCoy's expansive maneuver areas and engineer-training facilities continue to provide ideal conditions for engineer units conducting realistic mission-essential training.

Army aviation training was represented by the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, which regularly uses Fort McCoy's airspace and facilities to conduct helicopter operations, aviation-support missions, and readiness training. Aviation operations add another important dimension to the installation's ability to support combined-arms training across multiple domains.

Army Reserve participation during May included units from throughout the Midwest and beyond. The 644th Regional Support Group trained alongside sustainment and support organizations such as the 445th Transportation Company, 624th Quartermaster Company, 214th Legal Operations Detachment, 324th Engineer Company, 482nd Engineer Detachment, and the 801st Field Hospital. Together, these organizations represented the logistical, engineering, legal, medical, and emergency-response capabilities required to sustain military operations around the world.

The month also included training by public affairs professionals associated with the 364th Theater Public Affairs Support Element, demonstrating how Fort McCoy supports not only combat and sustainment units but also specialized organizations responsible for strategic communication, media engagement, and documentation of military operations.

Air Force training activity further reflected the installation's Total Force mission. Airmen from the



(Above and below photos) Training operations are shown at different dates in May 2026 at Fort McCoy where thousands of troops trained on post.



934th Airlift Wing trained with C-130 aircraft and aircrews at Fort McCoy, while personnel from the 435th Training Squadron conducted training that leveraged the installation's unique resources and capabilities. Their presence highlighted Fort McCoy's value as a joint-training environment that supports readiness across multiple military services.

May is traditionally one of the busiest periods of the training year as Army Reserve and National Guard units conduct annual training and readiness exercises. Fort McCoy's ability to support multiple units simultaneously is made possible by its exten-

sive training infrastructure and unique role within the Department of Defense.

Located on approximately 60,000 acres in west-central Wisconsin, Fort McCoy features hundreds of training areas, maneuver corridors, live-fire ranges, aviation facilities, urban-training sites, classrooms, maintenance facilities, barracks, and dining facilities that enable units to conduct realistic, mission-focused training.

The installation routinely supports everything from small-unit tactical exercises to brigade-level operations, engineer construction projects, aviation

training, convoy operations, sustainment exercises, medical readiness training, and joint-service activities.

Its airspace, range complexes, and maneuver lands allow units to integrate multiple warfighting functions in a single training environment while benefiting from modern support facilities and experienced training personnel.

In addition to serving Army National Guard, Army Reserve, and active Army units, Fort McCoy regularly hosts Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and interagency organizations.

The installation also serves as a major mobilization platform, helping prepare units for overseas deployments while supporting homeland-defense and domestic response readiness missions.

According to DPTMS, Fort McCoy's ability to support a wide range of military specialties — from infantry and artillery to aviation, engineering, logistics, medical, legal, public affairs, and emergency-response operations — makes it one of the Army's most versatile Total Force training centers. The diverse mix of units training throughout May 2026 provided another example of how Fort McCoy helps build readiness across the joint force.

That readiness mission was reflected in fiscal year 2025 training totals, when Fort McCoy supported 109,962 troops in training, including 46,047 personnel participating in annual training and major exercises and 63,915 personnel conducting battle-assembly training. Those numbers represented a significant increase over previous years and reinforced Fort McCoy's standing as one of the Army's premier Total Force training locations.

Whether supporting Wisconsin National Guard combat formations, Army Reserve sustainment organizations, Air Force airlift crews, or specialized medical, legal, engineering, public affairs, and emergency-response units, Fort McCoy continues to serve as a critical readiness platform for America's military.

The wide variety of organizations training at the installation during May 2026 highlights not only the scope of Fort McCoy's capabilities, but also its enduring importance to Total Force readiness throughout the Midwest and across the nation.

Fort McCoy's motto beginning in 2026 is "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909."

The installation's mission: "Fort McCoy strengthens Total Force Readiness by serving as a training center, Mobilization Force Generation Installation, and Strategic Support Area enabling warfighter lethality to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars."

And Fort McCoy's vision is, "To be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces."

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

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Fort McCoy hosts 2026 Spc. Hilda I. Clayton Best Combat Camera Competition

Visual information professionals from across the Department of War gathered at Fort McCoy in May 2026 to compete in the annual Spc. Hilda I. Clayton Best Combat Camera Competition — a demanding event that tested participants' physical fitness, tactical proficiency, and visual storytelling skills.

Hosted by the 55th Public Affairs Company (Combat Camera), the competition honors the legacy of Spc. Hilda I. Clayton, an Army combat photographer who was killed while documenting military training in Afghanistan in 2013.

The annual event challenges competitors to demonstrate the capabilities required of military visual communicators operating in austere and operational environments.

The competition also celebrates a military profession with roots stretching back more than 80 years, history shows. During World War II, Army photographers and motion-picture crews accompanied Soldiers into combat across Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific, documenting some of the most significant battles in U.S. military history. Their imagery informed military leaders, provided information to the American public, preserved historical records, and created an enduring visual archive of the Army's wartime service.

The combat documentation mission continued through the Korean and Vietnam wars and later evolved into dedicated combat camera organizations that deployed alongside military forces around the world. During operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, combat camera Soldiers routinely accompanied combat patrols, airborne operations, humanitarian missions, and special operations forces, capturing imagery and video from the front lines while often operating under the same conditions and risks as the units they supported.

Today, combat camera professionals are trained as both communicators and Soldiers. They provide commanders with visual documentation of operations while producing photographs, video, graphics, and multimedia products that support historical preservation, strategic communication, training, and public information efforts.

According to organizers, the annual Best Combat Camera Competition is designed to test those capabilities in realistic scenarios that mirror operational requirements.

Throughout the multiday competition at Fort McCoy in May 2026, participants completed a variety of events designed to evaluate both Soldier and communicator skills. Challenges included tactical lanes, marksmanship events, physical fitness assessments, reconnaissance activities, land navigation, and visual information production requirements that mirrored real-world combat documentation missions.

According to a June 2 post by the Army Public Affairs Association, Staff Sgt. Carter Acton and Sgt. Cody Williams of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) earned top honors in the 2026 competition. Competing as a team, the Soldiers distinguished themselves through a week of demanding physical, tactical, technical, and storytelling challenges that tested the full spectrum of combat camera skills.

In recognition of their performance, both Soldiers were awarded the Meritorious Service Medal by the Army Communication and Outreach Office during the Army Public Affairs Forum. The association noted that Acton and Williams' teamwork, professionalism, and ability to tell the Army story under pressure represented the very best of the military visual information profession.

Fort McCoy's expansive training areas, maneuver space, ranges, and field environments provided an ideal setting for the competition, Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) officials said. It allowed participants to operate in realistic conditions while producing photography, video, and multimedia products under pressure.

The event also highlighted Fort McCoy's reputation as one of the Army's premier training installations, supporting readiness for Army Reserve, National Guard, active-duty, and joint-service forces from across the United States, DPTMS officials said.

The competition concluded following several days of rigorous training and evaluation, reports by Sgt. Christian Aquino and Cpl. Jaimee



U.S. Army Soldiers pose for a group photo May 27 during the 2026 Spc. Hilda I. Clayton Best Combat Camera Competition at Fort McCoy. The competition challenges participants in tactical operations, combat documentation and multimedia storytelling under physically demanding conditions.



Staff Sgt. Carter Acton (left), and Sgt. Cody Williams (right), both assigned to 5th Special Forces Group, participate in the 2026 Spc. Hilda I. Clayton Best Combat Camera Competition on May 23 at Fort McCoy.

Perez show. The competition showcased the technical expertise, adaptability, and warfighting mindset required of today's military visual information professionals.

As the next generation of combat camera Soldiers continues to document military operations around the world, they carry forward

a tradition that has preserved the Army's history and told the Soldier story for more than eight decades.

(Article prepared by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office and Exercise News Day coverage by Sgt. Christian Aquino and Cpl. Jaimee Perez at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USAREND>.)

NEWS

Wisconsin Army National Guard aviation Soldiers conduct May 2026 readiness training at Fort McCoy

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Soldiers and aircraft from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment (1-147th Aviation) conducted extensive training throughout May 2026 at Fort McCoy, taking advantage of the installation's airspace, training areas, and support infrastructure to maintain aviation readiness and prepare for future missions.

The training several times in the month brought pilots, aircrew members, maintainers, and support personnel together to execute a variety of aviation operations designed to enhance combat readiness and strengthen the battalion's ability to support state and federal missions. Training activities included helicopter flight operations, aircrew proficiency training, maintenance operations, tactical mission planning, and aviation-support tasks in a field environment, according to Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

Headquartered in Madison, Wis., the 1-147th Aviation Regiment serves as the Wisconsin Army National Guard's primary aviation battalion and operates UH-60 Black Hawk and UH-72 Lakota helicopters, according to the Wisconsin National Guard. The battalion provides aviation capabilities that support military operations, emergency-response missions, disaster-relief efforts, medical evacuation support, and transportation requirements throughout Wisconsin and beyond.

Fort McCoy's unique training environment allows aviation units to conduct realistic operations while integrating with ground forces operating across the installation, Fort McCoy DPTMS officials stated. The post's expansive maneuver areas, aviation facilities, and available airspace provide opportunities for crews to practice the skills necessary to support combat, sustainment, reconnaissance, and emergency-response operations.

Also, according to information provided by Fort McCoy DPTMS, aviation operations conducted during May represented another example of the diverse military training that takes place at the installation during the Army's peak annual training season times. Throughout the month, Fort McCoy hosted units from the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Active Army, and Air Force, supporting a wide variety of mission sets ranging from infantry and artillery training to engineering, logistics, medical, legal, and aviation operations.

For aviation units such as the 1-147th, Fort McCoy offers an opportunity to train in conditions that closely replicate operational environments, officials stated. Aircrews can conduct missions over large maneuver areas while coordinating with Soldiers on the ground, helping strengthen the combined-arms capabilities that are critical to modern military operations.

The battalion has a longstanding relationship with Fort McCoy and regularly utilizes the installation for training events. Previous exercises have included helicopter operations, sling-load missions, medical evacuation training, mobilization readiness activities, and large-scale field exercises involving multiple aircraft and support personnel.



UH-60 Black Hawks with the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment of the Wisconsin National Guard are shown May 30 (above) and May 28 (below) during training at Fort McCoy. In May 2026, Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation supported Wisconsin National Guard training at Fort McCoy on multiple fronts with multiple helicopters.



These opportunities help ensure crews remain proficient while maintaining the readiness required to respond to both federal missions and state emergencies.

As training continued throughout May, the presence of Wisconsin Army National Guard helicopters over Fort McCoy served as a visible

reminder of the installation's role in building and sustaining military readiness. Through realistic aviation training and integration with other military organizations, Soldiers of the 1-147th Aviation Regiment strengthened the skills and capabilities needed to support missions wherever they may be called to serve.

Air Force personnel leverage Fort McCoy's unique training environment during May 2026 operations

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

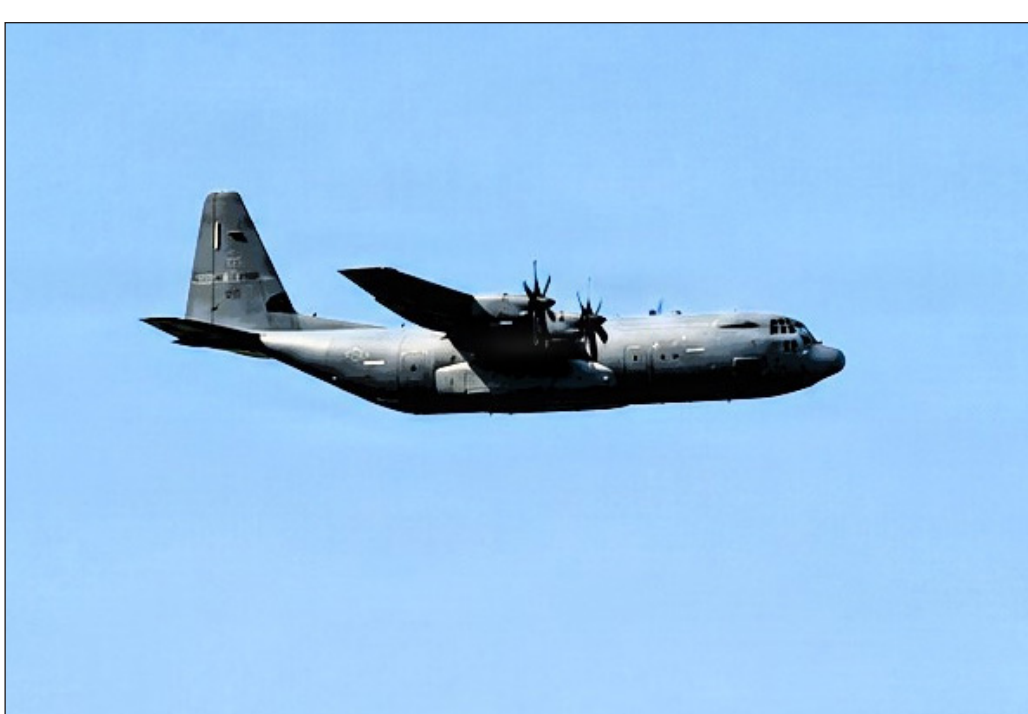
Airmen with the 934th Airlift Wing and 435th Training Squadron conducted training at Fort McCoy throughout May 2026, utilizing the installation's extensive training lands, airspace, and support infrastructure to strengthen readiness and enhance operational capabilities.

The training activities highlighted Fort McCoy's role as a premier Total Force training center, where Army, Air Force, Reserve, National Guard, and other Department of Defense organizations can conduct realistic mission-focused training in a joint environment.

Airmen assigned to the 934th Airlift Wing, based at Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station, trained with C-130 Hercules aircraft and aircrews at Fort McCoy during the month. The wing, one of the Air Force Reserve's premier tactical airlift organizations, routinely conducts missions involving personnel movement, cargo transport, aeromedical evacuation, and support to military operations around the world, according to its website, <https://www.afrc.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/4445308/934th-airlift-wing>.

Training at Fort McCoy provided aircrews opportunities to operate in an environment that supports a wide variety of military missions while enhancing coordination with ground units and training organizations, Fort McCoy Garrison officials said. The installation's airspace, maneuver areas, and training facilities help create realistic conditions that prepare Airmen for operational requirements at home and overseas.

Also training at Fort McCoy during May were personnel from the 435th Training Squadron, whose mission includes providing expeditionary skills and readiness training for Air Force personnel. By leveraging Fort McCoy's diverse training resources and capabilities, Airmen were able to con-



A C-130 Hercules with the 934th Airlift Wing in Minnesota flies over South Post on May 27 at Fort McCoy. Airmen with the 934th regularly conduct operations at Fort McCoy to use Young Air Assault Strip and Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport as well as to complete airdrop practice operations.

duct hands-on instruction and readiness activities designed to strengthen mission preparedness.

The presence of both organizations demonstrated the breadth of military training supported by Fort McCoy and the installation's value as a joint-service readiness platform, garrison officials said. While Air Force aircrews operated C-130 aircraft in support of airlift training, members of the 435th Training Squadron conducted specialized training that benefited from Fort McCoy's unique combination of training areas, classrooms, support

facilities, and field environments.

According to information provided by Fort McCoy's Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS), Air Force participation during May was part of a larger training effort that brought thousands of service members to the installation.

Units from the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, active Army, and Air Force conducted training across a wide range of specialties, including aviation, infantry, artillery, engineering, logistics,

medical, legal, public affairs, and sustainment operations.

Fort McCoy's ability to support such a diverse mix of organizations stems from its extensive training infrastructure. Located on approximately 60,000 acres in west-central Wisconsin, the installation includes maneuver areas, live-fire ranges, aviation facilities, urban-training sites, classrooms, maintenance facilities, barracks, and dining facilities that allow units to train in realistic operational environments.

The installation has become a critical training destination for both Army and Air Force organizations seeking opportunities to conduct integrated readiness training. Its central location in the Upper Midwest and ability to accommodate large-scale exercises make it a valuable resource for military units preparing for deployments, contingency operations, and domestic response missions.

The importance of Fort McCoy's training mission was reflected in fiscal year 2025, when the installation supported 109,962 troops in training, including annual training, battle assembly activities, mobilization operations, and major exercises.

The continued presence of organizations such as the 934th Airlift Wing and 435th Training Squadron demonstrates how Fort McCoy contributes to readiness across the Total Force and helps ensure service members are prepared to meet mission requirements around the globe, Fort McCoy DPTMS officials said.

As military training activity continues during the summer months, Fort McCoy remains a key location where Airmen and Soldiers alike can develop, sustain, and refine the skills necessary to support national defense.

The training conducted by the 934th Airlift Wing and 435th Training Squadron during May 2026 served as another example of the installation's enduring role in building joint-force readiness, officials stated.

Fort McCoy NEC personnel strengthen safety readiness during confined-space training

Employees with Fort McCoy's Network Enterprise Center (NEC) strengthened their readiness and reinforced critical workplace safety procedures during confined-space entry training conducted April 29, 2026, at Fort McCoy.

The hands-on training provided NEC personnel with practical experience in identifying hazards, conducting atmospheric testing, using specialized safety equipment, and executing safe entry procedures in confined spaces commonly encountered while maintaining the installation's communications infrastructure.

NEC officials said the training was designed to ensure employees remain proficient in the procedures and safety requirements necessary to safely perform work in underground vaults, manholes, and other confined spaces that support Fort McCoy's communications network.

Fort McCoy NEC technicians routinely access underground utility vaults and manholes to maintain critical telecommunications and fiber-optic systems that support installation operations, officials said. While essential to mission success, these environments present unique hazards that require specialized training, equipment, and strict adherence to safety protocols.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a confined space is large enough for a worker to enter and perform assigned duties but has limited means of entry or exit and is not intended for continuous occupancy. Many of the spaces encountered by NEC personnel are considered permit-required confined spaces because they may contain hazardous atmospheres, engulfment hazards, or other serious safety risks.

One of the primary focuses of the training was atmospheric testing, which serves as the first line of defense against unseen dangers. Before entering a confined space, personnel used multi-gas detection equipment to test air quality at multiple levels within vaults and manholes for potential hazards such as oxygen-deficient atmospheres, combustible gases, and toxic contaminants including hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide.

Trainers emphasized that atmospheric testing remains one of the most critical elements of confined-space operations because many hazards cannot be detected without specialized equipment. Officials noted that continuous monitoring helps ensure changing conditions do not place workers at risk while maintenance activities are underway.

Participants also practiced hazard-mitigation procedures, including

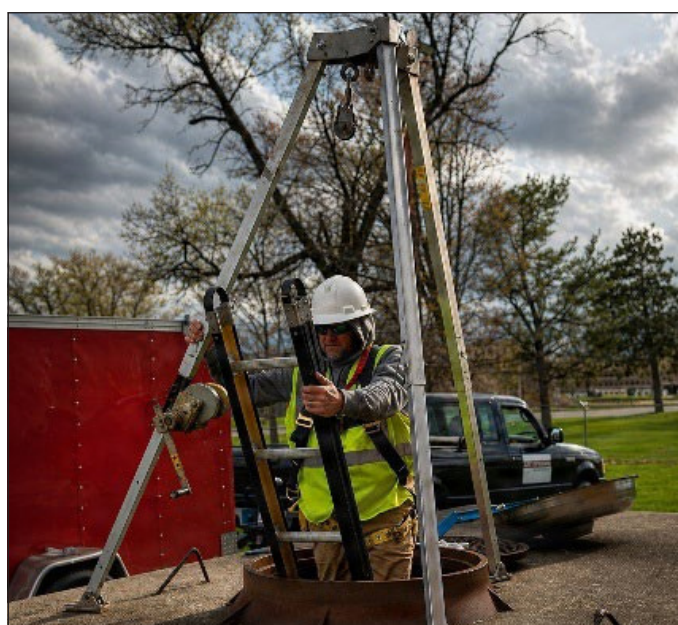


Photo by Brian Scoggins, Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center

Fort McCoy Network Enterprise Center personnel conduct confined-space training April 29 at Fort McCoy, Wis.

ventilation techniques designed to introduce fresh air into confined spaces and remove potentially dangerous gases. Additional instruction focused on identifying water accumulation and other physical hazards that could increase the risk of electrocution, falls, entrapment, or injury.

The training further highlighted the importance of teamwork during confined-space operations. Personnel reviewed the three key roles required during an entry operation: the authorized entrant, who performs work inside the space; the attendant, who remains outside and continuously monitors conditions; and the entry supervisor, who verifies that all safety requirements have been met before authorizing entry.

Hands-on exercises included the setup and use of retrieval systems, safety harnesses, ladders, tripods, and mechanical winches designed to safely lower personnel into confined spaces and provide rapid extraction capabilities during emergencies. Participants practiced coordinated entry procedures and rescue techniques that emphasized communication, accountability, and situational awareness.

According to NEC trainers, confined-space safety depends on every member of the entry team understanding and executing their responsibilities. Trainers stressed that effective communication between entrants, attendants, and supervisors is essential to preventing accidents and ensuring a rapid response if conditions change.

NEC officials said the training reflects Fort McCoy's ongoing commitment to maintaining a culture of safety while ensuring personnel remain prepared to support the installation's communications mission. By combining classroom instruction with practical exercises, the April 29 training helped reinforce the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary for employees to safely perform work in some of the most challenging environments found on the installation.

"This training helps ensure our personnel have the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to safely perform their duties while supporting Fort McCoy's communications mission," NEC officials said. "By regularly conducting hands-on training, we reinforce the safety procedures that protect our workforce and enable mission success."

The training serves as a reminder that safety is an active process requiring careful planning, continuous monitoring, and strict adherence to established procedures.

Through recurring training and preparedness exercises, Fort McCoy's Network Enterprise Center continues to ensure its workforce remains equipped to safely maintain the critical infrastructure that supports the installation's mission.

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.

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

NEWS

Fort McCoy supports May 2026 natural resources, extension committee meeting

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy staff provided updates about the installation's natural resources-related efforts May 11 during the May 2026 meeting of the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee.

The monthly committee includes members Nodji VanWychen, Joey Esterline, Cedric Schnitzler, Doug Rogalla, Todd Sparks, and Paul Zastophil from areas within the county. According to the Monroe County webpage for the committee, the group works to manage, conserve, and protect natural resources while promoting sustainable land use, outdoor recreation, education, and stewardship throughout Monroe County.

As part of Monroe County, Fort McCoy supports the committee through the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch (NRB), the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, and other installation personnel.

During the May meeting, Fort McCoy representatives reviewed recent accomplishments completed by NRB personnel during April and early May. Updates covered fisheries, forestry, threatened and endangered species management, invasive species control, wildlife management, prescribed burning operations, and conservation partnerships.

Among the accomplishments highlighted during the meeting were several significant fisheries projects.

— **NRB fisheries personnel collected water samples during three runoff events**, monitored 38 stream thermographs, and collected temperature and dissolved oxygen data on all 10 installation lakes. Dissolved oxygen levels remained at optimal levels following spring ice-out conditions. Fisheries staff also stocked 15,000 rainbow trout into six Fort McCoy lakes and continued spring fish population surveys.

— **Fisheries personnel conducted extensive fyke netting surveys on the North Flowage**, Suukjak Sep Lake, Swamp Pond, and Big Sandy Lake. Early survey results showed the North Flowage bluegill population estimate was nearly identical to historical averages and included many quality-sized fish. The largemouth bass population estimate was the highest recorded during recent surveys, reflecting strong recruitment over the past several years. Surveys also identified numerous large bluegills in Big Sandy Lake.

— **Forestry personnel reported planting 500 trees in the cantonment area in partnership** with Child Development Center participants as part of Arbor Day activities. Forestry staff also submitted fiscal year 2027 timber planning documentation, managed three active timber sales, and supported prescribed fire operations that resulted in approximately 5,295 acres being burned, including acreage within impact areas.

— **In threatened and endangered species management**, NRB personnel continued extensive monitoring and conservation efforts. Staff completed 20 Blanding's turtle surveys and 15 bullsnake surveys, capturing and processing several animals as part of ongoing population monitoring efforts. Personnel also conducted biweekly telemetry tracking on Blanding's turtles, wood turtles, and bullsnakes while monitoring eagle and osprey nests across the installation. During nest checks, staff observed activity in a newly identified eagle nest near the North Flowage and continued monitoring active osprey nesting sites.

— **NRB personnel also maintained acoustic bat detectors**, conducted elfin butterfly monitoring, and updated wildlife observations within the installation's geographic information system database.

— **Invasive species management personnel treated nearly 20 acres for invasive vegetation**, including garlic mustard and autumn olive. Staff also surveyed more than 68 acres while balancing invasive species management efforts with an active prescribed burning season. Despite challenging weather conditions and limited staffing, personnel supported six prescribed burns during the reporting period and

MONROE COUNTY WISCONSIN

NATURAL RESOURCE AND EXTENSION COMMITTEE

WORKING TOGETHER TO CONSERVE, PROTECT, AND SUSTAIN OUR NATURAL RESOURCES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

CONSERVE PROTECT STEWARD

The mission of the Monroe County Natural Resource Committee is to manage, conserve, and protect our natural resources, promote wise and sustainable land use, and encourage stewardship of our resources for generations to follow.

U.S. Army illustration by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office

This graphic/photo illustration highlights the Monroe County (Wis.) Natural Resource and Extension Committee that is supported monthly by members of Fort McCoy.

completed environmental reviews for two projects. Staff additionally partnered with fisheries personnel and members of the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group to review stream improvement projects following invasive species removal efforts.

— **Wildlife management personnel continued updating Fort McCoy's hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations** while coordinating with installation organizations and working groups. Staff also managed the installation's spring turkey season, issuing all 460 available permits. Through the first three spring hunting periods, hunters harvested 62 turkeys. Wildlife personnel also completed annual wild turkey and ruffed grouse surveys, which showed grouse activity remained similar to previous years while turkey observations and gobbling activity declined compared to 2025 survey results.

— **Additionally, wildlife personnel completed the spring prescribed burn season**, conducting fuel-reduction burns within the North Impact Area, South Impact Area, selected training ranges, and portions of the railroad corridor. Officials reported the installation's partnership with the U.S. Forest Service successfully supported the burn program during its first season of implementation. Staff also began preparations for summer wildlife surveys and completed professional certification activities related to integrated pest management.

Fort McCoy's natural resources program supports military readiness while conserving and managing more than 60,000 acres of training lands and natural habitats, Fort McCoy Garrison officials stated. Through ongoing monitoring, habitat management, wildlife conser-

vation, invasive species control, forestry operations, and fisheries management, Fort McCoy continues to balance its training mission with responsible stewardship of the installation's natural resources.

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

Fort McCoy Garrison commander joins community leaders for Sparta-Elroy Trail Opening Celebration

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez joined community leaders, local officials, tourism representatives, and outdoor enthusiasts May 2, 2026, for the annual Sparta-Elroy State Trail Opening Tunnels Celebration hosted by the Sparta (Wis.) Area Chamber of Commerce.

Baez Ramirez participated in a ceremonial ribbon cutting at the Sparta Depot that officially marked the opening of the trail tunnels for the 2026 season. Sparta Mayor Kristen Riley and representatives from the Monroe County Butterfest organization also took part in the ceremony as community members gathered to celebrate the return of one of Wisconsin's most popular outdoor recreation destinations.

The event served as both a celebration and community gathering for residents and visitors eager to begin another season on the historic Sparta-Elroy State Trail, recognized as the nation's first rail-to-trail conversion.

According to information shared by the Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce during a Facebook video from the event, activities included opportunities to tour a Western Technical College fire truck, participate in a bicycle swap organized by the Wisconsin Friends of the Sparta-Elroy State Trail, purchase food from Chugging Good Eats, and enter a bicycle decoration contest later in the day.

"We had a ribbon cutting already," a chamber representative said in the video. "Mayor Riley was right there just doing the ribbon cutting along with the Butterfest gals."

The chamber also encouraged visitors to take advantage of the trail opening despite a temporary bridge closure requiring a detour of approximately 3.5 miles.



Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez (middle) participates with others in a special ribbon-cutting event May 2 that signified the opening of the Sparta-Elroy Bike Trail (including tunnel openings) at the depot for the Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce in Sparta, Wis. The appearance by Baez was part of ongoing community engagement by Fort McCoy leaders.

The annual celebration highlights the importance of outdoor recreation and tourism to Sparta and Monroe County. Thousands of visitors travel to the area each year to experience the trail's three historic railroad tunnels, scenic countryside, and connection to Wisconsin's bicycling heritage.

For Fort McCoy, participation in the event reflects the installation's commitment to community engagement and partnership throughout western Wisconsin. The installation regularly collaborates with local governments, chambers of commerce,

schools, veterans organizations, and community groups in support of economic development, education, recreation, and public service initiatives.

The relationship between Sparta and Fort McCoy dates back more than a century to Maj. Gen. Robert Bruce McCoy, the Sparta civic leader and military officer whose efforts helped establish the military training grounds that eventually became Fort McCoy. Today, that partnership continues through participation in community events such as Memorial Day observances, educational programs,

civic celebrations, and tourism initiatives.

By joining local leaders for the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Baez helped celebrate an attraction that serves as an important economic and recreational asset for the region while reinforcing the strong ties between Fort McCoy and the communities it serves.

As cyclists began heading out onto the trail following the ceremony, the event marked the official start of another season on one of Wisconsin's most historic and recognizable outdoor destinations.

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And Fort McCoy's vision is, "To be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces."

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

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Fort McCoy is also part of Army's Installation Management Command where "We Are The Army's Home."



Convoy on Fort McCoy

Soldiers at Fort McCoy for training drive military vehicles in a convoy June 12 on the cantonment area at the installation.

During June, thousands of troops are training at Fort McCoy, including many with the Wisconsin National Guard and the Iowa National Guard.

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Photo by Scott T. Sturkol



Photo courtesy of Fort McCoy Directorate of Emergency Services

An overall look of the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area and the setup for Armed Forces Day Open House is shown May 16 at Fort McCoy.

OPEN HOUSE

from Page 1

unified Department of Defense established a single observance to recognize Americans currently serving in the armed forces. Since then, installations across the nation have used Armed Forces Day as an opportunity to welcome the public, strengthen trust, and foster understanding of military service.

At Fort McCoy, that tradition has evolved over generations. Community partnerships have long been vital to the installation's success, whether supporting Soldiers departing for war, welcoming them home, or simply maintaining strong relationships between service members and neighboring communities.

That spirit of connection was evident throughout the 2026 event.

Families explored a wide range of activities and displays designed to educate and entertain visitors of all ages.

Hands-on activities in building 905 included sandbag filling, personalized military identification tags, camouflage face painting, marksmanship activities, and informational exhibits from numerous Army organizations and partner agencies.

Military vehicle displays allowed guests to get close to modern tactical equipment, including a Paladin artillery system and other Army vehicles, while Soldiers answered questions and interacted directly with visitors. For many younger attendees, the opportunity to climb inside military equipment became one of the day's most memorable experiences.

The Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch again drew large crowds with its wildlife display featuring animals found on post, including turtles and snakes.

The bus tours and other interactive exhibits also remained popular attractions throughout the day, while music by the 204th Army Band helped create a festive, welcoming atmosphere at the beginning of the event.

The event also offered visitors an opportunity to explore Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area — one of the installation's most visible examples of preserving military history while engaging the public.

Originally dedicated in 1995 as the World War II Commemorative Area, the site has grown into an 11-acre historical complex featuring preserved World War II-era troop buildings, the Equipment Park, Fort McCoy History Center, and Veterans Memorial Plaza.

The Commemorative Area itself grew from efforts begun in the early 1990s to preserve a portion of Fort McCoy's World War II heritage. As older wooden troop buildings across the installation faced demolition or modernization, Fort McCoy leaders recognized the historical significance of preserving a representative section of the cantonment area.

That effort ultimately created one of the Army's more unique historical preservation sites, allowing today's visitors to walk through spaces once occupied by generations of Soldiers.

Equipment Park, first established in the mid-1990s with only a handful of displayed artifacts, now includes more than 70 military equipment pieces representing equipment historically used at Fort McCoy. New additions in 2026 included an M7 "Priest" Self-Propelled Gun and an M114 155 mm Towed Howitzer.

Inside the Fort McCoy History Center and preserved troop buildings, visitors learned how the installation supported military operations spanning more than a century.

Public reaction shared on social media after the event reflected strong appreciation for both the event itself and Fort McCoy's outreach efforts.

One participant highlighted several popular attractions, noting visitors especially enjoyed the bus tour, sandbag activity, personalized dog tags, shooting range, military equipment displays, and the wildlife exhibit featuring turtles and snakes.

She also said children being able to explore military equipment was especially popular.

Another event-goer praised the return of the event, calling it "very nice" and encouraging additional bus tours in the future.

Tom Swift praised Fort McCoy personnel, saying, "Everyone that I talked with was courteous and professional."

Barth Bushberger described the event as a "wonderful experience" and said he was glad the opportunity was made available to the general public.

Melinda Mae Jessie called the event a "great experience" and thanked organizers.

Anita Lind said she "really enjoyed the event" and expressed appreciation for military service members.

Retired Chief Warrant Officer Paul Piotrowski described the open house as an "awesome experience" for himself and his family.

Elmer McPherson said he and his family had "a great visit," adding that everyone was friendly and noting it was his first time returning to Fort McCoy since National Guard training there in the 1980s.

James Couetts said he and his family enjoyed the exhibits and praised the personable nature of event staff and participants.

Jay Dennison summed up his family's experience by saying they had "a wonderful time" with "so much to see and do."

Representatives with Battleship Wisconsin Division, U.S. Naval Sea Cadets shared appreciation for the event, noting cadets attending during their drill weekend were grateful for the opportunity to visit.

Ronald DeSouza praised the event with humor, saying he wished similar activities had been available when he was stationed at Fort McCoy and joked that seeing his former barracks now preserved in the commemorative area made him "feel ancient."

These reactions reflected exactly why events like Armed Forces Day remain important.

For many civilians, open houses provide a rare opportunity to interact directly with service members, ask questions about military missions, and better understand the role installations like Fort McCoy play in national defense.

For veterans, such events can reconnect them with places where they served and memories tied to military life. For military families and service members, the events help strengthen bonds with the communities that support them.

By day's end, the 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House once again demonstrated that Fort McCoy's connection with the public remains as important as ever — continuing a tradition of military-community engagement that has endured for decades.

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Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

(Above and below photos) Scenes from the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House are shown May 16 at Fort McCoy.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol



Photo by Greg Mason, Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office



Photo by Pfc. Melissa Walkenhorst/U.S. Army Reserve



Photo by Staff Sgt. Caroline Sauder/U.S. Army Reserve



Photo by Capt. Tyler Rickenbach/U.S. Army Reserve



Photo by Staff Sgt. Caroline Sauder/U.S. Army Reserve

COMMUNITY

McCoy honors Desert Shield, Desert Storm-era veterans during open house

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy honored Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm-era veterans during a special recognition ceremony May 16 at Veterans Memorial Plaza as part of the installation's 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House.

Organized by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, the ceremony recognized all veterans who served during the Desert Shield/Desert Storm time frame, including those who deployed in support of the 1990-1991 Gulf War, while also highlighting the installation's historic role in supporting one of the most significant military mobilizations of the modern era.

Held 35 years after the end of Operation Desert Storm, the ceremony served as both a tribute to Gulf War-era veterans and a reminder of Fort McCoy's long-standing role in preparing America's military forces for global operations.

Operation Desert Shield began Aug. 7, 1990, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. In response to the aggression by Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein, the United States led a multinational coalition to defend Saudi Arabia and build combat power in the region. What began as a defensive mission quickly became one of the largest military deployments since World War II, with hundreds of thousands of U.S. service members deploying to Southwest Asia.

Operation Desert Storm began Jan. 17, 1991, with a massive coalition air campaign targeting Iraqi military infrastructure, air defenses, command centers, and logistics networks. That campaign was followed by a swift ground offensive launched Feb. 24, 1991, that liberated Kuwait in approximately 100 hours. A ceasefire was declared Feb. 28, 1991.

As those operations unfolded overseas, Fort McCoy played a major role in preparing troops for deployment.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Ricciardi, Fort McCoy senior commander and commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division, said the installation became a critical mobilization platform during the Gulf War.

"As we look around our installation today, we see a modern, state-of-the-art training center, but the foundation of what Fort McCoy was, was tested and proven 35 years ago when Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm commenced," Ricciardi said.

"Fort McCoy became one of the roaring engines for American combat power."

According to Ricciardi, Fort McCoy

mobilized, trained, and deployed more than 18,000 Soldiers from 148 units across the Total Force — active-duty, Reserve, and National Guard formations — in support of the Gulf War effort.

"For many of those brave men and women, the freezing temperatures in the fields of Wintry McCoy were the final stop before deploying to the sandy Kuwaiti and Iraqi deserts," Ricciardi said.

The installation's mobilization mission during Desert Shield and Desert Storm helped demonstrate the importance of integrated readiness across all military components — a mission Fort McCoy continues today as one of the Army's premier Total Force training centers.

Ricciardi said the ceremony was about recognizing not only wartime achievements, but also the enduring impact of those who served.

"We gather for a profoundly important purpose, to recognize our Gulf War veterans," Ricciardi said. "We remember your service, we value your sacrifices, and we stand proud for everything that you have accomplished."

He noted that many veterans continued serving their communities long after military service ended.

"When you hung your uniform, you came home and became a leader," Ricciardi said. "You became a business owner, a teacher, a pillar to our community."

Ricciardi also credited Gulf War veterans with helping shape the next generations of military service members.

"We owe you a debt of gratitude, not just for the victory that we secured in the desert, but the legacy of excellence that you handed down to us," he said.

Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, also spoke during the ceremony, connecting the recognition of Desert Shield/Desert Storm-era veterans with the broader significance of Armed Forces Day.

Baez shared the history of Armed Forces Day, explaining that the observance began after the creation of the Department of Defense and the unification of the armed services under a single department. The first Armed Forces Day observance took place in 1950, with President John F. Kennedy officially designating it as a national observance in 1961.

She reminded attendees that while Veterans Day and Memorial Day honor past service and sacrifice, Armed Forces Day focuses on recognizing those currently serving.

"Today is to celebrate servicemen and women across the world right now serv-



Scenes from the Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm-era veterans appreciation ceremony May 16 during the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House are shown at Fort McCoy.

ing in uniform," Baez said.

She encouraged visitors attending the open house to remember the military personnel serving globally.

"Take a minute and remember the servicemen and women around the world right now," Baez said. "That's what today is for, to thank those that are out there serving and defending this great nation."

The ceremony also highlighted the continuing partnership between Fort McCoy and the surrounding community. Ricciardi thanked local supporters for

helping military families during deployments and welcoming service members home.

"When our Soldiers return, you look after their families," Ricciardi said. "When they return, you welcome them with open arms."

Set against the backdrop of Veterans Memorial Plaza and amid the Armed Forces Day Open House festivities, the ceremony offered a moment of reflection on the service of those who answered the nation's call during the Gulf War era and the readiness mission that

continues at Fort McCoy today.

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Fort McCoy RSO team highlights McCoy Army Chaplain Corps history during 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

The Fort McCoy Religious Support Office combined history, outreach, and reflection during the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House by presenting an Army Chaplain Corps historical display at the installation's historic Commemorative Area.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Walter McCall, Fort McCoy Garrison chaplain, along with his wife Jackie Adorno-McCall, Chaplain Assistant Staff Sgt. Conor Techentien, and Sarah Covert (Techentien), organized and managed the display during the May 16 event.

The exhibit highlighted the long history of the Army Chaplain Corps as well as Fort McCoy's own religious-support history that dates back to the installation's World War II mobilization era.

The display also connected visitors to the continuing mission of the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office (RSO), which supports Soldiers, families, civilians, and training units across the installation.

The Army Chaplain Corps traces its origins to July 29, 1775, when chaplains first served with the Continental Army during the American Revolution. At Fort McCoy, chaplain support has existed for decades, particularly during World War II when numerous chapel buildings were constructed to support the tens of thousands of Soldiers training on post.

Today, two original World War II-era chapel buildings remain in use by Fort McCoy's RSO, providing a direct connection between the installation's historic past and its current training mission.

The historical display was set up inside one of the historic structures in Fort McCoy's Commemorative Area, which itself represents more than a century of Army history.

Throughout the open house, visitors stopped to learn about the role chaplains have played in supporting Soldiers during combat operations, training missions, deployments, and times of crisis.

The display was part of the annual Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House, which welcomed nearly a thousand visitors to the installation for military equipment displays, live demonstrations, historical exhibits, community engagement activities, and ceremonies honoring military service members and veterans.

The event began with a Desert Shield-Desert Storm Veterans Recognition Ceremony where McCall delivered the invocation.

"Almighty and everlasting God, creator of the Earth and boundless skies above, we come to you today, gathered here today at Fort McCoy with grateful hearts, to celebrate Armed Forces Day," McCall said during the ceremony.

McCall also reflected on the significance of the installation's historic surroundings and the service of military members across generations.

"We thank you for this beautiful and sun-filled day, and for the opportunity to come together as a community of Soldiers, veterans, families, and friends, to honor the men and women who served and have served on this Commemorative Area, a place of 110 years of history and remembrance, surrounded by the legacy of those who've gone before us," McCall said.

During the invocation, McCall also honored currently serving military members and veterans.

"We give thanks for the unwavering courage, dedication, and sacrifice of every member of the United States Armed Forces," McCall said. "We ask for your divine protection upon those who stand to



Members of the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy participate in the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House on May 16 at Fort McCoy.

watch today around the world."

McCall also recognized the contributions of military families and veterans.

"We also pray for the families who support them, whose love and sacrifice make that service possible," McCall said. "As we honor all who served, we remember especially the veterans among us. We thank them for their service and for the peace and security in their contributions that they have helped to secure."

The Fort McCoy Religious Support Office con-

tinues to support the free exercise of religion for service members and the Fort McCoy community through worship opportunities, counseling, ceremonies, and support mobilizing and training units throughout the year.

The participation by the RSO team during the Armed Forces Day Open House gave visitors an opportunity to learn more about both the Army Chaplain Corps and the enduring spiritual-support mission that has long been part of Fort McCoy's history.

Fort McCoy archaeology team supports '26 Armed Forces Day Open House

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Archaeologists and cultural resource specialists at Fort McCoy helped showcase thousands of years of regional history during the installation's 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House on May 16 at the post's historic Commemorative Area.

Members of the Fort McCoy archaeology team welcomed dozens of visitors throughout the day with an educational booth highlighting the installation's long-running archaeology and cultural resources program. The team also offered a hands-on activity area where visitors could practice throwing an atlatl, an ancient spear-throwing tool used by Native Americans centuries ago.

The display gave visitors a closer look at one of the Army's most extensive archaeology programs in the Upper Midwest. Fort McCoy's Cultural Resources Management Program oversees hundreds of archaeological sites spread across the installation's 60,000-plus acres in Wisconsin's Driftless Area. Archaeologists have documented evidence of human activity on the installation dating back more than 10,000 years.

Fort McCoy archaeologists and partner organizations have identified more than 580 registered archaeological sites and recovered hundreds of thousands of artifacts over decades of work. Discoveries have included Paleo-Indian projectile points, Woodland-era pottery and tools, remnants of 19th-century farmsteads, and artifacts connected to the installation's early military history.

Archaeologist Tyler Olsen and Miranda Alexander with the Colorado State University Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML) spoke with visitors during the event about the history of the program and the importance of preserving archae-



A scene with members of the Fort McCoy archaeology team supporting the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House is shown May 16 at Fort McCoy.

ological resources while supporting Fort McCoy's military training mission.

The archaeology team explained how the installation's protected

training lands have helped preserve important historical and prehistoric sites that might otherwise have been lost to development or modern agriculture. Many of the artifacts and records recovered through Fort McCoy archaeology projects are curated through partnerships with organizations such as the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

The Armed Forces Day event allowed visitors to learn how Fort McCoy archaeologists conduct surveys, catalog artifacts, map sites, and work with tribal representatives and preservation agencies to protect culturally significant areas across the installation.

The atlatl demonstration proved especially popular with families and younger visitors, offering a hands-on connection to ancient hunting technologies once used throughout the region.

Fort McCoy officials said the archaeology exhibit was designed not only to educate the public about the installation's history, but also to highlight the ongoing stewardship work that has helped preserve a unique archaeological record spanning thousands of years.

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NEWS

Fort McCoy Equipment Park serves as major attraction during 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy's historic Equipment Park served as one of the primary attractions during the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House, drawing hundreds of visitors to the installation's Commemorative Area to experience more than a century of Army history firsthand.

According to officials with the Fort McCoy Garrison and Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, nearly 1,000 people attended the annual open house May 16, with at least half of those visitors touring the Equipment Park throughout the day.

Located within Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area, the Equipment Park features more than 70 military vehicles, artillery pieces, helicopters, and other equipment displays representing Army history from World War II through modern military operations.

Fort McCoy officials said the park continues to serve as one of the installation's most popular historical attractions because it gives visitors an opportunity to closely view military equipment that Soldiers trained with and operated at Fort McCoy through multiple generations of service.

The Equipment Park was originally established in the mid-1990s as part of the installation's larger Commemorative Area historical preservation effort. According to information provided by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, the park began with only a handful of "macro-artifacts" before steadily expanding into the large outdoor historical exhibit visitors see today.

Officials with the Fort McCoy Garrison stated the equipment on display was selected specifically to reflect the types of military vehicles and weapons systems used at Fort McCoy throughout its more than 110-year history.

Among the displays are tanks, tracked vehicles, artillery pieces, tactical trucks, helicopters, and transport equipment representing eras from World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and modern Army operations.

During the Armed Forces Day Open House, visitors walked through the outdoor exhibits while also participating in ceremonies, military displays, historical demonstrations, and family activities held throughout the Commemorative Area.

Officials said the Equipment Park was especially popular with veterans and families, many of whom stopped to photograph the displays and discuss the historical significance of the equipment.

The condition and appearance of the park also received significant attention ahead of the event. According to Fort McCoy officials, installation personnel worked extensively to ensure the Equipment Park was well maintained and presentation ready for visitors attending the open house.

Grass areas were manicured, display areas were cleaned, and equipment exhibits were prepared to provide a professional and welcoming atmosphere for the public. Officials said the upkeep helped showcase both the installation's history and Fort McCoy's continued commitment to preserving Army heritage.

The Equipment Park complements the larger Fort McCoy Commemorative Area, which includes historic World War II-era buildings, Veterans Memorial Plaza, and the Fort McCoy History Center. Together, the area preserves and interprets the installation's long role as a major Army training center.

Fort McCoy officials noted that events such as the Armed Forces Day Open House help connect the public with the Army's mission while also honoring the generations of Soldiers, veterans, and military families connected to the installation.

The annual Armed Forces Day Open House is one of Fort McCoy's largest public outreach events and is designed to provide community members with an opportunity to visit the installation, learn about military service, and interact with Soldiers and Army organizations in an educational and family-friendly environment.

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(Above and below) Visitors to the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House check out Equipment Park at the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area as part of the open house attractions May 16 at Fort McCoy.



eration Installation, and Strategic Support Area enabling warfighter lethality to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars."

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Fort McCoy open house highlights importance of Army community engagement, public trust

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

More than 800 visitors attended the 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House at Fort McCoy on May 16, continuing a long-standing Army tradition of strengthening relationships between military installations and the communities they serve while offering the public a firsthand look at military readiness, history, and service.

Held in Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area, the free public event featured military displays, historical exhibits, interactive activities, live music, and a special recognition ceremony honoring Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm-era veterans. The event also demonstrated how Army community engagement and strategic outreach efforts help strengthen public understanding and support for military missions across the United States.

Organized by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy with support from numerous installation partners, the event reflected a mission extending far beyond military training. Public events such as Armed Forces Day observances, installation open houses, military appreciation events, and historical commemorations allow communities to connect directly with Soldiers, Army civilians, and military families while building trust and transparency between the Army and the American public.

During remarks at the event, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez emphasized the importance of maintaining strong relationships between the Army and surrounding communities while recognizing the critical role community support plays in sustaining military readiness and operations.

"To our community partners that stand here today, shoulder-to-shoulder with Fort McCoy, we want to thank you for your support," Baez said. "When our Soldiers deploy, you look after their families. When they return, you welcome them with open arms. You were the heartbeat behind the uniform, and we cannot thank you enough for your unwavering patriotism."

Army leaders across the force have long recognized that strong community relations are essen-



A scene from the 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House is shown May 16 at Fort McCoy.

tial to maintaining support for military readiness, training, and operational missions. Military open houses and public events allow Americans to directly connect with Soldiers and military families while strengthening transparency, trust, and understanding between the Army and the communities it serves.

Through community engagement programs, public outreach events, school partnerships, historical preservation efforts, and strategic communication initiatives, Army installations help foster greater public awareness about the role military readiness plays in national defense.

For installations such as Fort McCoy — Wisconsin's only U.S. Army installation — those relationships remain especially important. Since its establishment in 1909, Fort McCoy has supported the training and mobilization of military forces through World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Global War on Terrorism, and ongoing readiness missions supporting today's Army and joint force.

Events such as the Armed Forces Day Open House give visitors opportunities to see firsthand the people, equipment, and missions supporting national defense while also helping the Army maintain transparency with the public it serves.

Baez also emphasized the continued importance of readiness and community support for the Army mission.

"Let us ensure that our total force remains trained, ready, and lethal so we can meet the challenges of the future," she said. "To our community, thank you for supporting Fort McCoy every way that you can. Thank you, everybody, for supporting the United States of America."

That spirit of connection was visible throughout the day as families explored a wide range of exhibits and activities designed to educate and entertain visitors of all ages.

Hands-on activities in building 905 included sandbag filling, personalized military identification tags, camouflage face painting, marksmanship activities, and informational exhibits from numerous Army organizations and partner agencies. Military vehicle displays allowed guests to get close to modern tactical equipment while Soldiers answered questions and interacted directly with visitors. For many younger attendees, climbing inside military equipment became one of the most memorable experiences of the day.

The Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch also drew large crowds with its wildlife display featuring animals found on post, including turtles and snakes. Bus tours, interactive exhibits, and music by the 204th Army Band further contributed to the event's welcoming atmosphere.

The event additionally highlighted Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area, one of the installation's most visible examples of combining Army historical preservation efforts with public education and outreach.

Originally dedicated in 1995 as the World War II Commemorative Area, the site has grown into an 11-acre historical complex featuring preserved World War II-era troop buildings, the Equipment Park, Fort McCoy History Center, and Veterans Memorial Plaza. Equipment Park now includes

more than 70 military equipment displays representing vehicles and systems historically used at Fort McCoy.

Preserving Army history while making it accessible to the public remains another important component of Army strategic engagement. Historical sites, museums, memorials, and public educational events help connect generations of Americans with the Army's legacy of service while reinforcing the importance of continued military readiness.

Army community relations efforts also play a critical role in sustaining long-term support for military operations and installations nationwide. Installations depend heavily on partnerships with local governments, schools, businesses, veterans organizations, civic leaders, and residents to successfully carry out training, mobilization, and support missions.

Public outreach efforts help ensure communities better understand how military installations contribute not only to national defense, but also to local economies, emergency response capabilities, environmental stewardship, and regional partnerships.

At Fort McCoy, those relationships have been built and strengthened over generations through public engagement events such as Armed Forces Day observances, military appreciation programs, and community partnerships.

Public reaction shared following the event reflected strong appreciation for both the open house itself and Fort McCoy's outreach efforts.

One participant highlighted several popular attractions, noting visitors especially enjoyed the bus tour, sandbag activity, personalized dog tags, shooting range, military equipment displays, and wildlife exhibit. Another attendee praised the return of the event and encouraged additional bus tours in the future.

As the Army continues modernizing and preparing for future challenges, leaders across the force continue emphasizing the importance of maintaining strong public connections through strategic engagement, transparent communication, and community outreach.

Events such as the Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House help strengthen those connections by allowing Americans to directly experience Army service, readiness, and history while reinforcing the longstanding bond between the military and the communities that support it.

Fort McCoy's motto beginning in 2026 is "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909."

The installation's mission: "Fort McCoy strengthens Total Force Readiness by serving as a training center, Mobilization Force Generation Installation, and Strategic Support Area enabling warfighter lethality to deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars."

And Fort McCoy's vision is, "To be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces."

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi>, and on X (formerly Twitter) by searching "usagmccoy." Also try downloading the My Army Post app to your smartphone and set "Fort McCoy" or another installation as your preferred base. Fort McCoy is also part of Army's Installation Management Command where "We Are The Army's Home."



A scene from the 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House is shown May 16 at Fort McCoy.

FORT MCCOY 2025 WATER QUALITY REPORT

The following information is from the 2025 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Consumer Confidence Report data for Fort McCoy — 64203029 North Post and 64203073 South Post.

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

Health information

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

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

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

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

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

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

Definition of Terms

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

Source(s) of Water

Source ID (North and South Post)	Source	Depth (in feet)	Status
24	Groundwater	202	Active
25	Groundwater	204	Active
27	Groundwater	217	Active
28	Groundwater	220	Active
29	Groundwater	N/A	Active
30	Groundwater	250	Active
26	Groundwater	N/A	Active
31	Groundwater	262	Active

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

Educational information

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

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

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

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

and wildlife.

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

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

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

- Radioactive contaminants, which

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

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

Additional health information

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

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

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

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

WATER REPORT ITEMS

INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
ARSENIC (ppb) (SP)	NA	10	NA	0	0-0	6/12/2024	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Runoff from orchards. Runoff from glass and electronics products wastes.
ARSENIC (ppb) (NP)	NA	10	NA	0	0-0	6/12/2024	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Runoff from orchards. Runoff from glass and electronics products wastes.
BARIUM (ppm) (NP)	NA	2	2	0.008	.004-.008	6/12/2024	No	Discharge from drilling waste. Discharge from metal refineries. Erosion of natural deposits.
BARIUM (ppm) (SP)	NA	2	2	0.019	.013-.019	6/12/2024	No	Discharge from drilling waste. Discharge from metal refineries. Erosion of natural deposits.
CADMIUM (ppb) (SP)	NA	5	5	0	0-0	6/12/2024	No	Corrosion of galvanized pipes. Erosion of natural deposits. Discharge from metal refineries. Runoff from waste batteries and paints.
CHROMIUM (ppb) (NP)	NA	100	100	2	0-2	6/12/2024	No	Discharge from steel and pulp mills. Erosion of natural deposits.
FLUORIDE (ppm) (NP)	NA	4	4	0.1	0.0-0.1	6/12/2024	No	Erosion of natural deposits. Water additive which promotes strong teeth. Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
NICKEL (ppb) (NP)	NA	100	NA	2.2	0.49-2.2	6/12/2024	No	Nickel occurs naturally in soils, ground water, and surface waters and is often used in electroplating, stainless steel, and alloy products.
NICKEL (ppb) (SP)	NA	100	NA	0.55	0-0.55	6/12/2024	No	Nickel occurs naturally in soils, ground water, and surface waters and is often used in electroplating, stainless steel, and alloy products.
NITRATE (NO3-N) (ppm) (NP)	NA	10	10	0.2	0.00-0.20	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use. Leaching from septic tanks, sewage. Erosion of natural deposits.
NITRATE (ppm) (SP)	NA	10	10	0.58	0.35-0.58	NA	No	Runoff from fertilizer use. Leaching from septic tanks, sewage. Erosion of natural deposits.
SELENIUM (ppb) (SP)	NA	50	50	1	0-1	NA	No	Discharge from petroleum and metal refineries. Erosion of natural deposits. Discharge from mines.
SODIUM (ppm) (NP)	NA	NA	NA	17	4.10-17	6/12/2024	No	NA
SODIUM (ppm) (SP)	NA	NA	NA	11	2.50-11.00	6/12/2024	No	NA
THALLIUM (ppb) (NP)	NA	2	0.5	0.2	0.0-0.2	6/12/2024	No	Leaching from ore processing sites. Discharge from electronics, glass, and

LEAD AND COPPER

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Action level	MCLG	30th percentile level found	# of results	NA	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
COPPER (ppm) (NP)	AL=13	13	0.9640	1 of 15 results were above the action level.	NA	6/27/2024	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits. Leaching from wood preservatives.
COPPER (ppm) (SP)	AL=13	13	0.4475	Zero of five results were above the action level.	NA	6/27/2024	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Leaching from wood preservatives.
LEAD (ppb) (NP)	AL=15	0	8	1 of 15 results were above the action level.	NA	6/29/2024	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits.
LEAD (ppb) (SP)	AL=15	0	2.04	Zero of five results were above the action level.	NA	6/29/2024	No	Corrosion of household plumbing systems. Erosion of natural deposits.

DISINFECTION BYPRODUCTS

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
HAA5 (ppb) (NP)	DEP-8060	60	60	0	0	NA	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.
HAA5 (ppb) (SP)	B-5026	60	60	4	4	6/14/2023	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.
TTHM (ppb) (NP)	DEP-8060	80	0	22.8	22.8	NA	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.
TTHM (ppb) (SP)	B-5026	80	0	4.5	4.5	6/14/2023	No	Byproduct of drinking water chlorination.

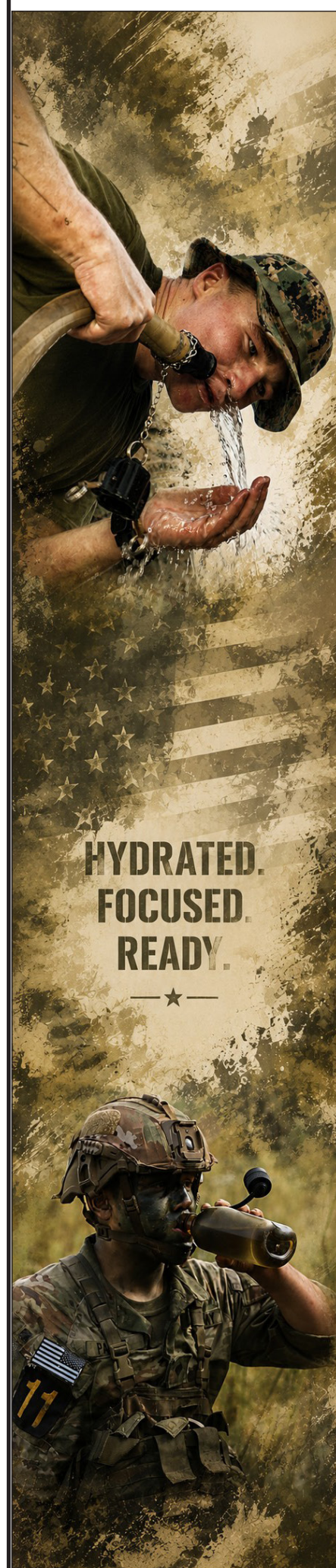
RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS

Contaminant (units) North Post (NP) and South Post (SP)	Site	MCL	MCLG	Level found	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
GROSS ALPHA, EXCL. R & U (pCi/l) (SP)	NA	15	0	3	1.3-3	12/7/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
RADIUM, (226 + 228) (pCi/l) (NP)	NA	5	0	0.9	0.5-0.9	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
RADIUM, (226 + 228) (pCi/l) (SP)	NA	5	0	2.1	0.4-2.1	5/19/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
GROSS ALPHA, INCL. R & U (r/l) (SP)	NA	NA	NA	3	1.3-3	12/7/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
COMBINED URANIUM (ug/l) (NP)	NA	30	0	1	0.1-1.0	NA	No	Erosion of natural deposits.
COMBINED URANIUM (ug/l) (SP)	NA	30	0	0.1	0-0.1	5/19/2021	No	Erosion of natural deposits.

PFAS CONTAMINANTS WITH A RECOMMENDED HEALTH ADVISORY LEVEL

Contaminant (units) South Post (SP)	Site	RPHGS or HAL (ppt)	Level found	Range	Range	Sample date (if prior to 2024)	Violation	Typical Source of Containment
PFHxS (ppt) (parts per trillion)	NA	40	0.94	4.3	0-94	11/5/2023	No	Drinking water is one way that people can be exposed to PFAS. In Wisconsin, two-thirds of people use groundwater as their drinking source. PFAS can get into groundwater from places that make or use PFAS and release from consumer products in landfills.

U.S. Army Graphic Illustrations



COMMUNITY

Fort McCoy's East Barracks Project reaches 98 percent complete, nearing final turnover

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Construction of Fort McCoy's newest transient-training barracks has reached another significant milestone as the installation's East Barracks Project achieved 98 percent completion by the end of May 2026, according to a recent update from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The project continues to advance toward final completion and eventual occupancy as crews work through final commissioning activities, punch-list corrections, and remaining modifications.

Nathan Butts, project engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers, reported May 29 that the project was 98 percent complete both in scheduled and actual progress.

Project records also showed 106 requests for information had been answered with none remaining under review, while 828 construction submittals had been completed and only six remained in review.

Current work includes completion of mechanical commissioning requirements, correction of punch-list items throughout the facility, parking-lot sealant operations, and processing of an approved mechanical modification proposal. In addition, 36 newly installed doors have been painted and are awaiting final hardware installation to complete the modification effort.

The \$27.3 million East Barracks Project has been one of Fort McCoy's largest ongoing military construction efforts. It was previously reported the project reached 97 percent completion at the end of April and was entering its final phase of construction.

The project was awarded to L.S. Black Constructors LLC in February 2024 with construction beginning later that spring. Once completed, the more than 60,000-square-foot facility will provide housing for up to 400 Soldiers training at the installation.

The new barracks represents another major step in Fort McCoy's long-term modernization of troop housing and quality-of-life facilities. Over the past several years, the installation has transformed the 1600 block area of its cantonment with new barracks, brigade headquarters facilities, and officer quarters projects replacing or supplementing aging infrastructure dating back to World War II.

In support of those efforts, several historic 1942-era barracks buildings were relocated in 2025 to make room for additional construction and future development.

Master planning efforts at Fort McCoy have focused on creating a more modern and efficient troop-housing environment based on the Army's Operational Readiness Training Complex concept. The design consolidates facilities into multi-story structures that support a more walkable training environment while reducing utility and maintenance costs.

Previous Fort McCoy planning documents outlined a long-term vision that includes four new barracks buildings, multiple brigade headquarters facilities, and officer quarters projects in the same area.

The East Barracks Project is also part of a broader wave of military construction that continues to strengthen Fort McCoy's ability to support Army readiness. Along with the recently completed \$28.08 million South Barracks Project and the ongoing \$55.75 million Collective Training Officers Quarters Project, the East Barracks facility expands the installation's capacity to support the more than 100,000 service members who train at Fort McCoy during a typical year.

Beyond its training value, construction investment continues to generate substantial economic benefits for Wisconsin and surrounding communities. Fort McCoy officials reported the installation's total economic impact reached approximately \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2024, an increase from \$1.38 billion in fiscal year 2023.

Since fiscal year 2019, more than \$310 million has been invested in new construction projects in-



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



Contractors work on a new \$27.3 million transient training troops barracks project, known as the Fort McCoy East Barracks Project, on May 18 at Fort McCoy.

volving buildings and ranges across the installation. During the same period, more than \$1.47 billion has been invested in operating costs, including maintenance, utilities, construction support, contracts, supplies, services, and personnel.

Fort McCoy officials have noted that many construction contracts have been awarded to regional firms, allowing military construction funding to support local economies while improving installation infrastructure.

The continued progress of the East Barracks Project also supports Fort McCoy's new mission, vision, and motto established in 2026. The installation's mission is to strengthen Total Force readiness as a training center, Mobilization Force Generation Installation, and Strategic Support Area. Its vision

is to be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces.

The installation's motto — "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909" — reflects Fort McCoy's ongoing commitment to preparing service members while modernizing facilities to meet future readiness requirements.

As final commissioning and closeout work continues, the East Barracks Project stands as another visible example of Fort McCoy's continued growth and modernization. Once completed, the facility will provide Soldiers with modern accommodations while enhancing the installation's ability to support large-scale training, mobilization, and readiness missions for years to come.

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

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

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Wisconsin Challenge Academy cadets support 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Dozens of cadets from the Wisconsin Challenge Academy played a key role in supporting Fort McCoy's 2026 Armed Forces Day Open House on May 16, helping welcome more than 800 visitors to the installation's historic Commemorative Area for a day of military appreciation, community engagement, and hands-on activities.

Cadets with Wisconsin Challenge Academy Class 56 assisted throughout the event in a variety of roles, helping ensure the success of the annual open house while also sharing their own stories of personal growth and service.

"The cadets help with the sandbag filling activity, they helped with parking vehicles, they shared their stories with visitors, and much more," said Public Affairs Specialist Melissa Dubois with the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, which organized the event with significant support from Fort McCoy Garrison staff across many directorates.

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy, a tenant organization at Fort McCoy, has been a longtime partner on the installation and provided valuable manpower and enthusiasm for the event.

Founded in 1988, the academy is part of the Wisconsin National Guard Youth Challenge Program and provides an alternative educational path for young people seeking a fresh start and greater direction in life.

"The Wisconsin Challenge Academy is an alternative education program designed to reclaim the lives of at-risk youth and produce graduates with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults," according to the academy's website.

"The academy is part of the National Guard Youth Challenge Program, a community-based program that leads, trains, and mentors 16-18-year-olds so that they may become productive citizens in America's future."

According to the academy, the program begins with a 5 1/2-month residential phase followed by a one-year post-residential phase, helping participants develop life skills, discipline, education, and personal responsibility needed for long-term success.

For visitors attending the open house, the cadets' presence added another meaningful dimension to the event — showcasing not only Army equipment and military history, but also one of Fort McCoy's important community-based programs focused on youth development and mentorship.

Held under sunny skies with temperatures in the 80s, the Armed Forces Day Open House continued a long-standing tradition of strengthening ties between Fort McCoy and surrounding communities while offering the public a firsthand look at Army readiness, history, and service.

The free event featured military vehicle displays, historical exhibits, interactive activities, live music, and a special recognition ceremony honoring veterans who served during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Organized by U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy with support from numerous installation partners, the event reflected a mission extending beyond military training — building and maintaining strong relationships with the communities that have supported Fort McCoy for generations.

As Wisconsin's only U.S. Army installation, Fort McCoy has played a central role in preparing America's armed forces for more than a century. Established in 1909, the installation has supported mobilization and training missions for World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm,



Photo by Capt. Tyler Rickenbach

Cadets assigned to the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy stand in formation during the Armed Forces Day Open house on May 16 at Fort McCoy.



Photo by Capt. Tyler Rickenbach

Cadets assigned to the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy fill sand bags during the Armed Forces Day Open house on May 16 at Fort McCoy.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

A scene from the 2026 Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House with cadets from the Wisconsin Challenge Academy is shown May 16 at Fort McCoy.

the Global War on Terrorism, and ongoing readiness operations.

Military public engagement events such as Armed Forces Day observances have long served as important bridges between installations and the communities they serve. Armed Forces Day itself dates to 1950, when the newly unified Department of Defense established a single observance to recognize Americans currently serving in the armed forces.

For Fort McCoy, that tradition remains an important part of its enduring relationship with the public.

This year's event also demonstrated how tenant organizations such as the Wisconsin Challenge Academy contribute directly to that mission — not only by supporting installation activities, but by embodying the values of service, resilience, and growth that military communities strive to foster.

FEATURE

Fort McCoy LRC director receives Quilt of Valor

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL & MIKE VOLPE
Public Affairs Staff

Tanya Morene, director of the Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center and a retired Army lieutenant colonel, was honored May 20 with a Quilt of Valor during a special presentation at Fort McCoy's Central Issue Facility.

Morene, a resident of Sparta, Wis., received the handmade quilt from the Mauston chapter of the Quilts of Valor Foundation. The quilt was presented by Donna Thomas, representing the chapter, during a ceremony attended by colleagues and supporters.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation is a national nonprofit organization that awards handmade quilts to service members and veterans who have been touched by war. Each quilt is intended to provide comfort, healing, and recognition for military service and sacrifice.

Morene retired from the Army after a distinguished military career and continues to serve the military community through her civilian leadership role at Fort McCoy. As director of the Logistics Readiness Center, she oversees logistics operations and support services that help sustain the installation's training and readiness missions.

During the presentation, Thomas recognized Morene's years of military service and ongoing commitment to supporting Soldiers and military readiness. The Quilt of Valor award serves as a tangible expression of gratitude from the community for the dedication and sacrifices made by military members and veterans.

The ceremony at the Central Issue Facility highlighted the continued partnership between community organizations and military installations in recognizing the service of veterans. The handmade quilt presented to Morene joins thousands of Quilts of Valor awarded nationwide to veterans and service members since the foundation was established in 2003.

For Morene, the award represented not only recognition of her military career but also appreciation for her continued service to the Army community at Fort McCoy.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation's mission is to "cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor," honoring their service and sacrifice through the work of volunteer quilters across the country.



Photo by Mike Volpe/Fort McCoy Garrison

A scene from the quilt presentation for Tanya Morene, Fort McCoy Logistics Readiness Center director and retired Army lieutenant colonel, is shown May 20 at the Fort McCoy Central Issue Facility at Fort McCoy.

Fisheries biologist continues tradition of stewardship, balancing conservation, mission support

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

By the time Steve Rood officially stepped into Fort McCoy's fisheries biologist role in 2023, he already knew Fort McCoy's waters like few others.

From cold-water trout streams winding through the installation to lakes and impoundments that support recreation, wildlife habitat, and military training, Rood had spent nearly two decades building an intimate understanding of the installation's aquatic ecosystems before formally assuming the lead fisheries role.

Today, as fisheries biologist with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch, Rood continues supporting a wide variety of fisheries management activities that help preserve one of Fort McCoy's most valuable natural resources while supporting the installation's military mission.

For Rood, the position represents the continuation of a journey that began more than 20 years ago.

He first came to Fort McCoy in 2005 as a seasonal employee supporting the fisheries program through the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education while completing his education. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 2006 with a biology degree emphasizing fisheries management, he joined the program full time. Three years later, that role transitioned under an agreement with Colorado State University, allowing him to continue supporting the fisheries mission.

When longtime Fort McCoy fisheries leader John Noble retired in June 2023 after more than three decades of service, Rood was the logical successor.

"I am very excited at the opportunity to be a part of the Fort McCoy Natural Resource Branch, and to be able to build upon the ideas and management objectives that I have been a part of over the last 15-plus years," Rood said when he assumed the role. "I have spent a lot of time working on and developing an understanding of the different watersheds and landscapes on Fort McCoy, and I am eager to put that knowledge to use in order to maintain a high-quality fishery and military training."

That understanding is critical given the scope of Fort McCoy's fisheries program.

The installation includes 10 lakes and impoundments and approximately 71 miles of cold-water streams and tributaries, many of them Class I trout waters that support naturally reproducing brook and brown trout populations.

Managing those resources requires a diverse portfolio of work.

Rood's responsibilities include conducting fish population surveys, stream and habitat assessments,



Fort McCoy Fisheries Biologist Steve Rood with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Natural Resources Branch talks with Trenton Foreman, fisheries technician, and Watershed Management Biologist Derek Maki, both with the Colorado State University's Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands who work in partnership with the Natural Resources Branch, as they complete a fish survey April 22 at Suukjak Sep Lake at Fort McCoy.

invasive species management, aquatic habitat improvement projects, angler outreach, and collaboration with state and federal conservation partners. He also works closely with other members of Fort McCoy's Natural Resources Branch to ensure fisheries management aligns with broader land stewardship goals and military training requirements.

"Aside from getting outside and conducting surveys, I really enjoy working with the other natural resource program managers to understand what their priority projects are and how we can all work together to accomplish those goals," Rood said.

That collaboration is especially important at a military installation, where environmental stewardship and readiness must work hand in hand.

"There is definitely a balance that has to be struck between natural resource management, military training, anglers and many other stakeholders," Rood said. "However, that balance is what we are all here trying to achieve — a high-quality military training landscape along with outstanding ecosystem that can support a wide array of recreational activities."

Rood's long history at Fort McCoy gives him a unique perspective on that balancing act.

Over the years, he has spent countless hours in the field, conducting surveys, evaluating habitat

conditions, or meeting with anglers during creel surveys to gather feedback about fishing experiences on post.

Those conversations have stayed with him.

"Over the years I have conducted a lot of creel surveys, where I go out and talk to anglers about what they are catching and where they are from," Rood said in a past article. "I would always end the survey by asking if they had any questions for me. Probably the number one answer over all the years that I received from anglers, was them thanking me for the work that we do and for the ability to fish on Fort McCoy."

For Rood, those comments serve as a reminder that the work matters far beyond data collection and habitat management.

"That response shows how many of our anglers feel about the quality of fishing and habitat on Fort McCoy, and I will strive to keep it that way," he said.

As Fort McCoy continues to support military readiness as one of the Army's premier training installations, its natural resources remain an essential part of that mission.

For Rood, protecting those waters is both a professional responsibility and a long-term commitment — one built over decades along the streams, shorelines, and fisheries of Fort McCoy.

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Historic Camp McCoy postcards added to Fort McCoy History Center collection

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

The Fort McCoy History Center recently received a pair of historic postcards that offer a rare visual glimpse into the early history and development of Camp McCoy during the years leading into World War II.

The donated artifacts — one featuring the iconic Chapel Spire at Camp McCoy and another showing a historic stone entrance sign constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the late 1930s — help preserve the story of the installation's transformation from a modest training site into one of the Army's most important mobilization and training centers.

The postcards, though small in size, represent tangible pieces of Fort McCoy history. Their worn edges, aging photographic surfaces, and period printing styles reflect an era when postcards served as a primary way Soldiers and visitors documented military life and shared their experiences with families back home.

One postcard prominently features the sharp steeple and towering spire of a Camp McCoy chapel framed by pine branches. The black-and-white real photo postcard, believed to date to the World War II era, captures both the simplicity and importance of spiritual life at the installation during a time when tens of thousands of Soldiers trained at Camp McCoy before deploying across the globe.

The image highlights the chapel's steep roofline and narrow spire rising above the cantonment area, symbolizing a place of reflection and comfort during wartime service. Chapels at Camp McCoy played a critical role throughout the mobilization years of the 1940s, supporting Soldiers from across the nation as they prepared for uncertain futures overseas.

The postcard itself is considered a "real photo postcard," or RPPC, a popular photographic postcard format used extensively during the 1930s and 1940s. The artifact includes period lettering reading "Chapel Spire — Camp McCoy, Wis." and carries a photographer's studio mark from Milwaukee, the latter connecting the piece to Wisconsin history.

The second donated postcard depicts one of Camp McCoy's historic stone signs constructed through WPA labor during the Great Depression era. Built in the late 1930s, the stone entrance features the rugged craftsmanship and native stonework commonly associated with WPA construction projects throughout the United States.

The WPA, established as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's



A World War II-era postcard that was donated to the Fort McCoy History Center is shown April 22 at Fort McCoy. The card depicts a stone sign at then-Camp McCoy.

New Deal programs, provided employment for millions of Americans while completing infrastructure and public works projects nationwide.

At Camp McCoy, WPA workers helped build roads, bridges, stone structures, and training infrastructure that supported the installation's rapid growth prior to World War II.

The stone sign postcard captures more than a physical structure — it reflects an important chapter in both Army and American history. The handcrafted masonry and rustic appearance represented the enduring style of Depression-era federal projects, many of which still remain at Fort McCoy today.

Together, the postcards help document two distinct but connected aspects of Camp McCoy history — the human side of military service represented by the chapel, and the installation's physical development represented by the WPA stonework.

Officials with the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office said artifacts such as these are important because they preserve everyday visual history that might otherwise be lost to time. While official reports and military records document major events, postcards and photographs

often capture the atmosphere, architecture, and personal experiences associated with an installation's past.

The postcards also complement the growing collection of Fort McCoy historical artifacts preserved within the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area and History Center.

The museum contains exhibits and memorabilia spanning the installation's history from its founding in 1909 through World War I, World War II, the Cold War era, Operation Desert Storm, and modern-day training missions supporting the Army Reserve and National Guard.

As Fort McCoy continues preserving its heritage, artifacts like these postcards provide a direct visual connection to generations of Soldiers, civilians, and workers who shaped the installation over more than a century of service.

Though modest in appearance, the postcards stand as enduring historical artifacts — small windows into the history, architecture, and daily life of Camp McCoy during some of the most transformative years in American military history.

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Next issue of The Real McCoy
The July 2026 edition of The Real McCoy will be published July 17, 2026. The deadline for submissions or article ideas is July 10, 2026.

If your unit is at Fort McCoy for training, you have some award-winning people, or if you have something newsworthy, please pass it along to the newspaper staff. For more information, call 502-898-4128.

Dining Facilities
Building 1672 operates April-September, Building 1362 operates October-March - Offers full meal service

- Military members, military family members, and Department of Defense (DOD) civilians on official orders for temporary duty training may use dining facilities.
- DOD civilians working on Fort McCoy and retired military personnel may use dining facilities when MWR facilities are not open.
- Units must coordinate through the Food Program Management Office at 502-898-6518/4739.

Open Hours
Breakfast: 6-8 a.m.
Lunch: 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
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Breakfast - \$4.40
Lunch - \$7.10
Dinner - \$6.10

Other Dining

McCoy's Community Center: Building 1571. Catering/administration, call 502-898-2065. Building 1571. Open 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Tues.-Fri. and 4-10 p.m. Sat. Call 502-898-7060.

Snack Avenue: Building 1538. Located inside Express. Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat. and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun. Call 608-269-5604 or 502-898-4343.

Specialty Express Food Court: Building 1538. Open 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Limited seating available. Delivery available to South Post and in cantonment area. Call 608-269-5615, ext. 303.

Whitetail Ridge Chalet/Ten Point Pub: Open during regular ski area hours. Call 502-898-3517.

facilities services

This schedule is projected through July 16, 2026. Hours of operation and services can change frequently. Call facilities to verify hours before traveling.

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

Reassignments: 502-898-4746.
Records Update: 502-898-5677.
Centralized Promotions: 502-898-5677.

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

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

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

Permit Sales: Building 2168. Hunting, fishing, and firewood permits. Open 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Check <https://mccoysportsman.net> for updates. Call 502-898-3337.

Personal Property Processing Office: Building 200. Open 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call 502-898-3060, fax: 502-898-5634, email: usarmy.mccoys.asc.mbx.ltr-pppo@mail.mil.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Army Substance Abuse Program: Building 1344. Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. By appointment only. Call 502-898-2441.

Red Cross: Fort McCoy active-duty Soldiers and Family members can call 877-272-7337 for emergency assistance. For other Red Cross services, call 800-837-6313 or 608-788-1000.

Worship

School Age/Youth Center: Building 1792. Activities for youth kindergarten through 12th grade. Offers after-school, non-school, and inclement weather care for eligible youth. Open: M-F: 6:30 am - 5:30 pm; Summer & Non-School Days: 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm. After School Call: 502-898-4373. Childcare requests should be made at <https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome>.

Alcoholics Anonymous: For more information, call 502-898-5955/2441.

Fort McCoy Civilian Employee Assistance Program: Screening and referral services for civilian employees and Family members experiencing difficulties due to problems related to substance abuse, mental health, marital/family discord, or other causes. By appointment only. Call 502-898-2441/5955.

Fort McCoy Sexual Harassment/Assault Response & Prevention (SHARP): 24/7 hot-line: 502-898-3000.

Occupational Health Clinic: Building 1679. Open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. By appointment only. Call 502-898-8461.

TRICARE: TRICARE North Region, 877-874-2273; TRICARE West Region, 877-988-9378; TRICARE South Region, 800-444-5445; TRICARE for Life, 866-773-0404; or www.tricare.mil.

Veterans Crisis Phone Number: New option by dialing 988 and pressing 1. Veterans may still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the previous phone number — 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1.

Catholic: Chapel 10, building 1759. 9:15 a.m. Sun. Call 502-898-3528.

Protestant: Building 50. 11:30 a.m. Sun. Call 502-898-3528.

All faiths, self-worship: Sun. Building 2672, 10 a.m. - 3p.m.

Fellowship: Sun. Building 2675, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Other faiths in the local area: Please call the RSO office at 502-898-3528.

Counseling: Call the on-call duty chaplain at 608-630-6073.

Organizations

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 1882: Call 502-898-1882.

Reserve Officers Association, Fort McCoy-Readiness 43: For more information, call 920-535-0515 or email justdave49@centurylink.net.

USO Wisconsin at Fort McCoy: Building 1501, 10th Ave. For more information or to volunteer, call 414-477-7279 or email esokol@uso.org.

Warrant Officers Association, Chapter 0317: For more information email usawoamccoym@outlook.com.

Recreation

Automotive Skills Center: Building 1763. Open 1-9 p.m. Thur.-Fri. and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat.-Sun. Call 502-898-3013.

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS): Call 502-898-3200.

iSportsman: Portal for outdoor recreational activities; registration and check-in required. Register, apply for permits, and sign in or out of recreation areas at <https://mccoysportsman.net>.

McCoy's Community Center: Building 1571. Offers books, arcade, gaming area, and bowling. Open 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Tues.-Fri. and 4-10 p.m. Sat. (Bar, food, bowling). Call 502-898-7060.

Bowling Center: Open 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Tues.-Fri. and 4-10 p.m. Sat.

Leisure Travel Services Office: Open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 502-898-3011.

Pine View Campground/Recreational Equipment Checkout Center: Campground opens May 1. Building 8053. Call 502-898-2619/3517.

Recreation Accommodations: Open 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tues.-Fri. Mon. by appointment only. Call 502-898-2029.

Rumpel Fitness Center: Building 1122. Open 5 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Fri. and 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Sat.-Sun. 24/7 access available. Call 502-898-2290. Use designated parking areas.

Sportsman's Range: Closed for the season. Call 502-898-9162 for information.

Tactics Paintball/Laser Tag: By appointment only; 2-day notice required. Call 502-898-3517.

Whitetail Ridge Ski Area: Closed for Season. Call 502-898-4498 or 502-898-3517 for more information.

Services

Barber Shop (Exchange): Building 1538. Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 608-269-1710.

Car Rentals (Enterprise): Information available at the Exchange, building 1538. Use the phone at the Enterprise sign. Call 608-782-6183 or 800-654-3131; use CDP# 1787245.

Car Wash: Building 1568. Offers self-service and automatic bays and vacuums. Open 24/7.

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Attack	30-sec. to 5-min. wavering tone or voice announcement	Attack imminent or in progress. Examples: Vehicle bomb, terrorist action, release of biological or radioactive materials.	Be alert. Ensure all personnel are warned. Implement force-protection condition (FPCON) procedures as indicated. Take cover by evacuating to a safe location or sheltering in place. Notify supervisor of location.
All Clear	Voice announcement	Immediate threat from disaster or attack is over.	Be alert for secondary hazards. Account for all personnel. Check building. Await instructions for FPCON level. Report fires, injuries and other hazards.

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The Real McCoy

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Editorial Content502-898-4128

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

FIREARM REGISTRATION POLICY
All privately owned firearms brought on the installation must be registered through the Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) Police Department. Firearm registration is required by Army Regulation 190-11, 4-5, "Privately owned weapons and ammunition." Firearms are required to be registered prior to entrance or immediately upon entering any lands identified as Fort McCoy property. For more information, call 502-898-2266.

HISTORY

from Page 16

longer bridge," said Capt. Edwin S. Johnson, Levittown, N.Y., who commands the 317th.

A former Reserve unit from Benton Harbor, Mich., the 317th is bivouacked in a tent city a few hundred yards from the bridge site. They act as an instructor group and other engineer outfits put up the pontoon bridge under their supervision.

Because the training companies are "green," the 317th has to mix sweat with advice. In the past six weeks, the 317th has done a lot of bridge building.

"I think we could put the darned bridge up and tear it down in our sleep," declared Sgt. 1st Class Bruno Panetta, St. Joseph, Mich.

First Lt. Sheldon Garber, Chicago, a 317th platoon leader, called the latest operation "strictly routine," but it was one of the most grueling tasks that the 317th has yet completed.

And, of course, it was equally tough for Company "B" of the 645th Engineers. The mission of the two companies: put the bridge under the cover of darkness so the "VI Corps Artillery can move up across the lake."

The entire project was carried out under simulated combat conditions. A detachment from the 199th Engineer Combat Battalion acted as an aggressor force to harass the operation.

The maneuvers opened with a 50-mile motor march that took the two engineer companies through Necedah, Mauston, New Lisbon, and back into a pup-tented bivouac area.

60 Years Ago — June 1966

FROM THE JUNE 10, 1966, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: 32nd Division to arrive at Camp McCoy tomorrow (By Newspaper Staff) — More than 8,000 Wisconsin Army National Guardsmen of the 32nd Infantry Division will arrive at Camp McCoy this week to begin two weeks of intensive combat training.

The famous "Red Arrow" Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. John A. Dunlap of Milwaukee will begin arriving Saturday for their annual active-duty training.

The 32nd was first organized in 1917 and saw action in World War I campaigns such as Haute-Alsace, Aisne-Marne, and Meuse-Argonne. In World War II, the men of the "Red Arrow" blazed a trail of bitterly fought battles across the South Pacific. Landing in Australia in the spring of 1942, they met and defeated the enemy on New Guinea and at Leyte, Manila, Imuran and other Philippine battles.

As a tribute to their bravery, the Philippine government renamed the Villa Verde Trail, which the 32nd wrested from the enemy, the "Red Arrow Trail." During their nearly two years of combat in World War II, the men of the 32nd Division won six Congressional Medals of Honor, 157 Distinguished Service Crosses, 49 Legion of Merit awards, 845 Silver Stars, 1,855 Bronze Stars, 98 Air Medals and 78 Soldier's Medals. It was a bittersweet fame — more than 11,500 Purple Hearts were awarded to men of the division wounded or killed during the struggle.

The "Red Arrow" was once again called to the service of its country in 1961 when it was activated and subsequently designated a ready force of the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC).

More recently, as an Army National Guard unit, the division's 1st Brigade, commanded by Col. Richard Ballman of Milwaukee, was named one of the six Selected Reserve Force (SRF) Brigades in the nation. The 1st Brigade is now operating under an increased training schedule that will result in a high degree of combat readiness to meet any contingency.

FROM THE JUNE 17, 1966, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: 1st Brigade first SRF unit to take field ATTs (By Newspaper Staff) — All eyes at Camp McCoy are on the Big One of the 32nd Infantry Division.

The Big One for this Annual Field Training of Wisconsin's 32nd National Guard Division is Col. Richard J. Ballman's 1st Infantry Brigade. This 3,800-man Selected Reserve Force unit, including its supporting troops, have established some firsts of their own since they were created seven months ago.

They make up the first SRF unit in the nation to get its first field tests after an accelerated and intensive training program at armories throughout Wisconsin.

And they are the first unit of this size — practically full combat strength and fully equipped — to get field exercises and tests at Camp McCoy in more than 20 years.

The Red Arrows SRF is built around the bri-

gade with three infantry battalions, including the division's first mechanized infantry battalion, and the supporting units from artillery (a battalion) and companies from aviation, signal, medical, and maintenance units, and cavalry troop.

There are 39 units, many of them as split units between two communities, in 35 Wisconsin towns and cities involved in the brigade. When they started their annual training with Exercise Roadrunner, the Citizen-Soldiers suddenly became all Soldier.

In initial defense and attack problems, closely scored by umpires and controllers, many of the troops went for 35 hours straight to complete their mission before getting a deserved rest.

The situations were made as realistic as possible for every Guardsman with the use of simulators and blank rounds, use of aggressors, and a logical combat purpose through a mythical battle situation that existed in Wisconsin.

Commanders emphasized that in the problem development friendly and aggressor forces were balanced at a ratio of one to one — one friendly trooper to one aggressor trooper.

All this was in preparation for the climax of the 1966 summer encampment — the Army training tests.

At the opening of the training period, Maj. Gen. John A. Dunlap, Red Arrow division commander, told his officers: "I expect the results of the Army training tests to be outstanding. The next 11 days will determine the effectiveness of army preparation."

50 Years Ago — June 1976

FROM THE JUNE 3, 1976, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: Riley group runs airfield operations (By Newspaper Staff) — A good, experienced pilot is usually at the controls of an aircraft when it achieves a smooth landing. A good, experienced crew is usually responsible for the smooth operation of an airfield.

The smooth running of the Fort McCoy Army Airfield can be attributed to the efforts of the men from the 1st Aviation Company, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kan. The Fort Riley Company with a staff composed of 23 enlisted, seven warrant and two commissioned officers will be manning various sections of the airfield during Annual Training '76.

One of these men is SFC Arthur Mager, operations sergeant. He says operations is responsible for receiving and filing flight plans on all aircraft arriving to departing McCoy. The operations section also coordinates crash rescue activities at the airfield.

In addition, it maintains all data that is necessary for flight planning, such as flight publications and weather teletype.

Another duty which Mager and his staff of four dispatchers have upon themselves is that of assisting aviators and passengers as necessary. To accomplish the monumental task, the operations sergeant and four dispatchers operate the section of the airfield 24 hours a day. The workload is broken into two 12-hour shifts.

The men of the 1st Aviation Company also staff the control tower at the airfield. The four men who have responsibility for operation of the tower 12 hours a day, five days a week are also responsible for the smooth and orderly movement of aircraft into and out of the Fort McCoy airfield. They are also responsible for flight following aircraft within the reservation boundaries.

When the tower is not in operation, the operations section maintains an advisory center for all aircraft. The aviation group also maintains a Ground Control Approach (GCA) section. The GCA section at the Fort McCoy Airfield is set up primarily for training pilots in ground control approach techniques. The main purpose of GCA is to aid pilots in landing during adverse weather conditions.

The 1st Aviation Company also keeps a maintenance section to perform necessary maintenance on organic aircraft. These are aircraft which support missions on and around activities at Fort McCoy. Also included are backup aircraft for the medical evacuation team.

40 Years Ago — June 1986

FROM THE JUNE 19, 1986, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: 1001st runs field bakery, laundry (By David Saunders) — The freshly baked bread sat neatly in rows as other loaves were being taken from the oven and added to the racks. The aroma of bread fresh from the oven is one that is always welcome.

But this may not seem like a usual day in the field unless you are a member of the 1001st Field Service Company from Chillicothe, Ohio.

The 1001st Field Service Company spent the first two weeks of June conducting annual training at Fort McCoy.

The 1001st, which consists of bakery, laundry, shower, grave registration and sales units, received excellent ratings during their Army Readiness Training Evaluation Program (ARTEP), according to 1st Lt. Lawrence Lipscomb, 1001st company commander.

"We had a good team effort, everybody worked together," said Lt. Lipscomb.

The bakery, while also training in chemical and nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) skills, was able to deliver over 1,000 loaves of fresh bread and dozens of cookies during their training.

Sgt. Hubert Carpenter of the 1001st bakery said the unit is capable of serving 16,000 Soldiers a day with each Soldier receiving one half pound of fresh bread.

"We can feed them, shower them, and wash and sew their clothes," said Sgt. Rosemary Burnes of the 1001st laundry and renovation platoon.

During training Burnes said they were able to wash clothes for hundreds of people daily. When received, the clothes were marked according to the owner and then sorted to be washed.

The washer, capable of washing 60 pounds of clothing at a time, also has its own self-contained hot water heater. According to Burnes, the washer takes clothes through a 26-minute, 6 cycle wash to ensure cleanliness.

After the final cycle the clothes are put through a 13-minute drying cycle, sometimes a little longer for BDUs. Other units of the 1001st were also kept busy. The shower point accommodates over 1,000 people for showers. The grave registration and salvage unit could not operate under such real conditions but were able to receive excellent training by training aids.

As well as sharpening their common skills and NBC knowledge, members of the 1001st participated in night and day compass courses, night road movement, and posted 24-hour guard duty, according to Lipscomb. The company was also under constant attack, surviving the hard not encountered in previous years.

(Sgt. Saunders is a Reservist assigned to the 83rd Army Reserve Command Public Affairs Office, Columbus, Ohio.)

The Real McCoy
 Published for Fort McCoy, Wis. — Proudly Serving America's Army Since 1909



Spc. Taylor Mitchell (left), Pfc. Marcus Bird, Spc. Cody Whensch, and Staff Sgt. Frankie Tedtunas, all with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company of Green Bay, Wis., participate in land-navigation training May 27 at Compass Course 2 on Fort McCoy's South Post.

Civil Affairs Soldiers build land-navigation skills

These are skills we have to have as Soldiers, especially if we are going to mobilize for a deployment.

Completing the land-navigation training at Fort McCoy was a new experience for Human Resources Specialist Spc. Taylor Mitchell with the 432nd.

"It's been a good learning experience to go through some of this different terrain," Mitchell said. "You have to know how to read different types of terrain, especially if you are going to deploy where you can encounter many different types of terrain."

Motor Sergeant Staff Sgt. Frankie Tedtunas, also with the 432nd, said successful land navigation takes a team approach. The event was a good teamwork opportunity.

(See SKILLS page 5)

U.S. Army Garrison Fort McCoy launches social-media pages

The Facebook page is located at www.facebook.com/FtMCCoY. The Twitter page is located at twitter.com/USAGMCCoY.

For more information, call the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office at 608-388-2407.

Veterinary clinics set for June 15-16

Walk-in pet vaccination clinics will be held Wednesday, June 15, and Thursday, June 16, at Fort McCoy. The June 15 clinic will be from 1-6:30 p.m. at building 6138 on South Post. The June 16 clinic will be from 8-11:30 a.m. at building 806.

The Great Lakes Veterinary Treatment Facility will provide services.

For dogs, the facility offers rabies, DAPP-L, bordetella, and Lyme disease vaccination; microchip implantation; flea, tick, and heartworm prevention; and heartworm/tick-borne disease and intestinal-parasite testing.

For cats, the facility offers rabies, FVRCP and leukemia vaccines; microchip implantation; flea, tick, and heartworm prevention; and FIV/FeLV and intestinal-parasite testing.

Customers should bring vaccine records and a same-day stool sample for testing.

Only cash and check payments will be accepted. A price list is available online at www.mwgl.com/special_services/vet_clinic/vet.htm.

The clinics are open to current military members, military retirees, and family members with valid identification cards. For more information or to pre-register a pet, call 847-688-5740, extension 4.

ZZ Top, Gregg Allman concert: Ticket sales kick off June 24

ZZ Top and Gregg Allman are performing at the Saturday, June 24, Army Concert at Constitution Park featuring ZZ Top and Gregg Allman.

Tickets cost \$40 June 24. Tickets will be available at Kwik-Trip locations in Sparta (Black River Street), Tomah (West McCoy Boulevard at KFC), Onalaska (Highway 16 and Highway 35/Oak Forest Drive), and La Crosse (Rose Street) from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and online at mccoymilitary.com all day.

The MWR hotline, 877-864-4969, will be available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Starting June 25, tickets will cost \$50. Day-of-show tickets will cost \$60.

For more information about the concert, call 877-864-4969.

10 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 10, 2016, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at Fort McCoy.

30 Years Ago — June 1996

FROM THE JUNE 7, 1996, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: JROTC camp teaches leadership (By Rob Schuette, Triad Staff) — Activities offered at the Chicago Junior ROTC camp held at Fort McCoy from May 25 through May 31 challenged the 455 cadets physically and mentally to reach and use their full capabilities.

From the time they arrived and helped set up their barracks to the final pass in review, the cadets had many of the same experiences Army recruits would encounter during basic training, said Lt. Col. Henry James, camp commander. The 58 cadre were former servicemembers, civilian chaperones or National Guard medics.

"The training is structured so cadets learn confidence and leadership within a company structure and how to live with other cadets from other schools and different backgrounds," James said. "During the week here, each cadet learns to be a good leader, which also requires that they know how to be a good follower."

Cadets ranged from 14 to 18 years old. They did a wide variety of physical activities, including drilling; physical training, such as Airborne planning for a 34-foot tower, marshalling; 12-, 34- and 55-foot towers; confidence and conditioning course training; and land navigation, using maps and compasses.

On the final day of training, the cadets held a "challenge day," during which medals and ribbons were awarded to winners of various competitive events, such as one-mile runs, sit-ups and 50-yard dashes. The cadets also learned about science and mathematics.

"The purpose of the camp isn't to encourage these students to go into the military, but to make them into better citizens and encourage them to go to college," James said. "Many of the students in the group enjoy the experience of the camp and come back another year."

Kathleen Barrett, 14, who will be a sophomore at Lane Technical High School in Chicago, said she learned discipline and how to respect other cadets during the camp.

"I had a lot of fun rappelling," she said. "I'm afraid of heights, and I thought I couldn't do it, but I like challenges and did it. It also served as a staff sergeant and that helped me learn how to give certain orders."

20 Years Ago — June 2006

FROM THE JUNE 23, 2006, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: Troop Project to expand, improve Young Air Assault Strip under way (By Rob Schuette, Triad Staff) — Troop project work to expand and improve Young Air Assault Strip to accommodate the landing and takeoffs of C-17 aircraft has begun.

ETO Silver Star Winner Released From Active Duty

Wearing the Silver and Bronze Stars and Purple Heart, Lt. Charles D. Leophart, Missoula, Mont., was relieved from active duty at the separation center Friday following combat duty in the European theater of operations.

Lt. Leophart received the Silver Star at Regensburg, Germany, for bravery in action and the Purple Heart for wounds received simultaneously. Although wounded in both legs with shrapnel, Lt. Leophart, as platoon leader, was successful in getting his troops across a river and to safety before being ordered back by his commanding officer. He was hospitalized at Sappes, France, with the 220th General Hospital for several weeks and then sent to a unit near Linz, Austria.

The bronze star was presented following action at Speyer, Germany, when Lt. Leophart led a combat patrol across the Rhine river in the face of the enemy. Lt. Leophart served with the 14th Infantry, 71st Division during service overseas which included duty in France, Germany and Austria. He was with...

80 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 7, 1946, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at then-Camp McCoy.

Chief, Officers' Counseling Unit Ends Service

Maj. Walter A. Scoville, Jr., Riverside, Ill., chief of the officers counseling section of separation center, was relieved from active duty June 1. He was replaced by Capt. Jack A. Schulz of Aurora, Ill., who has served as counselor since last August.

A member of the Officers Reserve, Maj. Scoville entered the service in Aug. 1942, with his first assignment at Chanute Field, Rantoul, Ill. He remained there for a period of three years serving in the capacity of squadron adjutant, assistant provost marshal and ground safety officer.

Served First As Officer

Transferred to McCoy in Aug. 1945, Maj. Scoville was assigned to Officers Counseling, serving first as counselor. His appointment to chief of counseling took effect in December.

Prior to entering service, Maj. Scoville was industrial relations advisor with the E. I. DuPont Joliet, Ill. He was previously connected with the Board of Trade in Chicago as a grain broker.

Maj. Scoville is a graduate of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.

80 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 7, 1946, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at then-Camp McCoy.

THIS MONTH IN FORT MCCOY HISTORY

Fort McCoy, Wis., was established in 1909. Here is a look back at some installation history from June 2026 and back.

80 Years Ago — June 1946

FROM THE JUNE 7, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Chief, Officers' Counseling Unit ends service (By Newspaper Staff)* — Maj. Walter A. Scoville, Jr., Riverside, Ill., chief of the officers' counseling section of separation center, was relieved from active duty June 1. He was replaced by Capt. Jack A. Schulz of Aurora, Ill., who has served as counselor since last August.

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Entered as aviation cadet

Capt. Schulz entered the service in Nov., 1941, as an aviation cadet, receiving his commission as a second lieutenant in February of the following year.

Prior to his assignment here as counselor, Capt. Schulz was stationed at Lowry Field, Colo., as training officer of the Army Air Force Armament and Photography School and as publications and photographic officer at Boca Raton, Fla. He attended the classification school for counselors at Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga.

FROM THE JUNE 7, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Army To Conduct Worldwide Head Count June 14 (By Newspaper Staff)* — The Army will conduct its personnel inventory Friday, June 14, when all over the world identical reports will be filled out, Army Headquarters in Washington announced this week.

Inconsistencies in returns of strength, personnel statistics and other personnel records received by the War Department show that commanding officers, personnel adjutants and others charged with the preparation of morning reports, verification of rosters, issuance of orders involving the assignment and movement of personnel and units, and other administrative details involving personnel accounting, are not giving the painstaking supervision to this work that its importance demands. Promptness in submission of personnel reports and accuracy in their preparation are essential. Current administrative instructions and procedures are sufficiently clear and detailed to leave no justification for this situation, Maj. Gen. Edward F. Witsell, the adjutant general stated.

The universal Army head count will be made in order to arrive at the correct strength of the Army. No leaves, passes or furloughs will be granted unless the individual can return to his proper station before June 14, 1946. Persons on terminal leave, enlistment or reenlistment furloughs, pre-embarkation leaves and furloughs or cases of extreme emergency are exempt.

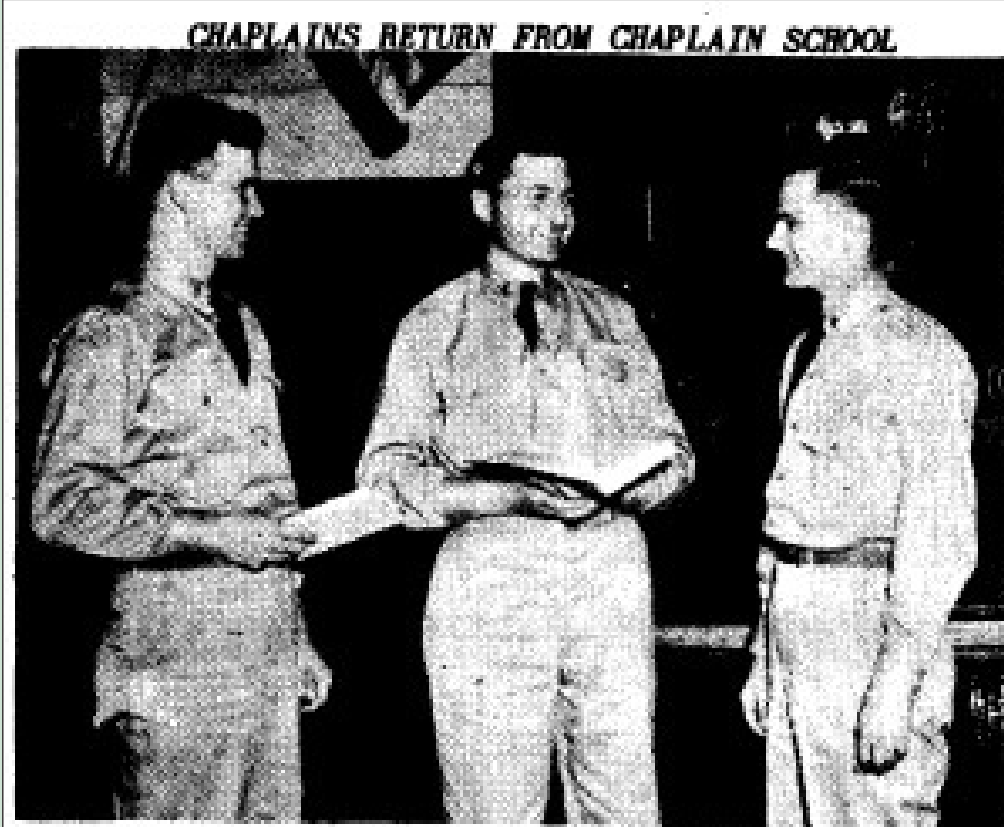
The main purpose of this report or "nose count," the order stated, is to show the military personnel physically present in the Continental United States and the assigned and attached unassigned strength of the command on the date of the inventory as well as those eligible for separation June 30, 1946. The roster will include such data as the name, serial number, branch, race, grade, MOS, duty SSN, component, date of birth, ASR score, category of selection of class of volunteer, month of separation selected by officers, month and year of current enlistment, months of service, etc.

FROM THE JUNE 14, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *A-26 lands at old Camp Field on stopover (By Newspaper Staff)* — Capt. D. J. Keeffe, Saturday landed his A-26 attack model plane at the old Camp McCoy airfield as a stopover since it is needed in father's home which he visited in Athens, Wis.

The routine flight from Eglin Field, Fla., to Chicago and on to McCoy was made in less than five hours. The stunt ship was landed at 2 p.m. Sunday and Capt. Keeffe's father, Patrick M. Keeffe, friend of the family, Capt. Harold McGinnis, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Davies and son, John, all of Athens, Wis., were at the airport to see the takeoff. Some children from the Sparta State School who were at supper at the field at the old camp were also there.

An 'M' model

Lt. L. C. Graves, Grohams, Ore., and T/Sgt. A. A. Kloesberg, Miami, Fla., were his crew. The pilot and crew flew a borrowed A-26, carrying a shipment at Eglin Field and T/Sgt. Kransberg



Shown above are the three post chaplains who have just returned to the post from the Chaplain school at Fort Slocum, N.Y. They are (left to right): Chaplains Albin R. Appelquist, Duane A. Windmiller and Percival Lovseth. Story is on page 1.

U.S. Army Historical Photos

75 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 15, 1951, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at then-Camp McCoy.

was in the aircraft chief.

The pilot, Capt. Keeffe, graduated from ACR Racing Grounds Command at Eglin Field, Fla. The boat is which he went overseas was sent out of North Africa and 115 miles over 100 feet at 15 years, they went westward. They were on their way to India where they trained Chinese and Capt. Keeffe flew combat missions back there.

Down behind lines

He served with the 14th Air Force in China in the China-Burma-India campaign, flying air Fighting missions in B-19s, between that point in June, 1944, he flew enemy lines and spent one month walking back to friendly territory. He gave the rest of his time overseas flying transport and return to the states in November, 1945, after 17 months overseas service.

Capt. Keeffe is the holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with one cluster and the Purple Heart with cluster.

FROM THE JUNE 21, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Former McCoy adjutant signs up as master sergeant (By Newspaper Staff)* — Former Lt. Col. John F. McCoy, who served as post adjutant for 44 months prior to separation in February, reenlisted as master sergeant recently upon termination of his terminal leave.

A veteran of 27 years service, McCoy gained the position of a captain in June 1942 and in immediate rank over as adjutant in the old camp. He served under Col. George MacMullin, former post commander, and Brig. Gen. John R. Rice, ex-commanding general.

Sgt. McCoy will report for duty with the Military Personnel Procurement division in Madison. Prior to entering service in 1912 when he was commissioned and assigned to Illinois ROTC unit as head of the detachment, there he was stationed until 1942 when he was commissioned and assigned to McCoy.

Master Sgt. John F. McCoy

Prior to entering service, McCoy had been employed in the newspaper field and later as a postal clerk. During his military career he served in Hawaii before joining the army reserve. He spent nine years with his old unit before moving to Washington, D.C., to serve as Secretary of the Committee for the War College from 1928 to 1934.

As a master sergeant he was assigned to the University of Illinois ROTC unit as head of the detachment, where he was stationed until 1942 when he was commissioned and assigned to McCoy.

FROM THE JUNE 21, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Cpl. Alton, ex-prisoner, enlists in RA (By Newspaper Staff)* — Surviving the hardships and torture of a Japanese prison camp for 39 months, Cpl. Gordon H. Alton, Deer River, Minn., reenlisted in the Regular Army at the McCoy induction and recruiting office this week.

Captured at Corregidor in May 1942, Alton was taken to Luzon for a two-year period during which time he was forced to help in the construction of Nichols Air Field in Manila. Due to ill treatment, beatings with rods and sticks, and lack of food, Alton lost 50 pounds in weight and suffered extreme ill health.

Worked in copper mine

Alton was then taken to a prison camp in Hanawa, Japan, to work in a copper mine. Conditions were even worse at this camp, according to Alton,

who stated that the "menus" consisted of barley and millet seed served three times daily along with soup made of carrot tops and flavored with soy sauce. During the 14 months stay at this camp, Alton lost weight until he tipped the scales at only 98 pounds and suffered even worse torture at the hands of the Japanese.

With zero weather, the prisoners were allowed only two uniforms and one pair of tennis shoes for the two-year period. Soap was given to the men at the amount of one bar of soap every two months to be used by three men. Razors were made from mess kit knives.

Crammed into hold

The trip to Japan was made under extreme difficulty. Alton explained, since 1,035 men were placed in the hold of the ship which would only accommodate only 100 men in a comfortable manner. Food was lowered to the men twice daily and water only once daily during the entire trip of 10 days.

Following his liberation in September 1945, Alton was taken to Yokohama and then to Manila where he left for the United States by plane, taking off from Nichols Field which he had helped to construct.

Alton was sent to Letterman General Hospital, San Francisco, Calif., and later to Schick General Hospital, Clinton, Okla., prior to receiving a convalescent furlough of 104 days.

Alton is 27 years old. He was drafted in August 1937, when he was inducted at Fort Snelling, Minn. His first assignment was with the 4th Cavalry at Fort Meade, S.D. Following 24 months of service here he went to Fort McDowell, Calif., where he enlisted with the 55th Coast Artillery for service in the Philippines, making the trip in February 1940.

FROM THE JUNE 28, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *ETO Silver Star winner released from active duty (By Newspaper Staff)* — Wearing the Silver and Bronze Stars and Purple Heart, Lt. Charles J. Lapham, Mosinee, Wis., was relieved from active duty at the separation center Friday following combat duty in the European theater of operations.

Lt. Lapham received the Silver Star for distinguished, courageous service in action at the Purple Heart for wounds received simultaneously although wounded. In both legs with shrapnel, Lt. Lapham, a platoon leader, was successful in getting his troops organized and to safety before being ordered back by headquarters medical officer. He was hospitalized at Reims, France, with the 20th General Hospital for a period extending into August 1945.

The Bronze Star was presented following action at Speyer, Germany, when Lt. Lapham led a convoy through enemy-held territory in the face of the enemy.

Lt. Lapham served with the 19th Infantry, 79th Division during seven overseas combat periods and

in France, Germany, and Austria. He was with occupation troops in Germany prior to regulation of the states in June 1946.

Lt. Lapham entered the service in April 1943, following training at the Montana State University, Missoula, Mont. He entered officer candidate school at Fort Benning, Ga., receiving his bars in June 1944.

Lt. Lapham plans to return to Montana State University, Missoula, for further education. A football star in college, Lt. Lapham played center with the 1936 division team that won the title and represented the Fourth Army in Dallas, Texas, in 1942.

FROM THE JUNE 28, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Recruiting Sgt. awarded Army Commendation (By Newspaper Staff)* — Chief clerk of the recruiting office, Master Sgt. Catherine R. Berg Wausau, Wis., was awarded the Army Commendation Ribbon this week by order of Maj. Gen. Patrick W. Timberlake, War Department's Recruiting Division.

The commendation read in part: "During this period, (Sgt. Berg) has served with distinction. Your zeal and efficiency have resulted in the highest recruiting and skill in handling technical information were required for the fulfillment of your duties.

"I was delighted to duty details and display of exceptionally fine judgment during this period enabled you to meet your responsibility in a constructive manner.

"Your pleasing personality, adaptability and efficiency exhibited in handling all assignments has won admiration and respect from all whom you have worked.

"You are commended for the outstanding manner in which you performed your duties."

The commendation was made while Berg was employed with the Army Security Agency at Arlington Hall, Va., prior to entering the service. She was stationed clerk with the Washington Board in Wausau.

She recently signed to return to the army after her WAC discharge and is now serving in a troopship class at the Madison office.

She enlisted in the service on Sept. 9, 1943, and was sent to Camp McCoy the following week.

75 Years Ago — June 1951

FROM THE JUNE 15, 1951, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY: *Three chaplains return from Chaplain School (By Newspaper Staff)* — School days have ended for post Chaplains Percival Lovseth, Duane A. Windmiller and Albin R. Appelquist, all first lieutenants, who have just returned after completing a six weeks course at the Chaplain school, Fort Sill, N.M.

The Chaplain school, which serves chaplains of both the Army and the Air Force, has as its mission the special training of already professionally qualified clergymen for the specialized duties of military chaplains.

The chaplains learned all they need to know about such specifically military matters as the organization and administration of the service. They learned, also, what their responsibilities and required duties are. For example, they learned that their mission is primarily religious and that under no circumstances can they be detailed to any non-religious task. Their responsibility in the area of the church ministry of the home church to men and women in the service.

To enable McCoy's chaplains to further accomplish this mission, the Chaplain school offered them special courses in counseling, the use of audio-visuals in religious training and the aspects of speaking peculiar to a military congregation.

FROM THE JUNE 15, 1951, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY: *The longest bridge ever built by McCoy engineers (By Newspaper Staff)* — This feat has been recorded not once, but approximately 20 times by the 317th Ponton Bridge Company.

Aided by Company "B" of the 645th Engineer Combat Battalion, the 317th again pushed their 713-foot M-4 ponton bridge across a back water of Castle Rock Lake between Necedah and Mauston, Wis., last week.

Ordinarily the bridge doesn't run more than 608 feet — that's the length which the 317th's training equipment permits.

"We borrowed some extra pontoons and balk from the post engineers so we could build the

(See HISTORY, Page 9)

June 25, 2021
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Reserve Soldiers focus on skills during Warrior Exercise at McCoy

BY SGT. JESS DEBRALDE/ARL
86th Training Division Public Affairs

While operations for the Army Reserve and the 86th Training Division (TD) did not come to a complete halt during the COVID-19 pandemic, operations were limited.

The 2021 Army Reserve training exercise season has transitioned to full-spectrum operations.

"When we were doing the planning for this summer for the exercise that the 86th would be conducting, the feedback from the units was that they wanted something somewhat challenging, but a little more basic than what we'd offer some of the soldier skills," said Brig. Gen. Stacy M. Babcock, commanding general, 86th Training Division and exercise director for Warrior Exercise 86-21-02.

Due to this feedback, the 86th TD decided to scale back training and conduct a WAREX.

"The advantage that a WAREX provides is that it's compartmentalized training," said Maj. Jacob Spriggs, deputy exercise control director, 1st Operations Brigade, 86th TD.

This means if one unit makes a mistake, it doesn't trickle down to other units. In a Combat Support Training Exercise, the units are integrated so a mistake by one unit affects other units in the exercise.

"It's a non-impact so it allows a much more permissive environment for young leaders and inexperienced soldiers to make those mistakes and learn from them," Spriggs added.

Leaders believe that environment was necessary for the exercise.

See WAREX, pages 2-3

Musical artist Chris Kroeze entertains installation community

BY SCOTT J. STUBBS
Public Affairs Staff

For 90 minutes on June 15, dozens of installation community members got to witness the artistry of entertainer Chris Kroeze during a concert in McCoy's Community Center at Fort McCoy.

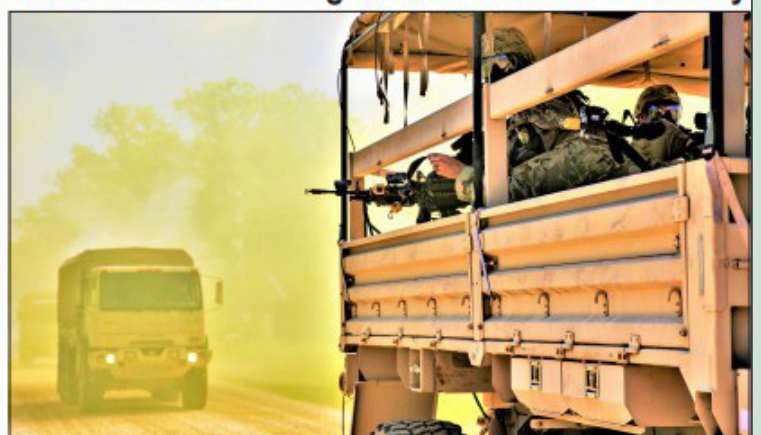
The concert, emceed by the Wisconsin USO and supported by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, offered the first indoor musical event like this on post since the start of the pandemic in 2020.

"Chris Kroeze stepping in by entertain the troops was a breath of fresh air to many military members who have spent the last year with the use of the country watching COVID-19 TV coverage or visiting or staffing testing sites," said Operations and Program Manager Ella Helder with USO Wisconsin. "For the USO to be able to bring someone of Chris' skill and talent to Fort McCoy

was exciting."

Kroeze is a native of Barron, Wis., and is familiar with the installation.

See KROEZE, page 7



Army Reserve Soldiers with the 412th Theater Engineer Command, headquartered in Vicksburg, Miss., secure convoy assets after a simulated gas attack and enemy fire during annual training June 13 in Warrior Exercise 86-21-02 at Fort McCoy. Convoy security operations training allows Soldiers the ability to develop fundamentals in a multidomain environment.

Fort McCoy hosts IMCOM-Readiness director visit

Installation Management Command-Readiness Director Brandy Lee McCullough visited Fort McCoy from June 7 to 9. She was joined by Command Sgt. Maj. Dan Dantonio, CSM for IMR, COM-Readiness.

McCullough and Dantonio visited Fort McCoy to tour training and quality-of-life facilities and attend briefings about Fort McCoy — including the Installation Planning Board, which develops the Integrated Priorities List in support of improving installation services and programs.

During the visit, they spoke with senior leadership throughout the garrison. They also visited simulation facilities run by the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; toured several Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs; visited one of the new, recently completed homes in South Post Housing; and saw the new modern barracks construction, which is overseen by the Directorate of Post Housing.

Zachary Hynes, Directorate of Public Works housing manager, meets with Installation Management Command-Readiness Director Brandy Lee McCullough on June 8 to tour a home in South Post Housing.

See DIRECTOR, page 6



Zachary Hynes, Directorate of Public Works housing manager, meets with Installation Management Command-Readiness Director Brandy Lee McCullough on June 8 to tour a home in South Post Housing.



UMPIRES, TEAM LEADERS POSE FOR PRE-GAME PICTURE—The umpires and team leaders involved in the McCoy-Platteville Cardinal match Sunday take time out from their pre-game conference to pose for the "Real McCoy" camera. From left to right the officials are: "Scotty" Grinstead, coach of the McCoy nine, John Udehavan, Cardinal catcher, John Van Veghel, base umpire, Keith M. Tarrell, manager of the visiting nine, and T-Sgt. Roy Evans, who called balls and strikes.

80 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 21, 1946, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at then-Camp McCoy.

5 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the June 25, 2021, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at Fort McCoy, an issue that featured cold-weather training on post.