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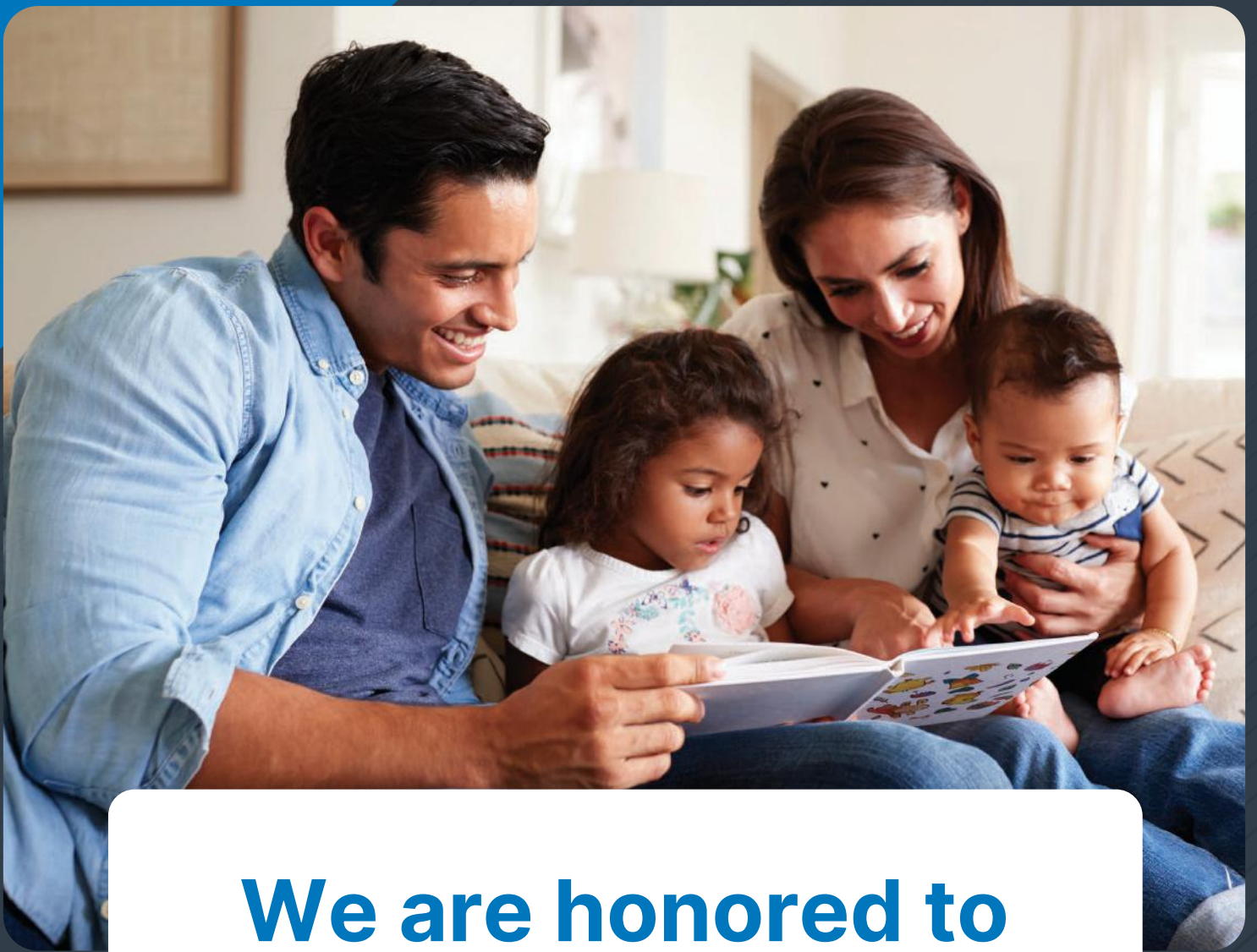
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Publisher's Note - This year we honor 250 years of the American story—a story defined by courage, resilience, and the unshakable belief that a free people can shape their own destiny. From the bold ideals declared in 1776 to the diverse, dynamic nation we are today, America's journey has been one of constant striving toward a more perfect union. As we celebrate this historic milestone, we recognize the generations who built, defended, and enriched this country. We reflect on the progress we've made, the challenges we've overcome, and the enduring spirit that binds us together. May this anniversary inspire us to carry forward the values that sparked a revolution—liberty, equality, opportunity, and hope—and to imagine boldly what the next 250 years can bring. Happy 250th Anniversary, America. Here's to the past that shaped us and the future we will create together.

God Bless Our Military and All Who Support It!

*Dan Clark McKinley Williams Rich Dmochowski
David Spector Mike Gonzales*

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Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

The 42,000-contiguous acres of JB MDL are home to more than 80 mission partners and 40 mission commanders providing a wide range of combat capability. The base spans more than 20 miles, from east to west. It is situated in the two largest counties in New Jersey—Burlington and Ocean—and includes portions of eight municipalities: the borough of Wrightstown and the townships of New Hanover, North Hanover, Pemberton, and Springfield, in Burlington County, and the townships of Jackson, Manchester, and Plumsted in Ocean County. The 87th Air Base Wing provides installation management support for 3,933 facilities. More than 44,000 airmen, soldiers, sailors, marines, coast guardsmen, civilians, and their family members live and work on and around JB MDL.

The United States Air Force's McGuire Air Force Base, the United States Army's Fort Dix and the United States Navy's Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst were merged on 1 October 2009. JB MDL is the Department of Defense's only tri-service joint base.

As America's premier joint warfighting base, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst is uniquely capable of projecting air, land, and sea power in support of our nation's defense.

Though consolidated into a single joint base, the three facilities which were adjoining, but separate military installations remain commonly known by their pre-merger names. Although the installation management functions have been consolidated, the missions of each of the three installations will continue.

The Air Force provides global mobility and expeditionary combat support, the Army mobilizes and train soldiers, and the Navy continues to assure fixed and vertical wing aircraft operate safely and effectively worldwide.



**Colonel
Michael D.
Stefanovic**
Commander



**Colonel
Bryan
Dunker**
Deputy Commander



**Captain
James B.
Howell**
Deputy Commander

87TH Air Base Wing

**Colonel
Michael D. Stefanovic**
Commander
Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst
and 87th Air Base Wing



Col. Michael D. Stefanovic is the Commander, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL) and 87th Air Base Wing, JB MDL, New Jersey. He is responsible for providing mission-ready expeditionary Airmen, Guardians and Sailors to combatant commanders in support of joint and coalition operations.

Colonel Stefanovic entered the Air Force in 2001 after obtaining his commission through the ROTC program at the Georgia Institute of Technology, earning a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering. He has served in various base level and headquarters assignments, including an international assignment as a counter-IED and explosive subject matter expert to the United Nations in New York. He has deployed to multiple locations in support of overseas contingency operations.

**Chief Master Sergeant
Nicholas "Nic" Conner**
Command Chief
87th Air Base Wing



Chief Master Sergeant Nicholas Conner serves as the 87th Air Base Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. As senior enlisted leader of the Department of Defense's only tri-service joint base, he is the principal advisor to the installation commander. The wing provides mission support, civil engineering, and medical services to more than 88 mission partners and 52,000 active duty, reserve, guard, civilian, retiree and family members residing on the joint base with an infrastructure valued at \$9 billion. He is entrusted with the combat readiness, organization, training, professional development and effective utilization of more than 1,200 Airmen and Sailors. Additionally, he is the functional manager of 21 First Sergeants who maintain a mission-ready force and support the military community's quality-of-life.



MANEUVER TO WIN: MAJ. GEN. DARREN R. COLE LEADS THE 21ST AIR FORCE INTO NEW ERA OF GLOBAL MOBILITY

Published February 2, 2026
 Story by Rochelle Naus
 21st Air Force & US Air Force Expeditionary Center

The U.S. Air Force's 21st Air Force has carried many names and missions since it was first activated on June 12, 1942. The organization began as a World War II ferrying wing responsible for delivering aircraft to support wartime operations. It soon transitioned into an airlift headquarters that moved personnel and cargo across the European theater. Over the decades, the unit evolved into a global mobility command that delivered combat capability, humanitarian relief and operational support to warfighters around the world.

Following several redesignations and a period of inactivation, the 21st Air Force reemerged on Sept. 5, 2025, under Air Mobility Command as part of a broader effort to modernize the expeditionary mobility enterprise. Today, it stands alongside the 18th Air Force as one of the mobility enterprise's two numbered air forces responsible for organizing, training and equipping Rapid Global Mobility forces.

Maj. Gen. Darren R. Cole took command during AMC's 2025 realignment this past September. The new construct strengthened unity of command across several joint bases, distributed workload between the two numbered air forces and elevated a mission-centric organizational design. Under this structure, the 18th and 21st Air Forces now share responsibility for preparing forces to execute AMC's core capabilities: airlift, aerial refueling, aeromedical evacuation, global mobility support and command and control.

Cole is a command pilot with more than 4,900 flying hours in mobility and tanker aircraft. His career includes combat missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and across the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. He previously served as director of Global Reach Programs at the Pentagon and held senior positions at USSOUTHCOM and USCENTCOM. His operational and joint experience has reinforced his belief that Rapid Global Mobility is inseparable from warfighting success.

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Maneuver to Win continued from page 6

“Air Mobility Command is the nation’s rapid maneuver force. No other nation can match the speed, scale and reach of America’s mobility forces, so we must be able to get the joint force to the fight and keep them there,” Cole said. “This is a demanding task. Whether they fly, fix or support at home station, enroute or at a contingency location, I expect our 21st Airmen to lean forward and anticipate the mission. They must be biased for action, relentlessly improving and determined to build warfighter advantage. To be succinct, we must be maneuvering to win.”

The 21st Air Force provides administrative control for nine Air Mobility Command wings and one stand-alone group. Its

units include the 305th Air Mobility Wing, the 87th Air Base Wing and the 621st Contingency Response Wing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; the 19th Airlift Wing at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas; the 436th Airlift Wing at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware; the 437th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina; the 521st Air Mobility Operations Wing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany; and the 43rd Air Mobility Operations Group at Pope Field, North Carolina.

The units aligned under the 21st Air Force execute missions that reach every corner of the globe, continuing a legacy that began with the organization’s World War II airlift operations into the European theater. Today, these wings and group conduct humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, aeromedical evacuation, strategic airlift, aerial refueling, air base opening and contingency response. Operating as a unified mobility enterprise, they enable the Joint Force to deploy rapidly, maintain operational reach and sustain campaigns across all theaters.

Cole also commands the USAF Expeditionary Center, which forges and integrates Air Force expeditionary concepts and oversees the USAF Expeditionary Operations School. Throughout its history, the Expeditionary Center’s mission has adapted alongside Air Force requirements. It originated in 1978 as the Airlift Operations School at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The institution later broadened its scope, relocated to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and emerged as the service’s primary center for expeditionary training. In 2011, it assumed installation support responsibilities for several joint bases, and in 2012 it expanded again to include the Air Force’s only Contingency Response Wing and two Air Mobility Operations Wings in Europe and the Pacific.

The USAF Expeditionary Operations School now serves as the execution arm of the center. It offers 92 in-residence courses and 19 online programs that graduate more than 40,000 students annually. The school provides advanced training for multiple career fields following initial skills instruction under Air Education and Training Command. Its curriculum includes Advanced Readiness Training for deploying Airmen, as well as courses in expeditionary skills, joint all-domain command and control, intelligence, Phoenix Raven, the Advanced Study of Air Mobility and aerial port operations.

Cole identified three enduring priorities for the 21st Air Force and Expeditionary Center: Airmen, readiness generation and continuous mission improvement. He consistently emphasizes that Airmen are the organization’s competitive edge.

“We must begin with a rock-solid foundation of trained, supported and ready Airmen,” he said, “because when we take care of our people, they take care of the mission.”

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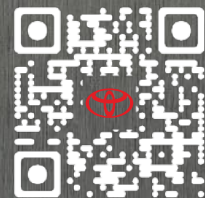
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Beyond the “Quick Fix” - Why I Had to Fix My Own Neck



Every morning followed the same grim script: a neck so stiff it felt bolted to my shoulders and a soul-crushing headache that arrived the second I started to move. I did exactly what I was “supposed” to do. I tried different treatments and did the generic stretches. Nothing Worked.

The Problem with the “Standard of Care”

As a Doctor of Physical Therapy, I realized why traditional treatments were failing me - and why they’re likely failing you. Most clinics treat the neck like an isolated area. They rub the sore spot, give you a printout of three exercises, and send you on your way. That is not how the neck works. It’s influenced by how your nervous system handles stress, how your upper back moves under a load, and how your brain “guards” against pain after years of discomfort.

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I spent the last 5 years refining a framework that goes beyond the “sore spot.” After successfully treating over 1,000 neck cases, I’ve proven that you don’t have to just “manage” the pain. You can fully resolve it. My approach doesn’t just fix the pain; we retrain your body to support itself so the pain stops coming back. We stop chasing symptoms and start building a neck that is resilient enough to handle your life. I’ve lived through it, I know what it takes to come out the other side. I spent three years in pain looking for a solution. Now, I provide the shortcut for you.

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I’m not interested in giving you another “quick fix” that wears off by Tuesday. I want to give you your life back. Here is how:

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- Call My Cell Directly: If you are ready for change and want to talk to the person who actually wrote this, give me a call. I’m happy to chat for a few minutes to see if my framework is the right fit for you.

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Tanner Kerr, DPT

Founder of TPT Rehabilitation & Wellness



ARMY RESERVE EXECUTES APPROXIMATELY \$150M IN FACILITY UPGRADES IN FY25

Published February 23, 2026

Story by Ashley Bradford

Office of the Chief, Army Reserve

The U.S. Army Reserve marked a major milestone in fiscal year (FY) 2025 by completing nine military construction and major renovation projects totaling approximately \$146 million. These efforts spanned a diverse range of facility types—barracks, training ranges, fitness centers, maintenance shops, and organizational parking—reflecting the breadth of the Army Reserve’s infrastructure portfolio.

“This past fiscal year, we have significantly advanced our infrastructure portfolio by completing nine key military construction and major renovation projects, delivering approximately \$146 million in facility upgrades,” said Quincy Meade, Assets Division Chief, Army Reserve Installation Management Directorate. “These projects include critical range and barrack modernizations that directly support Soldier training and readiness.”

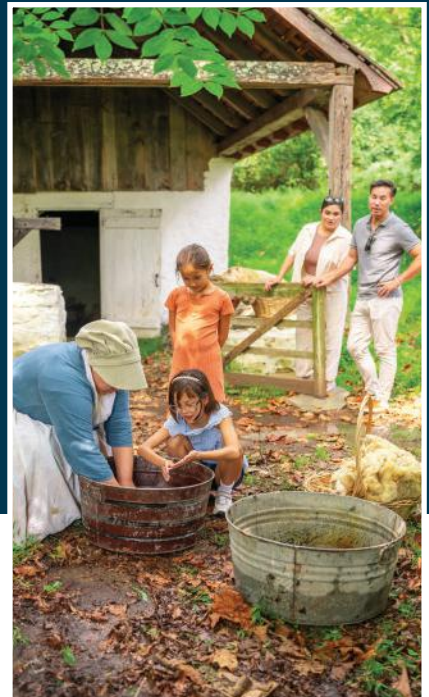
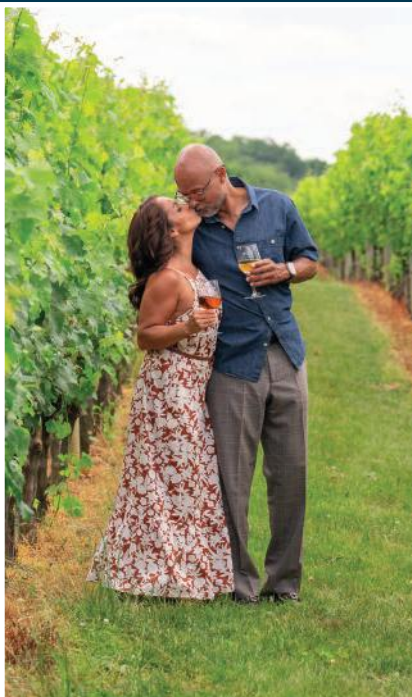
The completed projects include:

- Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL), NJ Collective Enlisted Barracks major repair and Vehicle Maintenance Shop major repair
- Caven Point Army Reserve Center, NJ major repair
- Fort Jackson, SC organizational parking
- Fort McCoy, WI Scout Reconnaissance Range and Collective Training Enlisted Barracks
- Cedar Rapids, IA construct organizational parking
- Southfield Area Maintenance Support Activity, MI
- Fort Buchanan, PR Physical Fitness Center major repair

These investments enhance operational readiness and provide modernized environments for training, maintenance, and daily operations across the Army Reserve.

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11 new construction contracts valued at approximately \$375 million for FY25. These projects will continue the momentum in modernizing barracks and training facilities nationwide. Additionally, the Army Reserve has secured \$107 million in the FY26 appropriation for new military construction, as well as repair by replacement barracks funding, ensuring sustained progress in infrastructure development.

With a focus on readiness, resilience, and modernization, the Army Reserve remains committed to delivering high-quality facilities that support the evolving needs of its Soldiers and missions. ⚙️

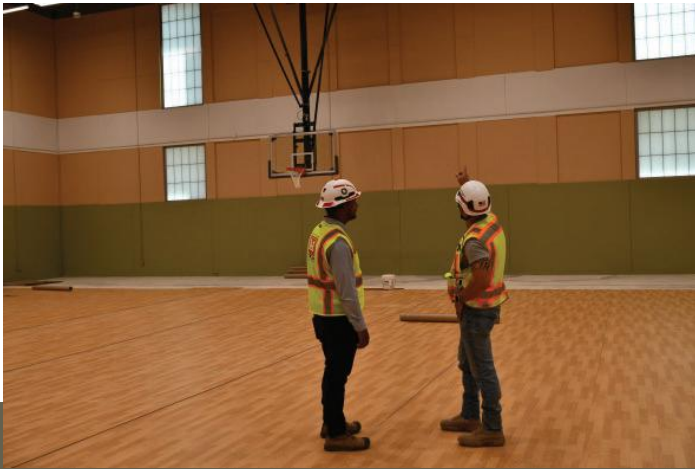


Photo By David Hernandez | Workers with RBC Construction Corporation of Cataño, Puerto Rico, continue their work on the renovation construction project of the installation Fitness Center into March 2025 at Fort Buchanan.

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NAWCAD LAKEHURST ENHANCES CRYOGENIC SYSTEMS FOR NAVAL AVIATION

Published January 23, 2026
 Story by Adam Hochron
 Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division

As the Cryogenics and Corrosion Control Support Equipment (SE) Integrated Product Team (IPT) Lead at NAWCAD Lakehurst, Asif Yeahia knows that many people may not fully understand the work his team does. However, working with substances at temperatures below negative 200 degrees gives them one of the “coolest” jobs at the Warfare Center—both literally and figuratively.

The cryogenics team specializes in servicing oxygen and nitrogen systems on aircraft, focusing on the storage and dispersal of liquid and gaseous nitrogen and oxygen.

“Whether it’s supporting the warfighter or ensuring our naval aircraft are fully operational and mission-ready, cryogenics plays a huge role,” Yeahia said. “From inflating aircraft tires to servicing struts, to ensuring aviators’ breathing oxygen meets cleanliness standards, cryogenics SE is involved in all of it.”

Collaboration and Innovation

The team works closely with the Common Aviation Support Equipment Program Office (PMA 260), the cryogenics depot located at Lakehurst in Depot Repair Point (DRP)-14, and industry partners to support the warfighter. While each team member is assigned specific equipment, they collaborate to address issues quickly and effectively.

“It’s a very collaborative process,” Yeahia explained. “Whether it’s in-service items or designing something new, there’s a lot of feedback and teamwork involved.”



The cryogenics team at Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Lakehurst specializes in servicing oxygen and nitrogen systems on aircraft, focusing on the storage and dispersal of liquid and gaseous nitrogen and oxygen.

The team includes engineers and contractor support, all united by a common purpose. Yeahia describes them as “scientists by nature,” constantly experimenting and finding innovative solutions to make their ideas practical.

“A lot of people aren’t entirely familiar with how quickly a contaminated oxygen system can pose a safety risk to personnel and aircraft,” Yeahia said. “Even something minuscule could potentially cause a catastrophic incident.”

Safety and Training

Earlier this year, the team organized a cryogenic system safety course, leveraging industry experts to train the Lakehurst team and cryogenics depot artisans and technicians. The training focused on keeping personnel safe while working with cryogenic systems.

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305TH AMW HOSTS KC-46 WEAPONS SYSTEMS COUNCIL 25-2

Published December 8, 2025
Story by Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

From Dec. 8-10, 2025, the 305th Air Mobility Wing chaired the KC-46 Weapons Systems Council 25-2, hosting senior leaders, subject matter experts and some of the most experienced aircrew, operations support personnel and maintainers who fly and operate the KC-46A Pegasus aircraft from across the U.S. Air Force. In total, 147 KC-46 Weapons Systems Council attendees joined the 305th AMW and 108th Wing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, flying in from the 22nd Air Refueling Wing, 931st ARW, 60th AMW, 349th AMW, 916th ARW, 157th ARW, 97th AMW, 509th Weapons Squadron, 21st Air Force headquarters, Air Mobility Command headquarters, Air Education and Training Command headquarters and Air Force Reserve Command headquarters.

The KC-46 Weapons Systems Council meets semi-annually to align the KC-46 enterprise's strategic focus, resolve operational challenges facing the KC-46 community and collaborate to advance innovations and warfighting tactics, techniques and procedures. It is an opportunity to bring KC-46 operators and maintainers at the unit level together with AMC staff, set the strategic priorities for the airframe and then set actionable objectives to advance those

U.S. Air Force members walk out to a KC-46A Pegasus aircraft during Exercise Krampus at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Dec. 9, 2025. Exercise Krampus focused on developing future tactics, techniques and procedures for the KC-46A, bringing together aircrews, operations support personnel and maintainers from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., McConnell AFB, Kan., and Pease Air National Guard Base, N.H. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Aidan Thompson)

priorities over the next three to five years.

"The KC-46 Weapons Systems Council provides a comprehensive mechanism for the enterprise to advance the KC-46 as a mobility platform," said U.S. Air Force Col. Kathleen Hasson, 305th AMW commander and chair for this KC-46 Weapons Systems Council. "By integrating our training and system performance efforts, we are not only enhancing current readiness but also defining the future capabilities of our force."

This specific KC-46 Weapons Systems Council followed the completion of the largest and longest KC-46 deployment to date, seeing the platform and its personnel deploy together in historic numbers in response to significant contingency operations in U.S. Central Command and across the globe in 2025. This KC-46 Weapons Systems Council capitalized on the success of that deployment, focusing on a theme of "optimizing enterprise warfighting."

To that end, KC-46 Weapon Systems Council 25-2 applied the lessons learned from that deployment to improve KC-46 agile combat employment training in the Pacific region and prioritized initiatives to

continued on page 16



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305TH AMW continued from page 14

enhance the KC-46's ability to deliver strategic deterrence for U.S. Strategic Command. To be at the forefront of the National Defense Strategy, this KC-46 Weapons Systems Council also prioritized the future of the KC-46 as a key enabler in the long-range kill chain, collaborating on innovations that enable the KC-46 to connect the joint force at the forward edge of the next aerial conflict. The KC-46's ability to connect and relay information between our joint and coalition partners in a denied and degraded environment is just as critical to future warfighting as providing airborne fuel to joint and coalition aircraft.

Never missing an opportunity to apply these warfighting initiatives in real time, more than 70 participants of the council's 147 attendees participated in Exercise Krampus, a complex joint exercise the 305th AMW planned and orchestrated concurrently with this KC-46 Weapons Systems Council. The 305th AMW partnered with the 1st Fighter Wing from JB Langley-Eustis, Virginia, integrating seven Total Force KC-46 wings and nine KC-46 aircraft into the 1st FW's annual combat readiness exercise. Exercise Krampus involved over 80 joint aircraft and was developed to deliver concentrated and coordinated air power in decisive strikes as well as train toward an additional 18 agile combat employment desired learning objectives. The plan had KC-46 aircrew flying in a simulated contested environment, challenging them to deliver F-22 Raptor aircraft and other coalition aircraft to the forward-most part of the fight, and then, not only react to adversary aircraft and threats, but coordinate actions over secure communications and tactical datalink.

"It's an honor seeing our aircrew, operations support personnel and maintainers plan and accomplish a large-force exercise to this scale, as well as teaming up with the very best in the KC-46 community to plot the future trajectory of the airframe," said Lt. Col. Paul LaSorda, 32nd Air Refueling Squadron commander. "The team is pushing the KC-46 enterprise to be at the leading edge of the Mobility Air Force, delivering not just airborne fuel to the most forward part of the aerial fight, but connectivity, command and control and battlespace situational awareness for the joint force. When you look around the room at the KC-46 Weapons Systems Council and at the personnel (who) planned Exercise Krampus, there is a unified goal: for the KC-46 to lead the Mobility Air Force and win the next fight." ★





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LAKEHURST TEST TEAM FINDS TEMPORARY HOME FOR UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

Published January 23, 2026
 Story by Adam Hochron
 Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division

An empty space at Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Lakehurst, previously used for electromagnetic interference testing, was quickly transformed into a temporary test site to advance Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology.

The repurposed site is now home to the Motion Platform Aerial Sensor Suite (MPASS), a system that uses cables and a dolly to simulate UAV behavior to support developmental testing provides a unique platform for testing UAV control systems.

The six-month project, made possible by funds from the Naval Innovative Science and Engineering (NISE) program, is a collaborative team effort including the original equipment manufacturer and other stakeholders. It will allow customers to use and refine the technology before it moves to its permanent home at Lakehurst's Ship Motion Platform (SMP) next year. This additional testing time will enable the team to enhance their proficiency and optimize the system's performance before it reaches its permanent location.

"In this fast-paced world of innovation, the whole idea is being quicker with UAVs and drones, and we're taking steps to do that," said lead test engineer Rob Pellegrino. "We're leveraging existing capabilities and transforming them into usable spaces for emergent needs."

In its temporary location, the Lakehurst team has already identified ways to improve MPASS, enhancing its smoothness and positional accuracy to make it an even more valuable tool for customers.

"The whole reason for MPASS is to allow a third-party control system to fly the dolly around as if it were the aircraft," Pellegrino explained. "It was always designed to test early UAV control systems with the intent of taking the airframe out of guidance system development."

While the team looks forward to installing the full system at the SMP, Pellegrino emphasized the benefits of having a temporary site.

"We're surging to meet the need, and executing things in short timeframes is going to be more and more important with expected changes in the UAV landscape. How do we shorten development times, and how do we get everything to the fleet faster?"

MPASS, which uses the same technology that moves cameras during televised sporting events, has applications beyond UAV testing. It can also support obstacle avoidance control for omnidirectional vehicles in shipboard environments and help mitigate undesired motion in autonomous systems

caused by ship movement.

Pellegrino thanked Lakehurst leadership for quickly approving the use of the space and the test team for their hard work in setting up the site while managing other priorities. 🌟

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ARMY RESERVE LEADER AWAKENS SPIRITUAL READINESS

Published January 22, 2026
Story by Sgt. 1st Class Deziree Lau
99th Readiness Division

"May our minds be set for victory with hearts set for peace," said brig. Gen. Charles Causey, U.S. Army Reserve deputy chief of chaplains, during the annual prayer breakfast.

Heads were bowed in prayer to each person's higher power as chaplains from the Air Force and Army prayed over the nation, its leaders, the armed forces, and the families and friends of service members past, present, and future. Prayers asked for continued guidance, grace, and comfort with the common theme of unity.

"May we have our offerings of a unifying story filled with faith and virtue," said Causey, who served as keynote speaker for the event. He put emphasis on individual strengths being important, and the effectiveness and successes of a group depending on leadership that can direct and create a unified front.

"I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion," Causey said, quoting Alexander the Great.

The purpose of the prayer breakfast is to foster a sense of unity and belonging among service members by providing time for reflection, encouragement, and fellowship. The event aims to strengthen resilience, build trust, and reinforce shared values, all of which contribute to higher morale and a more cohesive team.

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From left, U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, acting director, Air National Guard, Lt. Col. Eric "Rebel" Emerson, commander, 119th Fighter Squadron, 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey National Guard and Colleen Shine showcase the 2024 Lt. Col. Anthony C. Shine Fighter Pilot Award during a ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, Feb. 10, 2026. (photo by Master Sgt. Erich B. Smith)

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AIR GUARD PILOT RECOGNIZED WITH PRESTIGIOUS SHINE AWARD

Published February 12, 2026
Story by Master Sgt. Erich Smith
Air National Guard

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Eric "Rebel" Emerson, a fighter squadron commander with the New Jersey Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing, received the 2024 Lt. Col. Anthony C. Shine Award during a ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, Feb. 10, becoming the first Air National Guard pilot to earn the honor in nearly 45 years.

The Shine Award, established in 1980, honors the legacy of Air Force Lt. Col. Anthony C. Shine, a Vietnam War fighter pilot who went missing in action in 1972. The award recognizes one outstanding Air Force fighter pilot in the rank of major or below for "superior leadership qualities, exceptional flying proficiency and community involvement."

"It always feels special to be a 'first,' but more importantly it highlights the hard-working men and women of the Air National Guard and their contributions to the fight," Emerson said. "Without these amazing Airmen, nothing we do in the air would be possible. I dedicate this award to the men and women of the 177th Fighter Wing."

Air Combat Command oversees the Shine award, selecting the top representative each year among the best of active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve fighter pilots. Shine's daughter, Colleen, was in high school when her father went missing. She would eventually be instrumental in helping to find her father's remains—leading to his burial in Arlington National Cemetery—and she would become an advocate for the remaining 1,566 Americans who are still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

"Rebel, your outstanding service in flying, teaching and leading is a reminder of all that is right about today's Air Force." Colleen said. "You are a sterling example for the caliber of character and excellence in flying my father stood for."

During the presentation ceremony, Colleen remarked she stood in awe at Rebel's extraordinary responsibility and community impact—spotlighting the vital role played by the

continued on page 22



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"This is the first time an Airman from the Air National Guard has won the Shine Award, and we are grateful to spotlight the Guard's role in our formidable Air Force," Colleen said. "Lt. Col. Emerson embodied the National Guard motto of 'Always Ready, Always There,' leading extraordinary missions while serving his community with the same commitment."

According to the award citation, Emerson earned the honor for an "exceptional year" as an F-16 instructor pilot and squadron commander. The citation highlights his leadership

during a "no-notice" mission that rapidly mobilized more than 50 personnel and six aircraft, generating over 200 combat hours in support of coalition forces in the Red Sea. Additionally, he directed aircraft and personnel movements across multiple countries while maintaining continuous alert operations, guided pilot upgrade training, and supported homeland defense missions—ensuring combat-ready Airmen and aircraft remained prepared to respond at a moment's notice.

Beyond operational excellence, Emerson volunteered hundreds of hours as a youth basketball coach and mentor and playing a key role in organizing community outreach initiatives, including food distribution efforts supporting more than 1,000 families.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, acting director of the Air National Guard, said that while maintaining a war fighter ethos as part of the world's foremost air power is paramount, it's what leaders "do on Earth that matters."

"These are the reasons we fight, and there are reasons we serve. But there are great individuals whose lives are not only defined by their ability to 'slip the surly bonds of Earth,'" said Pirak, who served as host for the award ceremony. "They're devoted, compassionate, selfless members of the community who seek to leave every place on every occasion better than they found it. Lt. Col. Shine was that individual. Lt. Col. Emerson is that individual."

Pirak, as the ANG's senior leader and a fighter pilot himself, extended Emerson high praise.

"Rebel, in winning the Shine Award, you represent the best of the Air National Guard: rooted in the community, with lethal capabilities and an unwavering dedication to any and every mission," Pirak said. "You are truly an example of the best of our profession, and I am proud to serve with you."

For Emerson, the honor represents both recognition and responsibility.

"The spirit of Lt. Col. Shine reminds us to strive for excellence on and off the field, to learn from failure, and then to teach others," said Emerson. "This is who we are—Airmen bound by trust, loyal to our cause, dedicated to excellence in our craft, and accountable for our actions." 🇺🇸



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87FSS FOOD SERVICE WHIPS UP CULINARY EXCELLENCE

Published December 2, 2025
Story by Kris Patterson

A food service specialist from the 87th Force Support Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, has cooked up a spot at the national Salute Hospitality Epicurean Faceoff.

The SHEF is a culinary competition sponsored by the U.S. Air Force Services Center and Aramark to provide culinary Airmen an opportunity to sharpen their cooking skills and display their “chops.”

During the recent 87th FSS competition, Airman 1st Class Shanise Caampued and Senior Airmen Jaylen Lovett and Nidia Hernandez-Lima, 87th FSS food service specialists, brought their A-games, stirring in talent, precision, and passion under the heat of intense scrutiny.

Caampued proved she’s got the secret sauce for success. She took first place, earning a ticket to the national competition at the Culinary Institute of America in San Antonio, Texas, where, on Dec. 3, 2025, she’ll be given one box of mystery ingredients and one hour to cook as she competes against 10 other Air Force food service specialists from military bases across the country.

“I’m incredibly excited and honored to represent JB MDL at the national competition,” said Caampued. “Knowing that Halvorsen Hall Dining Facility and the 87th FSS are behind me means a great deal. Their support is the spark that drives me to give my absolute best, not just for myself but for everyone who has invested in me.”

This is Caampued’s second SHEF win, having won a quarterly 87th FSS SHEF contest earlier this year. It was this experience that gave her the edge, said Staff Sgt. Heather Love, 87th FSS food services supervisor.

“Her poise and composure definitely gave her a leg up,” Love said. “Being a returning champ gave her confidence in her skills and allowed her to deliver flawlessly.”

2nd Lt. Christian Shelton, 87th FSS food officer in charge, shared this perspective, attributing Caampued’s ability to handle a challenging ingredient for beefing up her chances to win.

“She had to clean and carve a whole tenderloin of beef,” said Shelton. “It’s not as easy as it sounds.”

During the 87th FSS competition, no element was left unseasoned as Caampued and her fellow competitors were judged “from start to finish, from prep to plating,” Shelton said.

continued on page 37

Dana Kaminsky, the team's supervisor, emphasized the importance of maintaining oxygen cleanliness, noting that improper levels could lead to catastrophic failures. She highlighted the critical need for proper training to safely handle the equipment.

Kaminsky also noted that the team's collaboration with the depot plays a vital role in their success, both on the Lakehurst campus and abroad.

"Those guys go above and beyond. They're involved in installs, troubleshooting, and engineering support," Kaminsky said. "They're a great resource to have here, and they're a fantastic group of people."

Innovative Solutions for the Fleet

One of the team's recent accomplishments was developing a compact oxygen relief valve tester for ejection seats. This equipment is designed to test emergency oxygen systems on seat survival kits, parachute bottles, and relief valves.

Previously, maintainers relied on an obsolete piece of equipment called aliquid oxygen converter test stand to test aircraft liquid oxygen converters and emergency oxygen systems. With modern aircraft requiring new solutions, the team developed a system that better meets aircraft requirements, is certified for shipboard use, and ruggedized to meet fleet needs.

"It feels like a huge accomplishment when you're presented with a challenge that's impacting the fleet and you can identify a path forward," Yeahia said. "Ultimately, we always ask ourselves, 'How is this going to help the fleet?' That level of accountability is critical to everything we work on."

A Legacy of Excellence

Kaminsky noted that Lakehurst has been involved in cryogenics for decades, and the team is proud to continue that legacy. The team dynamic is also a key part of their success.

"Everyone works together. I know there are a lot of teams here that collaborate, but even outside of work, we support each other on a personal level," Kaminsky said. "There's so much to be said for keeping morale high, having each other's backs, and making sure everyone is excited about what they do." 🌟



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MISSION ENHANCEMENT CELL: RELENTLESS INNOVATION

Published January 29, 2026

Photos & Story by Airman 1st Class Luisa E. Dugan

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Public Affairs

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. --

The U.S. Air Force was founded and shaped by a long history of innovative minds. Today, a modern example of generational ingenuity can be observed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst's Mission Enhancement Cell.

The MEC, formerly known as the Innovation Lab, equips different units and squadrons across the joint base with the tools needed to maximize efforts and solve common problems that may hinder mission efficiency.

"The Mission Enhancement Cell is a hub of continuous improvement and innovation for the joint base," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Andy Hewins, MEC chief of innovation. "Our priority is to extend our capabilities and relentless innovation in terms of additive manufacturing and producing solutions across all the units."

There is an innovation process during which MEC members collaborate with different units to build a network of subject matter experts to produce solutions. The SMEs work with individual shops to understand specific problems that pose a hinderance to their mission and create solutions based on what best supports their mission.

The team uses various types of 3D printers and materials when creating products, which is a key factor in applying

these solutions. However, modern warfighting is constantly evolving, meaning the MEC must stay up to date with machine certifications and experiment with new materials.

"We have a couple of materials that we've been testing," said Senior Airman Ian Conners, MEC chief of technology. "One of them is a polymerized form of Kevlar. So, if you think of a bullet proof vest or something made from Kevlar, a helmet that's made from Kevlar fibers; this can potentially let you additively manufacture any shape out of Kevlar."

The Innovation Hub site allows innovation labs across different bases to share and access finalized projects for aircraft capabilities that propel their mission.

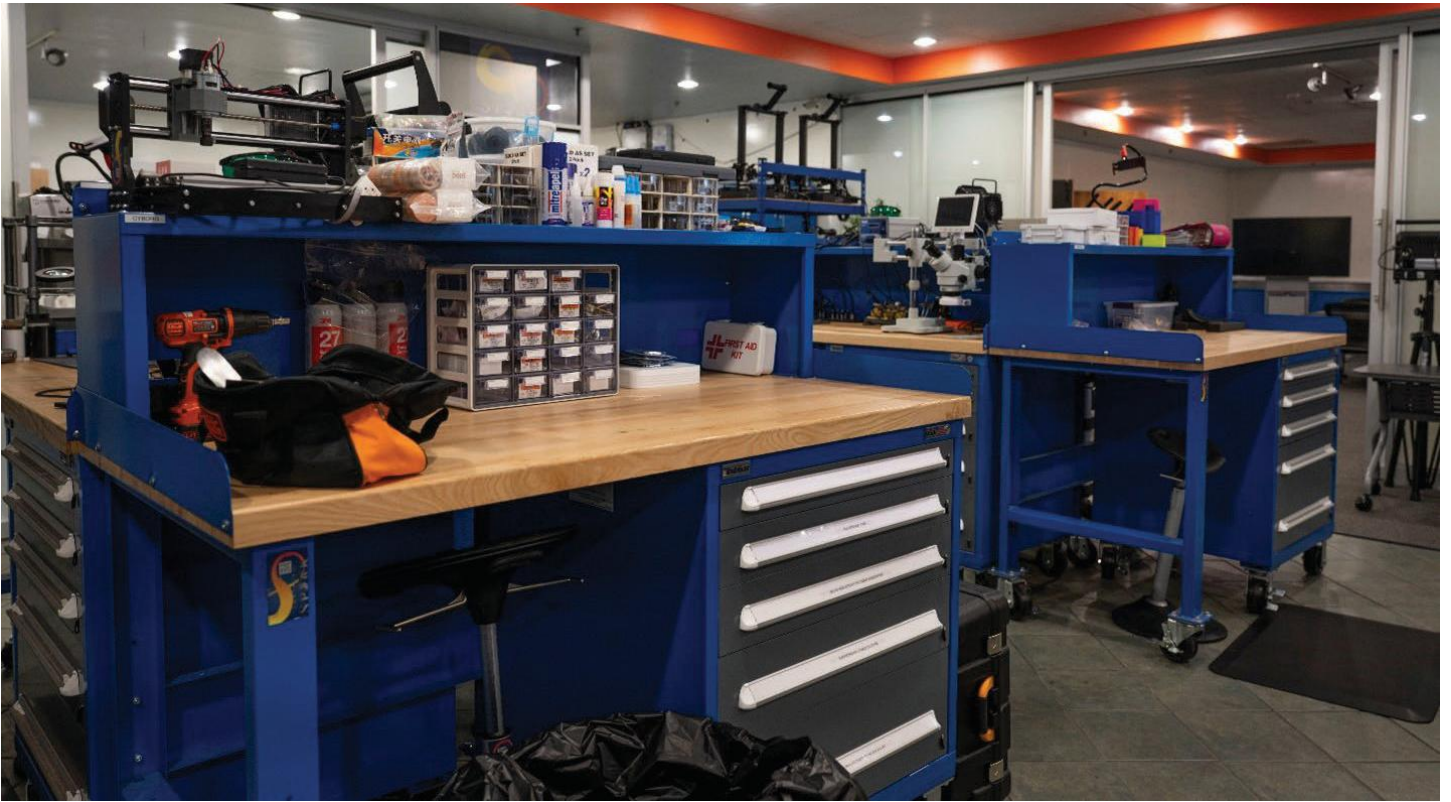
"It's what networking is supposed to be used for," said Tech. Sgt. Kevin Mack, MEC chief of operations. "This is what this space is for. Any idea that comes across the board can help."

Traditionally, projects remained internal and were only shared within the squadron. Today, the capabilities produced through the MEC serve as an Air Force-wide breakthrough for mission support expediting timeliness, reducing cost and improving efficiency.

The MEC lives up to its name and continues to enable warfighters across the joint base. It serves as a provenance for Airmen who are driven, empowered and ready to win. 🌟



A 3D printed drone attachment prototype for the Badger 7 drone is on display in the Mission Enhancement Cell at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J.



U.S. Air Force Mission Enhancement Cell workstations are used to assemble 3D printed pieces at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Nov. 5, 2025. Focused on empowering warfighters, the MEC provides relentless innovation to solve common problems that might hinder mission readiness.

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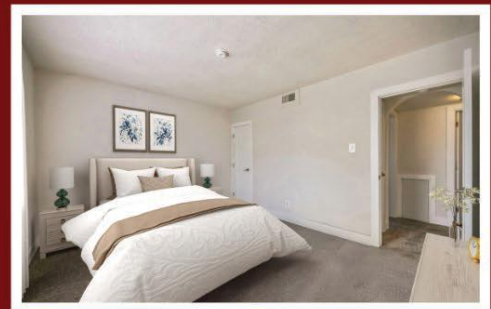
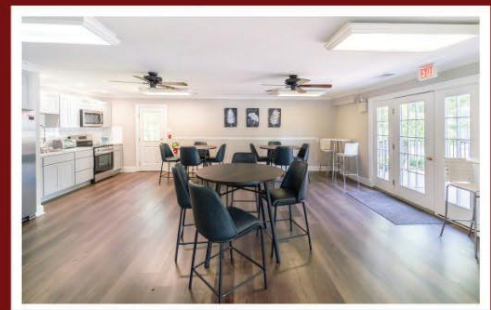
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U.S. Marine Corps Landing Signal Officers monitor a simulated F-35B Lightning II recovery inside the Manned Flight Simulator at the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division in Patuxent River, Md. The warfare center is serving as the interim schoolhouse for a new Marine Corps program that trains and certifies Landing Signal Officers for the unique short takeoff and vertical landing procedures of the F-35B. The school, which will also train international partners, is a critical step to standardize operations and enhance interoperability across the global F-35B fleet. (U.S. Navy photo by Chuck Regner)

NAWCAD LEADS NEW LANDING SIGNAL OFFICER SCHOOL FOR MARINES AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FLYING F-35B

*Published February 5, 2026
Story by NAWCAD Visual Information
Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division*

As global F-35B operations expand, the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) is leading the new training pipeline for Marine Corps Short Takeoff and Vertical Landing Signal Officers.

NAWCAD will serve as the interim schoolhouse, providing all training and curriculum development until the permanent facility opens at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in 2028.

"As the F-35B expands across the fleet and our allied partners, this school is a critical step to meet growing demand," said Lt. Col. Brian Kimmins, the school's officer in charge. "Standardizing procedures with our F-35B partner nations ensures we can operate safely and consistently from each other's ships, ultimately driving interoperability and mission success worldwide."

The program, approved by the Marine Corps' Training and Education Command in 2025, prepares officers to safely control shipboard launches and recoveries. This new

school will focus on the unique procedures for the F-35B's short takeoffs and vertical landings aboard amphibious assault ships, which are distinct from the catapult and arrested-recovery operations taught at the Navy's Landing Signal Officers school. The Marines' school will expose its students to a broader range of events, including day and night emergencies and varied weather conditions.

The Patuxent River facility was selected based on its advanced simulation capabilities that provide an immediate, cost-effective solution for scenario-based STOVL LSO training until the permanent schoolhouse opens.

NAWCAD's military, civilian, and contract personnel operate test ranges, laboratories, and aircraft in support of test, evaluation, research, development and sustainment for all Navy and Marine Corps aviation platforms. Based in Patuxent River, Maryland, NAWCAD also has major sites in St. Inigoes, Maryland; Lakehurst, New Jersey; and Orlando, Florida. 🌟



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U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 87th Civil Engineer Squadron's Installation Office of Emergency Management and Explosive Ordnance Disposal units simulate decontamination procedures during a training exercise at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., Jan. 28, 2026. The IOEM and EOD units trained together to practice proper communication and evaluate response time between agencies through careful coordination across multiple sections.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: COMMUNICATING THROUGH CHAOS

Published February 20, 2026

Photos & Story by Airman 1st Class Luisa E. Dugan

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Public Affairs

Readiness requires insightful planning, extensive training and strategic execution. The 87th Civil Engineer Squadron's Installation Office of Emergency Management and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal units partnered together to effectively accomplish any emergency task through careful coordination across multiple teams at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Jan. 28, 2026.

The IOEM hosted a training exercise to practice proper communication and evaluate response time between agencies, including security forces, medical, fire and other squadrons involved in responding to emergencies. Their objective was to work through chaos and create a team equipped with the appropriate skills for the simulated contaminated incident.

"The purpose of this event is to make sure all the agencies can meet each other prior to accidents and incidents happening," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sierra Raynor, IOEM non-commissioned officer in charge. "It's good for people to meet face-to-face and work out what their standard operating procedure says, what ours says and if we are aligning with what the incident commander's objectives are."

The IOEM plans to meet with the other agencies on a quarterly basis. While still in the early phases of development, the training is designed to set the standard and procedures for conducting large scale multi-unit exercises. This allows the service members to continuously remedy how the team communicates amongst the different units.

"It gets all the agencies responding with common terminology," Raynor said. "If we're coordinating with EOD or even other agencies outside the Air Force, we all can try to speak the same language."

Cohesion across all agencies comes from giving service members of all ranks the opportunity to familiarize themselves with other team members and the resources they provide.

"My main thing is networking, networking, networking," said Senior Airman Jasia Waddell, 87th EM training section lead. "If you don't know the answer you need to find someone who does. We have to be able to interact with other people, especially those higher ranking."

According to Raynor, this first iteration of training produced positive results for the IOEM. It allowed the agencies to challenge their individual confidence and reflect on potential areas of improvement to address in the future.

"I think for us it built more grit," Waddell said. "It was hard, but we were able to stick it out and continue doing it and complete the mission. We didn't give up at any point, we kept going, kept pressing and although there were little hiccups here and there, everything got taken care of."

By establishing communicative clarity and mitigating barriers, collaborative training has produced favorable outcomes for the units involved. Between exercises and real-world incidents, the IOEM remains dedicated to excellence by accomplishing their mission through adversity. 🌟



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 87th Civil Engineer Squadron's Installation Office of Emergency Management assess equipment needed for a collaborative training exercise.



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 87th Civil Engineer Squadron's Installation Office of Emergency Management set up a perimeter for decontamination procedures during a training exercise

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U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Darren R. Cole, Air Mobility Command director of operations, strategic deterrence and nuclear integration, acknowledges an Airman after a brief about operation needs during a joint training exercise at Schoonover Air Field on U.S. Army Fort Hunter-Liggett, California, May 8, 2023

Maneuver to Win continued from page 7

Strengthening readiness is central to Cole's leadership approach. Under his direction, the 21st Air Force is expanding training in combat representative environments that mirror the complexity of future conflicts, including contested, degraded, and dispersed conditions. He has directed the enterprise to be prepared to transition rapidly from peacetime operations to crisis response with minimal delay.

"Together, these priorities form a framework to increase our advantage against any adversary," Cole said. "Together, we

must always maneuver to win."

With a legacy rooted in World War II and a mission that spans continents, the 21st Air Force and Expeditionary Center remain central to the nation's ability to project power and deliver hope. Under Cole's leadership, the enterprise continues to adapt to the modern security environment while sustaining its heritage as one of the Air Force's most enduring global mobility organizations. ✪

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America's Armed Forces Kids Color Run
Date: May 30 @ 8:00am
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U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Shanise Caampued, 87th Force Support Squadron food service specialist, showcases her winning plate during the 87th FSS's Salute Hospitality Epicurean Faceoff in September at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J. Caampued earned first place and will represent JB MDL at the national SHEF competition on Dec. 3, 2025 at the Culinary Institute of America in San Antonio, Texas.

Top SHEF continued from page 24

"This competition is not for the faint of heart," said Shelton. "It's tough, it's regulated, it's enduring, and it's the opportunity of a lifetime."

It's more than a culinary showdown; it's a vital opportunity for Air Force food service specialists to foster pride in their craft and demonstrate how their work contributes to the readiness of warfighters in any environment, Love said.

"Wherever you are at, deployed or home station, you always want to eat good food," said Love. "This competition helps the chefs build on learned skills through training and solidify skills they already use daily at Halvorsen Hall. It's an opportunity for these Airmen to grow confident in their abilities to execute."

With the skills honed and confidence gained through this demanding competition, Caampued is now eager to translate that growth into a winning performance on the national stage.

"I'm ready to represent our team with pride and show what JB MDL brings to the table," Caampued said. 🌟

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- Tuesday: 8:00 AM Mass
- Wednesday: 8:00 AM Mass
5:45 PM Holy Hour
(Adoration, Confession)
7:00 PM Traditional Latin Low Mass
- Thursday: 8:00 AM Mass
- Friday: 8:00 AM Traditional Latin Low Mass
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- Wednesday: 6:00 PM -6:45 PM (during Holy Hour)
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PRAYER FOR OUR MILITARY

Lord Jesus, Savior of the World and Prince of Peace, watch over our loved ones as they serve their country. Protect them from the physical and moral dangers of military life. Keep them close to You and help them live in such a manner that is pleasing to You. Lord Jesus, give them courage to serve their country with honor and dignity. We pray that You would be with them when they are in danger, strengthen them when they face hardships. Above all Lord, grant that when their service is finished they may return to us, sound in mind, body and soul. And Lord, for those who give the ultimate sacrifice with their lives for serving their country, please touch and minister Your Grace to their families. Amen.



621ST CRW NCOS ACCOMPLISH MX PRODUCTION AND SUPERVISION COURSE

U.S. Air Force maintenance airmen assigned to the 621st Contingency Response Wing prepare to graduate from the Mobility Air Force Maintenance Supervision and Production Course at the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School Nov. 20, 2025 at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. The course requires participants to be rank of technical sergeant or higher, but after a waiver process, seven 621st CRW staff sergeants became the first to attend the course since 2022. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Devin M. Rumbaugh)

*Published November 20, 2025
Photo & Story by Staff Sgt. Devin Rumbaugh
621st Contingency Response Wing*

U.S. Air Force maintenance airmen assigned to the 621st Contingency Response Wing graduated from the Mobility Air Force Maintenance Supervision and Production Course instructed by the U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Operations School Nov. 10-21, 2025 at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.

A total of nine maintenance noncommissioned officers from the 321st Contingency Response Squadron, 521st CRS, 621st CRS, and 818th Mobility Support Advisory Squadron, attended the course in residency, saving approximately \$40,500 in TDY funding.

The MSPC aims to cultivate proficient maintenance leaders by equipping selected NCOs with comprehensive supervisory, technical, and managerial skills crucial for optimizing maintenance operations within a military organization," said Senior Master Sgt. Roscoe Tamondong, 621st Contingency Response Group maintenance functional manager. "

The course is not mandatory for all maintenance airmen. Unlike initial technical training all maintenance members receive, the course is targeted at those who will be responsible for managing and leading maintenance teams and activities.

"While in the CRW, the production superintendent and expeditor roles are combined and with these lessons, I will be able to better manage the flightline and supervise

maintainers," said Staff Sgt. Gilbert Lopez, 621st CRS contingency maintenance craftsman. "When I return to a standard maintenance unit, know the roles of those above me helps job performance and mission execution."

The contingency response wing mission often requires maintenance professionals to work in rapidly changing environments with minimal support, manning, and resources, levying relationships built with different Department of War entities, and advising foreign partners.

"I see myself using the lessons learned during the course to advise partner nations on maintenance production practices," said Staff Sgt. Jacob Fraas, 818th Mobility Support Advisory Squadron aircraft maintenance air advisor. "When I transition to the 621st CRG, I'll be able to accurately communicate maintenance operations and statuses while operating in austere locations."

Allowing staff sergeants assigned to the CRW to attend the course develops their skills and capabilities while in the contingency response wing, along with their following assignments.

"The MSPC transforms technically proficient Airmen into effective and agile maintenance leaders, capable of ensuring the rapid generation of airpower and contributing directly to the CRW's mission of rapid global response and agile combat support, particularly vital for sustaining equipment operability in forward operating locations," said Tamondong. 🌐



Spiritual Readiness continued from page 19

“Prayer develops spiritual readiness by fostering personal and community reflection and connection to one another and to each person’s higher power,” shared Col. Robert Farmer, 99th Readiness Division command chaplain.

JB-MDL offers chapel services for several faith groups, religious education (adult and child audiences), prayer services for various faith groups, ecumenical prayer services (such as the prayer breakfast, the National Day of Prayer, and Thanksgiving prayer services), community outreach, and food support for Soldiers and families in need.

“This is in addition to the traditional unit and Soldier-focused chaplain activities that ensure access to Constitutionally protected religious practice, counseling, casualty/mortuary/funeral support, and moral leadership training.”

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Answering the Call to Care: One Veteran's Next Chapter

By Kristin Bombel



After dedicating four years to the United States Marine Corps, Brendan Kelly's next mission would lead him to the frontlines of patient care. Kelly first enlisted in the USMC in 2017, where he spent his military career serving in specialized infantry units in the

Combined Anti-Armor Teams (CAAT) and would eventually manage the planning and execution of over 50 combat patrols and operations during his two deployments to Syria. He rose to the rank of Corporal, a recognition reflecting his proactive discipline and intrinsic reliability as a trusted leader to those in his infantry platoon.

Nearly seven weeks before his service came to an end, Kelly had just completed a second high-stakes deployment overseas, thousands of miles from home. Then, almost suddenly, he reentered civilian life, transitioning into what was his most prominent culture shock upon his return to the United States. Living each day as a Marine meant following a strict, regimented routine where every decision carried critical impact, a noticeable contrast to the slower, more flexible pace of everyday life. Kelly learned to lean on his close circle of family and friends throughout this transition, drawing strength from their unwavering support even in his most difficult moments.

Kelly spent a significant amount of time surrounded by Navy Hospital Corpsmen, witnessing firsthand how battlefield care, emergency treatment, and routine medical attention are delivered to those in combat. Having also been exposed to the

healthcare industry by his mother, who worked as a nurse during his childhood, and continues to do so today, he was determined to channel both his military experience and his mother's inspiration, into a service-oriented career. This decision ultimately brought him to where he is today: a soon-to-be graduate of Felician University's nursing program this Spring.

Nursing school is designed to challenge each student with accountability, confidence, and adaptability -- skills that proved crucial in his time planning and leading complex operations in the Marines. Kelly sought to elevate these strengths further, rising above the barriers he found within himself. "I had to become more comfortable asking questions, seeking help, and having a greater sense of understanding of others," he said. "These changes have helped to reinforce the principles I consider essential in life, such as humility and compassion."

Looking ahead, his post-graduation goal is to work in an environment where his commitment to integrity and service as a veteran can offer comfort to those facing serious and emergency medical conditions. Having been in the military, where life-altering situations are commonplace, he hopes to translate his empathetic mindset and apply it to patient care, where reassurance and clarity are at the forefront of every interaction.

The Marine Corps will always stand as the defining chapter of his life, and the one he is most proud of. "I know I was able to have at least a small impact on the world and be a part of something bigger than myself. I hope that I can continue to have a positive impact on people's lives each day and make the world a better place." ★



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Ramstein Air Base honor guardsmen stand at port arms after a memorial service on Ramstein Air Base, Germany, March 12, 2026. (Photo by Senior Airman Jason Jones Jr.)

AIR FORCE ISSUES NEW GUIDANCE TO STREAMLINE LINE OF DUTY DECISIONS FOR RESERVISTS, GUARDSMEN ON EXTENDED ACTIVE-DUTY ORDERS

Published February 23, 2026
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

The Department of the Air Force released updated guidance, Feb. 1, intended to accelerate Line of Duty determinations for Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard members serving on extended active-duty orders.

The directive revises Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-2910 to streamline the LOD process for continued access to health care for those Air Reserve component members who are activated for 31 or more consecutive days. The update prioritizes timely care and administrative consistency across components.

"This change reflects our commitment to taking care of our service members. The new directive removes bureaucratic friction and allows Airmen to focus on recovery and mission readiness," said Richard Anderson, assistant secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. "We will continue refining the process to ensure our Reserve and Guard forces receive the support they need and deserve."

Under the revised policy, LOD approving authorities will issue "in the line of duty" determinations when specific criteria are met, aligning procedures with those used for regular Air Force and active Guard and Reserve members. In cases that meet the criteria, officials will no longer need to determine when an illness or injury began—unless a commander requests a formal investigation.

Lt. Gen. John Healy, chief of the Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, equates this change to a tangible demonstration of the command's commitment to readiness and Airmen-first processes.

"When leadership talks about being 'Ready Now,' this is what it looks like in practice, empowering you to be healthy and mission-ready instead of leaving you stuck in a bureaucratic holding pattern," said Healy. "This is about cutting through the red tape to ensure you get the same

level of care as your active-duty counterparts, because the mission depends on it."

To qualify for the streamlined process, members must be serving on a single active-duty order for 30 days or more and must have at least 180 days of Total Active Federal Military Service. Members must complete an LOD Rights Advisement memorandum and submit medical documentation that includes a diagnosis and treatment directly supporting the claim.

Reservists and Guardsmen must initiate LOD requests before the end of their active-duty orders, either through their Reserve or Guard medical unit or through the Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness Integration Organization.

Requests that do not meet the new criteria will follow the standard informal or formal LOD processes outlined in current guidance.

Maj. Gen. Duke Pirak, acting director of the Air National Guard, emphasized the importance of removing administrative barriers for Guard members.

"This initiative directly supports wartime readiness by enabling our Guardsmen to return to the fight faster," said Pirak. "It provides a support structure for members during duty status transitions to ensure they remain mission ready. We look forward to future policy and system enhancements that will continue to refine and improve the Line of Duty process."

The directive applies to LOD determinations initiated on or after Feb. 1, 2026, and pertains only to health-care access. Other programs requiring LOD determinations, such as medical continuation or disability evaluations, will follow the requirements listed in DAFI 36-2910 and DAFI 36-3212.

Additional procedural guidance and an updated publication of DAFI 36-2910 will be released within 180 days. ✪



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ARMY RESERVE LEADER RECOGNIZES FOOD BANK'S EFFORTS DURING GOVERNMENT FURLOUGH

Published February 27, 2026
 Photos by Sgt. Salvatore Ottaviano
 Story by Staff Sgt. Shawn Morris
 99th Readiness Division

PENNSAUKEN, N.J. – The U.S. Army Reserve's 99th Readiness Division presented a certificate of appreciation to the Food Bank of South Jersey Feb. 9 at the company's headquarters here.

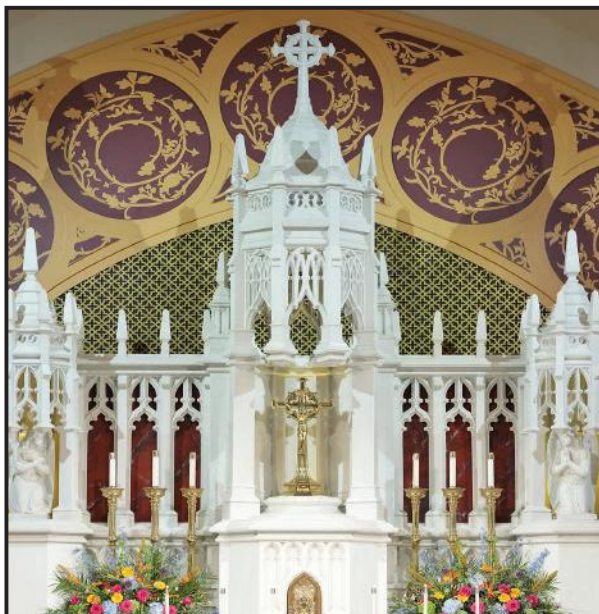
The certificate recognized the Food Bank's support of Soldiers, civilians and family members during the 43-day federal government shutdown in October-November 2025.

"We just want to relay our gratitude toward you and recognize your service," explained Brig. Gen. John D. Rhodes, 99th RD deputy commanding general, who presented the certificate to Food Bank leadership.

"It was pretty stressful on our Soldiers," Rhodes continued. "What you did really made a huge impact to support our Soldiers and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst."



continued on page 48



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LAKEHURST COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER WITH MASSIVE TOYS FOR TOTS DRIVE

Published January 23, 2026
Photo and Story by Adam Hochron
Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Lakehurst community achieved a record-breaking milestone during this year's Toys for Tots drive, sending three 7-ton tactical trucks and trailers back to the Marine Corps Combat Logistics Battalion in Red Bank, fully loaded with more than 100 bicycles and over 1,000 toys.

This annual drive was by far the most successful, surpassing all expectations of co-organizers Scott McChesney and Amanda Tanzini, who started the initiative in 2015 with just 200 toys. Over the years, word has spread about the drive, which begins with collection boxes placed in various buildings around Halloween and continues through the holiday season.

"We couldn't do it without the generosity of the workforce here," Tanzini added.

Assembling Bikes for the Kids

Lakehurst Executive Director Sean Brennan joined volunteers, including lead welder Larry Sinou, to assemble dozens of bicycles after hours.

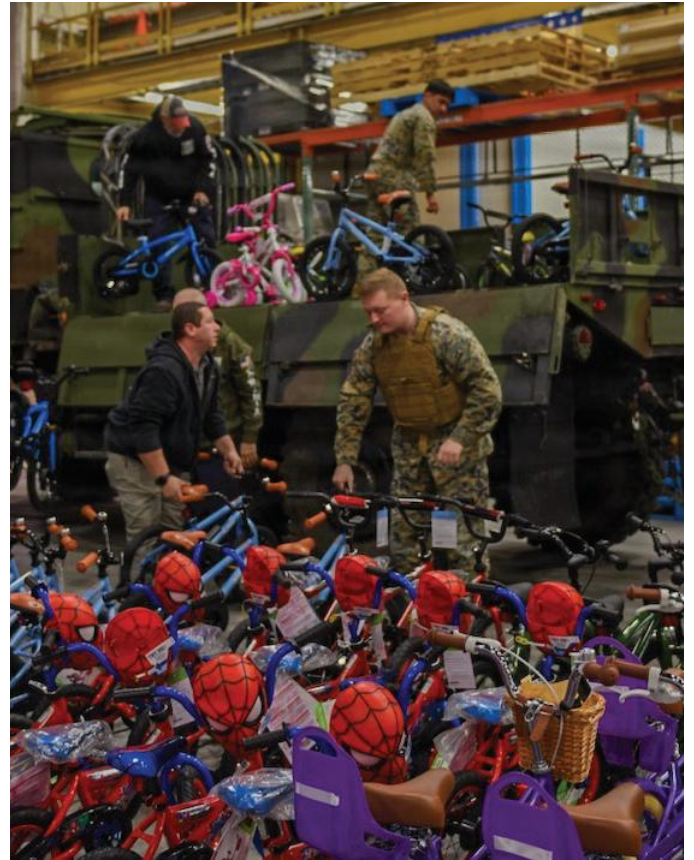
"This program is near and dear to my heart, and just to see what the kids are going to get out of this is totally amazing," Sinou said. "I couldn't have done it without the support of management, the generosity of everyone who donated, and the people putting in their time."

Community Effort and Support

While many toys are collected through the building boxes, Tanzini and McChesney credited Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst's Navy Exchange team for their significant contributions. Lakehurst Navy Exchange supervisor Lauren Blair set up a collection point in the store, helping to grow the effort year after year.

"I just want to be able to give back to the community and the kids to make sure they have a decent Christmas," Blair said. "With everybody coming together to help—the bikes, the toys—it's beyond wonderful." McChesney, who first became involved with Toys for Tots during his time in the Marine Corps, noted the importance of teamwork in making the drive a success.

While 2025 was a record-breaking year for the drive, McChesney and Tanzini are already looking ahead to next year, eager to see if they can surpass this year's success once again. 🌟



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An F-35 Lightning II is shown operating alongside Collaborative Combat Aircraft in a conceptual graphic illustrating their integration. The unmanned systems serve as wingmen, enhancing mission effectiveness by supporting manned aircraft pilots with critical tasks. (U.S. Navy graphic)



F-35 PILOTS AND NAVY COLLABORATIVE COMBAT AIRCRAFT HONE TACTICS IN JOINT SIMULATION ENVIRONMENT

Published January 5, 2026
Story by NAWCAD Visual Information
Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) achieved a milestone in advancing F-35 Lightning II aircraft integration with the Navy's Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) during a recent tactical demonstration in its Joint Simulation Environment (JSE).

The event demonstrated how advanced modeling and simulation can develop tactics and strategies for fifth-generation aircraft like the F-35 operating with uncrewed combat systems.

"Modern warfare is demanding more from our aviators," said NAWCAD Commander Rear Adm. Todd Evans. "This milestone shows the Joint Simulation Environment's impact on equipping them with the advanced tactics they need to win future battles."

During the demonstration, F-35 pilots used touch-screen tablets to control multiple CCA during simulated missions. Using advanced operational communication systems and precision-guided missiles, pilots engaged complex threats in the JSE's highly realistic virtual environment.

The JSE is the Department of War's state-of-the-art digital test and training range that replicates real-world combat scenarios in a virtual environment. Built by NAWCAD engineers, the JSE combines cockpit simulators, advanced software, and domed visual displays to allow pilots to train and test systems in a safe, controlled setting. The JSE enables pilots to fly more sorties in one week than they can on open-air ranges in a year, sharpening their skills and improving readiness.

The Navy's CCA are multi-role uncrewed combat vehicles that will operate with crewed fighters enhancing the mission effectiveness of crewed platforms in highly contested environments. They are central to the Department's future strategy, enabling pilots to focus on high-level decision-making while expanding operational capabilities. The JSE is playing a key role in developing tactics and operational concepts for integrating these systems with fifth-generation platforms like the F-35.

NAWCAD'S JSE continues to integrate additional platforms and enhance the fidelity of its simulated environment with planned additions of the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, and EA-18G Growler to enable integrated test and training in fiscal year 2026.

NAWCAD hosts dozens of squadrons and hundreds of pilots annually, fostering joint and international collaboration in advanced air combat training. The JSE is expanding with additional Navy and Air Force facilities under development at Naval Air Station Fallon, Nellis Air Force Base, and Edwards Air Force Base, to train tactical pilots.

NAWCAD employs military, civilian, and contract personnel. It operates test ranges, laboratories, and aircraft in support of test, evaluation, research, development, and sustainment for all Navy and Marine Corps aviation platforms. Based in Patuxent River, Maryland, NAWCAD also has major sites in St. Inigoes, Maryland; Lakehurst, New Jersey; and Orlando, Florida. ✪



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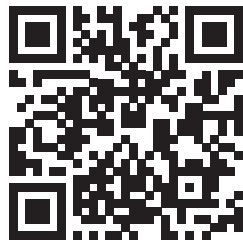
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A pilot operates a simulator inside the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's Joint Simulation Environment at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md. The JSE enables pilots to train in highly realistic virtual combat scenarios, sharpening their skills and improving readiness. (U.S. Navy photo)

According to their website, part of the Food Bank of South Jersey's mission is to provide food to people in need. The Food Bank maintains a food pantry on JBMDL, but increased their efforts during the furlough.

"It's not only what you did for our Soldiers, but what you do here on a daily basis to take care of our communities as well," Rhodes added. 🌟

If you or someone you know is in need, you can search by zip code for food-distribution sites in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties by scanning the QR code below.



<https://foodbanksj.org/zip-code-locator/>

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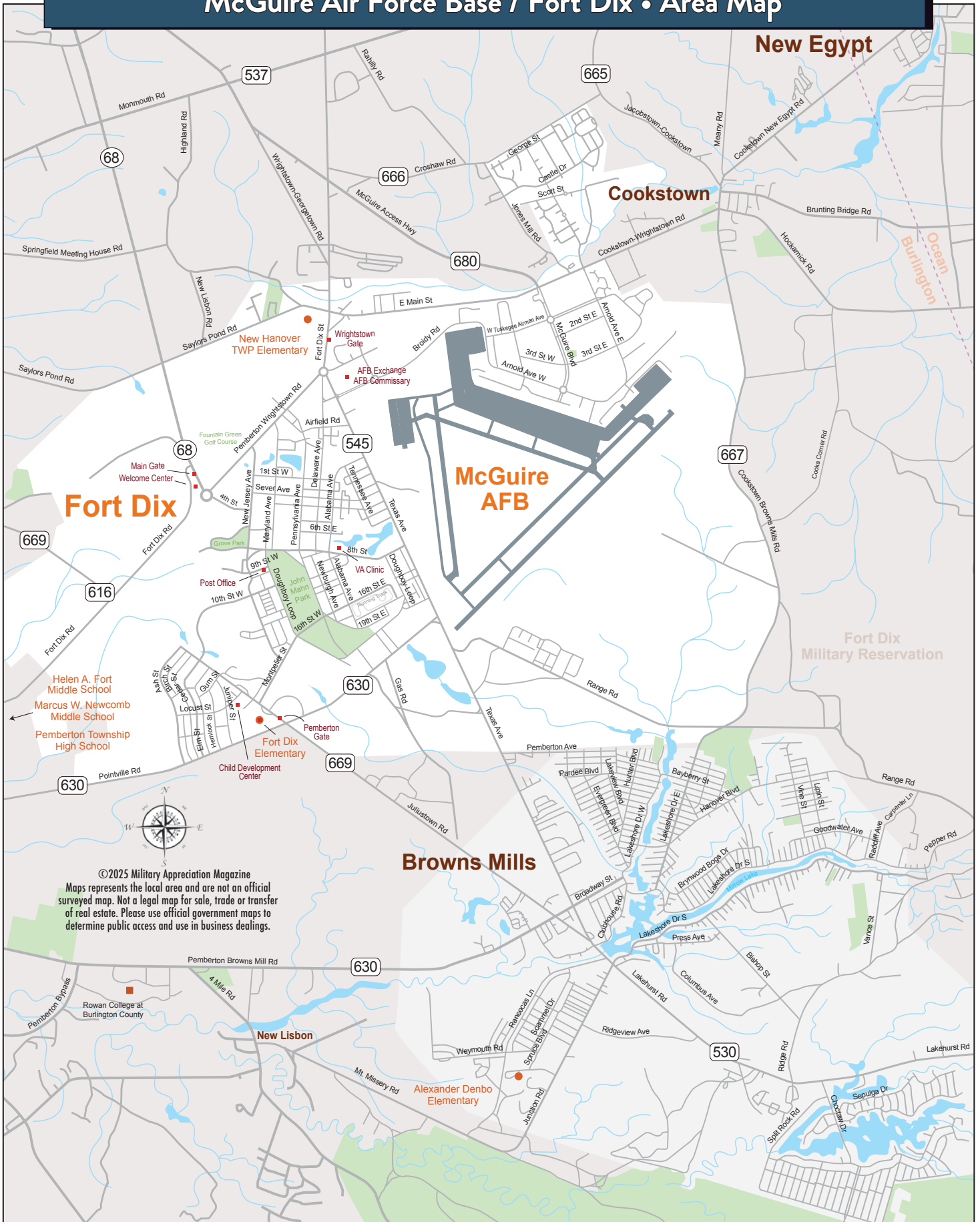


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**Military Appreciation Magazine Summer Issue (July-September 2026)
deadline is Friday, June 19, 2026**



McGuire Air Force Base / Fort Dix • Area Map



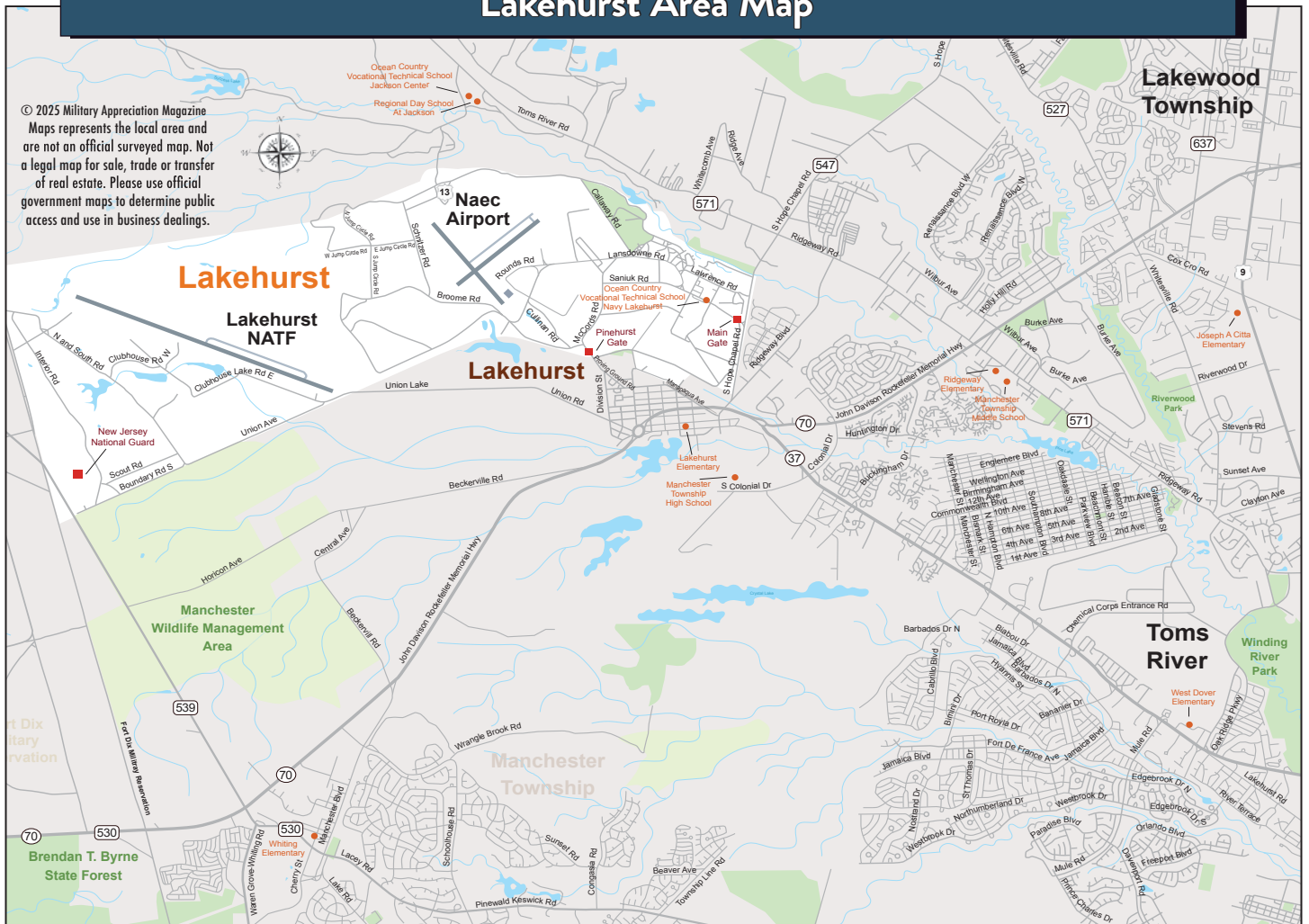
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JBMDL FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS

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All American Inn/Lodging.....	754-4667
Aquatics.....	562-6396
Auto Hobby Shop.....	754-4316/323-2087
Arts and Crafts.....	562-5691
Bowling Center.....	562-6895/323-2027
Business Office.....	323-1111
Chaplains Office.....	754-4673
Child and Youth Enrollment.....	562-4702/323-2260
87th Civil Engineer Customer Service Center.....	754-8723
Civilian Personnel.....	754-5701
Command Post.....	754-3935
Joint Base Library.....	754-2079
Joint Base Theater Reservations.....	754-2830
Joint Personnel Property Shipping Office.....	562-2571/323-7266
Lodging.....	323-2266
Medical Clinic.....	754-9200/323-5372
Military Clothing Sales.....	723-2307
Military Family Support Center.....	754-3154/562-2767/323-1248/323-1248
Military Personnel Section.....	323-5060
Navy Relief.....	323-2362
Outdoor Recreation.....	323-2583
Commissary.....	754-2153/323-1220
Community Special Events.....	323-2405
Doughboy Gym.....	562-5780
Family Child Care.....	562-1312/754-2516
Finance.....	754-5052
Fire Arms Registration.....	562-5260
Fitness and Sports Center.....	754-6085/323-7266

Name	Phone#
Fleet Liaison.....	323-7934
Flight Deck (Rec Center).....	323-2405
Force Support Squadron.....	754-5374
Fountain Green Golf Course.....	562-2166
Griffith Field House.....	562-4888
Halvorsen Hall.....	754-2450
Housing.....	754-3662/323-2370
Human Resources.....	754-6900/323-1058
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Inspector General.....	754-8711
John Mann Park.....	562-6667
Passenger Terminal.....	754-2749
Pine Ridge Golf Course.....	323-7483
Pine Ridge Pool.....	323-2473
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Protocol.....	754-2405
Public Affairs.....	754-2104
Pudgy's Sports Bar.....	724-0443
Range 14 Rod and Gun Club.....	562-4676
Safety.....	754-7233
School Liaison.....	754-3878
Soldier and Family Assistance Center.....	562-6554
Traffic Management Office (TMO), Personal Property Section (PPS).....	754-6911
The Attic (Donation/Assistance Center).....	754-8703
The Exchange.....	723-6100/323-7680
Thrift Shops.....	754-2368/723-2683/323-2362
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Veterinary Clinic.....	562-6636

Lakehurst Area Map



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Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Phone Numbers

QUICK REFERENCE

Emergency...911 • Base Operator...754-1110/323-2011 • Base Status...754-2273/323-7669

McGuire Area Code 609, DSN 650 Zip Code 08641	Dix Area Code 609, DSN 562 Zip Code 08640	Lakehurst Area Code 732, DSN 624 Zip Code 08733
JBMDL Hospital		JBMDL Dix Victim Advocate Services
87th Medical Group		5203 Maryland Ave., Fort Dix, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-3849, (609) 562-6343
3458 Neely Rd, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(866) 377-2778		JBMDL Beneficiary Counseling Assistance Coordinators
JBMDL Air Force Aid Society		87th Medical Group
Military & Family Support Center		3458 Neely Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-9082, (609) 754-9083
3435 Broidy Rd, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154		JBMDL McGuire ID/CAC Card Processing
JBMDL Andrews Federal Credit Union		2916 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-1592
3456 Broidy Rd, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 723-8530		JBMDL Library
JBMDL Armed Forces Bank		2603 Tuskegee Airmen Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2079
McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 723-0707		JBMDL Loan Closet
JBMDL Auto Hobby Shop		Military & Family Support Center
2416 Vandenberg Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 562-3333		3435 Broidy R., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154
JBMDL Exchange Barber Shop		JBMDL McGuire-Dix Housing Management Office
Main Exchange, 3452 Broidy Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 723-5190		3700 A Circle Dr., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3662
JBMDL Women, Infants, and Children (WIC & WIC-O)		JBMDL McGuire Family Advocacy Program
Department of Health		3458 Neely Rd., JB MDL McGuire, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-9680
15 Pioneer Boulevard, Westampton, NJ, 08060.....(609) 267-4304		JBMDL Legal Services/JAG
JBMDL Main Exchange		2901 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2010
3452 Broidy Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641-0000.....(609) 723-6100		JBMDL McGuire Chapel
JBMDL Exchange Food Court		McGuire Chapel
3452 Broidy Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 723-6100		2503 East Arnold Ave, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-4673
JBMDL Chaplain and Religious Services - Lakehurst		JBMDL McGuire Sports and Fitness Center
Cathedral of the Air		2504 POW/MIA Blvd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-6085
264 Hope Chapel Rd., Lakehurst, NJ, 08733.....(609) 754-4673		JBMDL McGuire Victim Advocate Services
JBMDL McGuire Child Development Center #1		2903 McGuire Blvd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2988, (609) 754-2968
2430 Can Do Way, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2966		JBMDL McGuire Welcome Center
JBMDL McGuire Child Development Center #2		3021 McGuire Blvd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3628, (609) 754-3938
2414 Tuskegee Airmen Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3661		JBMDL Lakehurst Privatized Housing Office
JBMDL Civilian Personnel Office		1053 Division St., Lakehurst, NJ, 08733.....(844) 334-0831
2903 McGuire Blvd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-5701, (609) 754-2554		JBMDL Veterinary Services
JBMDL McGuire Commissary		3259 Gettysburg Ave., Fort Dix, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-6636
3453 Broidy Rd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2153, (609) 754-5860		JBMDL Dix Outdoor Recreation Center
JBMDL Dental Clinic		6045 Doughboy Loop, JB MDL, NJ, 08641-0000.....(609) 562-6667, (609) 562-4208
2417 McGuire Blvd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3786, (609) 234-2189		JBMDL Non-appropriated Funds (NAF) Human Resources
JBMDL Dix Chapel		2916 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-6900
5240 New Jersey Ave., Fort Dix, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-4673		JBMDL New Parent Support Program
JBMDL Education & Training Center		87th Medical Group
3829 School House Rd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3019, (609) 754-4116		3458 Neely R., JB MDL, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-9680, (866) 377-2778
JBMDL EFMP - Family Support		JBMDL McGuire Personal Financial Management Services
3435 Broidy Rd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154, (609) 754-9290		Military & Family Support Center
JBMDL EFMP - Enrollment		3435 Broidy Rd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154
87th Medical Group		JBMDL Military Personnel Support Office
3458 Neely Rd., JB MDL McGuire, NJ, 08640.....(609) 754-9752		2916 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3986, (609) 754-4740 (609) 754-5092, (609) 754-3017
JBMDL Falcon Creek Golf Course		JBMDL McGuire Relocation Assistance Program
2007 Can Do Way, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2169, (609) 754-3330		Military & Family Support Center
JBMDL McGuire Family Center		3435 Broidy R., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154
3435 Broidy Rd., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154		JBMDL McGuire Retirement Services
JBMDL Family Child Care Program		2916 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-2362, (609) 754-2474
3435 Broidy Rd., JB McGuire, NJ, 08640.....(609) 754-3154, (609) 754-3341		
JBMDL McGuire Finance Office		
2906 Tuskegee Airmen Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-6258		

continued on page 53

Phone numbers continued from page 43

JBMDL School Liaison Office
3435 Broidy Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 754-3154

JBMDL McGuire Spouse Education, Training and Careers Military & Family Support Center
3435 Broidy R., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-3154

JBMDL Household Goods/Transportation Office
1706 Vandenberg Ave., McGuire AFB, NJ, 08641..... (609) 754-6911, (609) 754-3521

JBMDL Household Goods/Transportation Office (Inbound)
5139 Pemberton-Wrightstown Rd., Fort Dix, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-6376

JBMDL McGuire Transition Assistance Program Military & Family Support Center
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JBMDL McGuire-Dix Unaccompanied Member Housing
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JBMDL Crescenz VA Medical Center
Crescenz VA Medical Center
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JBMDL Lakehurst Unaccompanied Member Housing
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JBMDL Lakehurst Housing Management Office
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JBMDL McGuire-Dix Privatized Family Housing
3700 A Circle Dr., JB MDL, NJ, 08641.....(609) 723-4290, (609) 316-0172

JBMDL Lakehurst Family Center
488-2 Highway 547, JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-1248

JBMDL Lakehurst Information & Referral Services
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JBMDL Lakehurst Relocation Assistance Program
488-2 Highway 547, JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-1248

JBMDL Lakehurst Personal Financial Management Services
488-2 Highway 547, JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-1248

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JBMDL Lakehurst ID/CAC Card Processing
Highway 547, JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-5060

JBMDL Dix Youth Center
1279 Locust Street, JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-5061

JBMDL Lakehurst Youth Center
487 Walsh Drive, JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-4043

JBMDL Lakehurst Victim Advocate Services
201 Highway 34 South, JB MDL, NJ, 07722.....(732) 573-5199

JBMDL Dix Welcome Center
2270 Fort Dix Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-6604

JBMDL Lakehurst Outdoor Recreation
123 Severyns Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-2583,(732) 323-1362

JBMDL Griffith Fitness Center
8th St., JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-4888

JBMDL Doughboy Gym
5953 Newport St., JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-5780

JBMDL Lakehurst Fitness Center
123 Severyns Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-7266

JBMDL Dix Child Development Center
1188 Juliustown Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-2371

JBMDL Lakehurst Child Development Center
657 Berry Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-2260

JBMDL McGuire School Age Care Program
3830 E. Scott St., JB MDL, NJ, 08641.....(609) 754-5914

JBMDL Dix School Age Care Program
5219 8th St., JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-3873

JBMDL Lakehurst School Age Care Program
487 Walsh Dr., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-4043

JBMDL Lakehurst Commissary
485 Walsh Rd., Lakehurst, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-1220, (732) 323-1271

JBMDL Dix Bowling Center
6054 Doughboy Loop, JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-6895

JBMDL Lakehurst Bowling Center
489 Saniuk Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-2027

JBMDL Dix Information, Tickets & Travel (ITT)
6045 Doughboy Loop, JB MDL, NJ, 08640.....(609) 562-4208, (609) 562-6667

JBMDL Lakehurst Information, Tickets & Travel (ITT)
123 Severyns Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-1362, (732) 323-4565

JBMDL Pine Ridge Golf Course
33 Berry Rd., JB MDL, NJ, 08733.....(732) 323-7483

New Jersey Veteran Service Organizatons

Please note that the following lists includes only five posts from each of two major VSOs, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The most current and comprehensive information of these two VSOs at the State level can be found at the following websites:

www.njamericanlegion.org

vfwnj.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp

American Legion Post 509

320 Beverly Rancocas Rd, Willingboro, NJ 08046
(609) 871-9000

American Legion Post 371

41 N Lakeview Dr, Gibbsboro, NJ 08026
(856) 783-7327

American Legion Post 38

129 Veterans Ln, Haddonfield, NJ 08033
(856) 429-5414

American Legion Post 129

2025 Church Rd, Toms River, NJ 08754
(732) 255-9250

American Legion Post 348

822 Mantoloking Rd, Brick, NJ 08723
(732) 477-1915

VFW Post 1817

142 Riverbank, Burlington, NJ 08016
(609) 386-3608

VFW Post 2445

914 East Main Street, Maple Shade, NJ 08005
(856) 667-9581

VFW Post 1270

2324 Penn St, Pennsauken, NJ 08110
(856) 317-9081

VFW Post 316

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