

# Fort McCoy Breaks Ground on New Training Barracks

With overseas troop levels dropping, the former mobilization training center is now looking to improve its primary focus.

*From staff and Army reports*

Fort McCoy installation leadership and civilian contractors donned hard hats and used golden shovels this fall to break ground for the construction of the Annual Training/Mobilization (AT/MOB) barracks.

"This is a historic event," said Darrell Neitzel, director of the Directorate of Public Works (DPW) at Fort McCoy, "This is the first permanent Soldier training barracks that has been built at Fort McCoy, ever."

The new barracks will house Reserve and National Guard Soldiers during their two-week annual training or extended training. Fort McCoy, which just a few years ago served as one of the Army's busiest mobilization training centers, now is turning its focus more to training. As overseas combat troop levels continue to drop, and with U.S. forces on schedule to completely withdraw from Iraq by the end of this year, the Army has less need for its mobilization training centers, dropping down to four centers from a high of 10 just a few years ago.

The four remaining centers are Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Dix, N.J.; Fort Hood, Texas; and Camp Shelby, Miss. Former mobilization centers including Fort McCoy, have had to look to repurpose their facilities to meet the changing needs of today's military.

Fort McCoy Senior Commander Maj. Gen. Glenn J. Lesniak emphasized the historical significance of the event

in his remarks at the late-September ceremony. "The landmark look that you see at Fort McCoy was originated in 1942. More than 1,500 facilities were built to support operations for about five years. Today, 272 of those facilities are still in use as barracks."

"The landmark look will be replaced with the look of the AT/MOB facility," Lesniak said. "It's the first brick-and-mortar barracks building to ever be built at Fort McCoy. It will be a two-story structure and house 168 personnel."

The barracks design is adapted from the design active-duty installations use; it will replicate a housing complex environment with laundry and other facilities located in the area, he said.



Officials participating in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Annual Training/Mobilization Barracks project at Fort McCoy. Photo by Allan Harding, Fort McCoy Public Affairs.

The project will include 160 bed spaces in open bays and eight semi-private bed spaces for higher-ranking Soldiers, and an on-site parking lot. The facility will include an Internet café area, separate shower and latrine areas, a laundry area, recycling area, etc. The floor plan will allow for the sectioning off the facility to house female Soldiers, Beck said.

The facility is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

Silver Certified. LEED is a green building certification system that takes into account the building site's sustainability and regional priority, the building's water efficiency and energy usage, the materials and resources used to construct the building, its innovation in design and the building's indoor environmental quality.

"It's a step toward modernizing Fort McCoy so it can be in service for the next 100 years," Lesniak said. Modernizing Fort McCoy is an ongoing process that has included more than \$98 million in renovation projects from fiscal years 2008-2011, according to the DPW Master Planning Division. DPW, with support by the post, and support by congressional leaders and local communities, has done a tremendous job with the renovations and upgrades at Fort McCoy, Lesniak said.

A testament to the outstanding upgraded facilities at Fort McCoy was given by the commander from the last unit to mobilize at Fort McCoy. "He said this is the best site he has ever mobilized from and gave Fort McCoy a number of other compliments about the services and facilities," Lesniak said.

Garrison Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Rob Humphrey and Garrison Command Sergeant Major Command Sgt. Maj. William T. Bissonette Jr. also accompanied the group.

The Army Corp of Engineers Fort McCoy project office will oversee the project. Four Bears/TCI Joint Venture is the contractor for this design/build project. The project will cost just over \$6.8 million. The completion date is expected by Oct. 1, 2012. ●

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