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105,546 troops train at Fort McCoy during fiscal year 2026

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy continued its longstanding mission of preparing America's military forces for future operations during fiscal year (FY) 2026, supporting training for 105,546 military personnel despite several significant challenges that affected the installation's annual training schedule.

The total, provided by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS), represents another year in which the installation supported more than 100,000 military personnel from across the Total Force.

Although the FY 2026 total was below the 109,962 personnel supported during FY 2025, installation officials said the difference was directly associated with a six-week federal government shutdown that resulted in multiple training cancellations, as well as the deployment of several large Army National Guard maneuver battalions.

The training total for FY 2026 demonstrates the continued demand for Fort McCoy's training capabilities and the installation's importance to military readiness, DPTMS officials said.

During FY 2025, Fort McCoy supported 109,962 troops, compared with 73,991 in FY 2024 and 86,090 in FY 2023. The FY 2026 total reflects a difference of 4,416 personnel from the previous fiscal year, but the circumstances affecting the training schedule provide important context for understanding the numbers.



This collection of photos highlights some of the training at Fort McCoy during fiscal year 2026 where 105,546 troops trained at the installation throughout the year. From institutional training to weekend training and major exercises, Fort McCoy lived up to its motto, "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909."

Annual training, battle assemblies account for 105,000-plus personnel

According to the FY 2026 DPTMS annual strength report, the installation supported 50,905 personnel participating in annual training and 54,641 personnel participating in battle assembly training activities.

Together, those activities accounted for all 105,546 personnel supported during the fiscal year. The report also documented 820,583 total training man-days during FY 2026. That included 612,210 man-days associated with annual training and 208,373 man-days associated with battle assembly activities.

Man-days provide another way to measure the scope of Fort McCoy's training mission by accounting for the number of days personnel spend participating in training activities, the report shows.

The monthly figures showed how activity increased as the fiscal year progressed and the traditional spring and summer training seasons began.

April accounted for 18,385 personnel, followed by 12,870 in May, and 8,459 in June. July brought 19,215 personnel, while August was the busiest month of the fiscal year with 22,244 personnel. September accounted for another 8,942 personnel as the fiscal year concluded.

The numbers reflect Fort McCoy's role in supporting both large annual training rotations and recurring battle assemblies throughout the year, officials said.

Training includes field exercises, weapons qualifications, institutional instruction, mobilization-related activities, specialized military courses, and large-scale collective exercises.

The installation's ability to accommodate those different requirements simultaneously remains one of its most important contributions to the Army and the joint force.

Training across Total Force

Fort McCoy's FY 2026 training year began Oct. 1, 2025, with National Guard, Army Reserve, active-duty Army, and other service members continuing to use the installation's ranges, maneuver areas, classrooms, facilities, and support infrastructure.

October and November 2025 included regular annual training, weekend battle assemblies, institutional training, and other military training activities. Documented activities show service members conducting training across the installation during both months.

October and November documented coverage also reflected the broad mix of military organizations that regularly use Fort McCoy. The installation supports both large organizations conducting collective training and smaller units completing specialized readiness requirements.

As the new calendar year began, Fort McCoy continued supporting aviation operations, medical readiness training, and other specialized requirements.

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Fort McCoy military leaders serve 2026 Holiday Meal to installation community

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Military leaders at Fort McCoy helped celebrate the holiday season by serving meals to members of the installation community Nov. 3 at Dining Facility 1362.

The annual holiday meal celebration brought together 230 military service members and civilian personnel for an afternoon of food and fellowship at the dining facility in the Noncommissioned Officer Academy complex.

Military leaders participating in the meal service included Maj. Gen. Kevin F. Meisler, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division and Fort McCoy senior commander; Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jason Sikorski, command chief warrant officer of the 88th Readiness Division; and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy.

The leaders served food to attendees, helping make the occasion a special opportunity for installation leadership and members of the workforce to share in the holiday spirit.

The Nov. 3 meal featured a traditional holiday feast prepared by Southern Premier Food Service, Fort McCoy's food service contractor, in coordination with the Fort McCoy Food Service Office. The menu included roast turkey with turkey gravy, pit ham, and hearty chili, along with a variety of traditional sides and desserts.

Other offerings included savory bread dressing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, steamed corn on the cob, seasoned green beans, cranberry sauce, deviled eggs, coleslaw, dinner rolls, and a fresh salad bar. Desserts included traditional pumpkin pie, warm apple pie, decorated white cake, assorted fresh fruit, and ice cream.

The dining hall was also decorated for the occasion, helping create a festive atmosphere for those attending.

Following the event, Jim Gouker of the Fort McCoy Food Service Office sent a letter of appreciation

(See **MEAL**, Page 2)



Fort McCoy community members participate in the annual Holiday Meal on Nov. 3 in a dining facility at Fort McCoy. More than 230 people participated in the event that included members of the installation leadership serving the attendees. Military leaders participating in the meal service included Maj. Gen. Kevin F. Meisler, commanding general of the 88th Readiness Division and Fort McCoy senior commander; Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jason Sikorski, command chief warrant officer of the 88th Readiness Division; and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major for U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy.

2026 Trunk-or-Treat event draws hundreds of post community members



Fort McCoy community members participate in the 2026 Fort McCoy Trunk-or-Treat event on Oct. 28 at Fort McCoy. More than 200 people attended the event that also included 27 trunks filled with candy and spooky fun.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
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Costumes, candy, decorated vehicles and plenty of Halloween spirit filled the parking lot at McCoy's Community Center on Oct. 28 as more than 200 community members gathered for Fort McCoy's annual Trunk-or-Treat event.

Children dressed as superheroes, princesses, spooky creatures, and other favorite characters joined their parents and families for an afternoon of Halloween fun.

Parents and children moved from vehicle to vehicle, 27 in all, collecting treats and enjoying the creative decorations that helped transform the parking lot into a Halloween celebration.

The event, organized by Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR), provided an opportunity for installation families and community members to come together and celebrate the season in a safe, family-friendly environment.

DFMWR personnel said the strong turnout and enthusiasm from participating families helped make the event a success.

The sight of children proudly showing off their costumes, parents joining in the festivities and community members taking part in the decorations reflected the spirit of togetherness that the annual event is intended to encourage.

Participating vehicles offered a variety of Halloween themes and decorations, giving children plenty of opportunities to enjoy the traditional trick-or-treat experience while visiting the different displays.

For many families, the event was about more than collecting candy. It was an opportunity to spend time together, enjoy the creativity of the season and connect with other members of the Fort McCoy community.

DFMWR personnel coordinated the event and preparations, including arrangements for vehicle participants and the use of the McCoy's Community Center parking lot. The event also provided an opportunity for families to enjoy the community center and its available services.

As the afternoon unfolded, the parking lot

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NEWS

Fort McCoy chaplain encourages gratitude, fellowship, support during holiday season

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Taking time to appreciate the people working alongside one another and recognizing the importance of fellowship were among the messages shared by Fort McCoy Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Walter McCall during the installation's 2026 Holiday Meal on Nov. 3 at Fort McCoy.

McCall addressed Soldiers, civilian employees, and other members of the Fort McCoy community attending the meal, encouraging everyone to slow down during the busy holiday season and recognize the contributions of those around them.

Drawing on the words of author Norman Shidle, McCall emphasized the importance of building a team in which people are confident in their own contributions while also recognizing and appreciating the skills and efforts of others.

He challenged those attending to look to the people on either side of them and consider the value they bring to the workplace and the Army mission.

"What I want you to do for this Thanksgiving is look at the person to your left, look at the person to your right," McCall said.

"You need to learn to make sure your life is not driven by what I'm going to do next but just taking a piece of time to be thankful for the people working with you side by side every single day."

He acknowledged that working relationships are not always easy but said the importance of teamwork goes beyond individual differences.

"Even if that person may emotionally get on your nerves, ... that person's contributing to the overall mission that we try to accomplish every day," he said.

McCall encouraged everyone to pause, avoid becoming consumed by the demands of everyday life, and remain thankful for the people who share in their work and service.

Following his remarks, McCall offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the meal, fellowship, and relationships that bring people together both at work and at home.

His prayer also focused on those who might experience loneliness during the holiday season. He asked that they never feel alone and that others be placed in their paths to demonstrate kindness, love, and support.

"We thank you for your presence throughout this season, and we thank you for those who may be alone in this season to never feel alone and send people across the path to show them love," McCall prayed.

McCall's participation in the Holiday Meal reflects the chaplain's broader role in supporting the Fort McCoy community throughout the year. Chaplains regularly provide spiritual care, encouragement, prayer, and a reassuring presence during installation activities, ceremonies, special observances, and community gatherings.

That support can be especially meaningful during the holiday season, when events bring people together but can also be a difficult time for individuals dealing with separation from family, personal challenges, or feelings of loneliness.

Through his participation in events such as the Holiday Meal, McCall helps reinforce the importance of looking out for one another and maintaining a sense of community among the people who live, work, and serve at Fort McCoy.

As the installation community moves through Thanksgiving and the December holidays, his message serves as a reminder that appreciation and support do not have to come through grand gestures.

Sometimes, they begin with something as simple as slowing down, recognizing the person standing next to you, and making sure that person knows they are valued.

The message also reflects an important part of the Army's culture of selfless service: recognizing that every member of the team has a role in accomplishing the mission and that taking care of one another is part of that responsibility.

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





(Above and below) Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Walter McCoy with the Fort McCoy Religious Support Office of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy meets with installation community members Nov. 3 during the 2026 Holiday Meal at a dining facility at Fort McCoy.

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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MEAL

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tion to the management and culinary staff of Southern Premier Food Service, recognizing their work in making the celebration successful.

Gouker highlighted the team's culinary presentation, hospitality, and organization, noting that providing a holiday dining experience for 230 military and civilian personnel required extensive coordination and hard work.

He also recognized the staff's friendly service and welcoming atmosphere, particularly for military personnel who were away from their families or attending training during the holiday season.

"Culinary Excellence & Presentation: Every course — from the traditional holiday meats and savory trimmings to the festive side items and desserts — was prepared to perfection, beautifully displayed, and thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees," the letter states. "Warm Hospitality and Morale Impact: Your team's friendly smiles, attentiveness, and welcoming service created an inviting, home-away-from-home atmosphere. For military personnel stationed away from their families or attending training, during the holidays, this event provided an invaluable boost to morale and camaraderie.

"Flawless Organization and Execution: Feeding 230 guests smoothly without delay requires extensive coordination and hard work behind the scenes," the letter states. "Your kitchen and front-of-house staff handled the flow of service seamlessly, ensuring every guest felt welcomed and honored. Your dedication and selfless service reflect the highest standards of culinary professionalism and community support. The time and energy invested by your management and staff did not go unnoticed, and we are deeply grateful for your partnership."

Gouker also recognized the importance of the meal beyond the food itself, noting that the gathering provided a boost to morale and camaraderie among those attending.

The meal was offered from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Non-subsistence-in-kind personnel could purchase the meal for $11.85, while personnel with standard subsistence-in-kind entitlements received the meal through their established entitlement.

The celebration continues a longstanding Fort McCoy tradition of bringing members of the military community together around the Thanksgiving and holiday seasons.

Previous holiday meal events at Dining Facility 1362 have featured installation leaders serving meals, special decorations, and participation from Soldiers, civilian employees, retirees, and other members of the Fort McCoy community.

In November 2023, more than 100 people attended an early Thanksgiving meal at the facility, with members of the garrison command team serving diners. A similar celebration in November 2024 drew more than 200 Soldiers and civilians.

This annual celebration provides an opportunity to recognize the people who support Fort McCoy's mission while bringing the installation community together outside its everyday work and training responsibilities, Gouker said.

The Fort McCoy Food Service Office and Southern Premier Food Service personnel play an important role in providing dining support to the thousands of military personnel who train at the installation each year, he said.

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(Above and below) Fort McCoy community members participate in the annual Holiday Meal on Nov. 3 in a dining facility at Fort McCoy.



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TRUNK-OR-TREAT from Page 1

became a colorful gathering place filled with costumes, laughter and the excitement that makes Halloween a favorite time of year for children.

The hundreds of people who attended helped make the Oct. 28 celebration another successful installment of Fort McCoy's annual Trunk-or-Treat tradition, continuing Fort McCoy's DFMWR's efforts to provide recreational opportunities and strengthen connections throughout the installation community.

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(All photos, above and below) Fort McCoy community members participate in the 2026 Fort McCoy Trunk-or-Treat event on Oct. 28 at Fort McCoy. More than 200 people attended the event that also included 27 trunks filled with candy and spooky fun. The event was organized by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

















NEWS

Fort McCoy undertakes major effort to clear outdated training equipment, improve readiness

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff





(Above and below) Contractors move items that are either being recycled or revitalized from training areas Oct. 20 at Fort McCoy.

A yearlong effort led by a garrison supply specialist is helping remove decades-old equipment from training areas, improve safety, and return valuable resources and land to more relevant military training.

At U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, Staff Sgt. Dequan Johnson understands that managing Army property is about much more than keeping track of equipment, maintaining inventories, and making sure supplies are accounted for. It is also about ensuring the installation has the resources, space, and capabilities needed to support the Army's changing training requirements.

As a member of the garrison's Headquarters and Headquarters Company at Fort McCoy, Johnson is helping lead a substantial installation-wide effort to remove excess equipment and materials that have accumulated over decades, particularly in former forward operating base (FOB) training areas such as FOB Liberty and FOB Freedom on North Post and South Post respectively.

The project, which has been nearly a year in the making, involves removing hundreds of containers, vehicles, trailers, shelters, and other equipment originally placed at Fort McCoy to support training requirements during the buildup of the Global War on Terrorism.

"This process has been nearly a year in the making of essentially removing excess equipment from Fort McCoy that's been here for about 25-plus years," Johnson said. "This equipment poses both safety and environmental hazards to the units that come and train on it, so it's my top priority to ensure that we get it out of here so we can use this area for training that's more relevant to the military at this time."

The effort is being coordinated with Fort McCoy's Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS), along with numerous installation organizations and mission partners.

At the center of the work is a large-scale removal operation involving approximately 420 40-foot containers located throughout the installation. Through the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Reutilization Program, equipment and materials are being transferred out of Fort McCoy for reutilization, recycling, or other appropriate disposition.

Johnson said a company awarded an $83,000 contract is conducting the removal operation over an approximately three-month period. The work includes removing containers, vehicles, and trailers from installation property.

The materials being removed include Alaskan shelters, mobile trailers, modified shipping containers used to recreate village environments, and other equipment associated with training scenarios developed decades ago.

Johnson said the equipment served an important purpose when it was originally established, but the Army's training priorities and operational requirements have evolved.

"So, this is huge for a few reasons," Johnson said. "This is big because it allows for Fort McCoy personnel to get back to what matters the most, and that is supporting the transient and units that come here to train at Fort McCoy."

He explained that removing the outdated equipment will allow installation personnel to shift their attention away from maintaining and supporting areas with potential environmental and safety hazards and toward providing training environments that better reflect current Army priorities.

The scope of the removal effort is substantial. Johnson estimated that approximately 20,000 tons of scrap metal will be moved through the operation. He said the company awarded the contract anticipates a return of approximately $4 million to $7 million from the recovered materials.

Although those proceeds do not directly return to Fort McCoy, the project provides other significant benefits to the installation and the Army.

"The opportunity cost is allowing our personnel to get back to what matters, and that is supporting the transient units," Johnson said. "So that's limited use of our own personnel, that is limited use of our own resources from a material handling equipment perspective, so that we can truly focus on what matters."

That distinction is important for an installation such as Fort McCoy, which supports thousands of military personnel and numerous training organizations annually. Personnel, equipment, and resources that might otherwise be committed to managing excess property can instead be directed toward supporting incoming units and their training missions.

Johnson's work also highlights the important role Army supply specialists play in installation operations. The Army's 92Y Unit Supply Specialist career field focuses on supply management, inventory control, property accountability, equipment distribution, and logistical support. Supply specialists help ensure military organizations maintain accurate records of their property while making sure equipment is properly stored, used, transferred, or turned in when it is no longer needed.

Those responsibilities extend well beyond maintaining a warehouse or conducting an inventory. They require coordination with commanders, supply organizations, tenant units, and other installation partners to ensure government property is accounted for and managed responsibly.

At Fort McCoy, Johnson is applying those principles on a much larger scale by helping identify excess equipment, coordinate its removal, and find appropriate ways to reutilize or recycle materials.

Johnson said he is particularly passionate about industrial ecology and the idea that materials should continue to have value even after their original purpose has ended.

"I'm super passionate about industrial ecology," Johnson said. "So, from cradle to grave, what does that look like when it comes to items being taken to the grave? Who can reuse it or repurpose it for something that we no longer have a use for?"

Through the DLA Reutilization, Transfer and Donation Program, the installation can help move materials into other uses rather than simply treating everything as waste. Johnson described the philosophy with a familiar saying: "One man's junk is another man's treasure."

For Johnson, the work at FOB Liberty also carries a personal connection. Approximately four years ago, he came to Fort McCoy as a Soldier with the 3rd Medical Command and had an opportunity to train at the same location he is now helping clear.

"I actually had the 3rd (Medical Command) stay out at Liberty in the very sense that I'm tearing down right now," Johnson said. "So, this is a full circle moment."

Having experienced the training environment first-hand gives him another perspective on the importance of preparing the installation for future requirements. He emphasized that adaptability is a major part of the Army's ability to remain effective as missions and operational environments change.

"One word — adaptability," Johnson said. "So, in order to adapt to what we're doing in the current environment, we have to get rid of the stuff that no longer serves a use to us."

He said the DLA program provides an opportunity to move materials to locations where they can serve a better purpose, supporting the Army's ability to adjust its resources to changing needs.

Although Johnson has been helping coordinate much of the effort, he emphasized that the project would not be possible without considerable assistance from organizations throughout the installation.

He credited the Supply Support Activity, tenant units across Fort McCoy, the Training Support Center at Fort McCoy, the 98th Army Reserve Readiness Training Center, the Fort McCoy Fire Department, and the Fort McCoy Police Department for their contributions.

Those organizations have helped provide personnel, equipment, coordination, and other support necessary to conduct the removal operations safely and efficiently.

"I truly couldn't do this without what I consider to be my mission partners," Johnson said. "All these guys have played an integral role in assisting me with this process since it has been a year in the making to ensure that we are doing this safely."

He also recognized the importance of volunteer support and cooperation among organizations, noting that the scope of the work requires far more than one person.

"This is obviously not just a one-man job here," Johnson said.

As the removal work continues, the benefits are expected to extend beyond the immediate cleanup of FOB Liberty, FOB Freedom, and other areas across the installation.

The effort represents a broader commitment to improving property accountability, reducing excess inventory, making better use of government resources, and ensuring Fort McCoy's training areas remain relevant to the needs of today's Army.

For Johnson, the goal is straightforward: remove what no longer serves a purpose, responsibly account for what the Army owns, and make room for what comes next.

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Training area revitalization adds to McCoy's continuous improvement objectives, more

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff



Contractors move items that are either being recycled or revitalized from training areas Oct. 20 at Fort McCoy.

Fort McCoy's fiscal year (FY) 2026 training numbers and new five-year strategic plan highlight the importance of adapting facilities, resources, and operations to support the Total Force, garrison officials said.

As the U.S. Army continues transforming to meet future operational requirements, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy is emphasizing the importance of continuous improvement in its strategic planning efforts to ensure the installation remains prepared to support military training and readiness.

From supporting more than 100,000 military personnel annually to modernizing facilities, improving training areas, and managing installation resources, Fort McCoy's ongoing efforts, officials said, reflect the need to continually evaluate how the installation operates and prepares for the future.

The installation's latest training numbers possibly demonstrate the continued importance of Fort McCoy's capabilities. During fiscal year FY 2026, which ended Sept. 30, 2026, Fort McCoy supported training for 105,546 military personnel, according to the installation's Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS).

Although that figure was below the 109,962 personnel supported during FY 2025, the FY 2026 total included 50,905 personnel participating in annual training and 54,641 participating in battle assembly activities, according to the DPTMS annual strength report. Those activities accounted for 820,583 total training man-days during the fiscal year, including 612,210 annual training man-days and 208,373 battle assembly man-days.

The numbers demonstrate the extensive support required to accommodate military organizations throughout the year. Fort McCoy supports Army National Guard, Army Reserve, active-duty Army, and other service components through a variety of training opportunities, facilities, ranges, and installation services.

Maintaining that level of support requires more than providing land and facilities. It requires an ongoing assessment of how the installation operates, how resources are used, and how training capabilities can evolve to meet changing military requirements.

To help guide those improvements, Fort McCoy developed its 2026–2030 Strategic Business Plan, which establishes six strategic objectives for the installation, according to the Fort McCoy Plans, Analysis and Integration Office (PAIO).

The plan provides a framework for improving installation operations over the next five years while supporting the Army's broader readiness and transformation priorities. Its six objectives focus on supporting the warfighter and mobilization mission; sustaining and modernizing installation infrastructure; attracting, developing, and retaining a professional workforce; delivering quality-of-life programs; enhancing internal and external communication; and evolving safety and security capabilities.

The objectives recognize that Fort McCoy's ability to support military training depends on the combined efforts of its workforce, facilities, infrastructure, tenant organizations, and mission partners. The development of the plan also prompted installation leaders to review Fort McCoy's mission, vision, and values and establish updated statements for 2026, according to PAIO Chief Bonnie Hilt.

The installation's updated motto, "Training the Total Force and Shaping the Future since 1909," reflects both its history and its commitment to future readiness. The updated mission statement reads: "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."

Its vision is: "To be the premier training center supporting the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal armed forces."

Hilt explained that the updated motto's reference to 1909 recognizes the year Fort McCoy was established, while the phrase "shaping the future" aligns with the Department of War's focus on transformation and future readiness.

During April 2026 workforce town hall meetings, then-Garrison Commander Col. Sheyla Baez Ramirez discussed the importance of having a strategic plan that provides direction while allowing the installation to remain flexible as Army priorities and operational requirements change.

"The great thing about our plan … we have enough flexibility in this plan for anything that comes from the department down," Baez said.

The strategic plan also establishes three command imperatives for the installation workforce: promoting and enhancing the Installation Management System and its management processes; integrating knowledge-management practices and emerging technologies to improve efficiency; and prioritizing funding and manpower in support of the installation's strategic objectives.

Those priorities provide a connection between long-term planning and the everyday work taking place throughout Fort McCoy. One example of that work involves installation efforts to remove outdated equipment and materials from former forward operating base (FOB) training areas, including FOB Liberty and FOB Freedom.

Staff Sgt. Dequan Johnson, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company at Fort McCoy, has been helping coordinate the removal of excess equipment that has remained on the installation for approximately 25 years or more.

Working with DPTMS and other installation mission partners, Johnson has been coordinating the removal of containers, vehicles, trailers, and other materials so the areas can be better utilized for current and future training requirements.

Johnson said the effort is important because the installation must remain adaptable as military training requirements change.

"One word, adaptability," Johnson said. "So, in order to adapt to what we're doing in the current environment, we have to get rid of the stuff that no longer serves a use to us."

The project involves approximately 420 40-foot containers located throughout the installation, along with other equipment and materials. Johnson said the removal effort is expected to move approximately 20,000 tons of scrap metal, while also reducing safety and environmental concerns associated with outdated training equipment.

The work is an example of how installation personnel are evaluating existing resources, addressing longstanding issues, and looking for ways to make better use of Fort McCoy's land and equipment.

Other improvement efforts are connected through the installation's annual Installation Planning Board (IPB), organized by PAIO. During a Sept. 1, 2026, meeting, Fort McCoy leaders and representatives from across the installation reviewed current requirements and discussed future priorities.

That process included reviewing updates to the 2025–2026 Integrated Priority List and recommendations for the 2026–2027 list. The list helps installation leaders identify and prioritize requirements when making decisions about available funding, manpower, and other resources, according to PAIO.

Those planning discussions encompass a wide range of installation needs, including construction, infrastructure, housing, utilities, roads, training areas, and tenant organization requirements.

By connecting the strategic business plan with annual resource planning, Fort McCoy can evaluate immediate needs while keeping longer-term mission requirements in view.

NEWS

Wisconsin Army National Guard aviation crews continue readiness training at Fort McCoy during October 2026

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Aircrews from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment (1-147th Aviation) completed another unit training effort Oct. 9 at Fort McCoy, continuing a longstanding relationship between the aviation unit and the installation.

According to Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) scheduling officials, the training was among the first major military training activities at Fort McCoy during the opening days of fiscal year 2027, which began Oct. 1.

The officials also noted that the 1-147th maintains a presence at Fort McCoy nearly every month of the year.

The Oct. 9 training included extensive aircrew proficiency activities, familiarization with designated flight routes and other aviation training requirements. These activities provide aircrews opportunities to become familiar with the installation's airspace, operating environment and available training resources while maintaining the skills necessary to support military missions.

Headquartered in Madison, Wis., the 1-147th Aviation Regiment is part of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's aviation force, Wisconsin Guard officials note. Its aviation capabilities include UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and UH-72 Lakota light utility helicopters, which provide support for military operations, transportation, command and control, medical evacuation and emergency-response missions.

The battalion's medical evacuation aviation capabilities include personnel and aircraft operating from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility in West Bend, Wis. The aircraft and crews regularly travel to Fort McCoy to conduct specialized training and support other military activities.

The unit's relationship with Fort McCoy extends well beyond its October training effort. As reported in an April 2025 Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office article, Soldiers with the 1-147th brought more than a dozen helicopters, aircrews and support personnel to Fort McCoy for a major drill training exercise. The aircraft included UH-60 Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopters and UH-72A Lakota helicopters from West Bend, along with additional personnel and equipment from the battalion's Madison location.

During that training, the unit conducted multiple scenarios and training lanes, including hot- and cold-load training involving the movement of simulated patients during medical evacuation operations.

Capt. Cole Hamilton, operations officer with the 1-147th, discussed the importance of the April 2025 field training exercise, explaining that it was designed to help prepare the unit for an upcoming mobilization.





(Above and below) An aircrew guides a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on a training flight at Fort McCoy on Oct. 9.

The training also demonstrated how Fort McCoy's aviation resources and training locations can accommodate multiple aircraft and support personnel. James L. Hubbard, airport manager with the Fort McCoy DPTMS Airfield Division, described how the unit operated aircraft and personnel from Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport, Young Air Assault Strip, and other training locations on the installation's South Post.

The 1-147th has also used Fort McCoy for specialized medical evacuation training that directly supports its lifesaving mission.

In a June 21, 2022, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office article, it was reported that Soldiers with the battalion conducted live-hoist training June 7, 2022, at Big Sandy Lake at Fort McCoy. The exercise involved aircrews using hoist equipment to lower rescue personnel and retrieve simulated victims from the water using a rescue basket.

Maj. Donald Graham, then serving as the 1-147th's administrative and executive officer, explained during the training that live-hoist operations are a critical skill for medical evacuation aircraft.

Graham said terrain, slopes and other obstacles can prevent an aircraft from safely landing at a rescue location. Hoist capabilities allow aircrews to lower a medic into restrictive areas to provide immediate medical care before safely extracting injured individuals for transport.

Graham also discussed real-world live-hoist rescue missions conducted by Wisconsin Army National Guard aircrews involving injured or stranded individuals in Wisconsin.

The battalion continued demonstrating those capabilities during Patriot '26 in August 2026. According to an Aug. 28, 2026, article published by the 165th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office, Soldiers assigned to the 1-147th conducted medical evacuation hoist training at Fort McCoy's Combined Arms Collective Training Facility. The exercise involved role players portraying simulated casualties, allowing aircrews to practice locating, hoisting and evacuating patients from areas where terrain or other conditions could prevent an aircraft from landing.

The training was part of a larger domestic-response readiness exercise involving approximately 1,000 Airmen and Soldiers from National Guard units across 35 states, along with federal, state and local agencies.

The battalion also conducted extensive aviation readiness training at Fort McCoy throughout May 2026. In a June 5, 2026, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office article, it reported on the unit's aviation training activities, which included flight operations, aircrew proficiency, aircraft maintenance, tactical mission planning and aviation support in a field environment.

In July 2026, the unit's UH-60 Black Hawks and aircrews supported numerous military training events across Fort McCoy's more than 60,000 acres of maneuver land. Another Fort McCoy article published Aug. 4, 2026, highlighted the unit's support of troop transportation, command-and-control activities, and other aviation requirements. The unit also supported a Wisconsin Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift at Fort McCoy on July 22.

The UH-60 Black Hawk provides the Army with a versatile utility helicopter capable of performing missions that include air assault, troop transportation, aeromedical evacuation, command and control, and general aviation support, according to its fact sheet.

For the 1-147th, recurring training at Fort McCoy provides opportunities to maintain those capabilities while working in an environment that supports both aviation and ground-force operations.

Fort McCoy's extensive maneuver areas, aviation facilities, landing zones, available airspace and support infrastructure provide military units with opportunities to conduct realistic training while coordinating with other organizations operating throughout the installation.

The battalion's continued presence also possibly illustrates the variety of military training that takes place at Fort McCoy throughout the year. From routine aircrew proficiency and aircraft operations to specialized medical evacuation exercises, the installation provides resources that help National Guard aviation personnel maintain readiness for both state and federal missions. Through its recurring training activities, the 1-147th Aviation Regiment continues to demonstrate the importance of Fort McCoy as a year-round training partner for Wisconsin's military forces.

Learn more about Fort McCoy online athttps://home.army.mil/mccoy, on Flickr at https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi, and on DVIDS by visiting https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FM-PAO on DVIDS.

Fort McCoy completes two bridge projects, improving installation infrastructure, safety

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Two bridge projects at Fort McCoy were completed earlier in 2026 and are now in use, providing important improvements to installation infrastructure, access and safety.

The projects involved the replacement of NRP-03 near Pine View Recreation Area and improvements to NRP-04, also known as Bridge 4, which provides access to the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy and Wisconsin Military Academy in the cantonment area.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works Director Liane Haun discussed the projects during a January 2026 Garrison-Tenant Staff Meeting, when the work was still being planned. Haun said Bridge 4 would receive a complete replacement during 2026 and explained that access to the State Patrol Academy and Wisconsin Military Academy would be temporarily affected during construction. She also highlighted the project at Pine View Campground, where an aging Bailey bridge was in failing condition.

"The big one is down at the campground," Haun said. "We have an old Bailey Bridge that's in a failing condition right now. It's actually a pretty cool bridge, but it's going to get a complete replacement, and it'll be much safer than what we've had in the past as well."

The two projects were subsequently included in a single Fort McCoy contracting effort. The project called for repair of Real Property Bridge 04 and construction of a new bridge to replace the NRP Bailey bridge at the campground. The Army awarded the $1.58 million contract to Larson Construction Co. Inc. of Chippewa Falls, Wis., in September 2025.

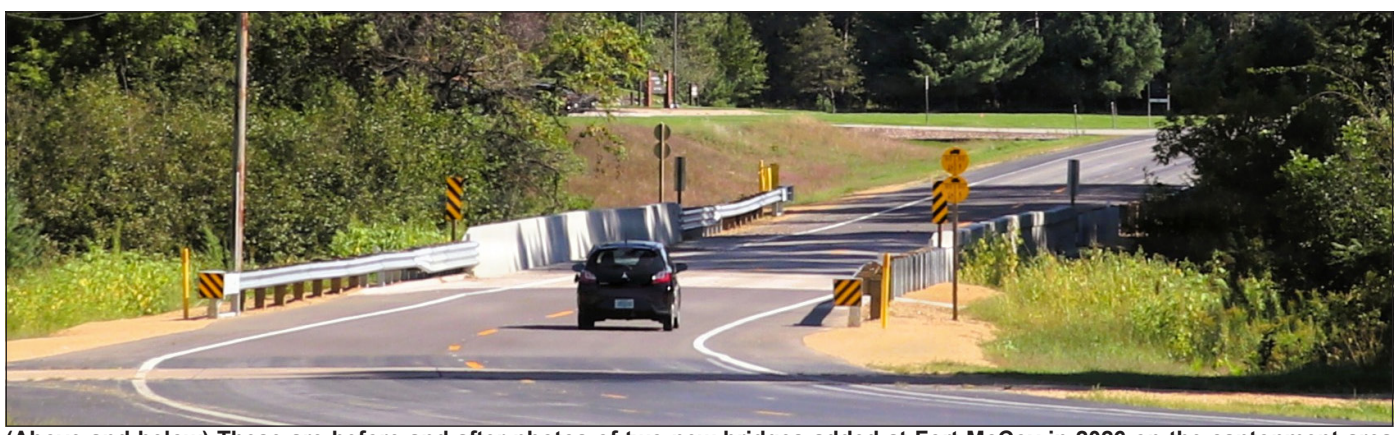
The NRP-03 project was separately awarded to Larson Construction in March 2026 for $847,271. The project involved replacing the existing stream bridge with a new concrete box-culvert structure, along with riprap, grading and restoration work.

By June, the new bridge crossing the La Crosse River near Pine View Recreation Area had been completed. Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation officials said the new crossing would improve transportation efficiency within the recreation area.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare Recreation Supervisory Recreation Specialist Alex Karis said the bridge would eliminate the need for staff to drive around the recreation area when traveling between the campground and Whitetail Ridge Ski Area.

The bridge projects are part of Fort McCoy's continuing effort to maintain and modernize infrastructure that supports the installation's training, recreation and day-to-day operations.





(Above and below) These are before and after photos of two new bridges added at Fort McCoy in 2026 on the cantonment area and at Pine View Campground.

During an April 2026 Installation Real Property Planning Board meeting, Haun further discussed the two bridge projects among the installation's ongoing military construction and infrastructure work. She also noted that much of Fort McCoy's existing infrastructure dates to the 1940s, making continued investment in facilities and infrastructure particularly important.

With both bridges now completed and in use, the projects provide Fort McCoy with safer, more reliable crossings while improving access to important areas of the installation, officials said. For DPW officials, the work represents another practical step in modernizing Fort McCoy's infrastructure and ensuring the installation can safely and effectively support its mission well into the future.

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 athttps://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."





TRAINING NUMBERS

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In January 2026, an aircrew and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the Minnesota Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, conducted training operations Jan. 13 at Fort McCoy.

The aircraft's mission capabilities include air assault, general support, aeromedical evacuation, command and control, and special operations support. The Black Hawk is also the Army's primary utility tactical transport helicopter and provides a versatile platform for moving personnel and equipment. The January aviation activity was one example of the installation's ability to support Army aviation operations alongside ground-based training.

Also in January, seven Soldiers started off 2026 by earning their newest Military Occupational Specialty — 91J — by completing five weeks of training in the 91J10 Quartermaster and Chemical Equipment Repairer Course at Regional Training Site (RTS)-Maintenance at Fort McCoy.

Instructors for this course session were Sgt. 1st Class Paul Hendrickson with RTS Maintenance and Staff Sgt. Aaron Devries of the 13th Battalion, 100th Regiment. Hendrickson described the course, and more.

"These are Soldiers who are coming from active duty, Guard, and Reserve," Hendrickson said. "With this course, what they are learning is how to do maintenance on heaters, fuel pumping units, water purification units at unit level size, company level, and battalion brigade size. They are also learning laundry units as well and how to maintain those."

February continued with annual training, weekend battle assemblies, institutional instruction, and other activities involving National Guard, Army Reserve, active-duty Army, and other service members.

Also in late January, with one CH-47 Chinook and three UH-60 Blackhawks from the 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment supporting, Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 120th (1-120th) Field Artillery held cold-weather sling-load training Jan. 28 at Firing Point 421 at Fort McCoy.

Because the focus was to operate during cold weather, Mother Nature didn't disappoint as temperatures were as low as -10 degrees Fahrenheit at the start of the training. Soldiers with the 120th prepared for the event, setting up a couple of Arctic 10-person tents with heaters.

Soldiers also donned their Army Extreme Cold-Weather Clothing System, or ECWCS, that's issued to Soldiers. The system includes a lightweight undershirt and underwear, midweight shirt and underwear, fleece jacket, wind jacket, soft shell jacket and trousers, extreme cold/wet-weather jacket and trousers, and extreme cold-weather parka and trousers.

With helicopter blade wash just increasing the wind-chill factor ten-fold during the training operations, all the cold-weather preparation was a good thing, said Command Sgt. Maj. (CSM) Nick Kletzien, battalion CSM. And the training provided a realistic feeling for what 120th members would have to face in extreme cold-weather conditions possibly somewhere else in the world.

"This was a great opportunity to test our equipment," Kletzien said. "And a good opportunity to have a training event that's realistic to what we could face."

For the sling-loads, the helicopter aircrews were lifting the M119 Howitzer. According to Army facts about the Howitzer, the M119 is alightweight, 105mm towed artillery piece used by the U.S. Army for mobile fire support, based on the BritishL119 gun, known for being air-transportable by helicopter or parachute and towed by Humvees, with upgrades like the M119A3 adding digital fire control for increased accuracy and effectiveness in rapid deployment scenarios.

This training event was completed over several hours. Teams of Soldiers took turns hooking up the sling-load Howitzers to the different helicopters. The helicopters would then pick up the pieces, take them for a short flight, and then return them to the same spot they were picked up from.

The installation's February training was documented showing military personnel conducting activities throughout the post as the winter training season continued.

Specialized medical training supports Army Reserve readiness

One of the significant specialized training efforts during the first half of FY 2026 involved the Fort McCoy Medical Simulation Training Center (MSTC), which supported Army Reserve combat medics completing required 68W Sustainment Training.

Staff with the Fort McCoy MSTC, which is part of the Fort McCoy DPTMS, stepped up in early 2026 help Army Reserve Command complete 68W Sustainment Training for more than 90 combat medics before March 31.

Healthcare Instructor and Interim Director Benjamin Leonard with the Fort McCoy MSTC described the kind of training his center was completing between January and March 2026.

"We're doing 68-Whiskey Sustainment Training, which is a two-year requirement for all combat medics to complete 72 hours of training, plus a Table 8 validation — the lane validation — where we put them into high levels of stress," Leonard said. "There, they perform their medical care under that stress in a simulated combat environment. We also utilize the high-fidelity simulators to make sure that all the mannequins and related equipment actually give those vitals as well.

"During the training here, they're doing everything on the patient as they would out in the real-world environment so that way they have the confidence, and we have the confidence in them as well to perform medicine to standard," Leonard said.

One part of the training that enhances realistic training is the trauma lanes, Leonard said.

"The Soldiers go out there, treat casualties, and more in a stressful environment," he said. "

Leonard said other things the combat medics are training on and learning is their medical treatment.

"It's similar to … a troop medical clinic," Leonard said. "They get the experience of working, doing sick call, or other medical care as they would in any other troop medical clinic. We also do prolonged casualty care training with them as well, so getting used to longer times, sitting on patients for longer experiences."

The training requirement included 72 hours of training and a Table 8 validation. The validation placed medics in simulated combat environments where they had to perform medical procedures while experiencing elevated levels of stress.

The MSTC also used high-fidelity medical simulators that provided realistic patient vital signs and responses, allowing medics to practice treating simulated casualties as they would in an operational environment.

The effort demonstrated how Fort McCoy's institutional training resources can support specialized readiness requirements while helping military organizations overcome scheduling challenges.

The MSTC is one of several specialized training resources at Fort McCoy that provides realistic instruction for military personnel who must maintain demanding technical and occupational skills.

Spring training activity

As spring 2026 arrived, training activity increased across the installation.

Soldiers with the 11th Field Hospital, based out of Fort Hood, Texas, successfully concluded a Collective Training Exercise at Regional Training Site (RTS)-Medical at Fort McCoy, Wis., which ran from March 4 to 12.

This training was supported by the 1st Medical Brigade from Fort Hood, Fort McCoy's RTS–Medical and the Fort McCoy Medical Simulation Training Center.

Organizers said the exercise was structured to ensure medical personnel train as they fight. Participants engaged in a range of activities, including refining staff processes and enhancing medical skills through state-of-the-art simulation and cadaver-based training.

These efforts, organizers said, are crucial for strengthening overall medical readiness and preparing our teams for future missions. They also stated the event highlights the power of partnership between active-duty units and Reserve training assets. Such joint efforts, they say, foster a shared learning environment, ensuring that warfighters will receive the highest level of care through a cohesive and expertly trained medical force.

Maj. Toritsetimiyin M. E-Nunu with the 11th Field Hospital described the training.

"We're here to do a culminating training event where we're able to enhance our medical training as well as integrate our standard protocols," E-Nunu said in an early March interview at https://www.dvidshub.net/video/1000528/11th-field-hospital-sharpens-medical-readiness-fort-mccoy-wis, who also noted there were close to 100 Soldiers in the training event.

"Those who are participating are actually active-duty Soldiers as well as active-duty nurses, doctors, and medics, and we do have Soldiers from outlying units that are serving as our role players," E-Nunu said.

April 2026 also brought thousands of service members to Fort McCoy for annual training, battle assemblies, field exercises, and institutional instruction.

Units from the Army Reserve, National Guard, and active-duty components used the installation's extensive ranges, maneuver areas, classrooms, and support facilities.

Institutional training remained an important part of the month's activity, with courses and hands-on instruction taking place at Regional Training Site-Medical and Regional Training Site-Maintenance.

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy also continued its educational and leadership-development mission at Fort McCoy. The installation's three major training organizations — the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade, 86th Training Division, and 88th Readiness Division — play important roles in supporting military training and readiness requirements.

The Regional Training Sites provide additional capabilities for technical and medical instruction, allowing service members to complete specialized training without traveling to other major military installations.

Fort McCoy's April training activity demonstrated how the installation supports both field-based collective training and classroom instruction, often simultaneously.

In institutional training, students with the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Course held their end-of-course Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR) on April 1 at the Fort McCoy NCO Academy with Fort McCoy Deputy Garrison Commander Lt. Col. Chad Holder serving in support of the training event.

The future enlisted leaders of the Army Reserve, National Guard, and active-component units who were in the course combined their experience from the course to hold the rehearsal, Fort McCoy NCO Academy officials said — the institutional training venue that manages the course.



Training operations for the 86th Training Division's Warrior Exercise/Regional Medic 2026 is shown Aug. 8 at Fort McCoy,. Thousands of U.S. Army Reserve troops as well as Joint and Total Force members were part of the exercise at Fort McCoy from late-July 2026 to early August 2026.

The CAR is the culminating event for the course, officials said. It synchronizes what the students have been doing for 22 days at Fort McCoy. One of the main points of having the CAR is to synchronize each battalion, so that way then the brigade can understand exactly what's going on. It also gives the picture to the other battalions on what's going on across the entire battle space.

Holder served as a simulated brigade commander receiving the briefing during the CAR.

Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Caires, course director for the Battle Staff NCO Course, described the course training.

"Here at Fort McCoy NCOA, our Battle Staff Course consists of 159 academic hours," Caires said. "One-hundred-eleven of those hours are just military decision-making processes on its own. Our course here has key topics such as mission command, command and control, Army operations, multi-domain operations, and large-scale combat operations."

National Guard, Army Reserve units conduct extensive May training

May traditionally represents one of the busiest periods of the training year as Army Reserve and National Guard organizations conduct annual training and other readiness exercises. May 2026 was no exception, with thousands of troops representing numerous military organizations conducting training at Fort McCoy.

Among the organizations training during the month were units from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, including the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, 1st Squadron, 105th Cavalry Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery Regiment.

Other Wisconsin Army National Guard organizations included the 724th Engineer Battalion and 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment.

Army Reserve organizations also maintained a significant presence, including the 644th Regional Support Group, 445th Transportation Company, 624th Quartermaster Company, 214th Legal Operations Detachment, 324th Engineer Company, 482nd Engineer Detachment, 801st Field Hospital, and 364th Theater Public Affairs Support Element.

The variety of organizations reflected the installation's ability to support infantry, cavalry, artillery, aviation, engineering, transportation, logistics, medical, legal, and public affairs training requirements.

Air Force personnel also took advantage of Fort McCoy's training environment during May. Airmen with the 934th Airlift Wing, based at Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station, conducted training with C-130 Hercules aircraft and aircrews at Fort McCoy.

Personnel from the 435th Training Squadron also conducted specialized training at Fort McCoy during May. The squadron provides expeditionary skills and readiness training for Air Force personnel. Its activities benefited from the installation's combination of training areas, classrooms, facilities, and field environments.

The Air Force participation provided another example of Fort McCoy's joint-service training mission, which extends well beyond Army organizations.

June brings additional joint-service, engineering, sustainment training

June 2026 continued the installation's busy training schedule as thousands of Soldiers and members of partner forces from across the United States conducted readiness activities.

The month included significant participation from Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force, Civil Air Patrol, and institutional training organizations.

One of the largest organizations training during June was the Illinois Army National Guard's 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The brigade conducted collective training designed to strengthen combat readiness and mission command while using Fort McCoy's maneuver areas, live-fire ranges, and other training facilities.

Supporting the brigade's training were artillery, aviation, engineer, and sustainment organizations. Their training included fire-support coordination, mission planning, aviation support, engineering operations, logistics, and other collective tasks.

Army Reserve Soldiers from the 407th Civil Affairs Battalion conducted planning and field training emphasizing coordination between military forces and civilian authorities. The 624th Quartermaster Company completed logistics and sustainment training, while the 416th Theater Engineer Command worked alongside subordinate organizations to enhance theater-level engineering capabilities.

Soldiers assigned to the 16th Psychological Operations Battalion also trained at Fort McCoy, refining information-related capabilities and operational planning skills.

Joint-service training continued with Airmen from the Wisconsin Air National Guard's 115th Security Forces Squadron, who conducted force-protection and base-defense training. Members of the Wisconsin Wing of the Civil Air Patrol also participated in leadership development, emergency-services training, and aerospace education activities.

Institutional training continued throughout June with the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Wisconsin Challenge Academy, Regional Training Site-Maintenance, Regional Training Site-Medical, and 86th Training Division.

Wisconsin National Guard annual training highlights July

July brought another major training period to Fort McCoy as thousands of Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers completed annual training at the installation during a two-week period.

The training included aviation, engineering, tactical, logistics, and sustainment missions designed to strengthen readiness for future state and federal requirements.

The 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, was among the organizations supporting the annual training period. UH-60 Black Hawk crews conducted aviation operations throughout July, supporting training scenarios and transporting personnel while maintaining flight proficiency.

The battalion also provided aviation support for the Wisconsin Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Boss Lift on July 22. Civilian employers from Wisconsin and Minnesota boarded Black Hawk helicopters and traveled to training locations across Fort McCoy to gain firsthand insight into the missions performed by their Guard and Reserve employees.

Engineer Soldiers also combined readiness training with improvements to the installation.

The Wisconsin Army National Guard's 229th Engineer Company (Horizontal) worked with the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works to complete a sidewalk improvement project during annual training.

The project allowed Soldiers to practice surveying, site preparation, excavation, grading, aggregate placement, concrete forming, concrete placement, finishing, and quality control. The skills involved in the project are similar to those used by horizontal engineer units during construction and infrastructure missions in operational environments.

The troop project program provides an opportunity for engineer units to complete meaningful hands-on training while improving Fort McCoy infrastructure, Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works officials said. That partnership benefits both the Soldiers completing their annual training requirements and the installation, which receives improvements that support future training operations and the quality of life for personnel working and living on post.

Warrior Exercise, Regional Medic strengthen collective readiness

Another major training effort began in late July and continued into August as the Fort McCoy-based 86th Training Division led its Warrior Exercise and Regional Medic 2026.

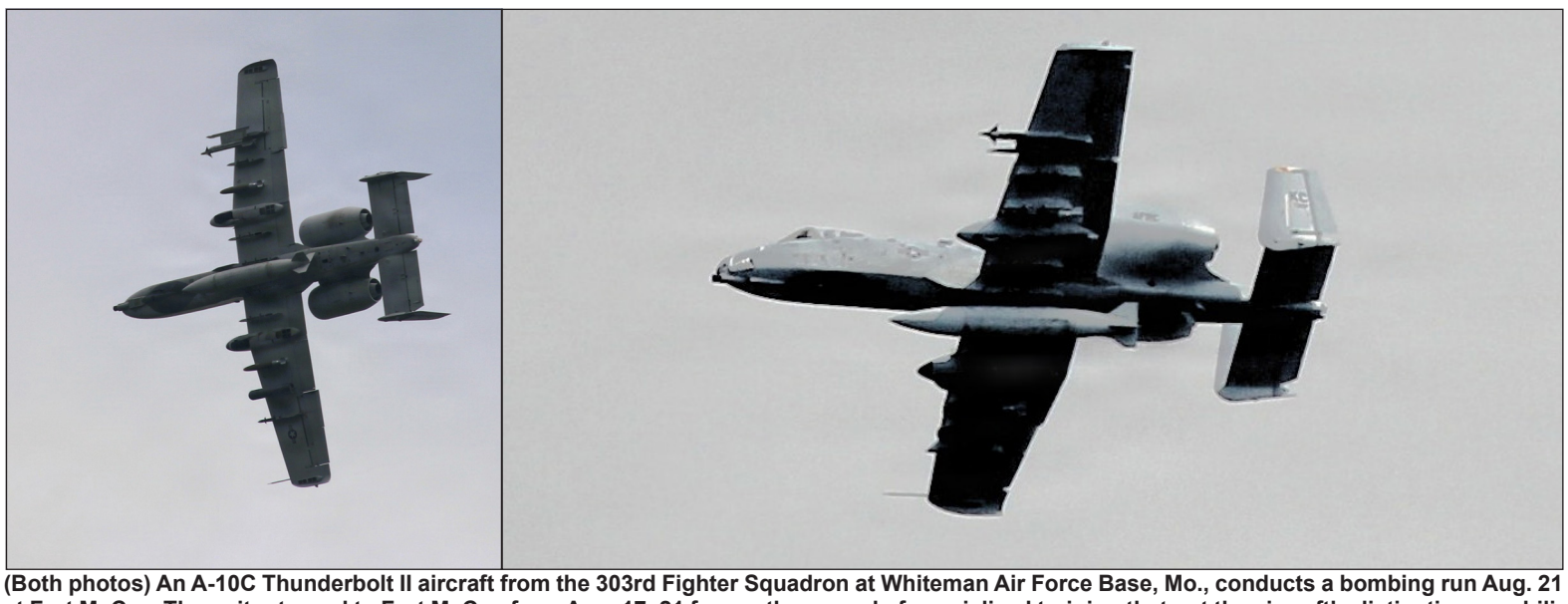
The combined exercise, known as WAREX-RM26, brought thousands of Army Reserve Soldiers to Fort McCoy for collective training designed to replicate demanding operational environments and prepare military organizations for large-scale combat operations, 86th Training Division officials said.

The exercise combined the traditional Warrior Exercise with Regional Medic training, allowing combat-support, combat-service-support, and medical organizations to operate simultaneously within a common training scenario.

Soldiers conducted dismounted tactical operations, tactical vehicle and convoy operations, mounted weapons training, casualty response, medical operations, sustainment activities, and other collective tasks, exercise planners said.

Training scenarios also addressed mission command, tactical decision-making, communications, force protection, engineering operations, and chem-

(See TRAINING NUMBERS, Page 7)



(Both photos) An A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft from the 303rd Fighter Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., conducts a bombing run Aug. 21 at Fort McCoy. The unit returned to Fort McCoy from Aug. 17–21 for another round of specialized training that put the aircraft's distinctive capabilities to work over the installation. According to Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security officials, the Air Force Reserve pilots conducted bombing training during the week, including low-level missions to the installation's impact area. The training also provided significant flight time for the pilots, giving them an opportunity to sharpen skills associated with operating the A-10 in a realistic training environment.

NEWS

New fiscal year brings renewed training activity to Fort McCoy as military units begin FY 2027

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

A new fiscal year means a new year of military training at Fort McCoy, and October 2026 provided an early look at the variety of missions, units and training requirements the installation will support throughout fiscal year (FY) 2027.

With Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, Marines, and aviation personnel among those conducting training during the month, Fort McCoy once again demonstrated its ability to support a wide range of military readiness requirements.

The new fiscal year began Oct. 1, and training activity started building immediately. One of the first major training events involved aircrews from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment (1-147th Aviation), which completed unit training Oct. 9.

According to Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS) scheduling officials, the 1-147th maintains a presence at Fort McCoy nearly every month of the year. The Oct. 9 training included extensive aircrew proficiency activities, familiarization with flight routes and other aviation requirements.

The unit's recurring training demonstrates how Fort McCoy supports specialized military capabilities in addition to traditional ground-force training. The Wisconsin Army National Guard aviation unit operates aircraft that support transportation, aviation operations and medical evacuation missions.

Marine Corps Reserve units also made Fort McCoy a training destination during October.

Marines with 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines (2-24), completed extensive training at the installation. The battalion, nicknamed the "Mad Ghosts," is part of the 23rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, and is headquartered at Fort Sheridan, Ill. Its motto is "First in, Last out," and its unit colors are black and gold.

The battalion traces its origins to the 9th Reserve Battalion, established in 1922, and was activated in March 1943 as part of the 4th Marine Division, history shows.

U.S. Marines with the 6th Engineer Support Battalion, 4th Marine Logistics Group, Marine Forces Reserve, also conducted training at Fort McCoy during October.

According to DPTMS officials, both Marine units conducted training on Fort McCoy's North Post, including activities at Ranges 6 and 18. Their presence highlighted the installation's ability to accommodate different service branches and a variety of training requirements at the same time.

The two middle weekends of October were particularly busy, DPTMS officials said, with a high volume of Army Reserve and Army National Guard personnel conducting training across the installation.

Activities included driver training, weapons qualifications, Warrior Tasks, and other individual and collective readiness requirements. These activities are essential for maintaining Soldier proficiency and ensuring military personnel remain prepared to perform their assigned duties.

The variety of October training is representative of Fort McCoy's larger mission as the Army's Total Force Training Center.

Located in west-central Wisconsin, Fort McCoy encompasses approximately 60,000 acres, including extensive contiguous maneuver and live-fire training areas. The installation provides a combination of open maneuver terrain, specialized training facilities, ranges, classrooms, aviation resources and logistical support that allows military units to conduct everything from individual weapons qualifications to large-scale collective training exercises.

Fort McCoy's range complex includes 31 live-fire ranges, 17 of which are automated or instrumented, as well as 21 artillery firing points, 12 mortar firing points and an 8,000-acre impact area, according to DPTMS.

The installation also offers specialized facilities for collective training, including multipurpose training ranges, a convoy live-fire range, an infantry platoon and squad battle course, multipurpose machine-gun ranges, live-fire shoot houses and a live-fire breach facility.

Beyond its ranges and maneuver land, Fort McCoy provides aviation training opportunities through Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport, Young Air Assault Strip and other aviation support facilities. These resources allow military aviation units to conduct flight operations and coordinate training with ground forces.

Other specialized capabilities include the Regional Training Site-Medical, Regional Training Site-Maintenance, simulation facilities, the Medical Simulation Training Center, 98th Army Reserve Readiness Training Center, and the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy. These resources support technical instruction, medical readiness, maintenance proficiency, leadership development and other institutional training requirements.



Photos by Greg Mason, Fort McCoy Multimedia-Visual Information Office, and Scott T. Sturkol

These photos show a few of the training scenes taking place at Fort McCoy during October 2026 where hundreds of service members trained at the installation.

Fort McCoy's DPTMS coordinates many of the resources that make these training opportunities possible. The directorate manages training areas and ranges, provides training aids and simulation support, coordinates airfield operations, and supports mobilization and demobilization requirements.

The installation's mission also extends beyond traditional Army training. As a joint training location, Fort McCoy supports active-duty military personnel, Army Reserve and National Guard units, and service members from the Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force. Other federal, state and local government organizations also use installation resources for training and mission support.

The scope of that mission is reflected in the installation's annual training totals.

During FY 2025, Fort McCoy supported 109,962 troops in training, according to information provided by DPTMS in November 2025. That included 46,047 personnel participating in annual training and major exercises and 63,915 personnel completing battle-assembly training.

Brooks Lundeen, DPTMS range officer, said in the November 2025 reporting that the increase in the FY 2025 total reflected the addition of strength reports for units using facilities in the cantonment area. That support included not only ranges and training areas but also barracks, dining facilities, buildings and other installation resources.

The FY 2025 total was higher than the 73,991 troops supported during FY 2024 and the 86,090 supported during FY 2023.

Fort McCoy's long-term training mission is even more significant. The installation has provided support and facilities for field and classroom training of more than 100,000 military personnel from all services nearly every year since 1984, according to the installation's official information.

Those numbers represent more than the number of troops using a firing range or maneuver area. They reflect an installation-wide effort involving range operations, training-area management, airfield support, lodging, dining, facility operations, logistics and the many other services necessary to support military units throughout their training cycles.

As FY 2027 continues, October's training activity provides an early indication of the continued demand for Fort McCoy's resources. From Wisconsin Army National Guard aviation crews and Marine Corps Reserve infantry and engineer units to Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers completing essential individual and collective tasks, the month's activities reflect the diversity of organizations that rely on the installation.

Each training event contributes to the larger readiness mission of preparing America's military personnel for their assigned responsibilities, whether at home or abroad.

With its extensive training land, modernized ranges, specialized facilities and ability to support multiple military branches and components, Fort McCoy remains an important part of the nation's military readiness network as another fiscal year of training begins.

TRAINING NUMBERS

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ical, biological, radiological, and nuclear response.

Medical units trained alongside maneuver and support organizations, conducting casualty triage, emergency treatment, casualty movement, medical evacuation, and other battlefield medical tasks.

The exercise also incorporated modern battlefield considerations, including training related to unmanned aircraft threats, said Maj. Jon Dahl, 86th Training Division public affairs officer. The combined exercise demonstrated how Fort McCoy can accommodate large numbers of personnel while supporting multiple military specialties and mission requirements within a coordinated training environment.

The 86th Training Division, which is headquartered at Fort McCoy, plays an important role in preparing Army Reserve units for operational assignments and supporting collective training across the Army Reserve, records show.

August features more than 22,000 training participants

More than 22,000 personnel participated in training at Fort McCoy during August 2026, making it the busiest month of the fiscal year. The DPTMS annual strength report recorded 22,244 personnel for the month, including annual training, battle assemblies, and other training activities.

In addition to the Warrior Exercise and Regional Medic training, the month included military police training, medical and sustainment operations, Air Force weapons training, aviation operations, and a major domestic-response exercise.

The 327th Military Police Battalion conducted nearly three weeks of training before completing its period Aug. 19. The training included physical and tactical activities, confidence-course and litter-obstacle-course training, medical instruction, tactical communications, casualty care, vehicle operations, and navigation.

Air Force Reserve A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft also returned to Fort McCoy from Aug. 17-21.

The aircraft from the 303rd Fighter Squadron at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., conducted specialized bombing training and low-level flight missions toward the installation's impact area.

Fort McCoy's extensive airspace, varied terrain, and designated impact area provide an environment where A-10 pilots can practice realistic flight profiles and air-to-ground weapons employment, Fort McCoy DPTMS officials said.

The training allowed pilots to maintain and sharpen the skills associated with the aircraft's close-air-support mission while gaining valuable flight time.

Another significant August event was Patriot '26, conducted Aug. 24-29 in conjunction with Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center. Approximately 1,000 Airmen and Soldiers from National Guard units representing 35 states participated, along with federal, state, and local agencies.



Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 609th Engineer Detachment (Concrete) from Milwaukee work on a sidewalk troop project Aug. 4 at Fort McCoy.

Hosted by the Air National Guard, Patriot '26 focused on domestic-response readiness and interagency coordination through realistic emergency scenarios. Fort McCoy provided several specialized training locations, including Training Area Rice, Training Area Harrison, the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility, Young Air Assault Strip, and Badger Drop Zone.

Army aviation crews from the Kentucky National Guard used UH-72 Lakota helicopters to support training scenarios involving medical-evacuation hoist operations.

Aircrews practiced recovering simulated casualties from areas where helicopters could not safely land, requiring coordination between aviation and ground personnel. Other scenarios involved mass-casualty response, search and rescue, damaged infrastructure, emergency operations, and coordination among military and civilian organizations.

The exercise highlighted Fort McCoy's ability to support joint and interagency training beyond traditional military field exercises.

September completes another year of Total Force training

September brought the fiscal year to a close with another 8,942 personnel supported through annual training, battle assemblies, and other activities. Training continued across the installation with Army Reserve and National Guard organizations, institutional training programs, and Air Force aviation operations.

Air Force A-10 aircraft returned to Fort McCoy for additional training, while C-130 Hercules crews also conducted September training operations. The installation continued supporting Regional Training Site-Maintenance, Regional Training Site-Medical, and the Fort McCoy Noncommissioned Officer Academy.

The September activities demonstrated the installation's ability to maintain a busy training schedule through the final month of the fiscal year while supporting a broad range of military organizations and specialties.

Installation capabilities support training throughout the year

The variety of military organizations and exercises conducted during FY 2026 reflects the depth of Fort McCoy's training capabilities. Located in west-central Wisconsin, Fort McCoy encompasses approximately 60,000 acres and provides extensive maneuver land, live-fire ranges, specialized training facilities, aviation infrastructure, classrooms, barracks, dining facilities, and other resources.

Fort McCoy has 31 live-fire ranges, including automated and instrumented ranges that support individual and collective weapons training. The installation also has artillery and mortar firing points and an approximately 8,000-acre impact area.

Collective live-fire training capabilities include multipurpose training ranges, a convoy live-fire range, an infantry platoon and squad battle course, multipurpose machine-gun ranges, live-fire shoot houses, and a live-fire breach facility. Those resources allow units to conduct everything from individual weapons qualification to complex collective training involving multiple organizations, Fort McCoy DPTMS officials said.

Fort McCoy also supports aviation training through its airspace, aviation facilities, Young Air Assault Strip, and Sparta-Fort McCoy Airport. The installation's training areas support engineering, military police, aviation, medical, sustainment, tactical, and emergency-response activities.

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NEWS

Fort McCoy team supports largest local Veterans Day effort in years; multiple personnel engage in local communities

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff



Contributed photos

This is a collection of photos from multiple Veterans Day observances on Nov. 11 that were supported by members of the Fort McCoy team in Western Wisconsin. This year there were more than a dozen events covered by Fort McCoy personnel.

Soldiers and leaders representing Fort McCoy and several military organizations supporting the installation took part in Veterans Day activities throughout western Wisconsin on Nov. 11, continuing a longstanding tradition of military-community relationships that dates back more than a century.

The 2026 effort included participation in approximately a dozen Veterans Day activities in communities across the region, making it one of the largest efforts by Fort McCoy personnel to support local observances in many years.

Representatives from U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade (MFTB), 88th Readiness Division and 98th Army Reserve Readiness Training Center (ARRTC) participated in ceremonies, delivered presentations, spoke with students, and helped community members recognize the service and sacrifices of America's veterans.

The events reached students from elementary school through high school, as well as veterans organizations and other community groups. Activities included keynote addresses, color guard support, classroom readings, military show-and-tell presentations, and opportunities for students to learn about military service directly from Soldiers.

Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli, U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy commander, was among those representing the installation. She served as a featured speaker at the Tomah VA Medical Center's Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 10 and supported Veterans Day activities at Sparta Montessori School and Sparta High School on Nov. 11.

At Sparta High School, Fraticelli participated in the school's annual Veterans Day observance alongside a color guard from the 181st MFTB. The color guard consisted of Sgt. 1st Class Jevon Johnson, Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Sieben, Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Stromberg and Sgt. 1st Class Eta Mbuarrey, with support from Master Sgt. Davied Gierling. The event brought together approximately 925 students, staff members and community attendees.

Other Fort McCoy Garrison leaders also supported area activities. Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, delivered a keynote presentation at the Sparta Veterans of Foreign Wars event. Deputy to the Garrison Commander Cameron Cantlon spoke at the Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau (G-E-T) High School/Middle School observance in Galesville, Wis.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Walter McCall, Fort McCoy garrison chaplain with the Religious Support Office, spoke to students at Meadowview Middle School in Sparta. His presentation focused on helping students understand the importance of Veterans Day, recognize and honor military service, and appreciate the sacrifices and commitment of those who serve the country.

Capt. Jacob Menn of the Fort McCoy Installation Legal Office served as the featured speaker for the Cashton High School/Middle School Veterans Day program. The event included students in grades six through 12, community members and Veterans of Foreign Wars representatives.

Other community engagements included:

— Melrose-Mindoro High School/Middle School: Paul Nielsen and Sgt. 1st Class Amy Sikorski of the 88th Readiness Division provided a keynote presentation discussing personal military history and the impact of military service on their lives.

— Onalaska High School: Lt. Col. Michael P. Zinnecker of the 88th Readiness Division supported the school's Veterans Day event as keynote speaker.

— Coon Valley Elementary School: Sgt. 1st Class Nel Archie Pascual and Lt. Col. Jared Emmart of the Fort McCoy Garrison participated in a show-and-tell activity with students, sharing information about military service.

— Herrman Elementary School: Maj. James Mehr of the 181st MFTB spoke with students about the meaning and importance of Veterans Day.

— Southside Early Learning Center: Soldiers from the 181st MFTB, 98th ARRTC and Fort McCoy Garrison participated in a reading program for children ages 4-6. The eight participating Soldiers visited 12 classrooms, spending approximately 15 minutes in each room reading books provided for the activity.

The Southside Early Learning Center activity included support from Sgt. 1st Class Lorna Lawrence, Sgt. 1st Class Crystal Palmer and Sgt. 1st Class Juan Roman of the 181st MFTB; Capt. Chassidy Thompson and Sgt. Roberto Escalante of the 98th ARRTC; and Staff Sgt. Anrube Swanson Asher of Fort McCoy Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

A tradition rooted in Fort McCoy's history

The installation's participation in local Veterans Day activities is part of a much longer relationship between the military and surrounding communities.

That relationship predates World War II and goes back to the earliest days of the military reservation near Sparta.

Maj. Gen. Robert B. McCoy, for whom the installation was eventually named, was himself a prominent member of the Sparta community. He served as a lawyer, district attorney, county judge and mayor of Sparta. His vision for establishing an artillery training area east of Sparta helped lead to the creation of the Sparta Maneuver Tract in 1909.

History shows during the years before World War II, the reservation continued supporting military and community-related programs. Camp McCoy hosted Citizens' Military Training Camps, which introduced young men of high school and college age to military training and prepared them for potential Reserve or National Guard service. Beginning in 1933, the installation also served as a supply base for the Civilian Conservation Corps, a program that provided employment, education and training opportunities for young men and veterans during the Great Depression.

During World War II, the relationship between Camp McCoy and surrounding communities became especially visible, history also shows. One notable example involved the 100th Infantry Battalion, a unit of Japanese American Soldiers from Hawaii that trained at Camp McCoy in 1942.

During their time in Wisconsin, Soldiers developed friendships with residents of Sparta, Tomah and La Crosse. Local families invited Soldiers into their homes for meals, church socials and dances, while the Soldiers participated in sports and other community activities.

Those relationships extended beyond the Soldiers' training period. In 1943, members of the 100th Infantry Battalion contributed money toward relief efforts after flooding struck Sparta. The contribution was later recognized with a memorial plaque in Sparta's Memorial Park. The plaque recognizes the Soldiers' appreciation for the hospitality and friendship extended to them during their 1942-43 training period at Camp McCoy.

The relationship continued after World War II, even as Camp McCoy's military missions changed. In 1952, Camp McCoy helped the surrounding civilian community during a polio epidemic by treating more than 100 civilian patients at its station hospital.

During the Korean War period, Camp McCoy also supported veterans through activities that brought military personnel and local veterans organizations together. One example documented in the installation's historical records was an event in which Camp McCoy officers and Soldiers joined area veterans groups to host a deer hunt for paraplegic veterans.

Community engagement also continued through educational outreach. In November 1966, a Camp McCoy Job Corps representative was scheduled to speak to the La Crosse County 4-H Junior Leaders Association at Bangor High School, providing information about the training center and its programs.

More recently, Fort McCoy personnel have continued that tradition by participating in school programs, civic gatherings, veterans observances and other community events. In November 2022, Fort McCoy personnel also supported numerous Veterans Day activities throughout the region. That effort included the garrison commander, deputy commander, command sergeant major, members of the 181st MFTB and other installation personnel speaking at schools and community organizations. At the time, Fort McCoy Public Affairs Specialist Kaleen Holliday described the effort as the largest number of personnel going out to support community events in approximately four or five years.

The 2026 participation represents another substantial demonstration of that commitment. From elementary school classrooms to high school auditoriums and veterans organizations, Fort McCoy personnel helped ensure area residents had opportunities to recognize veterans and learn more about military service.

The participation also possibly best demonstrates how the installation's military organizations work together beyond their individual training and operational responsibilities to support the communities surrounding Fort McCoy.

For more than a century, the relationship between the military reservation and western Wisconsin communities has developed through military service, shared experiences, education, community assistance and mutual support. The Nov. 10-11, 2026, Veterans Day activities provided another example of that continuing relationship.

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Garrison commander serves as guest speaker at Tomah VAMC Veterans Day ceremony

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff



Photos by Melissa Dubois

Scenes from the 2026 Tomah VA Medical Center Veterans Day Ceremony is shown Nov. 10 in Tomah, Wis. Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, served as the featured guest speaker for the event.

TOMAH, Wis. — More than 100 Veterans, family members, caregivers, community members, volunteers, and staff gathered Nov. 10 at the Tomah VA Medical Center to recognize and honor the men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces during the facility's annual Veterans Day ceremony.

Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli, commander of U.S. Army Garrison-Fort McCoy, served as the featured guest speaker for the ceremony, sharing reflections on Veterans Day and the importance of recognizing the service and sacrifices of America's Veterans.

According to a Nov. 10 social media post from the Tomah VA Medical Center, the ceremony provided an opportunity for the community to come together in recognition of Veterans and reflect on the courage, sacrifice, and dedication demonstrated by those who have served the nation.

Karen Long, executive director of the Tomah VA Medical Center, welcomed attendees and delivered opening remarks reflecting on the meaning and importance of Veterans Day.

Christie B. Clark served as the master of ceremonies, guiding participants through the program, which included the posting of the colors, the Pledge of Allegiance, the national anthem, an invocation, guest speaker introductions, musical performances, and military honors.

The Fort McCoy Challenge Academy Color Guard presented and later retired the colors. The Tomah Middle School eighth-grade choir, under the direction of Kate Buehner, performed the national anthem and the song "Oh America."

The ceremony also included an invocation and benediction by Chaplain Garin Forsberg, according to the event program. Military honors were provided by the Tomah Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1382, while Dan Winkleski of Mauston American Legion Post 81 performed Taps.

The Tomah VA Medical Center also recognized the Fort McCoy Challenge Academy Color Guard, the Tomah VFW Post 1382 Rifle Squad, Winkleski, and the Mauston American Legion Post 81, Chaplain Tara Shilts, and the volunteers and staff members who helped veterans attend and participate in the ceremony.

In its social media message following the event, the Tomah VA Medical Center expressed appreciation to everyone who contributed to the ceremony and helped make it a meaningful recognition of military service and sacrifice.

The Veterans Day observance also highlighted the relationship between Fort McCoy and the surrounding communities in recognizing and supporting military Veterans.

Fort McCoy, located near Tomah and Sparta, has a longstanding connection to the region and its military community. The annual Veterans Day ceremony provided an opportunity to recognize the contributions of Veterans from all branches of service and reaffirm the importance of honoring those who have worn the nation's uniform.

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NEWS

November South Post town hall provides residents with updates

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL & MELISSA DUBOIS
Public Affairs Staff

Eighteen residents attended a South Post community town hall Nov. 4 at Fort McCoy to receive updates on housing, installation services, family programs, and upcoming community activities.

The meeting continued Fort McCoy's efforts to maintain communication with military family housing residents and provide opportunities for residents to raise concerns, learn about available resources, and stay informed about changes affecting the South Post community.

A previous South Post town hall held Sept. 3 drew more than 30 residents and community members. These meetings provide an opportunity for installation representatives and community partners to share information and address topics important to residents.

Housing updates included reminders about winter safety, particularly safe driving and walking as colder temperatures and winter weather approach. Residents also received information about leaf maintenance and ongoing neighborhood upkeep.

Officials reported that eight new families had moved into housing since the previous town hall, with another 10 families expected to arrive by February. The Quartermaster Gate also remains closed.

Residents were encouraged to download the My Army Post Application to stay informed about installation announcements and bugle observances.

Additional updates covered services and amenities available to South Post residents. The barbershop is operating under new management, and residents were encouraged to give the business another try. The shop is also hiring.

Fort McCoy Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (DFMWR) representatives shared information about ways residents can stay connected through the Constant Connect program, the quarterly magazine, and the return of social media updates.

Winter recreation opportunities through the School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills (SKIES) program were also discussed. Officials said Parents Night Out programming is hopefully returning soon. Child and Youth Services (CYS) will also continue providing quarterly updates, and parents were encouraged to complete the Impact Aid survey as soon as possible.

CYS also provided information about its inclement-weather operations. The program will open when local schools close because of inclement weather.

Religious Support Office (RSO) representatives highlighted several chapel and community activities, including a recent fish fry that attracted more than 40 attendees. Other opportunities include chapel fellowship activities, Bible studies, a canning 101 program, and a women's book club scheduled for Dec. 11.

Information was also shared about a Christian homeschool basketball team and the McCoy Warriors basketball league.

Community members were reminded of the Sparta Thanksgiving Community Meal and the need for volunteers to support the event.

Cadence Communities representatives discussed housing maintenance and encouraged residents to use the community's designated application to submit and track maintenance needs.

Looking ahead to the holiday season, residents were informed about a December holiday decorating contest.



Photo by Melissa Dubois

A scene from a South Post Town Hall meeting is shown Nov. 4 at Fort McCoy. Eighteen residents attended the town hall to receive updates on housing, installation services, family programs, and upcoming community activities. The meeting continued Fort McCoy's efforts to maintain communication with military family housing residents and provide opportunities for residents to raise concerns, learn about available resources, and stay informed about changes affecting the South Post community.

Army Community Service (ACS) also highlighted its Flavors of McCoy program, which encourages community members to share recipes and connect through food and cooking.

The Nov. 4 meeting provided another opportunity for South Post residents to learn about available services, upcoming activities, and community resources while staying connected with installation representatives and service providers.

Fort McCoy continues to use community town halls as a way to share information, address resident concerns, and support the quality of life for military families living on the installation.

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RSO serves special fish fry for South Post community

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Religious Support Office (RSO) personnel supported the South Post community Nov. 4 by hosting a free fish fry in conjunction with the South Post community town hall at the South Post Community Center.

The special meal was served from 4 to 5 p.m. before the town hall meeting, giving residents and families an opportunity to gather, enjoy a meal, and connect with others in the community.

The menu included fried fish, crispy fries, hush puppies, buttered Texas toast, dessert, and drinks. More than 40 people attended the fish fry.

The event reflected the broader mission of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, which provides religious support, spiritual care, and advice on matters of religion, ethics, and morale to help build strong and ready Army teams.

According to the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps, chaplains support Soldiers, families, and authorized civilians by providing opportunities for religious practice, counseling, spiritual guidance, and community outreach. Their mission also includes supporting individuals during difficult circumstances and helping strengthen personal resilience and connections within the Army community.

Religious Affairs Specialists work alongside chaplains to help make those programs and activities possible. Their responsibilities include coordinating religious support, assisting with worship services and community programs, and helping ensure Soldiers and families have access to available resources.

Community activities such as the Nov. 4 fish fry provide another opportunity for the Religious Support Office to bring people together outside their normal work and daily routines.

The fish fry was held at the South Post Community Center, Building 6158, on Fort McCoy. It was another example of the Religious Support Office's continued efforts to support installation personnel, military families, and the surrounding community through fellowship, outreach, and special activities.



Photo by Melissa Dubois

Fort McCoy community members participate in a fish fry dinner Nov. 4 at the South Post Community Center at Fort McCoy.

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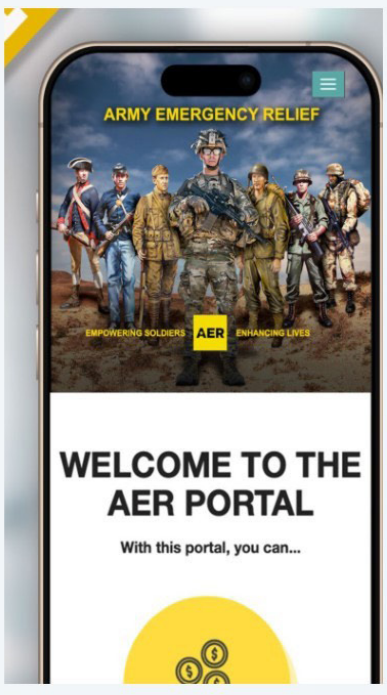

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Fort McCoy personnel share natural resources accomplishments during November county committee meeting

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff



Graphic/photo illustration by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office

Fort McCoy natural resources personnel continued a wide range of environmental management, wildlife monitoring, fisheries research, forestry, and invasive-species control activities during September and October 2026, with accomplishments from both months shared during the Oct. 10 and Nov. 9 meetings of the Monroe County Natural Resources and Extension Committee in Sparta, Wis.

Fort McCoy representatives attended the November meeting and provided committee members with an overview of the installation's recent natural resources activities. Personnel were unable to attend the committee's October meeting because it coincided with a federal holiday, but they submitted an update of their accomplishments for presentation and inclusion in the meeting record.

The combined updates highlighted work conducted by the Fort McCoy Directorate of Public Works (DPW) Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch, which manages and monitors the installation's natural resources while supporting its military training mission.

Fort McCoy routinely participates in the Monroe County committee meetings to maintain communication with county officials and regional conservation partners and to share information about environmental stewardship, research, monitoring, and natural resources management.

The following highlights were included in the September and October updates.

Fisheries management

— Fort McCoy fisheries personnel continued monitoring lakes, streams, water quality, and fish populations throughout both months.

— During September, staff conducted monthly adaptive-management phosphorus sampling, collected water samples from two runoff events and one base-flow period, and monitored 39 thermographs and two water-quality sondes. Temperature and dissolved-oxygen data were collected on all 10 installation lakes.

— Staff also conducted 13 creel surveys, interviewing 47 anglers. Fishing activity and catch rates were relatively low, which is typical during late summer.

— In October, fisheries personnel assisted the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) with trout collection in Silver Creek for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) sampling. Results from the fish-tissue sampling are expected within six months.

— Staff also conducted eight fall stream electroshocking surveys to evaluate trout movement and growth. During that effort, 93 new brown trout were tagged and 52 previously tagged brown trout were recaptured.

— Additional October activities included invertebrate sampling at 33 locations across Fort McCoy streams. The results will be compared with historical sampling conducted approximately every five years.

— Fisheries personnel also removed 39 thermographs and two water-quality sondes from the field and placed 11 thermographs to monitor winter stream and air temperatures. Temperature and dissolved-oxygen monitoring on all 10 lakes showed that most lakes had completed their seasonal turnover, with temperatures and oxygen levels becoming nearly equivalent from the top to the bottom of the water columns.

Staff also conducted 10 creel surveys, interviewing 20 anglers, and continued monitoring West Sandy Lake for invasive Eurasian watermilfoil. Only one stem was found during the October survey.

Forestry management

— Fort McCoy forestry personnel continued timber management and professional development activities during September and October.

— In September, staff sold three of four advertised timber tracts for a combined $96,357. Forestry personnel also participated in a prescribed-fire workshop at Fort Riley, Kan., gaining experience, completing Army mission objectives, and assisting Fort Riley personnel with qualification development. The workshop included completion of prescribed burns covering 5,143 acres across seven separate burn units.

— During October, forestry personnel administered three active timber sales and awarded two contracts for new timber sales. Staff also submitted the fiscal year 2027 timber harvest National Environmental Policy Act documentation for review.

— Another accomplishment involved completion of the Forestry Incident Response and Burn (FIRB) taskbook, which was approved at the Installation Management Command level.

Threatened and endangered species monitoring

— Fort McCoy's threatened and endangered species personnel continued monitoring protected wildlife and other species of conservation concern during both months.

— During September, biologists conducted biweekly telemetry tracking of one Blanding's turtle, two wood turtles, and one bullsnake. A new telemetry-tracked snake was also acquired in management area D06.

— Staff completed five bumble bee surveys, documenting two rusty-patched bumble bees, bringing the year's total to 19; 18 southern plains bumble bee sightings; and one American bumble bee observed incidentally.

— Other September observations included four Leonard's skippers and seven regal fritillaries outside formal survey efforts. Personnel also tagged and released 20 monarch butterflies and completed eight rough white lettuce surveys, documenting 33 plants.

— During October, personnel continued biweekly telemetry monitoring of the same groups of turtles and a bullsnake, taking fall measurements and maintaining transmitters as needed.

Staff completed nine additional rough white lettuce surveys, documenting 218 plants in management areas B18, B19, and B26.

— Personnel also checked three bat-box locations to determine bat use, continued processing 2026 bat recordings for reporting and submission to the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat), and worked on uploading bird-monitoring data to the Avian Knowledge Network.

— Other October work included completing the 2026 bumble bee survey summary, preparing the 2026 Wisconsin DNR report, and spraying crown vetch and woody encroachment on three goat prairies in management area B10.

Invasive-species management

— Invasive-species control remained a major part of Fort McCoy's natural resources workload during September and October.

— During September, personnel reported treating 258.4 acres through invasive-species management activities. Major treatments included 199 acres of honeysuckle, 59.8 acres of glossy buckthorn, and 22.8 acres of common buckthorn, along with smaller areas involving black locust, Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, and other invasive plants.

The September report also documented surveys of 196 acres for woody invasive species in management areas D01 and D06.

— During October, personnel reported treating 220.5 acres. Major treatments included 110.1 acres of glossy buckthorn, 105.9 acres of garlic mustard, and 46.1 acres of honeysuckle. Smaller treatments addressed common buckthorn and Japanese knotweed.

— Staff also surveyed 35.4 acres for woody invasive species in management area C19 and conducted 339.9 acres of garlic mustard treatment surveys.

— The October report noted that warmer temperatures during much of the month allowed woody foliar treatments to continue through approximately the first half of the month before personnel transitioned to fall garlic mustard treatments.

— In addition to the invasive-species work, staff treated 75.6 acres of native woody vegetation during September and conducted additional vegetation treatments on goat prairies during October. Fisheries personnel also completed separate buckthorn treatments along streams.

— Personnel also attended the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference in La Crosse, Wis., to participate in professional development and discussions related to invasive-species management.

Wildlife management

— Fort McCoy wildlife personnel continued monitoring deer populations, coordinating hunting activities, and conducting wildlife surveys during the fall.

— During September, staff completed the installation's truck-book surveys for gamebirds, deer, and predator, furbearer, and other unique wildlife. The information was being compiled for final survey results.

— Dusk and spotlight deer surveys also began. Eight surveys were completed in the cantonment area during September, with additional training-area surveys continuing into October.

— The September report also noted that Fort McCoy's Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Rules and Regulations, FMR 420-29, had been approved and signed by the garrison commander. The regulation was made available through the installation's iSportsman website, at the Hunter Information Point at the intersection of Highway 21 and South J Street, and at Permit Sales in Building 2168.

— October included the installation's Youth Gun-Deer and Gun-Deer for Hunters with Disabilities seasons, conducted Oct. 10-11. A total of 27 youth hunters and 27 hunters with disabilities participated.

— Those hunts resulted in 14 deer harvested, with nine Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples collected.

— Wildlife personnel also reported that the average doe-to-fawn ratio from summer surveys was 1:0.44, representing approximately one fawn for every 2.25 adult does.

— Fall trapping season began Oct. 17. During the reporting period, three different wolves were incidentally trapped in management area C20 in the northeastern corner of Fort McCoy and subsequently released. Fort McCoy personnel coordinated with the WDNR during the effort, and no GPS collars were deployed.

— The October wildlife harvest report, updated Nov. 3, documented 137 total deer harvested across the installation's reporting categories, including regular archery, cantonment archery, youth, and hunters-with-disabilities seasons. The report also documented 11 fall turkeys harvested.

Continuing environmental stewardship, partnerships

The September and October updates demonstrate the broad scope of Fort McCoy's natural resources management efforts, from monitoring fish populations and maintaining healthy streams to protecting threatened and endangered species, managing forests, controlling invasive vegetation, and supporting responsible hunting and outdoor recreation.

Fort McCoy manages nearly 60,000 acres of forests, wetlands, lakes, streams, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources. Its Natural Resources Branch works to balance environmental stewardship with the installation's military training and readiness mission.\

Participation in the Monroe County Natural Resources and Extension Committee provides an important opportunity to maintain relationships with local officials, conservation organizations, and natural resources professionals while sharing information about activities taking place on the installation.

The regular updates also help demonstrate how Fort McCoy's environmental management efforts contribute to the region's broader natural resources conservation work.

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

Installation members strengthen regional partnerships at Western Technical College gathering

BY SCOTT T. STURKOL & MELISSA DUBOIS
Public Affairs Staff


Photo by Melissa Dubois

Fort McCoy and community members participate in the Western Regional Connections: Meet, Share, Celebrate event Oct. 20 in the Western Tech campus in Tomah, Wis. The event provided an opportunity for community leaders to meet Western Technical College's new president, Kirk Bennett, while connecting with other organizations and individuals who contribute to the region's growth and success.

Fort McCoy leaders and staff joined community representatives from across the region Oct. 20, 2026, for a gathering at Western Technical College's regional location in Tomah, Wis., focused on building relationships, sharing organizational accomplishments, and strengthening connections among regional partners.

The event, titled Western Regional Connections: Meet, Share, Celebrate, provided an opportunity for community leaders to meet Western Technical College's new president, Kirk Bennett, while connecting with other organizations and individuals who contribute to the region's growth and success.

Hosted by Western Technical College, the gathering emphasized introductions, relationship-building, and sharing positive developments taking place throughout the communities and organizations represented.

Fort McCoy's participation highlighted the installation's continued commitment to maintaining strong relationships with its surrounding communities, educational institutions, and regional organizations.

As a major military training installation in western Wisconsin, Fort McCoy is an important part of the region's economic, community, and workforce landscape.

Its mission extends beyond providing training and support to military personnel. The installation also maintains relationships with local governments, educational institutions, businesses, civic organizations, and other community partners.

Opportunities such as the Western Regional Connections gathering allow Fort McCoy representatives to maintain those relationships, learn more about regional initiatives, and identify opportunities for future cooperation.

Strong community partnerships are particularly important because Fort McCoy's operations and mission are connected to the communities surrounding the installation. Local businesses provide goods and services, regional organizations support community initiatives, and educational institutions help develop the workforce and skills needed throughout the area.

Western Technical College is one of the region's important educational partners, providing educational opportunities, workforce development, and technical training that benefit individuals, employers, and communities throughout western Wisconsin.

By participating in gatherings like this, Fort McCoy personnel help ensure the installation remains engaged with the people and organizations that contribute to the region's continued development.

The event also provided an opportunity for attendees to share something they were excited about within their respective organizations, communities, or partnerships with Western Technical College, reinforcing the value of communication and collaboration.

Maintaining these connections helps strengthen mutual understanding, build trust, and create opportunities for organizations to work together on issues and initiatives that benefit the greater community.

Fort McCoy's continued involvement in regional gatherings reflects the installation's recognition that being a good community partner is an important part of its presence in western Wisconsin.

Through ongoing communication and engagement, Fort McCoy leaders and staff work to maintain relationships that benefit both the military installation and the communities it serves.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Fall visitors enjoy Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area in October 2026

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fall brought many visitors to Fort McCoy's historic Commemorative Area in October 2026, as people took opportunities to explore the installation's military history, view historic equipment and enjoy the autumn setting.

Dozens of people visited the Commemorative Area during open days Oct. 9 and 23. The area also hosted a scavenger hunt Oct. 26 organized by Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, providing another opportunity for participants to explore the installation's history.

Located in Fort McCoy's historic 800 and 900 blocks, the Commemorative Area serves as a central location for preserving and sharing the history of the installation, which dates to its establishment in 1909.

The site includes the Fort McCoy History Center, five preserved World War II-era buildings, the Fort McCoy Equipment Park and Veterans Memorial Plaza. Together, these attractions provide visitors with opportunities to learn about the Soldiers, missions, equipment and events that have shaped Fort McCoy throughout its history.

Exploring Fort McCoy history

Many visitors begin their experience at the Fort McCoy History Center, which opened in 1999 during the installation's 90th anniversary observance. The center features artifacts, photographs, uniforms, documents and memorabilia illustrating Fort McCoy's role in military training and operations over more than a century.

The exhibits cover a variety of periods and missions, including World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the 1980 Cuban Refugee Resettlement mission and more-recent military operations.

The Commemorative Area's five preserved World War II-era buildings offer another perspective on the installation's past. The structures represent buildings found in Fort McCoy's cantonment area during the major expansion that began in 1942.

Three of the buildings — a barracks, dining facility and administrative building — contain displays depicting aspects of Soldier life during the 1940s. Exhibits include bunk beds, footlockers, uniforms, mannequins, stoves and other items that help visitors better understand the conditions experienced by Soldiers who trained at Camp McCoy during World War II.

Equipment and memorials

Outside the historic buildings, visitors can explore the Fort McCoy Equipment Park, an outdoor display featuring more than 70 pieces of military equipment from different eras. The collection includes helicopters, howitzers, trucks, trailers and other equipment representative of systems used at Fort McCoy and throughout the military.

Visitors also can spend time at Veterans Memorial Plaza, which was formally dedicated June 13, 2009, during Fort McCoy's centennial celebration.

The plaza honors generations of service members through statues representing major periods of military service associated with the installation's history. It also serves as a location for military ceremonies, commemorative observances and other installation events.

The combination of historical buildings, artifacts, equipment and memorials makes the Commemorative Area an educational resource for military personnel, veterans, families, community groups and members of the public.



Vistors to one of the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area Open Days on Oct. 9 look read a sign by one of the historical buldings at the area.

Continuing to share Fort McCoy's history

The October visits and scavenger hunt continued the Commemorative Area's role as a place where visitors can connect with the installation's past while enjoying its surroundings during Wisconsin's fall season.

The Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office supports the Commemorative Area as part of the installation's historical preservation and community outreach efforts.

The Equipment Park and Veterans Memorial Plaza are generally available to visitors daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., weather permitting. Visits to the History Center and preserved buildings can be arranged by appointment for civilian groups and military units, subject to staff and installation availability. Visitors should contact the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office to confirm current access procedures and hours.

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Throughout October, Commemorative Area visitors were treated to a brilliant fall colors display, especially around Equipment Park where 73 items of historical Army equipment resides.

Fort McCoy leaders recognize Tomah schools, JROTC for support of military community

BY MELISSA DUBOIS & SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, attended the Tomah Area School District Board of Education's monthly meeting Nov. 16 to recognize the district's continued support of military-connected students and the Fort McCoy community.

During the meeting, Fraticelli presented the Tomah High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) with a certificate of appreciation recognizing the cadets' participation in presenting the colors during the annual McCoy Remembrance event in September at Fort McCoy.

The presentation recognized the JROTC cadets for their support of the annual event and their role in helping honor the service and sacrifices of those who have served the nation.

Fraticelli also took the opportunity to recognize November as National Military Family Appreciation Month and thank the school district for its commitment to supporting military families and their children.

She specifically recognized the district's achievement of earning the Purple Star designation at all nine of its schools. The Purple Star program recognizes schools that demonstrate a commitment to supporting military-connected students and their families as they navigate the unique challenges associated with military life, including relocations, deployments, and transitions between schools.

The recognition reflects the school district's efforts to provide resources and support for students from military families, many of whom have connections to Fort McCoy and the surrounding military community.

Fort McCoy leaders have maintained an ongoing relationship with the Tomah Area School District through regular school board visits, community engagement, and recognition of the district's support for military families.

Those visits provide opportunities for installation leaders to share information about Fort McCoy, recognize community partnerships, and discuss issues affecting military personnel and their families.

The November meeting continued that relationship, highlighting the importance of cooperation between Fort McCoy and local educational institutions in supporting military families throughout the region.

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Photos by Melissa Dubois

Fort McCoy Garrison Commander Col. Sarah E. Fraticelli and Command Sgt. Maj. James Riddle, garrison command sergeant major, attended the Tomah Area School District Board of Education on Oct. 20 in Tpomah, Wis. During the meeting they presented the Tomah High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps with a certificate of appreciation recognizing the cadets' participation in presenting the colors during the annual McCoy Remembrance event in September at Fort McCoy. They also recognized the district's continued support of military-connected students and the Fort McCoy community.



THIS MONTH IN FORT MCCOY HISTORY

COMPILED BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Fort McCoy was established in 1909. Here's a look at the installation's history from November 2026 and back.



Man on ground at left is on a stretcher moved on a toboggan, other man on two pairs of skis hooked up to provide transportation. Mascot Mike, a cocker spaniel, looks on while Sgt. Reid gives plasma to Pfc. Charles Bevilacqua of Pennsylvania. Maj. Phillip Nabbe, Chicago, looks on. T/4 Vernon Kirkness, Detroit, is on ski stretcher.

U.S. Army Historical Photos

80 YEARS AGO: A news clip from the Nov. 22, 1946, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper is shown. The Soldiers shown supported Task Force Frost training at then-Camp McCoy.

80 Years Ago — November 1946

FROM THE NOV. 15, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Reassignment unit speeds processing of 500 troops (By Newspaper Staff)* — Processing of the 500 or more troops brought to the camp during the past week for classification and reassignment, started off with a bang this week under supervision of Maj. Thomas B. Hammond, former commanding officer of the separation center.

The newly organized reassignment unit outlined plans for the screening and processing of the troops to determine whether they will be absorbed by the Fifth Army area in jobs suitable to their qualifications, or whether they will be given honorable discharges under the new Army ruling that dismisses personnel with AGCT scores below 70.

Personnel who fall in the category with scores of 69 or less will be given the privilege of appearing before the Board of Officers, composed of Maj. Charles A. Fanning, president; Maj. Paul A. Newman, recorder; and Lt. Thomas K. Williams, medical officer, who will determine their suitability for further training.

Unless the Soldier is determined by the Board to be an asset to the Army, either by possessing special talents desirable to the Army or having distinguished himself in combat, the Soldier will automatically be separated from service. Army personnel with the score of 70 and over and those determined as assets to the Army will be reassigned and absorbed by installations throughout the Fifth Army area.

Processing and reassignment of the initial group is scheduled to be completed by the end of the week. Those slated for discharge will either be separated at this post or at the Fort Sheridan Separation Center, Ill. Camp McCoy expects to reach a peak of 20 discharges per day with its limited separation personnel.

FROM THE NOV. 15, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *89 enlisted men leave; to be separated at Sheridan (By Newspaper Staff)* — Eighty-nine of Camp McCoy's ninety-three enlisted men eligible for discharge under the Fifth Army circular 193 left for the Fort Sheridan, Ill., Separation Center Sunday, the 10th.

While most of us were thinking "35 more shopping days 'til Christmas," these fellows were joyously reminding each other of "51 more days until January 1st."

Many of the dischargees were prominent personages around the camp. Among the more notable were T/5 Jack E. Wilson, outstanding athlete and main spoke of the baseball nine; T/4 Daniel A. Packard, efficient I and E clerk and the fellow who got The Real McCoy into your hands early Friday mornings; T/4 Arnold P. Szaj, crack morning report clerk of Headquarters Company; T/3 Joseph L. Veta, everyone's friend, the mail clerk; T/5 Myron Oppenheimer, promising young compact salesman.

To all the discharges, we wish the best of luck in their new civilian adventure.

FROM THE NOV. 15, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Newsmen flock to McCoy (By Newspaper Staff)* — Reporters and photographers representing all three news services, and numerous national publications, prepared to leave Camp McCoy today, after observing a two-day demonstration of Task Force Frost equipment.

The journalists arrived at Camp McCoy on the evening of the 13th and were oriented for the event at a dinner attended by Colonel Broedlow and staff officers.

On the 14th, the visiting press viewed displays by the infantry of tentage, sleds, winter clothing, and sleeping bags. The Medical Platoon exhibited their hospital tents and explained their part in testing the human reaction to cold. Tests were held to determine the advisability of using sleds to move Artillery, and the Radar radio set SCR-584 and Metro Radio Set SCR-658 were operated for reporters.

Firing of artillery, recoilless weapons, and flame throwers was also conducted. And in the evening, illuminating shells were used to light up a simulated night attack.

This morning, reporters were shown mountain climbing equipment and the M3 Snake, an engineer weapon used to clear mine fields, was detonated with 1500 pounds of explosives.

The journalists were transported by bus to the various demonstrations so that inconvenience and delay to both themselves and the participants of the tests could be eliminated. Coverage of these events by the National Press is a good indication of the importance of Task Force Frost and of the valuable facts the War Department expects to learn from the tests.

FROM THE NOV. 15, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Croix de Guerre Awarded (By Newspaper Staff)* — T/Sgt. Richard E. Coggins, who served with the First Division in the European Theater of Operations during the war, was presented with the Croix de Guerre and Palm last week by Col. Broedlow in behalf of the Belgian Government.

Sgt. Coggins, now a member of Service Battery of the 92nd AFA Bn., has been in the Army for six years, and had previously been awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

FROM THE NOV. 15, 1946, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Frost observes Armistice Day (By Newspaper Staff)* — Troops of Task Force Frost observed Armistice Day with parades in Tomah and Neillsville and displays were held in camp for the benefit of area civilians.

Men of the 3rd Observation Battalion marched in Tomah while the 7th Infantrymen tramped through the streets of Neillsville in commemoration of the 28th anniversary of the end of World War I.

The highlight of the Armistice Day celebration in Tomah was an address by Col. Newton G. Bush, Camp McCoy's post commander, whose timely remarks on the importance of military training and preparedness in the world of today was received with enthusiasm by military personnel and civilians present.

A veteran of overseas service during World War I, Col. Bush also served for a period of three years in foreign countries during World War II.

The exhibits, staged by Service and "B" Battery, 92nd Field Artillery and the 6th Tank Battalion and 10th Engineers, were not well attended, due in part to the cold weather.

70 Years Ago — November 1956

FROM WISCONSIN COUNTY BOARD OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS, 1956: *Proposal to use Camp McCoy hospital* — A resolution dated Nov. 15, 1956, in Sparta, Wis., called on the Wisconsin Legislature to authorize the state Department of Public Welfare to temporarily use Camp McCoy's hospital.

The resolution stated:

— Wisconsin needed additional facilities to care for mental-health patients.

— Existing state facilities were expected to be inadequate for approximately two years.

— Camp McCoy had an unused hospital capable of housing 2,500 patients.

— Monroe County officials wanted the state to negotiate with federal authorities to use the facility. The resolution was signed by William Jantz and Lester McMullen.

OTHER 1956 INFORMATION ABOUT CAMP MCCOY: According to Wisconsin state history, the Army had deactivated Camp McCoy on Feb. 1, 1953. However, the reservation continued hosting annual summer training for National Guard and Army Reserve units. The installation was therefore not completely abandoned. Its facilities continued serving military and civilian purposes.

60 Years Ago — November 1966

FROM LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVES: Nov. 8, 1966 — *Camp McCoy Job Corps representative speaks in Bangor* — A local newspaper published a short item titled "Job Corps Official To Speak In Bangor." The article reported that a representative from the Camp McCoy Job Corps Center would address the La Crosse County 4-H Junior Leaders Association at Bangor High School at 8 p.m. Thursday. The representative was scheduled to explain the center's functions and purpose. The meeting was open to the public.

History also shows the McCoy Job Corps Center received its first enrollees on Oct. 5, 1966. The center was operated by RCA Service Company in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin.

Its purpose was to provide young men, primarily ages 16–22, with:

— Vocational training.

— Technical education.

— Social skills development.

— Preparation for employment.

50 Years Ago — November 1976

FROM ARMY PERSONNEL REPORTS: The Army had established permanent-party staffing Fort McCoy in 1976 after reactivating the installation to support Reserve and National Guard training.

By September 30, 1976, an Army personnel report listed:

— 1,059 total personnel

— 87 military personnel

— 972 civilian employees

That gives a useful picture of the installation's workforce just before November 1976.

40 Years Ago — November 1986

FROM THE NOV. 21, 1986, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: McCoy wins sixth energy award; Clearly defined program helps installation reduce consumption (By Lou Ann Mittelstaedt, Newspaper Staff) — Fort McCoy was recently distinguished as being one of the Army's top achievers by winning the Secretary of the Army Energy Conservation Award.

Army Secretary John O. Marsh Jr. presented a plaque and certificate to Col. Bill Sorenson, Fort McCoy Garrison commander, at a Pentagon ceremony Monday, Sept. 22. Ann Olson, the post's energy assistant, also represented the installation at the ceremony.

The award, presented annually since 1979, recognizes energy conservation achievements in three categories: active component, Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. Fort McCoy was placed in the Reserve category because the majority of the installation's funding comes from Operation Maintenance Army Reserve appropriations, according to Keith Vansant, an energy specialist at Forces Command (FORSCOM) Headquarters.

The Secretary of the Army Energy Conservation Award was established in 1979 as an incentive to reduce energy consumption by recognizing significant achievements in energy conservation. It is presented to those installations that have conducted the most outstanding energy reduction program during the preceding fiscal year.

Fort McCoy has held the first-place title in the Reserve category for six of the eight years the award has been presented, according to Vansant.

Fort McCoy earned first place for 1985 for such conservation efforts as setting back thermostats, replacing inefficient lighting systems, limiting air conditioning, winterizing used buildings and converting from coal to liquid propane gas furnaces. Long-term plans call for further conversions to wood-burning furnaces that operate on three-quarter by one-half-inch wood pellets. Twenty-one such furnaces are already in place. In total, the conservation efforts resulted in a 1985 energy reduction of 7 percent.

"The key to Fort McCoy's successful energy conservation program is employee participation in the total team effort," said Vansant. "The post's energy program was clearly defined: To reduce energy consumption to the lowest practicable level while maintaining installation readiness."

During the ceremony, Marsh praised Fort McCoy and the other winners and runners-up for their short- and long-term energy conservation efforts, according to an Army News Service release.

He commended the degree of command emphasis represented by the award nominees, saying that sound energy management programs are essential for dealing with the national concern over energy resources.

"The Army has made significant strides in energy conservation," Marsh said. He cited Army-wide savings of almost 22 percent per square foot in facilities energy since the program began in 1975.

And Sorenson also expressed pride in the installation. "Fort McCoy does many things extremely well," he said. "This is just one example. I think our problem in many areas is just trying to create an awareness of Fort McCoy's many contributions at the FORSCOM and Department of the Army levels," he said.

"Winning this award for the sixth time helps to give us the visibility and credibility we need to expand in other areas."

Surpassing the energy conservation accomplishments already made may be difficult, but Sorenson said the installation will continue to fine-tune its energy program wherever possible.

"One area where we can and will improve concerns automation," he said. Several computer software programs, including a utilities management system, are currently being developed.

"Also, we need to be smart in our utilization of buildings, making sure utilities are turned off in buildings which are not being used," he said. "Energy utilization assets need to be kept efficient, meaning we must be smart in the purchase of fuels — buying the right quantities at the right time at the right price.

"At the same time, we need to recognize that individuals within our workforce are not as energy conscious as they could or should be," he said. "We've got to depend on our Energy Conservation Control Officers and directorate management to continually emphasize energy conservation."

FROM THE NOV. 21, 1986, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *NASA gathers cloud data here (By Lou Ann Mittelstaedt, Newspaper Staff)* — For generations, man has looked to the sky in search of clues that could help him better understand the weather and its frequent changes.

While many things have been discovered about clouds and weather patterns, much more remains a mystery. Working with high-tech equipment at a field site set up at Fort McCoy Army Airfield, five research scientists from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Langley Research Center tried to unravel the mystery of the wispy filaments and feathery tufts known as cirrus clouds.

The First International Satellite Cloud Climatology Regional Experiment, dubbed FIRE, had several objectives.

"We wanted to gain a better understanding of how these high-altitude ice clouds form, change and dissipate with time, as well as how these clouds affect the transmission of solar energy to the Earth and how the Earth's heat energy gets back into space, both of which would ultimately affect climates," said Lamont Poole, research team member.

"We also wanted to improve the methods of identifying cirrus clouds by using satellites and ground observations," he added. Aircraft also helped to gather data by observing and collecting samples of cloud particles.

"Most previous studies have dealt with lower-altitude clouds. Cirrus clouds, in part, had been ignored because they don't directly cause precipitation," Poole said. "Cirrus clouds are so thin and form at such high altitudes that they had been thought to be unimportant in the past. But research has shown that cirrus clouds do have an influence on climatology," he said.

Because research can't be conducted when lower-altitude cloud cover moves in, data gathering had been a case of either feast or famine since the team began its experiment here on Oct. 15, according to Joe Alvarez, team member.

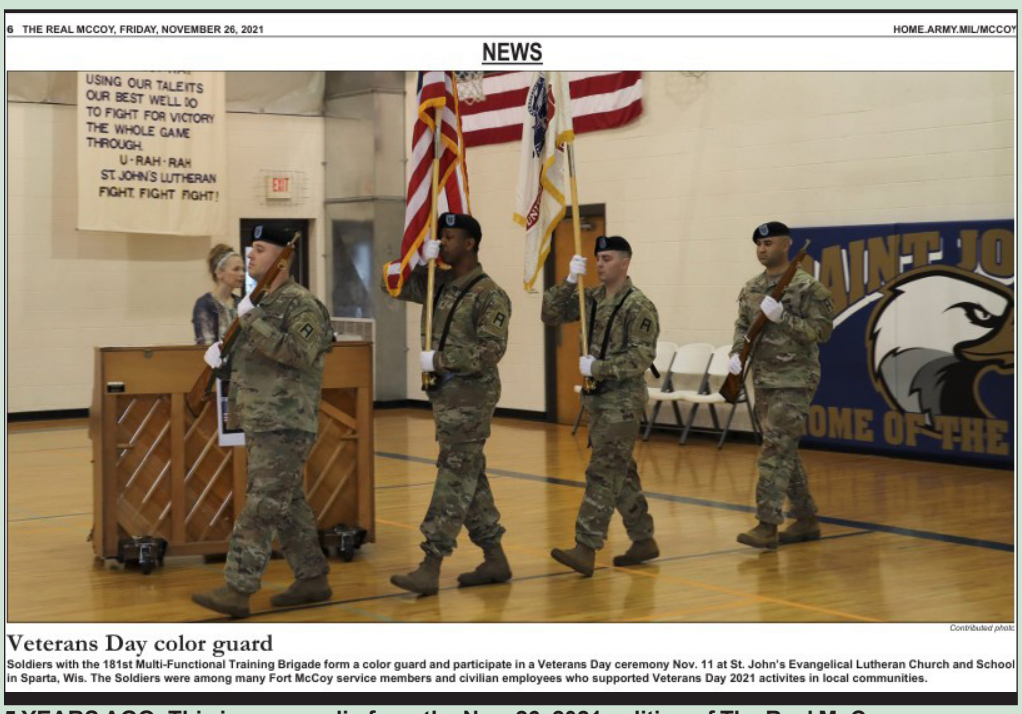
The team collected some "very interesting data" on Wednesday, Oct. 22. With clear skies overhead and a cold front expected to move in, the team anticipated a very busy day on Monday, Oct. 27, the day they were interviewed.

But the data-gathering process conducted here was only the first step of the project. The team departed Fort McCoy on Monday, Nov. 3, returning to their headquarters in Hampton, Va., to begin the task of analyzing and interpreting the data.

The data-gathering equipment used by the team included solar photometers and a pyrogeometer. But the real star of the show, according to Alvarez, was the Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) System, which employed laser-beam technology.

The laser's penetrating beam was fired into the atmosphere twice each second, 24 hours a day. As the beam traveled through the atmosphere it was partially reflected back to the LIDAR System and recorded and plotted on a

(See **HISTORY**, Page 15)



6 THE REAL MCCOY, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2021 HOME.ARMY.MIL/MCCOY

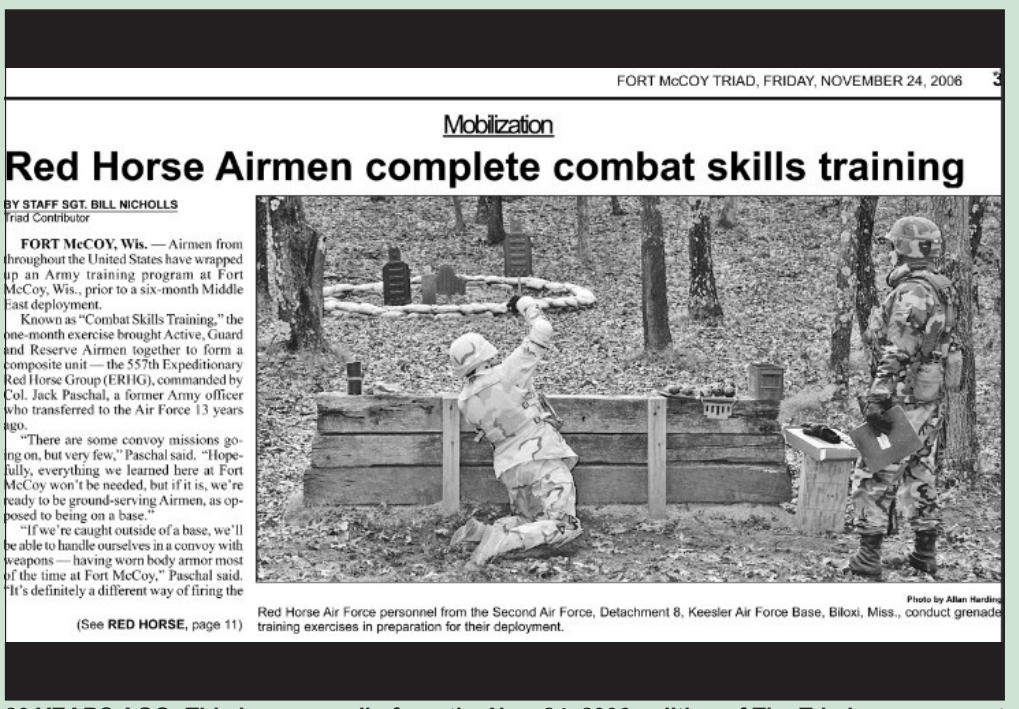
NEWS

Veterans Day color guard

Soldiers with the 181st Multi-Functional Training Brigade form a color guard and participate in a Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 11 at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School in Sparta, Wis. The Soldiers were among many Fort McCoy service members and civilian employees who supported Veterans Day 2021 activites in local communities.

Contributed photo

5 YEARS AGO: This is a news clip from the Nov. 26, 2021, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper highlighting post support for local Veterans Day events.



FORT McCOY TRIAD, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2006 3

Mobilization

Red Horse Airmen complete combat skills training

BY STAFF SGT. BILL NICHOLLS
Triad Contributor

FORT McCOY, Wis. — Airmen from throughout the United States have wrapped up an Army training program at Fort McCoy, Wis., prior to a six-month Middle East deployment.

Known as "Combat Skills Training," the one-month exercise brought Active, Guard and Reserve Airmen together to form a composite unit — the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Group (ERHG), commanded by Col. Jack Paschal, a former Army officer who transferred to the Air Force 13 years ago.

"There are some convoy missions going on, but very few," Paschal said. "Hopefully, everything we learned here at Fort McCoy won't be needed, but if it is, we're ready to be ground-serving Airmen, as opposed to being on a base."

"If we're caught outside of a base, we'll be able to handle ourselves in a convoy with weapons — having worn body armor most of the time at Fort McCoy," Paschal said. "It's definitely a different way of firing the

(See **RED HORSE**, page 11)

Photo by Allan Harding

Red Horse Air Force personnel from the Second Air Force, Detachment 8, Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Miss., conduct grenade training exercises in preparation for their deployment.

20 YEARS AGO: This is a news clip from the Nov. 24, 2006, edition of The Triad newspaper at Fort McCoy.

HISTORY

from Page 16

computer disc.

"It really gave us a time history of the atmosphere and the way it was constantly changing," said Alvarez. "Gas, water and other molecules all scatter light differently than ice crystals do, so we could really tell a lot about what's up there using this equipment."

"It may also be possible to get other characteristics of the ice crystals from the data," Alvarez said, adding that this would be determined when the data is analyzed.

Four Wisconsin locations served as sites for intensive field operations this year. Along with Fort McCoy, similar stations were operated by different agencies at the same time in Wausau, Madison, and Oshkosh.

Geographically, the four locations formed a diamond-shaped pattern, which permitted the researchers to record a history of how weather systems are altered after traveling relatively short distances of about 200 miles, Poole said.

Also, because the prevailing upper-level wind patterns for this area move weather systems in an easterly direction, Poole said the chances of tracking the changes in a system at two or more of the sites was very good.

"The four stations used similar, but not duplicate, types of equipment," Poole said. "We should be able to deduce more about the atmosphere using these different sources."

"Wisconsin was chosen as the site of this year's experiment because it is a good area for cirrus clouds, in the climatological sense, during the spring and fall," Poole said. "Cirrus clouds are often seen immediately east of the Rocky Mountains but these clouds are influenced by topography. That's really not the case here, though," he said. "The clouds seen in Wisconsin are often the classical cirrus clouds that are typically seen in advance of a cold front and are not strongly influenced by the lay of the land." If funding for the project continues, Poole said the research team may be back in two years to collect more data.

"Right now, it's a big, big puzzle as to how cirrus clouds should be included in computer models of the Earth's climates," Poole said. The puzzle could continue to grow as man releases more pollutants into the atmosphere with unknown consequence.

"Hopefully, this research will help predict what the effect may someday be," Poole said.

30 Years Ago — November 1996

FROM THE NOV. 8, 1996, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: *Solutions for dusty post roads explored (By Rob Schuette, Triad Staff)* — Modern technology soon may bring a long-time enemy of Soldiers training at Fort McCoy to its knees.

Capt. Bill Casiday, Chief of Range Operations for the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, said the post began its one-year dust-control test on 1.5 miles of Burma Road and 1.5 miles near Range 31 Sept. 15. The pilot test will continue through this winter to see how the materials hold up and will end next year after summer training.

"We've had a lot of complaints about the airborne dust caused by troops driving over unpaved roads," Casiday said. "It's a real safety concern. Personnel tell us they can't see a convoy in front of them, or they get covered by dust. Sometimes, there's even a total white-out condition."

Swirling dust also is hard on equipment, such as vehicle engines and helicopter blades, and increases maintenance costs, Casiday said.

In the Fort McCoy test, one-half mile of untreated, unpaved road is being used as a control strip. The next half-mile of the test strip is covered with calcium chloride, a byproduct of Teflon manufacturing that takes moisture from the air and uses it to hold sediment on the ground. The last half-mile is covered with a coating of Soil-Sement, which is an emulsion product that bonds sediments together to keep them on the ground.

Dusty, unpaved roads are a concern at many Army installations, Casiday said. Calcium chloride and Soil-Sement are being used successfully at Fort Campbell, Ky., Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Irwin, Calif., and Fort Knox, Ky., but these installations don't have winter climates like Fort McCoy does. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Laboratory in Champaign, Ill., is coordinating the programs.

Fort Campbell personnel already are reporting that dust-control procedures have helped reduce their maintenance costs by one-third, he said.

The test also may provide important environmental benefits to Fort McCoy, according to Susan Herzog-Blumer, an Environmental and Natural Resources Division environmental protection specialist, and Jeff Bullen, the acting Integrated Training Area Management Program coordinator.

Equipment traffic on the post's 134.9 miles of unpaved roads generates 159 tons of dust in air particulates yearly at the post. Herzog-Blumer said the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has issued the post an exemption to the state air particulate laws because the dust remains on the post.

"If the test project works, it will cut the air emissions greatly," Herzog-Blumer said. "The limited tests we've done so far indicate the dust level is much less on the stretches with Soil-Sement and calcium chloride."

Bullen said calcium chloride reduces the amount of dust but may produce some environmental concerns, such as runoff. The Soil-Sement may provide added environmental benefits if it proves to be effective because it is biodegradable and won't harm the environment, he said.

Testing elsewhere has shown Soil-Sement's bonding capability helps maintain soil integrity and minimize mud during rain, Bullen said. This would help maintain roads better throughout the training period.

Soil-Sement can be used to support vegetation and help control erosion, which is a big selling point because of the amount of sand at Fort McCoy, he said. Reducing sand on vehicles also will help reduce wear-and-tear on the installation's Central Vehicle Wash facility.

"It could be an important management tool to create the type of terrain we want and more ideal training conditions at Fort McCoy," Bullen said. "That would help keep the troops we have training here at Fort McCoy and help us attract new customers."

The testing will look at environmental and monetary aspects of both materials to decide if one is better than the other or if a combination of the two materials is the best solution to the post's dust problems, Casiday said.

Casiday said initial troop reaction to the test area has been favorable. "The troops tell us we don't know what you're doing, but keep doing it."

20 Years Ago — November 2006

FROM THE NOV. 24, 2006, EDITION OF THE TRIAD NEWSPAPER: Ordnance ANCOC adds tactical training as real-world preparation (By Rob Schuette, Triad Staff) — Senior maintenance noncommissioned officers (NCOs) taking the Ordnance Advanced NCO Course (ANCOC) at Regional Training Site (RTS)-Maintenance at Fort McCoy, now will have more tactical training to prepare them for the real-world environments they might face.

Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Kjornes and Sgt. 1st Class James Hebert, the RTS-Maintenance ANCOC instructors, said the transformation began two years ago when the Chief of Ordnance and Regimental Sergeant Major believed that senior NCOs needed to go back to the basics with their warrior skills and enhance their knowledge in tactical tasks.

"It showed in theater," Kjornes said. "The Ordnance Center and School restructured ANCOC to focus on what senior NCOs need to know."

The course previously was about 80 percent technical Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) work and 20 percent field training. Kjornes said the restructured course now has about 70 percent field-related tasks and about 30 percent technical classroom material.

NCOs attending the course now go through an annex called Project Warrior. It is focused on 12 critical areas with an emphasis on in-depth weapons training. Students learn to maintain and operate all of the basic weapons systems found in units today.

The weapons training culminated with the Soldiers going through the installation's Engagement Skills Trainer systems and operating them during computer-generated simulations.

NCOs receive training on mounted and dismounted land navigation while using a global positioning system. The students participate in modern Army combatives training instead of the standard Army physical training. They train on military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUT) and improvised explosive device (IED) training, he said.

Sgt. 1st Class Jonathon Scholl and the Urban Operations team from the 2nd Brigade, 85th Division (Training Support Brigade) operate the MOUT training. The Ordnance ANCOC class went through the same course with mobilizing Soldiers.

This provided more relevant training for both the ANCOC students and the RTS-Maintenance staff.

"This will help Soldiers taking ANCOC get ready for deployments, arming them with the skill sets they need to take into combat," Hebert said.

In addition, the Soldiers attending the course still have portions dedicated to their MOS skills needed to be an Ordnance NCO.

Sgt. 1st Class Edward Youngblood, a maintenance Soldier from the 89th Regional Readiness Command (RRC), said the course covered the administrative areas well and helped prepare them to take care of Soldiers.

Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Smith of Company C of the 634th Battalion Support Battery of the Illinois National Guard said the course covered a number of Army regulations needed to run a motor pool and handle maintenance tasks.

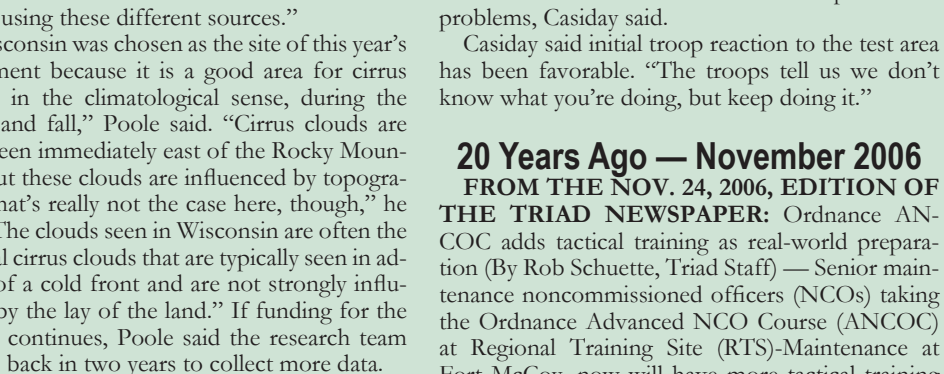
"I can take this back to the unit and implement new training," Smith said. "It's important to pass on this knowledge because most Soldiers don't know the purpose of all of these things, and this helps them see the big picture."

Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Campbell of the 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of Springfield, Ill., said the training was good because it covered both Army regulations governing the support battalion and training that the NCOs need in the field.

It gives course students a lot more field work, where before in these types of courses the only time students might have spent outside a classroom was going into a maintenance bay and turning a wrench, Campbell said.

The implementation of this new courseware was made possible because Fort McCoy has a lot to offer and has a lot of people that support RTS-Maintenance training, said Master Sgt. Neil LaChance, the RTS-Maintenance chief instructor.

"Along with a wide variety of ranges and help from the motivated trainers in the 85th, all the pieces come together, and we were able to provide a great new course that was fun to be a part of," LaChance said.



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The Real McCoy

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Police to remove Main Gate traffic cones

The Directorate of Emergency Services (DES) will cease placing traffic cones on the outbound lanes at the Main Gate at the end of the duty day, beginning Nov. 13.

The cones have been set out from 2:30 to 6 p.m. to reinforce Wisconsin law on proper positioning and method of turning at intersections, said Sgt. David Hansen, Fort McCoy's traffic sergeant. Officers will be watching for traffic violations after the cones are removed.

For a right turn, Wisconsin Statute 346.31(2) states: "Both the approach for a right turn and the right turn shall be made as closely as practicable to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway."

For a left turn, Wisconsin Statute 346.31(3)(a) states: "The approach for a left turn shall be made in the lane farthest to the left which is lawfully available to traffic moving in the direction of travel of the vehicle about to turn left. Unless otherwise marked or posted, this means the lane immediately to the right of the center line or center dividing strip of a two-way highway and the lane next to the left-hand curb or edge of the roadway of a one-way highway."

Wisconsin Statute 346.31(3)(c) states: "A left turn shall be completed so as to enter the intersecting highway in that lane farthest to the left which is lawfully available to traffic moving in the direction of the vehicle completing the left turn. Unless otherwise marked or posted, this means the lane immediately to the right of the center line or center dividing strip of a two-way highway and the lane next to the left-hand curb or edge of the roadway of a one-way highway."

These laws apply to all turns made while driving both on and off the installation, Hansen said.

"The easiest way to look at these laws is that you need to turn from the proper turn lane onto the lane closest to you that runs in the direction you wish to go," Hansen said. "From there, you can make a legal lane change to get into the lane you wish to be in, and always remember to signal your intended turns."

The only exceptions are directions given by an official sign or traffic control officer. Their instructions supersede the above listed laws.

For more information, call DES at 608-388-2044.

(Article prepared by the Directorate of Emergency Services.)



Fort McCoy Forester James Kerkman (right) with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch talks to foresters from several Army installations about Fort McCoy forestry efforts at a South Post area Nov. 1.

Army foresters learn about McCoy during first-ever visit

STORY & PHOTO BY SCOTT T. STURKOL
Public Affairs Staff

Twenty foresters from installations Armywide visited Fort McCoy Nov. 1 to learn more about the post's Forestry Program.

The tour was led by Fort McCoy Forester James Kerkman and Forestry Technician Charles Mentzel with the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division Natural Resources Branch.

The tour was planned to coincide with the national meeting of the Society of American Foresters (SAF), which was held in Madison, Wis.

This was the first time the annual SAF meeting has been held in Wisconsin since the 1950s, said Kerkman, who's been at Fort McCoy for 31 years. "This is a big deal. I've been to many other national meetings where if we were near a military installation, we would go visit it. So, we decided that we wanted to do it here as well.

"This was a great opportunity for them all to see how we care for our forested lands at Fort McCoy," Kerkman said.

The group visited a prairie area and Young Air Assault Strip on South Post as well as areas on North Post near Pine View Campground, such as a red pine plantation.

The stops were selected to prompt discussion and idea sharing, Kerkman said.

"The discussions were incredible," Kerkman said. "Many of us have known each other for years, and we know that many of us are dealing with the same issues and problems. In this tour, we had nearly the whole nation represented, and we learned from each other."

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JAMES KERKMAN,
Fort McCoy Forester

Forester Rodger Voss from Fort Drum, N.Y., said the tour showed him how many similarities Fort McCoy has to his installation.

"Our forest (ecosystems) are almost identical," said Voss, who manages approximately 65,000 forested acres at Fort Drum. "It's also interesting how similar we are with things like airfield issues, endangered species, and related issues. It's nice to be able to interact with people who are experiencing the same issues that we are."

Forester Allen Braswell from Fort Gordon, Ga., said that although forest types are different in Georgia and Wisconsin, he's learned more about varying forestry management styles.

"I really enjoyed this tour," said Braswell, who manages 46,000 acres of forested land at the Georgia post.

"It's also good for us to get together because we learn about the challenges (and successes) each other has had."

The six-hour visit included a lunch stop at McCoy's Community Center. The foresters then met Nov. 2 in Madison for a breakout session about forestry practices and training. The SAF meeting began Nov. 3.

For more information about the Fort McCoy Forestry Program, call 608-388-2102.

U.S. Army Historical Photos

10 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the Nov. 11, 2016, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper.

10 Years Ago — November 2016

FROM THE NOV. 11, 2016, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Army foresters learn about McCoy during first-ever visit (By Scott T. Sturkol, Editor)* — Twenty foresters from installations Armywide visited Fort McCoy on Nov. 1 to learn more about the post's Forestry Program.

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5 Years Ago — November 2021

FROM THE NOV. 26, 2021, EDITION OF THE REAL MCCOY NEWSPAPER: *Cold-Weather Operations Course training returns for 2021-22 in December at Fort McCoy (By Scott T. Sturkol, Editor)* — The 2021-22 training season for the Fort McCoy Cold-Weather Operations Course (CWOC) returns Dec. 1 with dozens of Marines to be trained in the course.

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

For the first class of the 2021-22 season, Class 22-01, training will be slightly different than traditional course operations to accommodate dozens of Marines coming to Fort McCoy for the course.

"So this season will start with Class 22-01 being dedicated to the 6th Marine Regiment," said Hunter Heard, site lead and senior CWOC instructor with contractor Veterans Range Solutions supporting the Fort McCoy Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, which oversees the training.

"Phase one of that class' training began with Joe and I going to Camp Lejeune (N.C.) to teach platform classes to approximately 150 Marines," Heard said. "Phase 2 will begin when the Marines deploy to Fort McCoy on Dec. 1. We will then run three, three-day field training exercise courses with them from Dec. 1 to 9. Then, for the 6th Marines, their phase three will be a deployment to Norway. For us, we will receive one more group of Marines out of Cherry Point (N.C.) from Dec. 14 to 17 as well, and we will run them through a similar field training exercise lane like the first groups of Marines."

After the first CWOC class completes its training, the CWOC training team of instructors — Heard, Joe Ernst, Manny Ortiz, and Brian Semann — will also conduct five more 14-day training sessions of CWOC into March 2022.

"We are still limiting the class sizes to 30 per class because of COVID-19 precautions, and we will still using face coverings in the classroom," Heard said. "Otherwise, we will be back to mostly normal operations like we were two years ago."

For the 2020-21 season, hundreds of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and others were trained in cold-weather skills. And since the start of the course, thousands of service members have now trained in the course and have shared that knowledge with others they serve with, Heard said.

"We're starting out the season with Marines, but like previous years, we will have an all-service, Total Force presence with our training," Heard said. "As word has spread about how Fort McCoy is a great place to hold this training over the years, we've had continued interest from active duty, Guard, and Reserve service members from all the military branches. CWOC training has truly become a Total Force training environment."

During the 14-day courses, students complete miles of ruck marching in the snow and cold, Ernst said. Sometimes students move in snowshoes and skis covering dozens of miles. Students also complete training terrain and weather analysis, camouflage and concealment, and risk management. They also learn about properly wearing issued cold-weather clothing and how to prevent cold-weather injuries.

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

Overall, through every CWOC class, students have said the course training was beneficial. This includes students from the last class of the 2020-21 season. Pfc. Sara Huerta, a student with Higher Headquarters Battalion, 121st Field Artillery in Milwaukee, said the course helped her build on her Soldier skills and more.

"This course taught me to be resilient," Huerta said in March.

"It taught me how to defend and protect myself in cold weather. I built special skills, including building a shelter, building fires, using rope in a variety of ways, and using other equipment."

Fire building and shelter building, which are core fieldcraft skills taught in the course, were also taught to CWOC Class 21-05 student Pfc. Caleb Rausch, who appreciated them.

"Fire starting is a class that I want to teach at my unit," said Rausch, who serves with Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry Regiment in Waupun, Wis.

"I also want to teach shelter building. … This course (overall) made me more equipped to survive in cold-weather situations."

Heard said it should be another great training season.

"We've already started off with going to Camp Lejune to start teaching Marines early," Heard said. "I think we'll have another successful year getting troops familiar with operating in a cold-weather environment."

Find more information at https://home.army.mil/mccoy, on Flickr at https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi, and on DVIDS by visiting https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FMPAO on DVIDS.



Camp McCOY News

VOL. VII — CAMP McCOY, WISCONSIN, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1951 — NO 37

THANKSGIVING 1951

WE DO HAVE REASON TO GIVE THANKS

This is a time of the year when cynics will be tempted to ask: "What have we to be thankful for on our Day of National Thanksgiving?" Seven years have passed since the fighting of World War II. Now we are engaged in a fight for freedom's sake. Many veterans and their families are still homeless...living costs have risen sharply...moral standards have left much to be desired...the international scene is unwriting. What in the face of such facts is there to call forth expressions of gratitude. I must admit that man's contributions to life have not been too heartening. As Rev. O.A. Geisman said, "We must not blame God for the things men do in violation of his own elementary principles of decent living. Please remember,

75 YEARS AGO: This is a news clipping from the Nov. 22, 1951, edition of The Real McCoy newspaper at the installation.

NEWS NOTES/FACILITIES













Next issue of The Real McCoy

The November 2026 edition of The Real McCoy will be published Dec. 18, 2026. The deadline for submissions or article ideas is Dec. 11, 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.

facilities services

This schedule is projected through Dec. 17, 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.

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.
Dinner: 5-6:30 p.m.

Rates per meal
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.

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://ftmccoy.isportsman.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. May close during extremely cold weather. Accepts cash or credit cards. Call 502-898-4161.

Commissary: Building 1537. Open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mon.-Sat. Call 414-977-5332.

CWT (Carlson Wagonlit Travel) SatoTravel: Building 2180. Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. No walk-ins. Call 502-898-2370, 608-269-4560, or 800-927-6343.

Education/Learning Center: Education/Learning Center: Building 50, room 123. Open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Email rebecca.j.janiszewski.ctr@army.mil to schedule tests. Email nelson.f.caleno.ctr@army.mil or call 502-898-7311 for other services.

Equal Employment Opportunity: Open 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. No walk-ins. Call 502-898-3106/3107 or email usarmy.usarc.usarc-hq.mbx.eeo@mail.mil.

Exchange: Building 1538. Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Sat. and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sun. Call 608-269-5604.

ID Card/DEERS Section: Building 2187. Open 8-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-3:30 p.m. Mon.-Wed. and Fri. and 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-3:30 p.m. Thur. Call 502-898-4563.

IHG Army Hotels: Building 51. Open 24/7. Call 502-898-2107 or 877-711-TEAM (8326).

Installation Legal Office: Building 2171. Call 502-898-2165.

Launderette/Dry Cleaning: Building 1538. Open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Call 608-269-1075.

Laundry Facilities: Open 24/7. Exclusively for use by Soldiers training on Fort McCoy. Civilian, family members, and retired military members are not authorized to use these facilities. Call 502-898-3800 to find out which buildings are open.

Military Clothing: Building 1538. Open 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Mon.-Sat. and 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun. Call 608-269-5604, ext. 203.

Military Personnel: Building 2187. Open 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. By appointment only.
In-/Out-processing: 502-898-4822.
Personnel Automations: 502-898-4842.
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://ftmccoy.isportsman.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.mccoy.asc.mbx.lrc-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.

Visitor Control Center: Building 35. Open 6 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Passes issued at Main Gate outside of VCC hours. Physical Security open for fingerprints Thur. only; call 502-898-2266. See ID/DEERS section for its hours.

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.

Child Development Center: Building 1796. Open: M-F: 6:30 am - 5:15 pm. Call: 502-898-2238. Childcare requests should be made at https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome.

Housing Office: Building 6158. Open 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri. Family Housing, Single Soldier Housing, and referral services. Self-Help Warehouse open open noon-3:30 p.m. Wed. and 8 a.m.-noon Fri. Call 502-898-2804.

Military Family Life Counseling: Building 2111. MFLCs can provide short-term, nonmedical counseling at no cost and augment existing military support programs. Services can be provided on or off post. Call 352-598-4972 or 352-801-2742 or email stojalowskyl@magellanhealth.com and meyert@magellanhealth.com.

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.

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.

Health Care

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.

Worship

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.

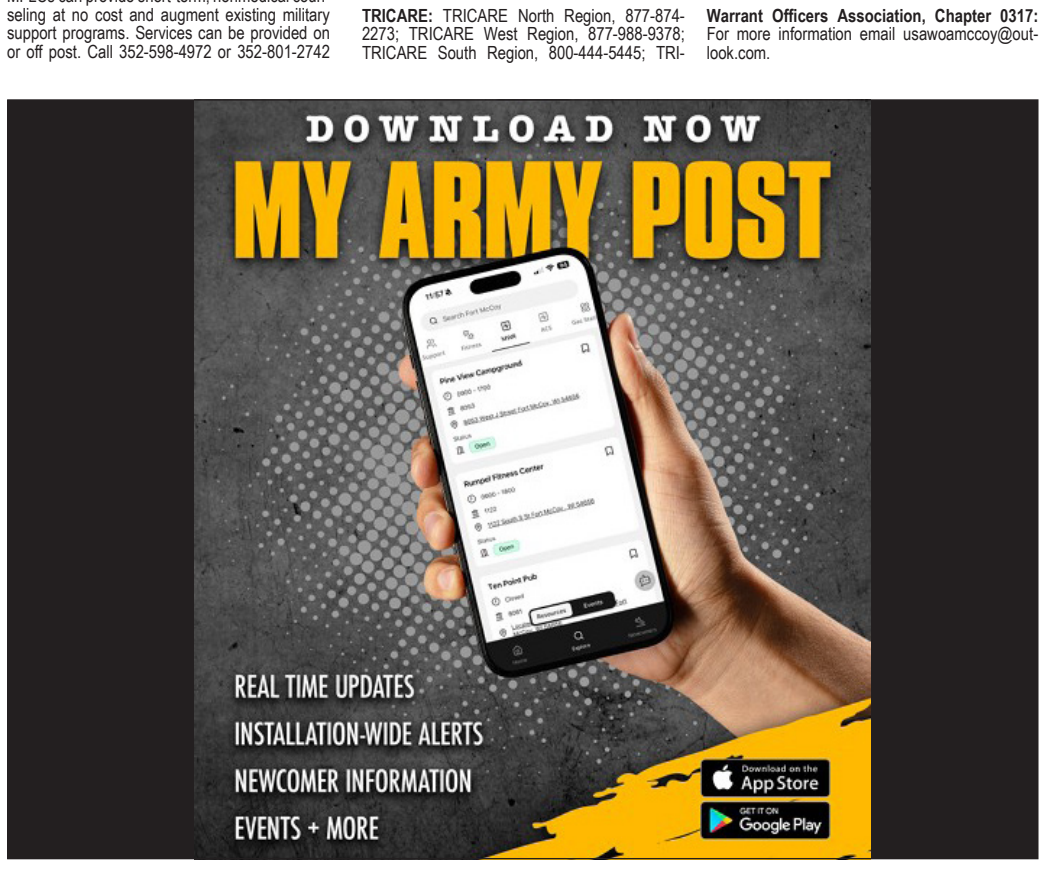
Organizations

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 usawoamccoy@outlook.com.



GIANT VOICE EMERGENCY-NOTIFICATION SIGNALS

CONDITION	IF YOU HEAR	THIS INDICATES	INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS
Natural Disaster	3- to 5-minute steady tone or voice announcement	Disaster imminent or in progress. Examples: Tornado, flash flood, hazardous-materials release, wildfire.	Be alert. Ensure all personnel are warned. Take cover by evacuating to a safe location or sheltering in place. Notify supervisor of location. Tune in to local radio or TV stations for emergency information.
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 on FPCON level. Report fires, injuries and other hazards.

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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/FEATURE

Fort McCoy's oldest building still stands as a silent witness to the installation's earliest days

Long before Fort McCoy became one of the Army's premier training installations, before thousands of Soldiers arrived each year by highway and aircraft, and decades before World War II transformed the post into a sprawling cantonment, a single concrete structure quietly took shape on what is now the installation's South Post.

Today, that modest building — a concrete storehouse also known as the Ordnance Magazine — remains the oldest standing structure at Fort McCoy. Built in 1911, the building has endured for more than a century, surviving wars, changing missions, and generations of Soldiers while offering a tangible connection to the installation's earliest history. Fort McCoy historical records identify the structure as the first permanent concrete building constructed after the establishment of the military reservation in 1909.

When construction began on the storehouse, Fort McCoy was still in its infancy. Known then as Camp Robinson on the south side of the railroad tracks and Camp Emory Upton to the north, the installation consisted largely of temporary galvanized buildings, open training grounds, and artillery firing areas.

The Army had selected the rugged hills and valleys between Sparta and Tomah because the terrain closely resembled many of the landscapes Soldiers might encounter in combat while providing abundant space for maneuver training. During the summers of 1909 and 1910, Regular Army artillery batteries and National Guard units trained on the reservation, helping establish Camp Robinson as one of the nation's premier field artillery camps.

As training increased, Army leaders recognized that the installation required more permanent infrastructure.

In 1910, Congress authorized additional funding to improve the camp, and work began to replace temporary facilities with more durable construction. Among the first of those improvements was the concrete ammunition storehouse completed in 1911 at a reported cost of $8,000. The structure represented the Army's confidence that the installation would become a permanent military reservation rather than a temporary encampment.

The building's location was no accident.

Historical records show the storehouse was built adjacent to the southern spur of the joint Chicago & North Western and Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railways, placing it within easy reach of rail transportation that served the installation. The railroad was one of the primary reasons the Army selected the McCoy property in 1909. It allowed troops, horses, artillery pieces, ammunition, construction materials, and other supplies to move efficiently onto the reservation while supporting the growing training mission.

An unloading sidetrack served Camp Robinson, and another rail spur extended into the maneuver camp, making rail transportation the logistical backbone of the young installation.

For the concrete storehouse, proximity to the railroad meant supplies could be unloaded directly from railcars and quickly distributed to nearby ranges.

The building served as an Ordnance Magazine, storing targets, ammunition-related equipment, and other materials supporting the adjoining small-arms range on South Post. Built of reinforced concrete with thick walls, the structure reflected early 20th-century Army engineering practices intended to provide secure, durable storage for military equipment while minimizing fire risk.

Historical photographs show the building standing alone amid open training grounds, surrounded by an installation that looked far different from today's Fort McCoy.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

This concrete storehouse, shown July 16 is the oldest standing building at Fort McCoy, Wis. The building was built in 1911, and its location was once next to the southern spur of the joint Chicago and northwestern-Chicago, Milwaukee, and Saint Paul railways that went through the area. Also known as the Ordnance Magazine, it served as a storehouse for targets and equipment for the adjoining small-arms range on the installation's South Post.

Outside the storehouse, Camp Robinson continued to grow.

Roads were improved, rifle ranges expanded, office buildings and additional storehouses were added, and by the years leading into World War I, the installation had earned a reputation as one of the country's finest artillery training camps. Thousands of Soldiers trained there before deploying overseas, while construction steadily transformed what had begun as a temporary maneuver site into a permanent military installation.

The railroad remained central to that growth.

For decades, trains carried generations of Soldiers through McCoy Station East and McCoy Station West.

They transported livestock, artillery pieces, vehicles, food, coal, lumber, and countless other supplies needed to sustain military operations.

According to Fort McCoy historical records, the rail lines helped Camp Robinson evolve into Camp McCoy and eventually Fort McCoy, linking the installation with communities across the Midwest and supporting every major expansion of the post throughout the first half of the 20th century.

More than 115 years after construction began, the old concrete storehouse remains.

While hundreds of buildings have been constructed, renovated, or demolished since 1911, the Ordnance Magazine continues to stand as the installation's oldest surviving structure. It is a reminder of Fort McCoy's beginnings — when railroads were the lifeline of military logistics, artillery echoed across the Wisconsin hills, and a young Army installation was laying the foundation for more than a century of service to the nation.

Fort McCoy has supported America's armed forces since 1909. Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

The post's varied terrain, state-of-the-art ranges, new as well as renovated facilities, and extensive support infrastructure combine to provide military personnel with an environment in which to develop and sustain the skills necessary for mission success.

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 Flickr at https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortmccoywi, and on DVIDS by visiting https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/FMPAO.

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."

(Editor's note: Historical information for this article was compiled from Fort McCoy historical files, installation heritage publications, archival photographs, and historical documentation maintained by the Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office.)

Lone stone gate preserves memory of Fort McCoy's historic South Post entrance

Along Ginger Road in Fort McCoy's South Post housing area stands a solitary stone gateway. To many who pass by, it is simply another historic structure seen around post.

But more than 85 years ago, it served as one of the first sights welcoming Soldiers, civilians, and visitors arriving at Camp McCoy during one of the most significant periods in the installation's history.

Today, only one of the original stone gate sections remains standing.

Constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in December 1940, the gates marked the original entrance along State Highway 21 as Camp McCoy prepared for the rapid expansion that would accompany America's entry into World War II.

According to *Fort McCoy History and Heritage* and other Fort McCoy historical files, the WPA built the gates in response to the relocation and construction of Highway 21, although the entrance road itself had existed since military training first began at Camp McCoy in 1909.

The gates represented much more than an attractive entrance.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Camp McCoy was transformed from a seasonal National Guard training camp into one of the Army's premier mobilization and training centers. New barracks, warehouses, headquarters buildings, motor pools, and support facilities appeared throughout the installation as the Army prepared for the possibility of war.

The WPA played an important role in that transformation.

From 1935 through 1941, the federal New Deal agency completed numerous construction projects across Wisconsin while providing employment during the Great Depression. At Camp McCoy, the WPA partnered with the War Department on a building program that included six wooden structures and two decorative stone entranceways — one along Highway 21 at today's South Post housing area and another at the Highway 16 entrance. These stone gates remain among the only surviving WPA-built structures at Fort McCoy.

Historical and archaeological records maintained by Fort McCoy also show the WPA's project headquarters was located just south of Quartermaster Avenue. From there, workers coordinated construction projects that helped reshape Camp McCoy in the years immediately preceding World War II. Among those projects were the Ginger Road entrance gates, which became a defining feature of the South Post landscape.

For thousands of Soldiers arriving during the early 1940s, the stone gates marked the transition from civilian life to military service.

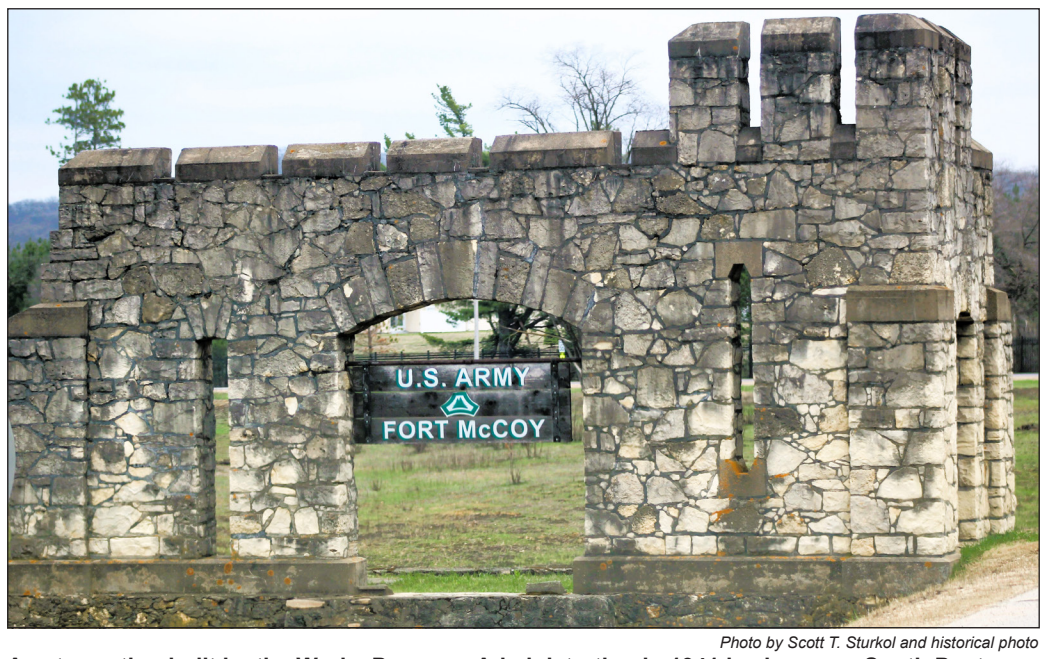
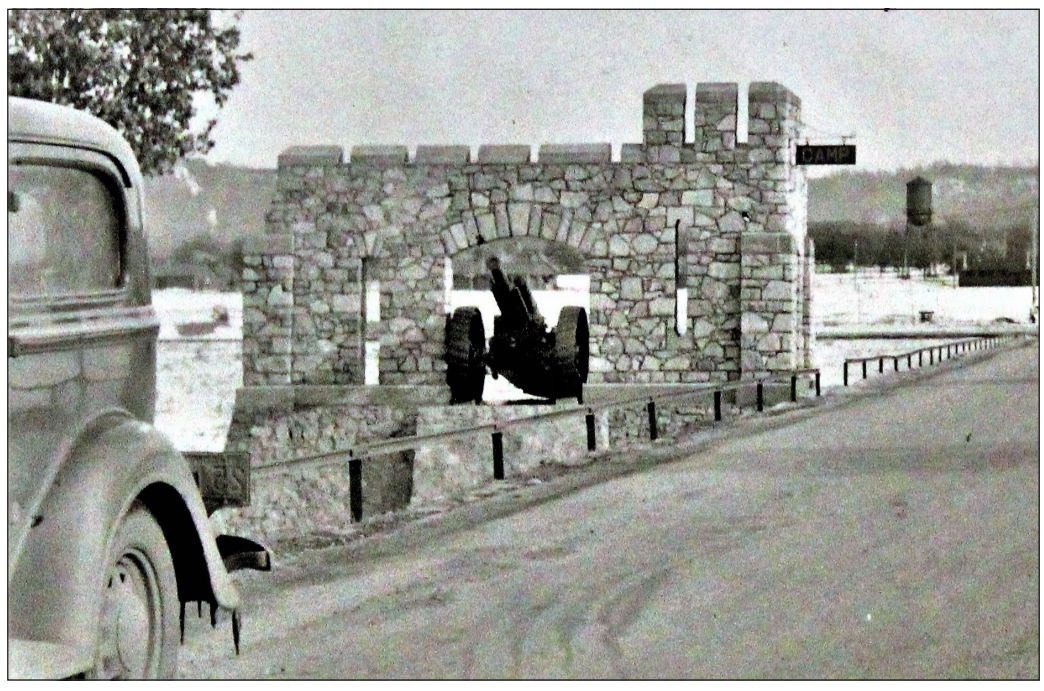


Photo by Scott T. Sturkol and historical photo

A gate section built by the Works Progress Administration in 1941 is shown on South Post near the housing area July 16 at Fort McCoy. Below, the same gate is shown in the early 1940s not long after it was built.



Many traveled to Camp McCoy by rail, arriving at nearby McCoy Station before entering the installation. Others approached by automobile along Highways 21 or 16, passing near the stone entrance.

Fort McCoy historical records note that memories of arriving Soldiers often became part of the installation's heritage. For many, seeing the Ginger Road stone entrance, nearby railroad lines, and sprawling tent cities formed their first impression of Camp McCoy in those early days — a place where later hundreds of thousands of Soldiers would ultimately train during World War II.

For many years after construction, decorative artillery pieces flanked the entrance, reinforcing Camp McCoy's identity as an Army training installation. While the cannons are no longer present and only one section of the original gate survives today, the remaining stonework continues to symbolize an important chapter in Fort McCoy's history.

Unlike the installation's oldest building — the 1911 concrete ordnance storehouse — the Ginger Road gate was never intended to store equipment or support training directly. Instead, it served as a ceremonial threshold, welcoming generations of Soldiers at a time when Camp McCoy was rapidly becoming one of the nation's busiest military training centers.

Today, the lone gate stands quietly outside the South Post housing area, a lasting reminder of the craftsmanship of the WPA and the thousands of Soldiers who passed through its entrance during one of the most transformative periods in Fort McCoy's history.

Fort McCoy has supported America's armed forces since 1909. Located in the heart of the upper Midwest, Fort McCoy is the only U.S. Army installation in Wisconsin.

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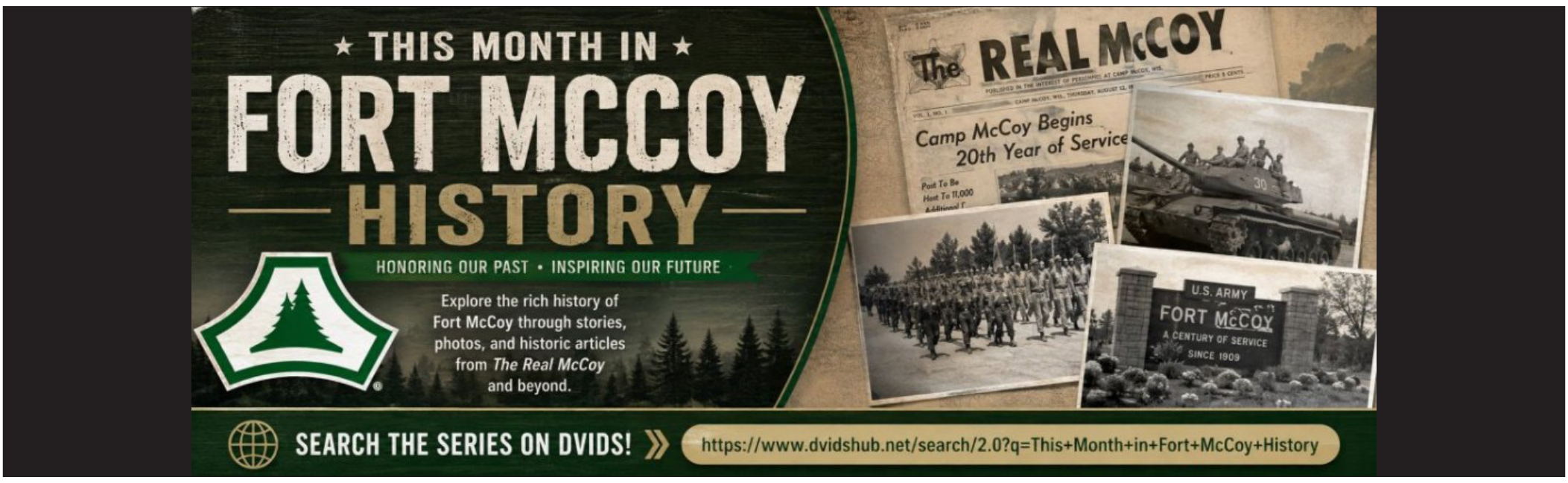


HISTORY/FEATURE

Trout Falls: A century-old scenic destination at Fort McCoy

Long before Pine View Campground, before Fort McCoy became the home of a modern four-season outdoor recreation area, and before the surrounding land became part of an Army installation, people were making their way to a scenic place along the La Crosse River known as Trout Falls.

Today, Trout Falls remains one of the distinctive natural features of Fort McCoy's Pine View Recreation Area. Surrounded by wooded hills and trails and fed by the La Crosse River, the falls offer visitors a place to experience the landscape in every season — from the colorful foliage of autumn to the snow and ice of winter.

And unlike many places on an active military installation, Trout Falls is part of a recreation area that is open to the public.

The history of the falls, however, reaches back more than a century before today's visitors arrive at Pine View.



Photo by Scott T. Sturkol

This photo, taken Aug. 9, shows the La Crosse River as it flows through the Pine View Recreation Area and over Trout Falls at Fort McCoy.

Trout Falls before Fort McCoy

Historical photographs and newspaper accounts show that Trout Falls was already a recognized scenic attraction in the early 20th century.

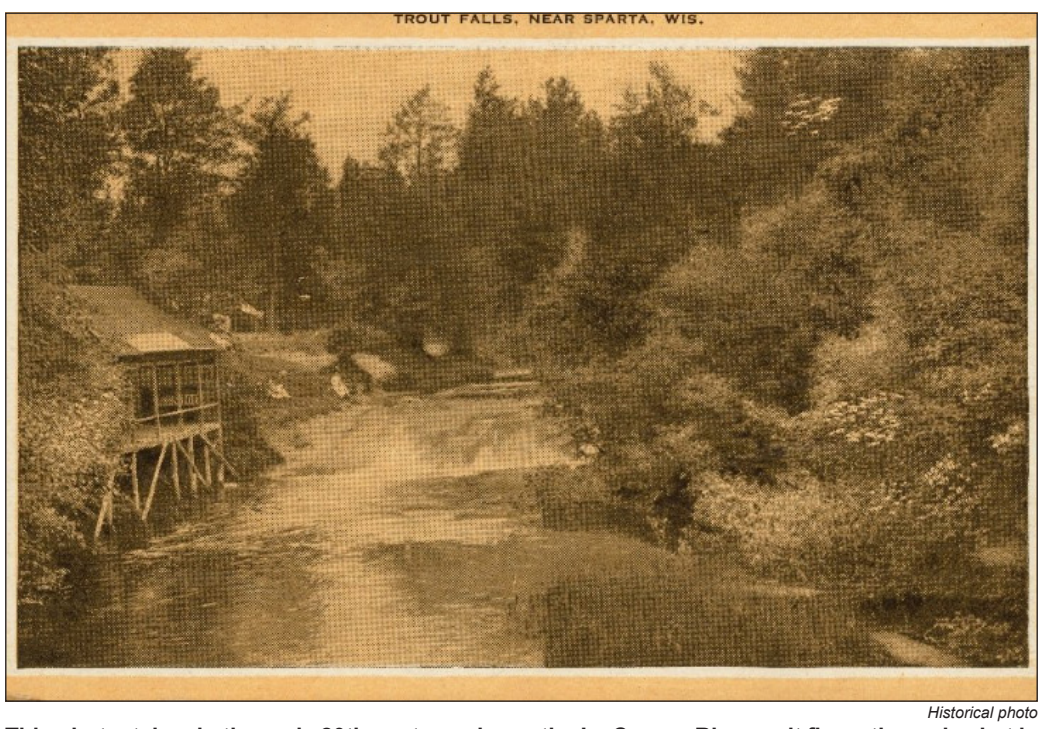
The Wisconsin Historical Society preserves a postcard of the falls dated 1906. The image shows Trout Falls on the La Crosse River, with a group of women standing along the left bank. The postcard's caption identifies the location as "Trout Falls, La Crosse River, La Crosse, Wis." The hand-colored postcard provides an early photographic record of the falls and demonstrates that the site was being photographed and shared as a scenic destination more than 120 years ago.

Another Wisconsin Historical Society postcard, produced in 1929 by the E.C. Kropp Co., provides an even more detailed look at the historic site.

The postcard is labeled "Trout Falls, Near Sparta, Wis." It shows an elevated view of the river and falls surrounded by trees. At the base of the falls on the left bank is an open-sided structure elevated above the ground on supports. A partially obscured sign inside the structure appears to read "SHOE." Two women can also be seen sitting on the riverbank and viewing the falls. The Historical Society identifies the location as approximately 7.7 miles northeast of Sparta on the La Crosse River in Monroe County.

The photograph is more than an attractive old image. It provides evidence that the area around Trout Falls was already being used and visited by people nearly a century ago.

The historic structure visible in the 1929 photograph also raises questions for future research. Its exact purpose has not been established from the available historical record, but its presence demonstrates that visitors were using and gathering at the falls during the period.



Historical photo

This photo, taken in the early 20th century, shows the La Crosse River as it flows through what is now the Pine View Recreation Area and over Trout Falls at present day Fort McCoy.

A place familiar to Sparta residents

A 2025 "Looking Back" feature published by the Monroe County Herald provides another important piece of Trout Falls history.

The newspaper looked back to 1910, when Sparta businessman Gustav Kollertz had his ice cream parlor decorated with painted scenes. One of those scenes was Trout Falls — a location the newspaper described as one that "every Spartan will immediately recognize."

The reference is significant because it shows that Trout Falls was not merely an obscure geographic feature. By 1910, it was sufficiently familiar to the people of Sparta that an image of the falls could be used as recognizable local scenery in a downtown business.

The Monroe County Herald's historical note also states that the area around Trout Falls was not part of Fort McCoy before the 1940s and was more readily accessible to the public at that time.

Thus, long before the Army developed Pine View Recreation Area, Trout Falls was already part of the recreational and visual landscape of the Sparta area.

The river that gives Trout Falls its character

Trout Falls is located on the La Crosse River, a waterway that remains an important natural feature of Pine View Recreation Area.

The river also provides an explanation for the name Trout Falls.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources records identify a 12.7-mile section of the La Crosse River upstream from Trout Falls as Class I trout water. The DNR describes that portion of the river as a high-quality trout stream with enough natural reproduction to sustain wild trout populations at or near carrying capacity. The classification identifies Trout Falls near the confluence with Suukjak Sep Creek as the downstream reference point for that high-quality trout-water section.

The trout-rich river and the falls have therefore been connected not only by geography but by the character of the landscape itself.

Visitors today can still see the La Crosse River flowing through Pine View Recreation Area and over Trout Falls.

From training land to recreation area

The next major chapter in Trout Falls history began after the land became part of the military reservation.

Fort McCoy's modern Pine View Recreation Area was conceived during the mid-1960s as an effort to provide a community recreation area on post.

In 1969, approximately 200 acres of training land were rezoned for development of the Trout Falls-Squaw Lake area. Most construction took place during the summer of 1971, with the original project including a five-acre picnic area and a 50-unit camping area.

The transformation brought a new chapter to a landscape that had already been known to area residents for generations. On June 24, 1972, Pine View Campground officially opened as the Trout Falls-Squaw Lake Recreation Area.

The original recreation development was much smaller than today's Pine View complex, but its name is historically important. The Army was not simply creating a campground near a scenic feature. Trout Falls was part of the name of the original recreation area itself.

Over the decades, the recreation area expanded and developed into today's Pine View Recreation Area. The area eventually became known as Pine View, but Trout Falls remained an important natural landmark within it.

From Trout Falls-Squaw Lake to Pine View

The recreation area that opened in 1972 continued to develop over the following decades.

The campground eventually grew far beyond its original 50-unit design. A 2014 Fort McCoy publication noted that the campground had expanded to 176 campsites, including 38 nonelectric tent sites, along with cabins, yurts, travel trailers and other amenities.

That same historical account emphasized something that remains true today: the campground and recreation area are available not only to military Families but also to the general public. At the time, approximately 65,000 people were using the area annually.

The transformation from the original Trout Falls-Squaw Lake Recreation Area to today's Pine View Recreation Area illustrates how a natural feature that had attracted visitors long before Fort McCoy became an installation was incorporated into a modern outdoor recreation destination.

Trout Falls today

Today, Trout Falls is part of a much larger recreation landscape.

Pine View Recreation Area encompasses hundreds of acres and includes the La Crosse River, Trout Falls, Suukjak Sep Lake and Suukjak Sep Creek, Pine View Campground, hiking trails, and Whitetail Ridge Ski Area. Fort McCoy describes the area as offering four-season, year-round recreation, including camping, hiking and fishing.

The current Fort McCoy camping information specifically states that members of the Fort McCoy community and the public may use Pine View Recreation Area and that Pine View is fully operational year-round.

Two miles of nature and hiking trails are maintained in the recreation area, and the trail to Trout Falls starts at the Pine View picnic area. That makes the falls particularly accessible for visitors who want to experience the area on foot.

The public should remember, however, that Fort McCoy is an active military installation and installation access is controlled. Visitors should check current access requirements, recreation-area rules, hours and seasonal conditions before traveling to the area. Fort McCoy's current information identifies Pine View as one of the installation's recreational facilities available to the public.

Autumn brings a different Trout Falls

For many visitors, autumn may be the most spectacular time to experience Trout Falls.

As the leaves surrounding the La Crosse River change from green to the reds, oranges and yellows of Wisconsin autumn, the falls become part of a larger landscape of color.

Fort McCoy Public Affairs photographs from Sept. 25, 2023, document Trout Falls surrounded by fall foliage. Similar photographs taken Oct. 10, 2024, show the La Crosse River flowing over the falls while the surrounding woods display the colors of the season.

Fort McCoy recreation officials have specifically encouraged visitors to experience Trout Falls during autumn.

Alex Karis, supervisory recreation specialist and facility manager with Fort McCoy's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, has described Trout Falls as an especially scenic destination during the fall season.

The attraction is not limited to sightseeing. Visitors can hike the trails through the recreation area, view the river, enjoy the changing foliage and combine a visit to the falls with other Pine View activities.

The combination of water, rock, forest and changing leaves gives Trout Falls a different appearance from the one seen in the historic postcards of the early 1900s.

Yet the basic scene remains remarkably recognizable. The river still runs through the same landscape. The falls still draw visitors. And the surrounding woods remain an important part of the experience.



Historical photo

This photo, taken in the early 20th century, shows the La Crosse River as it flows through what is now the Pine View Recreation Area and over Trout Falls at present day Fort McCoy



This photo, taken in the early 20th century, shows the La Crosse River as it flows through what is now the Pine View Recreation Area and over Trout Falls at present day Fort McCoy.

Winter transforms the falls again

When autumn ends and snow arrives, Trout Falls takes on another character. Fort McCoy has specifically promoted winter visits to the falls, noting that the river, trails and surrounding landscape can provide a scenic winter destination even after the main camping season has ended.

Karis has encouraged visitors to see Trout Falls after snowfall, saying the falls are particularly beautiful in winter. When snow conditions permit, visitors can use snowshoes or cross-country skis on the area's trails. The trails follow the La Crosse River both above and below the falls, and bridges provide crossings over the river.

A Nov. 28, 2023, Fort McCoy Public Affairs photograph provides a modern winter record of the falls, showing the river and falls in a snow-covered landscape.

Winter also provides something historical photographs cannot: an opportunity to see how dramatically the falls change when snow and ice become part of the scene.

The sound and movement of the river continue beneath the winter landscape, while snow and ice can build along the rocks and surrounding vegetation.

For visitors interested in photography, the seasonal contrast is particularly striking.

A natural landmark with a military history

Trout Falls represents an unusual intersection of Wisconsin natural history, local community history and Fort McCoy history. The falls were known to area residents before the Army acquired the surrounding land.

They appeared in early 20th-century postcards. They were familiar enough to Sparta residents in 1910 to be used as a recognizable scene in a local ice cream parlor. A 1929 postcard documented visitors at the falls and a structure beside the river. Then, decades later, the Army incorporated the falls into a recreation project that became the Trout Falls-Squaw Lake Recreation Area in 1972.

That recreation area eventually evolved into today's Pine View Recreation Area. The name changed, the campground grew, facilities were added and the surrounding military installation continued to evolve. But Trout Falls remained.

A place to experience Fort McCoy beyond the training mission

Fort McCoy is best known for its role as a military training installation, but places such as Trout Falls offer visitors a different perspective on the installation.

The Pine View Recreation Area provides an opportunity to experience the natural landscape of western Wisconsin while remaining within the boundaries of an active Army installation.

The area includes hiking, camping, fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities. Fort McCoy's current information lists Pine View as a public recreation destination, while installation regulations continue to govern access and activities.

For someone visiting Fort McCoy for the first time, Trout Falls can therefore serve as a reminder that the installation is more than its training areas and military facilities.

It is also a place where a river flows through wooded hills, where trout inhabit the La Crosse River, where hikers can follow trails through the landscape, and where a natural feature photographed more than a century ago can still be visited today.

A century of visitors — and counting

The historical record of Trout Falls provides a remarkable continuity. In 1906, a group of women stood beside the falls for a photograph that became a postcard. In 1910, residents of Sparta recognized Trout Falls as a familiar local scene.

In 1929, visitors were photographed sitting beside the river while the falls flowed nearby. In 1969, the Army designated approximately 200 acres for development of the Trout Falls-Squaw Lake recreation area.

In 1972, the recreation area officially opened. In 2022, Pine View marked 50 years of recreation use. In 2023 and 2024, Fort McCoy photographers documented the falls in autumn and winter.

And today, the public can still follow the trail to Trout Falls and stand beside the same river that attracted visitors generations ago.

The scenery changes with the seasons, but the attraction remains. For those looking for a place to experience Wisconsin's autumn colors, take a winter hike, photograph a historic natural landmark or simply spend time outdoors, Trout Falls offers something that is increasingly rare: a living landscape with a documented history stretching back more than a century.

The falls are not simply a feature of Pine View Recreation Area. They are part of the history of the land itself. And after more than 100 years of being photographed, visited and remembered, Trout Falls remains one of Fort McCoy's most distinctive places to experience the outdoors.

People can learn more about the recreation area and all it has to offer the public by visiting https://mccoy.armymwr.com.

(Editor's Note: Historical information for this article was compiled from Fort McCoy History and Heritage, Fort McCoy historical files, archaeological research maintained by the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division, and previous Fort McCoy Public Affairs Office historical publications.)