

FORT MCCOY REMEMBERS

LOOKING BACK AT INSTALLATION'S POW/MIA SUPPORT, HISTORY

SPECIAL INSERT TO THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER

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National POW/MIA Recognition Day is a special day every September



Maj. Randy Downs with the U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team from U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy presents the U.S. flag to 93-year-old Patricia Filut, the sister of Pfc. Charles Dickman, during the graveside service Oct. 21, 2023, for Dickman in Cashton, Wis., at Sacred Heart Cemetery. Dickman was a missing-in-action Soldier from the Korean War who was finally identified in 2023.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Every September, America remembers its former prisoners of war (POW) as well as those who went missing in action (MIA) fighting for the nation on the battlefield during National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The day falls on the third Friday of September every year, according to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

"National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter," states the DPAA website at <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crm-force.mil/dpaafamWebPosters>. "Since then, each subsequent president has issued an annual proclamation commemorating the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. A national-level ceremony is held on every National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Traditionally held at the Pentagon, it features members from each branch of military service and participation from high-ranking officials.

"In addition to the national-level ceremony, observances of National POW/MIA Recognition Day are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities," the website states. "No matter where they are held, these National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies share the common purpose of honoring those who were held captive and returned, as well as those who remain missing."

Recent events in Wisconsin have proven the effectiveness of DPAA and their commitment to finding the missing as well as recognizing former POWs.

In October 2023, Fort McCoy Soldiers supported the return to Cashton, Wis., of Pfc. Charles Dickman during a Mass of Christian burial for Dickman.

Pfc. Charles Dickman was only 17 years old when he died fighting in the Korean War on July 12, 1950, as a heavy weapons infantryman with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. But he never made it home.

"He was reported missing in action on July 12, 1950, near the town of Chochiwon, South Korea, as his regiment engaged in a series of delaying actions to buy time for reinforcements and resupply as they withdrew from the area to avoid being surrounded by North Korean forces," a DPAA news release states. "He was not seen to fall in battle, and he was not reported to be a prisoner of war. After regaining control of Chochiwon in the fall of 1950, the Army began recovering remains from the area and temporarily interring them at the United Nations Military Cemetery (UNMC) Taejeon.

"However, Pfc. Dickman's remains were not identified among those recovered from the area,

and in 1953, the Department of the Army issued him a presumptive finding of death. The unidentified remains from UNMC were sent to Hawaii where they were buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, known as the Punchbowl, as Korean War Unknowns," the release states.

But in 2023, Dickman was finally identified and brought home to the city where the Veterans of Wars post is even named after him. During the funeral mass, Father Michael Klos of Sacred Heart Catholic Church spoke to those who gathered, noting that the Soldier who was missing from his community for so long was "having come home at long last ... after 73 years."

Most of Dickman's immediate family are now deceased, including his parents and many of his siblings. However, a surviving family member, a sister — Patricia Filut — was there with many nieces and nephews of Dickman to remember him. Klos mentioned that all of the family would be glad to know this day had come where Charles had returned home.

"It is a good and beautiful thing for us to be gathered here today," Klos said. "To all (who) would be in this a wonderful moment for the family to have closure. They would remember him so well."

Maj. Randy Downs of Fort McCoy Garrison led the U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team for Dickman. He said it was an honor for the team to support the return home of a former MIA Soldier.

"Speaking on behalf of our team, please know it was truly an honor to support a fellow brother in arms, Pfc. Charles Dickman's homecoming and transition to his final resting place on this great nation's soil," Downs said.

"It gives our team peace and joy knowing his sister received closure at 93 years old, and he received the honor he deserves," Downs said. "It serves as a reminder to remember and appreciate those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the values we hold dear. His story is one I will remember and share for the rest of my life."

And on Aug. 26, 2024, another team of Soldiers from Fort McCoy also supported the return to Wisconsin of a former POW — former World War II POW Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld.

Numerous current and even some former Soldiers associated with Fort McCoy took time Aug. 26 to be part of the special Mass of Christian Burial for former World War II POW Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld who was returned home from having been found in the Philippines earlier in 2024.

Soldiers with Fort McCoy Garrison and the 86th Training Division were among the hundreds of people at the Hohlfeld service in St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska, Wis., and at the Catholic Cemetery in La Crosse, Wis.

(See POW/MIA DAY, Page 2)



The U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team from U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy completes the graveside flag-folding duty for Pfc. Charles Dickman during the graveside service Oct. 21, 2023, for Dickman in Cashton, Wis., at Sacred Heart Cemetery.



A scene from the Mass of Christian Burial graveside service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld is shown Aug. 26 at the Catholic cemetery in La Crosse, Wis., where Soldiers from Fort McCoy serve on the U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team. Hundreds of people attended a special Mass for Hohlfeld at St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska, Wis., and the graveside service as well.

Remembering POWs: America remembers Bataan Death March POW Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld with special service; welcomes him home to Wisconsin

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

On a hot August day, Bataan Death March and World War II veteran Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld was laid to rest in La Crosse, Wis., approximately 82 years after his death.

A Mass of Christian burial service was conducted at St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska, Wis., on Aug. 26, and internment was then held at the Catholic Cemetery in La Crosse. Hundreds of people attended the event, including family members, veterans, Catholic clergy, active military members, and even complete strangers thankful he was home.

"This is a very special event," said Kathy Gurnee at the service. Gurnee, of Fenton, Mich., is the grandniece of Hohlfeld. "This is very nice."

Accounting for a hero

In July, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced it had identified Hohlfeld and would bring him home. The identification was made conclusive in May.

"U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. Jack H. Hohlfeld, 29, of Trempealeau, Wis., who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for May 29, 2024," the DPAA release stated. "Hohlfeld was a member of Headquarters Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December 1941. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

"Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Hohlfeld was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. Hohlfeld was then held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war."

According to prison camp and other historical records, the release states, "Hohlfeld died Dec. 26, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 811."

"Following the war, American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) personnel exhumed those buried at the Cabanatuan cemetery and relocated the remains to a temporary U.S. military mausoleum near Manila," the release states. "In 1947, the AGRS examined the remains in an attempt to identify them. Three of the sets of remains from Common Grave 811 were identified, while the remaining 3 were declared unidentifiable. The unidentified remains were buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) as Unknowns. In 2018, as part of the Cabanatuan Project, DPAA exhumed the remains associated with Common Grave 811 and sent them to the DPAA laboratory for analysis."

To identify Hohlfeld's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence, the release further states. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA analysis. Although interred as an Unknown in MACM, Hohlfeld's grave was meticulously cared for over the past 70 years by the American Battle Monuments Commission. "Today, Hohlfeld is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for."

Finally home

Hohlfeld's family shared his biographical information, and it shows he came from humble beginnings. Hohlfeld was born in Hamburg Township in Vernon County just outside Stoddard, Wis.

"When he was 13 years old, his family moved to Centerville, just north of Holmen," biography information shows. "As a young adult, Jack lived for a brief time in both Trempealeau and La Crosse before moving to California. He volunteered to enlist and was sworn into the Army at Fort MacArther, Calif., in 1938. Hohlfeld was (later) assigned to the

Philippines as a member of Headquarters Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, U.S. Army Air Corps."

A release from St. Patrick's Parish further relayed more about the effort it took to bring Hohlfeld home.

"Jack's mother, Mary Hohlfeld, deeply wanted to know what had happened to her son so that he could come home," the release states. "She began writing letters to the War Department before the war had ended and continued doing so for many years. Sharon Graw, Sgt. Hohlfeld's niece (her father was Jack's brother, William), continued these efforts. In 2015, undoubtedly due in part to the persistence of Sharon, the multiple agencies involved in identifying and repatriating remains took a new interest in Jack's case."

Mike Gurnee, Kathy's husband who also was in attendance for the service with Hohlfeld family members, said he was appreciative of everything that was done to honor Hohlfeld. He could see, with his wife's Aunt Sharon in attendance, that it was a special day for her.

Mike also said he could only imagine how difficult it was for Hohlfeld.

"My father and all my uncles were in World War II, and I've known about the Bataan Death March," he said. "I watch all the movies. I'm big into the history, too. So, I knew all about the Bataan Death March before I knew her Uncle Jack was in there."

"We're just so (glad) that Sharon (could) bring him home," Mike said. "We spent ... years trying to locate him and work with the government to find him."

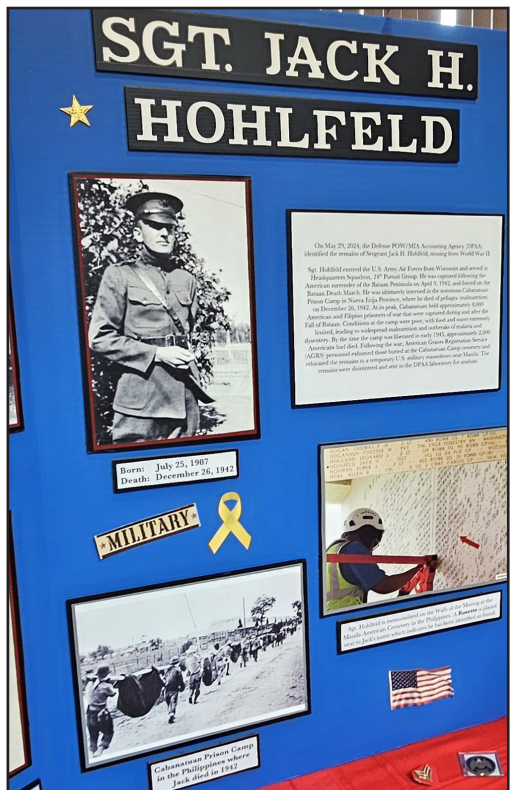
During the main service, Monsignor Steve Kachel with St. Patrick Parish spoke about Hohlfeld as well.

"If one were to look at the definition of the word hero, we would find out that a hero is one who is admired or idealize for courage, outstanding achievements, and noble quality," Kachel said. "We are gathered in this church as we have brought home a real hero and laid him to rest in his home city near his parents. And we know Jack was a hero for the courage that he showed in the face of evil. The courage that gave him stamina in prison and at the death march. ... And the courage ... shown as a prisoner of war until he succumbed to polio in prison. For Jack had the courage to fulfill a duty to serve, to honor, and to fight for his country."

Somber scenes of honor

Viewing the Hohlfeld service from balcony of

(See HOHLFELD, Page 2)



A display for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld is shown at the Mass of Christian Burial for him Aug. 26 at St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska, Wis.

HOHLFELD

from Page 1

the parish, it's possibly gave the best perspective of the entire scene. All the people. Hohlfeld by the altar. The Catholic clergy and altar servers. The many service members in attendance in uniform. The family members at the front. The media members in many places. The community members in the back. Everyone ... everywhere.

A team of Soldiers from the 86th Training Division at Fort McCoy, Wis., served as pallbearers for the service carrying Hohlfeld into the parish and out when the service was complete. They also did the same work at the Catholic Cemetery where they also folded the U.S. flag and presented it to Graw.

In the parish, also, members of the Knights of Columbus in their uniforms lined both the entry and departure lanes for Hohlfeld from the outer door of the church to the altar. In the process, these knights raised their swords to honor Hohlfeld as he passed both times at the beginning and end of the service.

Also present were the American Legion Riders organization who escorted the vehicle with Hohlfeld to the parish and then later to the cemetery. The many motorcycle riders cruising as escorts on their bikes are veterans themselves and were also in the parish for the service and stood graveside at the cemetery with U.S. flags to honor the fallen Soldier.

At the graveside service, there was also a lot to take in, but the biggest thing to remember would be that Hohlfeld was honored fully, and properly. The team of Soldiers performed a flag-folding ceremony in front of the family members and presented the flag.

In the process of the flag-folding ceremony, overhead of the ceremony, a vintage World War II-era fighter plan flew over bellowing smoke in its wake. And immediately following, several Wisconsin National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters also flew over the graveside service to pay tribute to Hohlfeld.

In the backdrop of the graveside service, and outside the parish, the U.S. flag

was posted at half-staff to honor Hohlfeld. Matter of fact, the U.S. flag was at half-staff for Hohlfeld in the entire state of Wisconsin on Aug. 26, including at Fort McCoy.

Never giving up

As Kathy Gurnee said, her mother, her Aunt Sharon, and her grandmother all never gave up hope that her great uncle Jack would someday come home.

The DPAA is dedicated to never giving up on bring those service members like Hohlfeld who are in missing-in-action (MIA) status or whose whereabouts aren't fully known. On the Department of Defense website about National POW/MIA Day, which in 2024 is Sept. 20, they discuss what DPAA does every year to recover the thousands of service members still in MIA status around the world.

"Each year, DPAA conducts investigation-and-recovery team missions around the world to search last known locations of missing American service members," the website states at <https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Experience/POW-MIA>. "These missions last weeks and comprise personnel with varied expertise — from explosive ordnance technicians to mountaineers. And the locations are diverse, often remote areas, sometimes underwater and sometimes in mountainous regions."

For family members like Kathy Gurnee who get to see their loved one come home, that never giving up was worth it. The work, the hope, the prayers, and more. They're thankful when they can be at an event like the one in La Crosse that brings closure.

"It's just ... very nice to be here," Gurnee said.

Learn more about DPAA by visiting <https://www.dpaa.mil>. Learn more about National POW/MIA Day by visiting <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/National-Pow-Mia-Recognition-Day>.



(Above and below) Scenes from the Mass of Christian Burial Service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld is shown Aug. 26 at St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska, Wis.



The U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team carries Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld into St. Patrick Parish on Aug. 26 during a Mass of Christian Burial Service for Hohlfeld in Onalaska, Wis.



Members of the Knights of Columbus stand to honor Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld on Aug. 26 during a Mass of Christian Burial Service for Hohlfeld in Onalaska.



A scene from the Mass of Christian Burial graveside service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld is shown Aug. 26 at the Catholic cemetery in La Crosse, Wis.



A vintage World World II-era fighter plane flies over a scene from the Mass of Christian Burial graveside service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld on Aug. 26, 2024, at the Catholic cemetery in La Crosse.



A scene from the Mass of Christian Burial graveside service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld is shown Aug. 26 at the Catholic cemetery in La Crosse.



Wisconsin National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters fly over a scene from the Mass of Christian Burial graveside service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld on Aug. 26 at the Catholic cemetery in La Crosse.

POW/MIA DAY

from Page 1

From the 86th, and in probably one of the most important jobs of the day for the event, seven Soldiers served as the pallbearer/flag folding team for Hohlfeld. Those Soldiers included Maj. Steven Kelly, Capt. Jiaru Bryar, Sgt. Maj. Abdul Parsons-Bey, 1st Sgt. Matt Hardin, Master Sgt. Kristy Roemer, Staff Sgt. Haley Dexter, and Sgt. Dalton Bruser.

In July, the DPAA announced it had identified Hohlfeld and would bring him home. The identification was made conclusive in May. And in August he was brought home.

"U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. Jack H. Hohlfeld, 29, of Trempealeau, Wis., who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for May 29, 2024," a DPAA news release stated. "Hohlfeld was a member of Headquarters Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December 1941. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.

"Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Hohlfeld was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese.

They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. Hohlfeld was then held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war."

A member of the pallbearer/flag folding team — Dexter — said she was honored to help bring him home.

"Serving as one of Sgt. Hohlfeld's pallbearers was an immense honor," Dexter said. "His story inspired me to delve deeper into the history of the Bataan Death March and the POW camps of World War II. I've made it my mission to ensure that the sacrifices of these courageous service members are remembered. It was a deeply meaningful experience, watching the family and community come together to honor his legacy."

The stories of Dickman and Hohlfeld are just two of many that are testament to the importance of the effort of DPAA as well as the need to remember POW/MIA service members during National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

That sentiment was likely fully repeated in the words of Monsignor Steve Kachel with St. Patrick Parish who spoke about Hohlfeld during his service.

"If one were to look at the definition of the word hero, we would

find out that a hero is one who is admired or idealize for courage, outstanding achievements, and noble quality," Kachel said. "We are gathered in this church as we have brought home a real hero and laid him to rest in his home city near his parents. And we know Jack was a hero for the courage that he showed in the face of evil. The courage that gave him stamina in prison and at the death march. ... And the courage ... shown as a prisoner of war until he succumbed to polio in prison. For Jack had the courage to fulfill a duty to serve, to honor, and to fight for his country."

Learn more about the DPAA by visiting <https://www.dpaa.mil>. Learn more about the origins of National POW/MIA Recognition Day by visiting <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2772567>.

Also, learn more about the Dickman return home by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/457075/home-after-73-years-fort-mccoy-soldiers-pay-honors-korean-war-hero-local-community>.

Learn more about Hohlfeld's return home by visiting <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/481410/rememering-pows-america-remembers-bataan-death-march-veteran-sgt-jack-hohlfeld-with-special-service-welcomes-him-home-wisconsin>.

Fort McCoy Soldiers support special service for former World War II POW

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Numerous current and even some former Soldiers associated with Fort McCoy took time Aug. 26 to be part of a special Mass of Christian Burial for former World War II POW Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld who was returned home from having been found in the Philippines earlier in 2024.

Soldiers with Fort McCoy Garrison and the 86th Training Division were among the hundreds of people at the Hohlfeld service in St. Patrick Parish in Onalaska, Wis., and at the Catholic Cemetery in La Crosse, Wis., on Aug. 26.

From Fort McCoy Garrison, Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Mike Corkum and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, garrison command sergeant major, attended the event to represent the installation.

From the 86th, and in probably one of the most important jobs of the day for the event, seven Soldiers served as the pallbearer/flag folding team for Hohlfeld. Those Soldiers included Maj. Steven Kelly, Capt. Jiaru Bryar, Sgt. Maj. Abdul Parsons-Bey, 1st Sgt. Matt Hardin, Master Sgt. Kristy Roemer, Staff Sgt. Haley Dexter, and Sgt. Dalton Bruser.

The team met the arrival of Hohlfeld to the parish for the start of the service, carried him into the parish and stood by him throughout the ceremony. Then returned with him to the hearse. At the cemetery, they also carried him from the hearse and to his final resting place.

And as a final duty, the team of Soldiers held the graveside flag-folding to honor Hohlfeld and to present that flag to the family.

According to the American Legion, the meaning of the flag-folding program is built on a special tradition of honor and respect.

"The flag-folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our great country was originally founded," states the website <https://www.legion.org/flag/folding>.

"The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted only when draped as a pall on the casket of a veteran who has served our country honorably in uniform.

"In the U.S. armed forces, at the ceremony of retreat, the flag is lowered, folded in a triangle fold and kept under watch throughout the night as a tribute to our nation's honored dead," the website states.

"The next morning it is brought out and, at the ceremony of reveille, run aloft as a symbol of our belief in the resurrection of the body. After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it has the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the Soldiers who served under Gen. George Washington and the Sailors and Marines who served under Capt. John Paul Jones and were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the U.S. armed forces, preserving for us the rights, privileges and freedoms we enjoy today."

At another website, www.va.org (Veterans Authority), they explain what a team does during the flag-folding at a graveside service.

"The U.S. flag is carefully taken from the casket and silently folded by the honor guard company," the website states. "Once folded, the flag resembles a triangle, representative of the three-cornered hats worn by colonial soldiers during the Revolutionary War. The method used during the folding of the flag requires 13 folds that represent the original colonies and once the flag is completely folded no stripes are visible, leaving only the blue and stars.

"After the flag is folded, it is presented to an honor guard member in the same military branch as the deceased veteran who subsequently marches the flag to the next of kin and presents the flag to them," the website states.

When they completed their duty on the team, every Soldier was proud of what they supported. Dexter said it was an honor.

"Serving as one of Sgt. Hohlfeld's pallbearers was an immense honor," Dexter said. "His story inspired me to delve deeper into the history of the Bataan Death March and the POW camps of World War II. I've made it my mission to ensure that the sacrifices of these courageous service members are remembered. It was a deeply meaningful experience, watching the family and community come together to honor his legacy."

Also supporting the overall effort through the Catholic parish was retired Army Col. Steven Nott, the former commander of Fort McCoy Garrison. Nott served as Fort McCoy's garrison commander from February 2012 to March 2016.

For this event, Nott helped coordinate many of the events at the parish where he serves, plus he coordinated with Fort McCoy for further support.

In July, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced it had identified Hohlfeld and would bring him home. The identification was made conclusive in May.

"U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. Jack H. Hohlfeld, 29, of Trempealeau, Wis., who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for May 29, 2024," a DPAA news release stated. "Hohlfeld was a member of Headquarters Squadron, 24th Pursuit Group, when Japanese forces invaded the Philippine Islands in December 1941. Intense fighting continued until the surrender of the Bataan peninsula on April 9, 1942, and of Corregidor Island on May 6, 1942.



(Above) Staff Sgt. Kyle Brunner, Sgt. Maj. Abdul Parsons-Bey, Master Sgt. Kristy Roemer, Capt. Jiaru Bryar, Maj. Steven Kelly, Staff Sgt. Haley Dexter, 1st Sgt. Matt Hardin, and Sgt. Dalton Bruser, most with the 86th Training Division of Fort McCoy, Wis., are shown after completing participation in a Mass of Christian Burial Service for Sgt. Jack Hohlfeld as the U.S. Army Funeral Honors Team on Aug. 26 at the Catholic Cemetery in La Crosse, Wis.

(Below) The same team of Soldiers is shown in several scenes participating in the event throughout the day, and other Soldiers from Fort McCoy participate in the event including Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Mike Corkum and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Calarco, garrison command sergeant major.



"Thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were captured and interned at POW camps. Hohlfeld was among those reported captured when U.S. forces in Bataan surrendered to the Japanese. They were subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. Hohlfeld was then held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. More than 2,500 POWs perished in this camp during the war."

According to prison camp and oth-

er historical records, the release states, "Hohlfeld died Dec. 26, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 811."

Hundreds of people watched the Fort McCoy Soldiers support the event and honor Hohlfeld. Dexter said it was worth it.

"I'll never forget it," she said.

Fort McCoy's motto is to be the "To-

tal Force Training Center."

Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

The installation has provided support and facilities for the field and classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at <https://home.army.mil/mccoy>, on

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

Also try downloading the My Army Post app to your smartphone and set "Fort McCoy" or another installation as your preferred base.

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

New research on Fort McCoy's World War II-era prisoner of war camp

Fort McCoy has now been able to benefit from some new research.

"One of Fort McCoy's most important historic sites is our 1942-1946 World War II prisoner of war (POW) camp — formerly located by what is today South Family Housing," said Fort McCoy Archaeologist Ryan Howell with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch and a member of the Fort McCoy Archaeology and Cultural Resources Team.

"It was one of the largest in country, housing at its height nearly 7,000 German, Italian, Japanese, and Korean prisoners of war."

New recent research, Howell said, into the POW camp at Fort McCoy has revealed some surprising new facts, photos and historic artifacts related to this important role Fort McCoy (then Camp McCoy) played in World War II history.

Recently, in conjunction with Fort McCoy's Public Affairs Program, Fort McCoy's Cultural Resource Program (which covers the Fort's history, archaeology and Native American affairs) has welcomed a series of visits from new academic researchers and historians interested in this chapter of Wisconsin's and America's past.

"We've had visitors and interest from many universities and independent scholars this year who want to use the historical archives housed at the Fort McCoy History Center to further their studies into World War II POW and alien internment issues," Howell said.

These researchers are studying a wide range of subjects, including the role Korean POWs, who were captive laborers used by the Japanese in military construction, played in shaping United States policy toward Korea in the 1950s, the use of Camp McCoy to initially house "enemy aliens" (Japanese-, German- or Italian-Americans whose citizenship was in doubt at the on-set of war) in 1942, and the roles and interactions German POWs had while serving as paid-laborers on the local farms and canning factories of World War II Wisconsin.

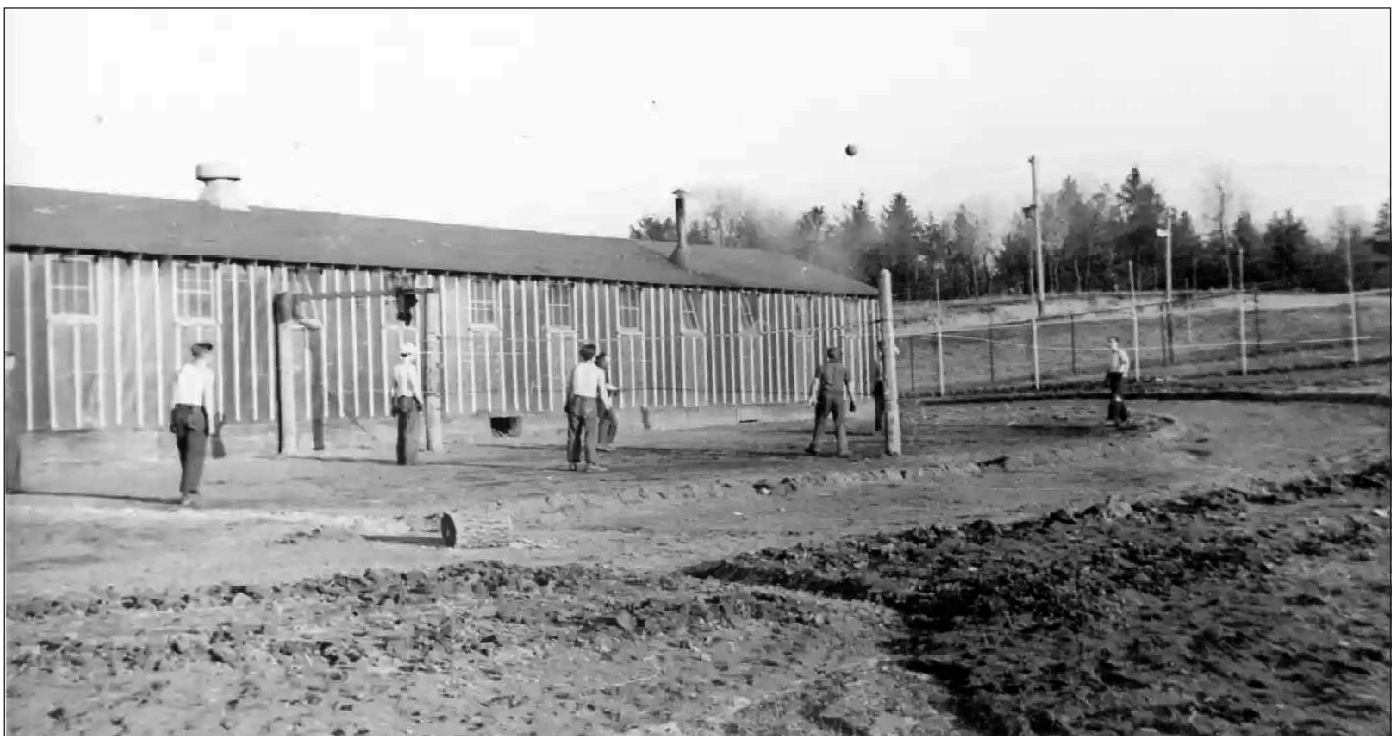
Working closely with local history centers like the Monroe County Local History Room and Museum (MCLHR) in Sparta, Wis., has also helped fill in the blanks and add to Fort McCoy's understanding of the POW camp during the World War era.

"It turns out that Lt. Col. Horace Rogers, who was the commanding officer of the POW Camp at Camp McCoy, still has family in the Sparta area," Howell said. "Working with Jarrod Roll, the director of the MCLHR, we were able to get a series of family photos that Rogers took during his posting at Camp McCoy. They detail the daily lives of German prisoners (the Japanese POWs generally refused to be photographed) at the POW camp. These have showed some very interesting events like a 1944 "POW Olympics" and German plays and show they put on to entertain themselves during their captivity.

"We've also recently found the daily log kept by Lt. Col. Rogers from 1942-1946 at the camp in ... of all places ... a used-book store in California," Howell said. "We'll soon get a copy of that from its current owner, and that will let us learn even more about the real day-to-day activities of Fort McCoy's POWs and the U.S. Army Soldiers who guarded them more than 80 years ago."

The Fort McCoy History Center, located in the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area, has several items recalling the POW experience of World War II at Fort McCoy. Also, throughout several areas of Fort McCoy, there are posted placards where the POW encampments were located.

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



Photos courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Photo Collection

Prisoners of war at Camp McCoy, Wis., get exercise during an undermined day in 1942. McCoy served as one of many locations in the United States to host POWs during World War II.



Prisoners of war at Camp McCoy, Wis., prepare for work detail in the in early 1940s. McCoy served as one of many locations in the United States to host POWs during World War II.

A further review on prisoner-of-war camp history from World War II Camp McCoy

A history study has been completed on the World War II (1941-1946) prisoner-of-war (POW) camp and alien internment camp that once was present near what is now South Family housing at Fort McCoy.

The study sheds new light on the history of then-Camp McCoy as it served a rather unique role in the Army's fighting of World War II. The camp held German, Polish, and Italian service personnel, and was the largest Japanese POW camp in the United States during the war with nearly 3,000 people at its height.

"I think most people familiar with the history of Fort McCoy are aware there was a World War II POW camp on base, but few likely know much about it and even fewer likely know about the story of the detention of U.S. citizens of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry at Camp McCoy in 1942-1943," said Ryan Howell, garrison archaeologist with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

"Like it always has historically, Fort McCoy was on hand with ready facilities to respond to an unforeseen need of the U.S. Army and the United States people," said Howell. "Camp McCoy (as it was known during World War II) rapidly altered an abandoned Civil Conservation Corps camp to house up to 500 prisoners within a few months, and later expanded to have room for up to 5,000 prisoners."

The nearly 300-page history study includes nearly 165 historic photos of the POW camp, its prisoners, guards, and buildings.

The study was completed by historians from the Corps of Engineers with support from the Fort McCoy Cultural Resource Management Office, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office, as well as local historians from the Monroe County History Room, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, and academics and graduate students from universities across Wisconsin.

"It was definitely a "history team effort," Howell said. "We basically got everyone who had an interest in this history, regardless of institution or position on board, and everyone made valuable contributions ... from veterans' families to high school history teachers to doctorate professors."

The study was needed, Howell said, so that the historical physical remains of the POW camp could be better managed under the National Historic Preservation Act and so that his program as well as the civilians, service personnel, and veterans working and visiting Fort McCoy would have a better understanding of this part of Fort McCoy's story of service.

The document details not only the history of the camp, its layout, and buildings (all of which are no longer standing) but goes into detail on the camp life of the POW and internees who lived at the camp from 1942-1946.

The study covers everything from the security and guarding procedures at the camp, medicine, and POW deaths due to wounds, the work life of the POWs (who worked for wages that could be spent at a POW camp store/canteen), and the recreation and off-work hours of the prisoners.

When asked about what the study had revealed that surprised him, Howell said it was the disunity and in-fighting amongst the Axis prisoners.

"It's clear from the records that one of the biggest weaknesses of the enemies of the U.S. Army during World War II was their 'culture of non-cooperation' and 'tribalism,'" Howell said.

"The Japanese and the German POWs refused to work together or associate, the pro-Nazi Germans bullied and beat up the non-Nazi Germans, everyone hated the Italians, and the Japanese Army and Japanese Navy were constantly trying to subvert and undermine each other to gain control of what was essential a handful of chore rosters.

"It's clear from the history that they considered their own allies and partner services nearly as much of an enemy as the Americans, if not more so," Howell said. "I think there is a real lesson to draw from that history."

Howell also noted there also never was a successful escape from the Camp McCoy POW camp.

See a related article at <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/397740/fort-mccoy-artifact-internment-pow-camp-map>.

(Article prepared by the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.)



Photo courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Photo Collection

Here's a look inside a prisoner of war barracks at Camp McCoy, Wis., in 1942. McCoy served as one of many locations in the United States to host POWs during World War II.



U.S. Army Historical Photos

This photo shows the exterior of the Japanese POW barracks at then-Camp McCoy in 1944.



This is a photo that shows the interior of the Japanese POW barracks at then-Camp McCoy in 1944.



U.S. Army file photo by PPA-OFF U.S. Signal Corps

Three hundred nineteen Japanese prisoners of war, carrying their belongings, board trains at then-Camp McCoy for California, where they will aid in harvest in the 1940s. According to the U.S. War Department information at the time, they were then sent to Japan when harvest was completed.



The Prisoner of War Area at Camp McCoy in 1943. Includes "A," building 7601, Guard Tower No. 5. (Barracks Buildings 7653, 7654, 7655, 7656 and 7657; Kitchen and Mess Hall Building 7659; and Guard Tower No. 6 Building 7651 are in the background).