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Times Union, June 11, 2025

Army Parade

Army National Guard soldiers from New York to march in Army anniversary parade

WRVO, June 13, 2025 :

More than 400 Army National Guardsmen from the 42nd Infantry Division will be taking part in the Army's 250th anniversary parade on Saturday.

The division includes soldiers from Syracuse, Utica, Buffalo, and the Hudson Valley, among other locations.

Sgt. 1st Class Trevor Cullen said the soldiers are excited to be involved in such a large event.

"Our job is to protect this great country, but we are also in our local communities, and we get to bring that local community aspect down here to the District of Columbia," he said. "We really get to showcase what we do best."

Different marching units in the parade will represent different time periods in the Army's history. The 42nd Infantry Division will represent World War I, when the division was created.

"The reason we're called the 'Rainbow Division' is because we stretched like a rainbow across the U.S. because we were pulling all of these different units in order to support World War I," said Cullen.

And the service members in the division wear a patch with half of a rainbow in honor of those who were lost in that war.

Cullen said it's just one way to honor the service of the many soldiers who have fought in the past.

"The United States Army, over its entire 250 years, has stood to protect and defend this nation, and we are honored and privileged that we get to be a part of that," he said.

About 100 soldiers from Fort Drum will also take part in this weekend's festivities.

<https://www.wrvo.org/2025-06-13/army-national-guard-soldiers-from-new-york-to-march-in-army-anniversary-parade>

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NY Army Guard Soldiers marching in Army's 250th birthday parade in Washington

Western New York Papers, June 11, 2025 :

Four hundred thirty-six soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division will be among the 6,700 troops taking part in the Army's 250th anniversary parade in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, June 14.

The division is responsible for soldiers across the northeast but is headquartered in Troy.

The soldiers left for Washington, D.C., this morning, and will return June 15.

The contingent will be led by Maj. Gen. Jack James, the commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, and a color guard.

Eleven of the Army's 19 divisions will be represented by marching contingents. The 42nd Infantry Division is the only one of the eight Army National Guard divisions sending a contingent to the parade.

The marchers are coming from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, a part of the 42nd Infantry Division, with elements located across the state. The soldiers come from units based in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica, New York City and the Hudson Valley.

Thirty soldiers from the Massachusetts Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, which is assigned to the 27th Brigade, are also part of the contingent.

Another 30 soldiers from the 42nd Infantry Division Band, which is headquartered at Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill, are also marching.

The headquarters elements of the 42nd Infantry Division are currently training for a deployment to the Middle East at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

The marching units will be divided up to represent different periods of the Army's history. The 42nd Infantry Division contingent, along with marchers from the active Army's 4th Infantry Division, will represent World War I.

Soldiers in World War I uniforms will march in front of the two division contingents.

"The 42nd Infantry Division is honored to represent the entire U.S. Army in WWI at the Army's 250th birthday parade," James said.

"The legacy forged by Rainbow Division soldiers on battlefields across France marked the 42d ID as one of the premier divisions of the American Expeditionary Force. We are honored to represent our predecessors, and all brave Americans who fought in that conflict 100 years ago," he added.

The 42nd was created during World War I by taking National Guard units from 26 states and creating a special division, which could go quickly to France in the fall of 1917. The division was organized in Garden City, Long Island, and nicknamed "The Rainbow Division."

The division's first chief of staff, Douglas MacArthur – who later commanded American forces in World War II – said the division would "stretch across the country like a rainbow."

The Army traces its birthday back to June 14, 1775. On that day, the Continental Congress voted to enlist soldiers into a force serving all the Colonies. Previously, each colony had raised its own troops when required.

The soldiers moved from locations across New York and Massachusetts to Washington. They are being housed in an empty Department of Agriculture office building and an unused General Services Administration warehouse.

The 500 New York National Guard soldiers and airmen who helped at the presidential inauguration in January stayed in these buildings then.

The cost for the New York National Guard to send soldiers to the parade is being covered by the Army.

The soldiers will receive MREs for breakfast and lunch and a hot meal for dinner along with per-diem of about \$69.

The parade will include 28 M1A2 Abrams tanks, 28 M3 Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles, 28 Stryker wheeled infantry vehicles, and four M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers.

The parade will march on Constitution Avenue along the Mall past the White House. Flyovers from historic aircraft and Army helicopters will be part of the event.

<https://www.wnypapers.com/news/article/current/2025/06/11/163352/ny-army-guard-soldiers-marching-in-armys-250th-birthday-parade-in-washington>

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Rainy, stormy weekend weather to potentially put a damper on DC's Saturday military parade

WTOPNews, June13, 2025 :

The weekend is getting off to a rough start on Friday as residents across the region face hot, humid weather conditions — in addition to flood threats being brought on by the latest storms moving into the D.C. area.

Aside from a storm alert going into effect at 3 p.m., a flood watch issued by the National Weather Service on Friday will take effect for the D.C. region starting at 6 p.m. and run until 2 a.m. on Saturday.

A bulletin issued by the agency indicates heavy rainfall has the potential to prompt “flooding of rivers, creeks, streams, and other low-lying and flood-prone locations.”

Current estimates suggest rainfall rates will fall between 1 to 3 inches within the first two hours of evening thunderstorms, with isolated high totals that could hit 4 inches.

7News First Alert Chief Meteorologist Veronica Johnson warned incoming storms “could pack a punch with some high winds, maybe even some heavier downpours that may lead to isolated flash flooding.”

The Weather Prediction Center has the D.C. area under the “marginal” risk for flash flooding.

<https://wtop.com/dc/2025/06/scattered-thunderstorms-could-impact-u-s-army-parade-in-dc/>

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30 Mass. National Guard troops with historic ties to Revolution marching in DC Army parade

Boston Globe, June 12, 2025 :

WASHINGTON — Thirty National Guard soldiers from Massachusetts are in Washington this week, marching in Saturday's controversial — and costly — Army parade.

They are members of the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, headquartered at the Melrose Armory. They are part of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 42nd Infantry Division, headquartered in Syracuse, N.Y.

“As one of the four oldest units in the U.S. military, soldiers from the 1-182 Infantry were among the Massachusetts militia who first formed the ranks of the Continental Army on Cambridge Common in 1775,” said Lt. Col. Landon Mavrelis, commander, 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, in a statement.

Guard Parade

New York Army National Guard soldiers load their gear onto a bus as they prepare to depart for Washington, D.C., on Thursday at Hancock Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, to take part in the Army’s 250th birthday parade in Washington. Four hundred and thirty-six soldiers from the New York and Massachusetts Army National Guard, assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division, will take part in the parade on Saturday. (Provided photo)The Republican

The 42nd “Rainbow” Division is one of the eight Army National Guard divisions in the parade, said Eric Durr, spokesman for the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs. Eleven of the Army’s 19 divisions are participating.

The 42nd was created during World War I by taking National Guard units from 26 states and creating a special division that could go quickly to France in the fall of 1917. The division was organized in Garden City, Long Island, and was nicknamed “The Rainbow Division.”

The division’s first chief of staff, Douglas MacArthur — who later commanded American forces in World War II — said the division would “stretch across the country like a rainbow.”

“The legacy forged by Rainbow Division soldiers on battlefields across France marked the 42d ID as one of the premier divisions of the American Expeditionary Force. We are honored to represent our predecessors, and all brave Americans who fought in that conflict 100 years ago,” said Major Gen. Jack James, the commander of the 42nd Infantry Division.

Trump Military Parade

U.S. Army personnel watch as tanks and other military vehicles are transported via train at the CSX railroad yard in Jessup, Maryland, on Monday, ahead of an upcoming military parade commemorating the U.S. Army’s 250th anniversary and coinciding with Donald Trump’s 79th birthday. (Stephanie Scarbrough / Associated Press)AP

James will lead the contingent along with a color guard.

Another 30 soldiers from the 42nd Infantry Division Band, headquartered at the Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill, New York, also will march.

The parade officially commemorates the 250th anniversary of the Army's founding in 1775. But the date Saturday also coincides with President Donald Trump's birthday, raising questions about the appropriateness of soldiers participating in what could be a political event.

The parade is expected to cost \$45 million.

The Massachusetts soldiers left for Washington, D.C., on Wednesday and will return Sunday, according to the New York Guard.

According to a statement from New York State, soldiers will be housed in an empty Department of Agriculture office building and an unused General Services Administration warehouse, just as they were for the inauguration.

The soldiers will receive meals ready-to-eat, or MREs, for breakfast and lunch, and a hot meal for dinner along with per-diem of about \$69. The cost is being picked up by the Army.

<https://www.masslive.com/westernmass/2025/06/30-mass-national-guard-troops-with-historic-ties-to-revolution-marching-in-dc-army-parade.html>

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Emergency Response

National Guard training in Capital Region through Thursday

WTEN, June 11, 2025 :

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – The National Guard has been conducting training in the Capital Region all week. It's running through a number of scenarios to practice responses to a terroristic deployment of weapons of mass destruction.

Seven National Guard Civil Support Teams from six states are training in the Capital Region, from Albany to Lake George. On Wednesday they were in Saratoga Springs.

One exercise, at SPAC, replicated a scenario where biological and chemical weapons were deployed at a popular venue.

"The National Guard in general is preparing for a number of contingencies as always. We have a homeland response mission. We also have an overseas mission so that is something that we prepare for anyway, but as far as my team, we are focused on hazmat civil support operations for possible weapons of mass destruction," said Giroux.

Giroux represents one of 57 Civil Support Teams across the nation. New York has two, one is based in New York City.

“Why the Capital District is because our team is based out of Scotia at the Stratton Airbase. It’s our hometown. And it’s the capital of New York. So well, New York City is traditionally the largest target area that we can think of, traditionally, the capital could very well be. And there’s a lot of great resources and a lot of great partnerships we wanted to exploit and develop,” said Lt. Col. John Giroux, the commander of the New York National Guard’s 2nd Civil Support Team.

Giroux said they have 114 participants on the ground, from across the Northeast. New York is hosting teams from Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

The focus is on securing a scene where nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons are involved.

With many federal, state and local partners involved Giroux said it’s imperative to practice communicating with partners across chains of command.

“It is complex, but that’s why we have the incident command system, the ICS and the national incident management system. We follow all of the rules of the road and the language and the structure of our agency partners over civilian authorities because they’re the ones that we are really supporting, so we follow their rules and we follow their lead,” said Giroux.

He said they hold these types of realistic training all year round, so that they’re “always ready”.

“We do it all the time. If you ever see it in progress, please don’t be alarmed. Feel free to come up to us, ask questions. We’re here to support with anything we can do. And as far as any agency partners out there that wanna work with us and want to train with us we’re happy to. We’re always open and excited to make new connections and partnerships and relationships,” said Giroux.

The National Guard Civil Support Team concludes its training on Thursday in Lake George.

<https://www.news10.com/news/national-guard-training-in-capital-region-through-thursday/>

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National Guard And New York Law Enforcement Conduct Hazmat Training Exercises In Capital Region

Q105 FM, June 9, 2025:

THIS IS A DRILL, THIS IS ONLY A DRILL. Spend one minute checking up on the latest news and you can see there is much unrest around the United States. The political protests and the reactions to these protests have many New Yorkers on edge.

Here in the Capital Region of New York you might witness unusual activity by our local law enforcement along with New York State Park Police and even the National Guard but, in these cases, there is no cause for alarm. Here's what is going on.

There are a series of safety training exercises taking place all around the Capital Region. In Albany, for example, you may have seen Albany Police, New York National Guard Civil Support Teams, Albany Fire Fighters and New York State Troopers conducting training exercises at the Palace Theatre, Port of Albany and the USS Slater on Broadway.

These hazmat training exercises are taking place inside and outside of the locations listed above as well as on the Hudson River. These exercises in Albany should conclude on Wednesday June 11th but there are more.

On Wednesday June 11th, in the Saratoga Springs area, National Guard and area law enforcement personnel will be holding a training exercise at Saratoga Spa State Park and Saratoga Performing Arts Center. The drill is expected to last most of the day and will involve a helicopter landing and taking off.

You may see emergency vehicles, uniformed personnel, exercise participants in hazmat suits, white decontamination tents and even hazardous materials response equipment. THIS IS A DRILL, THIS IS ONLY A DRILL.

https://q1057.com/national-guard-new-york-hazmat-training-capital-region/?utm_source=tsmclip&utm_medium=referral

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Federal Government

Armed National Guard Troops Aid Immigration Agents on Raids in Los Angeles

New York Times, June 9, 2025:

Note: This news item is being included for your situational awareness

Armed National Guard Troops Aid Immigration Agents on Raids in Los Angeles

Armed National Guard troops mobilized by President Trump accompanied federal immigration enforcement officers on raids in Los Angeles on Tuesday, a move that the state of California has called unlawful and inflammatory.

Tricia McLaughlin, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security, confirmed Tuesday evening that the National Guard was accompanying Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials on their operations.

The Trump administration deployed nearly 5,000 National Guard troops and Marines to the Los Angeles area to stop protests. The deployment enraged officials in California, who filed lawsuits asking the court to intervene in what they said were illegal and provocative moves.

Earlier in the evening, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth posted a photo of what appeared to be military personnel with rifles standing with ICE officers on social media. "This We'll Defend," he wrote.

ICE also posted images on social media of officers detaining individuals while being surrounded by National Guard members who could be identified by the insignia on their uniforms.

A federal judge in California set a hearing for Thursday afternoon on the state's request to restrict the federal government's use of military personnel in Los Angeles in law enforcement, limiting them only to protecting federal property.

The state also demanded an emergency order by Tuesday afternoon declaring that the Marines and other troops could not accompany immigration agents on raids or perform other law enforcement activities, such as operating checkpoints. The judge, Charles S. Breyer, declined to meet the deadline.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/10/us/national-guard-ice-raids-los-angeles.html>

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/10/us/national-guard-ice-raids-los-angeles.html>

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ICE protests in NYC continue amid Trump's immigration crackdown

Fox 5, June 11, 2025 :

The Brief

New York City is preparing for another wave of protests Tuesday afternoon as anger grows over the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

When asked about deploying the National Guard, Mayor Adams emphasized NYC's strong police force and said there are other ways to handle the situation before using the military.

An evening demonstration is planned at 26 Federal Plaza, where Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is headquartered. Protesters are demanding an end to mass deportations and calling for solidarity with immigrants.

NEW YORK - New York City is preparing for another wave of protests Tuesday as anger grows over President Donald Trump's nationwide immigration crackdown.

Will the National Guard be deployed in NYC?

President Trump assured Deputy Mayor of Public Safety Kaz Daughtry and NYPD Chief of Department John Chell that he will not send the National Guard to New York City in regard to the anti-ICE protests, provided the police keep demonstrators from acting out, according to The New York Post.

When asked about the possibility of deploying the National Guard in New York City, Mayor Eric Adams emphasized the city's large law enforcement manpower and added that there are other options before turning to a military response.

What they're saying:

Both Adams and NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch, have warned that New York City will not tolerate violence tied to ongoing immigration protests.

"We have no tolerance for property damage, for blocking traffic, or for attacks on law enforcement," Adams said. "Any such acts will be met with a swift and decisive response from the NYPD."

That warning came as momentum continued in an "ICE out of NYC" demonstration on Monday, where dozens were arrested including those who stormed the lobby of Trump Tower.

While many demonstrations across the country have remained peaceful, some have led to confrontations.

Over the weekend, protesters clashed with police and immigration officers in Lower Manhattan.

Several people were arrested at Federal Plaza after a protest turned tense, with demonstrators expressing outrage over a high school student detained by ICE and separated from his family during a routine immigration hearing.

The student, from Grover Cleveland High School in Ridgewood, Queens, was taken into custody while attending a legal hearing to seek asylum.

What we don't know:

Officials haven't released the name of the student or where he's being held.

ICE has not returned calls for comment.

Are there protests in NYC today?

A 5 p.m. demonstration is planned at 26 Federal Plaza, where Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is headquartered.

Protesters are demanding an end to mass deportations and calling for solidarity with immigrants. The flyer reads "ICE out of NYC."

Insurrection Act, LA protests

Trump doubled down Tuesday, defending the use of the National Guard in Los Angeles and left the door open to invoking the Insurrection Act, a federal law that allows a president to deploy military forces domestically.

"If there's an insurrection, I would certainly invoke it. We'll see," Trump told reporters. "Last night was terrible, and the night before that was terrible."

The Insurrection Act, passed through a series of laws between 1792 and 1871, has been used sparingly due to its sweeping power.

House Speaker Mike Johnson supported Trump's handling of the protests and echoed his criticism of California Governor Gavin Newsom. "That's not my lane," he said when asked if Newsom should face legal consequences.

Meanwhile, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem posted that deportations would continue despite the backlash. "ICE will continue to enforce the law," she wrote on X.

New York officials have not announced any plans to call in the National Guard.

This report is based on comments from the mayor, the Associated Press, The New York Post and FOX 5 NY.

<https://www.fox5ny.com/news/tuesday-protests-nyc-national-guard>

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NYPD commissioner says no need for National Guard after 86 arrested in NYC ICE protest

NY Daily News, June 11, 2025 :

NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch says she doesn't need help from the National Guard after cops arrested 86 anti-ICE activists in lower Manhattan — with more protests expected this week.

"We certainly got this," Tisch said on Fox 5's "Good Day New York" Wednesday morning. "I spent the weekend reaching out to our federal partners with a very clear message that the NYPD will have this under control. We have plans in place and if things escalate we can bring in cops from all over the city to assist."

"We have an army of 34,000 officers," she added. "We're prepared for everything that comes our way."

The Trump administration has deployed the National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles against the wishes of Mayor Karen Bass and California Gov. Gavin Newsom to quell protests that had flashes of violence. The state is suing to block the deployment.

Tisch does not expect a similar scenario to play out in New York.

"The NYPD has a responsibility to maintain safety and order and we are not going to abdicate that responsibility," Tisch told Fox 5. "We are fully able to police these protests and do it well."

More than 2,500 protesters showed up in Foley Square to protest the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's new tactics of rounding up and arresting people coming out of immigration court. It was the second day of protests at Foley Square.

Holding signs and screaming "F—k you! f—k ICE!" and "No ICE, no KKK, no fascist USA!" some protesters marched to Washington Square Park while a large number stayed at Foley Square to vent their frustrations with the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

Some protesters who remained by ICE headquarters at 26 Federal Plaza began to throw "litter baskets and rubbish in the streets," Tisch said.

"We did have a group of about 200 protestors looking to sow a little chaos and disorder — and the NYPD will not tolerate that," Tisch said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" Wednesday.

Some of the protesters threw bottles at cops and chucked traffic cones into the street. By the end of the night, cops had rounded up 86 protesters.

Cops said 52 of the protesters received summonses to appear in court at a later date. The remaining 34 were criminally charged, although the exact charges were not immediately disclosed, and were awaiting arraignment in Manhattan Criminal Court.

Officers started to clash with protesters around 8 p.m., with cops zip-tying demonstrators who were then put into white police vans.

More anti-ICE demonstrations are expected throughout the week and a mass protest is scheduled for Saturday.

Many of the protests playing out in New York and around the country were sparked by horrific images of the National Guard and Marines being called in to quell anti-Ice protesters in Los Angeles.

<https://www.nydailynews.com/2025/06/11/nypd-commissioner-says-no-need-for-national-guard-after-86-arrested-in-nyc-ice-protest/>

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Veterans are divided over the Army's big parade, being held on Trump's birthday

Associated Press, June 11, 2025 :

NOTE: This item is provided for your SA.

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — James McDonough served in the U.S. Army for 27 years, fighting in Vietnam and delivering humanitarian aid to Rwanda. For him, Saturday's military parade in Washington for the Army's 250th anniversary — coinciding with President Donald Trump's birthday — is about the resilience of a vital institution and the nation it serves.

"The soldiers marching that day represent all of that history," said McDonough, 78, of Crofton, Maryland. "They don't represent a single day. They don't represent a single person. It's the American Army still standing straight, walking tall, ready to defend our country."

Christopher Purdy, an Army veteran who served in Iraq, called the parade a facade that paints over some of the Republican president's policies that have targeted

military veterans and current service members, including cuts at the Department of Veterans Affairs and a ban on transgender troops.

Purdy said the parade, long sought by Trump, will needlessly display U.S. military might on the president's 79th birthday.

"It's embarrassing," said Purdy, 40, of Atlanta. "It's expensive. And whatever his reasons are for doing it, I think it's entirely unnecessary."

Until recently, the Army's long-planned birthday celebration did not include a big parade. Added under the Trump administration, the event, featuring hundreds of military vehicles and aircraft and thousands of soldiers, has divided veterans.

Some liken it to the military chest-pounding commonly seen in North Korea, a step toward authoritarianism or a perverse birthday party for Trump.

Others see it as a once-in-a-lifetime accounting of the Army's achievements and the military service of millions of soldiers over centuries. The parade is not about Trump, they say, but the public seeing the faces of soldiers when so few Americans serve.

The Army expects up to 200,000 people could attend and says the parade will cost an estimated \$25 million to \$45 million.

Trump, speaking at Fort Bragg this week, said Saturday would be "a big day" and noted "we want to show off a little bit."

"We're going to celebrate our greatness and our achievements," he said. "This week, we honor 250 years of valor and glory and triumph by the greatest fighting force ever to walk the face of the Earth: the United States Army."

'Divisive politics have ruined it'

For Edmundo Eugenio Martinez Jr., an Army veteran who fought in Iraq, the parade is a missed opportunity to honor generations of veterans, many of whom paid a steep price and came home to little fanfare.

"Sadly, the timing and the optics and divisive politics have ruined it," said Martinez, 48, of Katy, Texas. "And I'm not picking one side or the other. Both sides are guilty."

'It's just suspicious'

Joe Plenzler, a retired Marine who fought in Iraq, said Trump wants to see troops saluting him on his birthday as tanks roll past.

"It's just suspicious," the 53-year-old from Middletown, Virginia, said of the timing.

"I absolutely love the Army from the bottom of my cold black Marine heart," he said. "But if the Army's birthday was a day later, we probably wouldn't be doing it. I'd rather see that \$50 million take care of the men and women who went off to war and came back with missing arms, legs and eyeballs, and with damaged brains."

'Part of American culture'

Joe Kmiec, who served in the Army and Minnesota National Guard from 1989 to 1998, supports the parade because the Army is "part of American culture and our fabric."

He notes the Army's pioneering contributions to engineering and medicine, from dams to new surgical techniques. Like many veterans, he has a strong familial connection: His father served in the Army, and so did his maternal grandfather, who fought in World War II.

"I didn't vote for President Trump, but the commander in chief is going to be part of that celebration," said Kmiec, 54, of Roberts, Wisconsin. "The distinction needs to be made that the parade is a celebration of our Army, not of a person."

'Stroking Trump's ego'

For Gulf War Army veteran Paul Sullivan, Trump and the parade are inextricably linked.

"This Trump tank travesty is all about stroking Trump's ego," said Sullivan, 62, who lives outside Charlottesville, Virginia. "If Trump truly cared about our service members, he would sit down with them quietly and say, 'What can we do with \$50 million or \$100 million to make your lives better?' He's not."

'We are a great nation'

McDonough, the veteran from Crofton, Maryland, disagrees that the parade is about Trump or too costly. He said the U.S. held a grand celebration in New York after World War II when the nation was deeply in debt.

"We certainly need to bring our debt down, and we certainly need to take care of our veterans," he said. "But it's a false dichotomy. It's like saying if we bought two less aircraft carriers, we could do so much better to take care of our poor."

And McDonough said soldiers' oath is to the Constitution, not to Trump.

The president "understands the importance of doing this, not only for the Army, but for the nation," McDonough said.

'A real dark turn'

Purdy, the veteran from Atlanta, said the parade's brazen flex of military strength is not an American tradition, particularly absent a recent victory.

"I'm not saying we shouldn't celebrate the country," he said. "But for us to be projecting this type of hard power, in such a real in-your-face way, that's just not who we are."

Trump is brushing aside old alliances and foreign aid that have helped maintain peace for decades, Purdy asserted.

"It signals a real dark turn if we're just going to roll out the tanks," Purdy said.

'People are the Army'

Michael Nardotti, an Army veteran who served in Vietnam, said military hardware has long been in American parades, which can help recruitment.

More important, he said, is the tremendous value in the public seeing soldiers' faces in a parade when active-duty troops make up less than 1% of the population.

"'People are the Army,'" said Nardotti, 78, of Aldie, Virginia, quoting a former Army chief of staff.

Nardotti said he'll listen carefully to Trump's speech.

"I hope it sends the right message," he said.

<https://www.dailynews.com/2025/06/11/veterans-trump-military-parade/amp/>

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Bragg Soldiers Who Cheered Trump's Political Attacks While in Uniform Were Checked for Allegiance, Appearance

Military.com, June 11, 2025 :

Note: This item is being provided for your SA.

It was supposed to be a routine appearance, a visit from the commander in chief to rally the troops, boost morale and celebrate the Army's 250th-birthday week, which culminates with a Washington, D.C., parade slated for Saturday.

Instead, what unfolded Tuesday at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, bore little resemblance to the customary visit from a president and defense secretary. There,

President Donald Trump unleashed a speech laced with partisan invective, goading jeers from a crowd of soldiers positioned behind his podium -- blurring the long-standing and sacrosanct line between the military and partisan politics.

As Trump viciously attacked his perceived political foes, he whipped up boos from the gathered troops directed at California leaders, including Gov. Gavin Newsom -- amid the president's controversial move to deploy the National Guard and Marines against protesters in Los Angeles -- as well as former President Joe Biden and the press. The soldiers roared with laughter and applauded Trump's diatribe in a shocking and rare public display of troops taking part in naked political partisanship.

For this story, Military.com reached out to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's office as well as the Army and the 82nd Airborne Division directly with a series of questions that ranged from the optics of the event to social media posts showing the sale of Trump campaign merchandise on the base, to the apparent violation of Pentagon policies on political activity in uniform.

Internal 82nd Airborne Division communications reviewed by Military.com reveal a tightly orchestrated effort to curate the optics of Trump's recent visit, including handpicking soldiers for the audience based on political leanings and physical appearance. The troops ultimately selected to be behind Trump and visible to the cameras were almost exclusively male.

One unit-level message bluntly said "no fat soldiers."

"If soldiers have political views that are in opposition to the current administration and they don't want to be in the audience then they need to speak with their leadership and get swapped out," another note to troops said.

Service officials declined to comment when asked about the extent to which troops were screened, whether soldiers displaying partisan cheers on television -- a violation of long-standing Pentagon rules -- would be disciplined or if soldiers who objected to participating in the event, citing disagreements with the administration, would be disciplined or admonished in any way.

"This has been a bad week for the Army for anyone who cares about us being a neutral institution," one commander at Fort Bragg told Military.com on the condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation. "This was shameful. I don't expect anything to come out of it, but I hope maybe we can learn from it long term."

Experts were quick to come out and say that the public silence from military leadership is a missed opportunity to reinforce the military's nonpartisan nature. Meanwhile, the political leadership at the head of the Defense Department was far from apologetic.

"Believe me, no one needs to be encouraged to boo the media," Sean Parnell, a top Pentagon spokesperson, said in a statement to Military.com. "Look no further than this query, which is nothing more than a disgraceful attempt to ruin the lives of young soldiers."

Adding to the spectacle, a pop-up shop operated by 365 Campaign, a Tulsa, Oklahoma-based retailer that sells pro-Trump and other conservative-coded memorabilia, was set up on-site with campaign-style merchandise on Army property. Soldiers were seen purchasing clothing and tchotchkes, including "Make America Great Again" chain necklaces to faux credit cards labeled "White Privilege Card: Trumps Everything."

Permitting the sale of overtly partisan merchandise on an Army base likely runs afoul of numerous Defense Department regulations aimed at preserving the military's long-standing commitment to political neutrality. The Army has historically gone to great lengths to avoid even the appearance of partisanship.

Parnell did not respond to follow-up questions about the sale of MAGA campaign gear directly to troops but Col. Mary Ricks, a spokesperson for Fort Bragg, said that "the vendor's presence is under review to determine how it was permitted and to prevent similar occurrences in the future" in a statement provided after this story was first published.

Trump used much of his speech to slam California Democrats and tout his ongoing and unprecedented surge of nearly 5,000 federalized Guard soldiers and Marines to quell immigration protests.

"We will liberate Los Angeles and make it free, clean and safe again," he proclaimed to soldiers, adding that Newsom and L.A. Mayor Karen Bass are "incompetent" and falsely said they're aiding "insurrectionists" while goading troops into booing them.

"I bet none of those soldiers booing even know the mayor's name or could identify them in a lineup; they're nonexistent in the chain of command," an 82nd Airborne noncommissioned officer told Military.com. "So, any opinion they could possibly have can only be attributed to expressing a political view while in uniform."

Trump is far from the first president to use the troops as a backdrop for a speech that had political notes. But experts say this speech crossed a line and showed the military's ethics can be vulnerable.

"What I think is so remarkable about Bragg is that it's really a breakdown on the military side," Risa Brooks, an expert of civil-military relations at Marquette University, told Military.com.

"It shows it's possible -- that the military's professional ethics could fail," she said.

In 2022, Biden received criticism for delivering a speech outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia that aimed to warn the public about the authoritarian impulses of then-former President Trump and his supporters.

He was flanked by two Marines in dress uniform.

Republicans and reporters immediately jumped on Biden, slamming him for politicizing the military.

"The only thing worse than Biden's speech trashing his fellow citizens is wrapping himself in our flag and Marines to do it," Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., wrote on social media at the time.

Another Trump administration official, James Hutton, said Biden "used U.S. Marines as props" and slammed the move as "despicable conduct in attacking more than half of Americans."

Ari Fleischer, a conservative commentator at the time, said the speech was not only "inappropriate" but that the Marine Corps had "some explaining to do" for allowing the speech to occur.

Neither Fleischer, Hutton nor Issa appears to have made any posts criticizing Trump's speech as of publication.

Going back decades, presidents have all used troops as background and set dressing for addresses and appearances that at times skirted the line between the nonpartisan nature of the military and the politics of the presidency.

Biden's White House press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, noted to reporters after Biden's speech in 2022 that "it is actually normal for presidents from either side of the aisle to give speeches in front of members of the military, including President ... Ronald Reagan and President George H.W. Bush."

"It is not an unusual sight or is not an unusual event to have happened," she added.

Brooks also agreed and noted that many of the instances of troops being used as props "are mostly instigated by the civilian side."

However, many of those examples were presidents choosing the setting to speak to the troops about military policy and issues that affected them personally, and with the exceptions of polite applause and laughs at presidential jokes, troops have not been especially vocal or reactive to the rhetoric being offered.

"Trump has gone farther than any other politician in the tenor and content of his comments, overtly treating events with troops in the audience as campaign rallies, and overtly and directly criticizing his opponents," Brooks said.

Long before the unprecedented speech at Fort Bragg this week, Trump has been blurring the lines between politics and military events. In the early days of his first term, he spoke to troops at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida and told the assembled troops "we had a wonderful election, didn't we?"

"And I saw those numbers, and you liked me and I liked you. That's the way it worked," he added.

Trump also went on to use the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes to sign a ban on travel from Muslim-majority countries during his first term. Marines appeared in a 2020 Republican National Committee video that he shot at the White House. That same year, then-Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley appeared alongside Trump in Lafayette Square outside the White House after federal officials forcibly cleared a street of peaceful protesters for a photo opportunity in front of a local church.

Milley later apologized for his presence.

Despite the silence from military brass this week, other experts, military observers and a handful of former leaders, have condemned the speech or the ensuing silence.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, best known for serving as the task force commander that coordinated military relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina, called the speech "inappropriate."

"I never witnessed that s..t like this in 37 years in uniform," Honore wrote on social media Tuesday.

"Once you see one instance of this happening, it potentially normalizes it," Brooks warned. "It opens the door to more instances and more overt violations of the nonpartisan ethic."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2025/06/11/bragg-soldiers-who-cheered-trumps-political-attacks-while-uniform-were-checked-allegiance-appearance.html>

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About 500 National Guard troops in LA are trained to accompany agents on immigration raids

Associated Press, June 11, 2025 :

Note: This item is provided for your SA.

WASHINGTON (AP) — About 500 of the National Guard troops deployed to the Los Angeles protests have been trained to accompany agents on immigration operations, the commander in charge said Wednesday. And while some troops have already gone on such missions, he said it's too early to say if that will continue even after the protests die down.

Maj. Gen. Scott Sherman, speaking in an interview with The Associated Press and ABC, also warned that he expects the protest situation will escalate. "We are expecting a ramp up," he said, noting that protests across the nation are being planned and discussed now. "I'm focused right here in LA, what's going on right here. But you know, I think we're, we're very concerned."

Sherman, commander of Task Force 51 that is overseeing the more than 4,000 Guard troops and 700 Marines deployed, initially said that National Guard troops had already temporarily detained some civilians. He later said he was incorrect, and that he had based his comments on photos and footage he had seen that turned out to not be a representation of Guard members in Los Angeles.

He said that as of Wednesday, none of the troops has detained a protester. But he said they have gone through days of training and are prepared to do so if needed. Close to 2,000 of the Guard members have either been out protecting federal facilities or personnel already or are ready to move out, and the Marines will wrap up their training and are expected to be on the streets of Los Angeles as early as Thursday evening, Sherman said.

The decision to have the soldiers provide security on the raids moves troops closer than ever before to carrying out law enforcement actions such as deportations, as President Donald Trump has promised as part of his immigration crackdown.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has called the troop deployment a "serious breach of state sovereignty" and a power grab by Trump, and has gone to court to stop it. The president has cited a legal provision that allows him to mobilize federal service members when there is "a rebellion or danger of a rebellion against the authority of the Government of the United States."

Under the Posse Comitatus Act, active-duty forces are prohibited by law from conducting law enforcement. Sherman said all of the Guard troops and Marines are going through several days of training on civil unrest and crowd control so they know exactly what they can and can't do.

As an example, Sherman said if Guard members see someone trying to assault a civilian or a law enforcement officer, they are allowed to grab them and hold onto them. Then they would quickly turn them over to law enforcement, who would handcuff the person or arrest them.

The roughly 500 being used to provide security on the raids undergo expanded instruction, legal training and rehearsals with the agents doing the enforcement before they go on those missions. Photos of Guard soldiers providing security for the agents have been circulated by immigration officials.

“We are doing rehearsals with these groups of agents that are doing these missions,” Sherman said. “A crawl, walk, run rehearsal, if you will, so that we fully understand their operations.”

He said he has explained to the agents that “we are not law enforcement. This is not how we train.” And he’s made it clear the agents have to be very deliberate in how they explain to the troops exactly what they need them to do. At this point, he said, none of the Marines has been trained to go on the immigration raids.

Not all the 500 Guard members have been on missions yet. Sherman said it’s not clear yet if Marines will eventually also go on the raid missions, but added that he has full confidence in their ability.

While much of the first 2,000 Guard soldiers are already trained and many have gone out to do the protest security duty, the public will only see several hundred on the ground at a time. The troops work in shifts.

The other 2,000 Guard members that were notified of deployment earlier this week have not yet begun to train. It will be several days before they are ready to participate in the mission.

Under routine self-defense guidelines, troops can do whatever is needed to protect themselves or the lives of others.

Overall, Sherman said, this is a difficult assignment for the troops.

“This pulls on the heartstrings of anybody in the military. These are your own citizens, in your own country,” he said, adding that the troops have to protect lives and property while preserving the peace. “This tests any soldier or Marine on their morals, on their patriotism, on what our country stands for. So this is not easy.”

Active-duty military troops who have been deployed along the southern border also are able to detain people, but only those who cross into the national defense areas created by the Trump administration. Those areas technically have become part of U.S. Army installations in the area, so troops are allowed detain people who step onto base property.

This story has been corrected. The commander of the troops deployed to Los Angeles initially told the AP that National Guard members had already detained some civilians. He later said his information was incorrect and Guard members have not detained civilians.

June 11, 2025|Updated June 11, 2025 7:43 p.m.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/politics/article/national-guard-troops-have-temporarily-detained-20372721.php>

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Cuomo boasts Trump never sent troops to NYC in 2020 because he told him not to

Fox News, June 13, 2025 :

Former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Thursday that he was the reason President Donald Trump never sent the National Guard to New York City amid the violent George Floyd riots of 2020.

Cuomo's comments came during the second of two Democrat primary debates for New York City mayor after he was asked how he would handle the current situation around the anti-ICE protests and the president's decision to involve military personnel.

"President Trump did this, and Trump won. He did it a number of times. He sent troops into cities all across the country. This is him being macho, authoritarianism; he's the commander in chief," Cuomo responded. "He never sent them into New York because I said to him, 'You better never send troops into New York. We don't need them. It would be a hostile act. It would be a problem.'"

Trump ordered thousands of National Guard troops and hundreds of Marines to go into Los Angeles over the weekend and help quell the unrest and assist federal immigration authorities in their efforts to deport illegal immigrants. During the similarly violent 2020 George Floyd riots, Trump directed federal troops to Washington, D.C. and Portland, Oregon, in an effort to end the destruction, danger and chaos.

New York City saw some of the greatest violence during the Floyd riots, but Trump never deployed any federal agents there, as Cuomo noted during the debate.

New York City, similar to Los Angeles, is a self-proclaimed "sanctuary city" that protects illegal immigrants from deportation or prosecution by federal authorities.

During Thursday night's debate, Cuomo said he, too, would defend New York City's sanctuary city laws as mayor.

"Right now, in this situation, we're going to protect our immigrants. This is a sanctuary city, and we are going to defend the laws of the sanctuary city," Cuomo

said. "We have an NYPD that is the largest police force in the United States of America. Donald Trump only picks fights that he can win. He cannot win a fight with me as mayor of New York."

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/cuomo-boasts-trump-never-sent-troops-nyc-2020-because-he-told-him-not>

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Fort Johnson

US Army to bring back names of 7 bases that once honored Confederate leaders

CNN, June 3 10, 2025 :

The US Army said Tuesday it will restore the names of seven Army bases that previously honored Confederate leaders.

"We are also going to be restoring the names to Fort Pickett, Fort Hood, Fort Gordon, Fort Rucker, Fort Polk, Fort A.P. Hill, and Fort Robert E. Lee," President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday at Fort Bragg, which was briefly known as Fort Liberty until the administration changed it back earlier this year. "We won a lot of battles out of those forts. It's no time to change."

The Army plans to give the bases new namesakes honoring "heroic Soldiers who served in conflicts ranging from the Civil War to the Battle of Mogadishu," according to a news release, as it rolls back the Biden-era name changes. Reverting the base names to the original Confederate namesakes would require congressional approval.

The move comes after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, a National Guard veteran and former longtime Fox News host, moved quickly to roll back name changes at other Army bases, such as Fort Bragg and Fort Benning.

Hegseth also ordered the secretary of the Navy to rename the oiler ship USNS Harvey Milk, which had honored the gay rights activist and Navy veteran who was made to resign from the force because of his sexual orientation.

Removing Confederate monikers from US military bases became a contentious political issue in the final months of Trump's first term. While Trump vetoed the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act that included a naming commission to study and recommend new titles for bases named after Confederate leaders, Congress voted to override his veto with overwhelming bipartisan support.

The Department of Defense began implementing the naming commission's recommendations in 2023.

Here are the names that are being brought back.

Fort Pickett

According to the Army's Tuesday announcement, Fort Barfoot, a Virginia base previously named after Confederate General George Pickett, will be named in honor of 1st Lt. Vernon W. Pickett, a soldier who received the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism during World War II.

While pinned down by enemy machine gun fire, Pickett crawled forward and destroyed two enemy positions with grenades, the Army said. He escaped from a transport train after being captured, rejoined his unit and was later killed in action.

Fort Hood

Fort Cavazos in Texas will be renamed Fort Hood in honor of Distinguished Service Cross recipient Col. Robert B. Hood, who fought in World War I.

In 2023, it was named after Gen. Richard Cavazos, who served in both the Korean War and Vietnam War. He was the first Hispanic four-star general in US history.

Fort Gordon

Georgia's Fort Eisenhower will revert back to Fort Gordon, this time honoring Medal of Honor recipient Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon, who during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu, Somalia, defended wounded crew members at a helicopter crash site.

The base, which was previously named after Confederate General John Gordon, was renamed Fort Eisenhower after General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower, who went on to serve as the nation's 34th president.

Fort Lee

A Virginia fort once named for Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee will carry the namesake of Pvt. Fitz Lee, who received the Medal of Honor for his service during the Spanish-American War.

The fort was renamed Fort Gregg-Adams after Lt. Gen. Arthur Gregg and Lt. Col Charity Adams in 2023. Gregg helped desegregate the Army, including at Fort Lee, while Adams, in 1944, "was selected to command the first unit of African-American women to serve overseas," according to the congressional naming commission. Her service was chronicled in the 2024 film "The Six Triple Eight."

Fort Polk

Gen. James H. Polk, a Silver Star recipient and commanding officer of the 3rd Cavalry Group in operations across Europe during World War II, will become the new namesake for Louisiana's Fort Johnson, according to the release.

The fort had been renamed in honor of Sgt. William Henry Johnson, a Black soldier who was considered one of the first heroes of World War I after he fought off about two dozen Germans alone, killing at least four.

Fort Rucker

Fort Novosel will be redesignated as Fort Rucker, in honor of Capt. Edward W. Rucker, a Distinguished Service Cross recipient and aviator that flew behind enemy lines in World War I "in a daring aerial battle over France, disrupting enemy movements and completing their mission against overwhelming odds," according to the release.

It was previously renamed after Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael J. Novosel Sr., who served in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, where he flew 2,543 medical evacuation missions.

Fort A.P. Hill

The Army will bring back the Fort A.P. Hill name to Fort Walker, this time honoring Lt. Col. Edward Hill, 1st Sgt. Robert A. Pinn and Pvt. Bruce Anderson, three soldiers who fought for the Union during the Civil War.

The Virginia fort previously was named in honor of Lt. Gen. Ambrose Powell (A.P.) Hill, a Confederate commander. It was renamed Fort Walker in 2023, after Dr. Mary Walker, the Army's first female surgeon who was ultimately awarded the Medal of Honor for her service during the Civil War.

CNN's Samantha Waldenberg, Oren Liebermann, Devan Cole, Barbara Starr and Ellie Kaufman contributed to this report.

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/10/politics/army-restore-confederate-names-military-bases>

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Trump orders return to old, Confederate-linked names for 7 Army sites

Army Times, Jun 10, 2025:

President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced plans to revert the designations of seven Army installations previously named for Confederate fighters, but service officials emphasized the namesakes will now honor different military individuals.

The move erases moves by President Joe Biden's administration to remove any connection to the Confederacy from current military bases. In a speech at Fort Bragg in North Carolina — another base whose name was changed by Biden, then changed back by Trump — the current commander-in-chief said the changes were needed because “we won a lot of battles out of those forts” and “it’s no time to change.”

Service officials did not say how much the changes will cost or when the official designations will be updated. The base renaming process began in 2021 and was finalized in 2023, at a cost of nearly \$40 million.

The cost to rename 9 Confederacy-honoring Army bases has doubled

Army garrisons won't have to foot the bill for all the renaming, general says.

Fort Bragg was originally named for Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg and rechristened as Fort Liberty before Trump changed the name in March. The base now honors Army Pfc. Ronald L. Bragg, who was awarded a Silver Star for his actions during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II.

Army officials late Tuesday confirmed the other bases to have their names changed and their new honorees:

Fort Pickett in Virginia, briefly renamed Fort Barfoot, will now honor Distinguished Service Cross recipient 1st Lt. Vernon W. Pickett, who served during World War II.

Fort Hood in Texas, briefly renamed Fort Cavazos, will now honor Distinguished Service Cross recipient Col. Robert B. Hood, who served during World War I.

Fort Gordon in Georgia, briefly renamed Fort Eisenhower, will now commemorate Medal of Honor recipient Master Sgt. Gary I. Gordon, recognized for valor during the Battle of Mogadishu.

Fort Lee in Virginia, briefly renamed Fort Gregg-Adams, will now commemorate Medal of Honor recipient Pvt. Fitz Lee, who served during the Spanish-American War.

Fort Polk in Louisiana, briefly renamed Fort Johnson, will now honor Silver Star recipient Gen. James H. Polk, who served in World War II.

Fort Rucker in Alabama, briefly renamed Fort Novosel, will now honor Distinguished Service Cross recipient Capt. Edward W. Rucker, who served during World War I.

Fort Anderson-Pinn-Hill in Virginia, formerly known as Fort A.P. Hill and Fort Walker, will now commemorate Medal of Honor recipients Lt. Col. Edward Hill, 1st Sgt. Robert A. Pinn and Pvt. Bruce Anderson, all of whom served in the Civil War.

Trump resisted calls to change the base names away from the Confederate fighters during his first term in office, arguing that the emotional and community links to the names made them sacred in the eyes of service members.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2025/06/10/trump-orders-return-to-old-confederate-linked-names-for-7-army-sites/>

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Renaming of Fort Johnson military base sparks outrage

WTEN, June 10, 2025 :

FORT BRAGG, N.C. (NEWS10) — A U.S. military base named in honor of an Albany hero could be renamed. Pres. Donald Trump spoke at Fort Bragg on Tuesday ahead of the 250th anniversary of the Army. During his speech, he announced his intent to rename several military bases.

Fort Johnson in Louisiana is named after Sgt. William Henry Johnson, an Albany native and Medal of Honor recipient. The fort will be getting back its original name of Fort Polk. It was previously named after Confederate general Leonidas Polk. The name was changed in 2023 during the Biden administration.

Many have expressed outrage by the name changes. New York State Senators Patricia Fahy and Jake Ashby and Assemblymembers John T. McDonald, III, and Gabriella A. Romero released a joint statement, saying in-part:

“In yet another attempt to revise our nation’s proud history, the implications of reverting to a name with such proximity to the original inspired by the Confederacy is an insult to Black Americans who have served this nation honorably. Sgt. Henry Johnson’s legacy deserves full recognition. He embodied the very ideals of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism that our military installations should reflect. To erase and omit his name dishonors his memory and continues this administration’s pattern of sidelining Black contributions to our nation’s history.”

The U.S. Army also issued a statement saying the fort is being renamed “in honor of Silver Star recipient Gen. James H. Polk for his gallantry in action as commanding officer of the 3rd Cavalry Group.”

Louisiana military base to be renamed after Sgt. Henry Johnson

Fort Bragg, which was changed to Fort Liberty by the Biden administration, was the first to have its original name restored after the Army found another person with the same last name. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who was with Trump at Fort Bragg, signed an order restoring the name in February.

To restore the original names of the additional seven bases, the Army found service members with the same last names to honor. Those bases are Fort A.P. Hill, Fort Pickett and Fort Robert E. Lee in Virginia, Fort Gordon in Georgia, Fort Hood in Texas, Fort Polk in Louisiana and Fort Rucker in Alabama.

The decision strips names chosen in 2023 to honor top leaders, such as President Dwight D. Eisenhower, as well as Black soldiers and women. No women are included in the new Army list.

Sgt. Johnson was known for fighting off German soldiers in hand-to-hand combat during World War I to save a fellow American. He posthumously earned the Medal of Honor in 2015.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<https://www.news10.com/news/national/renaming-of-fort-johnson-military-base-sparks-outrage/>

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Lawmakers criticize renaming Fort Johnson (video)

WRGB, June 10, 2026 :

Albany, NY (WRGB) — U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer has strongly criticized President Trump's decision to rename Fort Johnson back to Fort Polk, calling it "a vile insult" to the legacy of Sgt. William Henry Johnson. U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer said in a statement,

This is a vile insult to the memory and heroic patriotism of Sgt. Henry Johnson, a Medal of Honor recipient and Albany resident who Theodore Roosevelt called 'one of the five bravest Americans' to have served in World War I. For nearly a century, the nation for which he was willing to give his life shamefully failed to recognize Henry Johnson's heroics, simply because of the color of his skin, and now they are disgracefully removing his name from an honor he unquestionably earned via superhuman heroism on the battlefield," said Senator Schumer. "Allied Commander Gen. John Pershing singled out Johnson for his valor in repelling a German raider party of at least 12 men, and Johnson protected his fellow soldiers under heavy fire and repelled the raiding party resulting in several enemy casualties, engaging in hand to hand combat. For this he received no American military honor because of a

racist and segregated military. Henry Johnson loved America when America did not love him back. Yet he still willingly put his life on the line for our great nation. Some might call that the warrior spirit. I call it patriotism of the very highest order."

Schumer continued, "Sgt. Johnson is a true American hero who displayed the most profound bravery on the battlefield, and returning this fort to its former name, that of a Confederate general, and taking this honor away from a medal of honor recipient is a disgusting new low for the Trump administration. It is utterly indefensible. All of America should be outraged at this slap in the face of a war hero. The Trump administration should be ashamed and should immediately reverse this

State Senators Patricia Fahy and Jake Ashby, along with Assemblymembers John McDonald III and Gabriella Romero, expressed their disappointment over the decision to rename Fort Johnson as "Fort Polk."

In a joint statement, the lawmakers said,

We are deeply disappointed by the decision to rename Fort Johnson as 'Fort Polk'. This change means the base will no longer honor Albany's own Sergeant Henry Johnson, a true American hero and Medal of Honor recipient. Instead, it appears to be a thinly veiled attempt to preserve symbolic ties to a painful chapter of our nation's past. When the current federal administration began renaming military bases, we were concerned that this very outcome might occur. On National Medal of Honor Day earlier this year, we called on our federal government to retain the name of Fort Henry Johnson.

In yet another attempt to revise our nation's proud history, the implications of reverting to a name with such proximity to the original inspired by the Confederacy is an insult to Black Americans who have served this nation honorably. Sgt. Henry Johnson's legacy deserves full recognition. He embodied the very ideals of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism that our military installations should reflect. To erase and omit his name dishonors his memory and continues this administration's pattern of sidelining Black contributions to our nation's history.

The City of Albany community and elected officials have worked and advocated strenuously throughout the years to ensure that Sgt. Henry Johnson receives the well-deserved recognition that he did not receive during his lifetime for his bravery. This resulted in a posthumous Medal of Honor, Purple Heart, Distinguished Service Cross, and the renaming of Fort Johnson.

We strongly urge the Department of Defense to reconsider this decision and make it unequivocally clear whose legacy we are choosing to uplift. Sergeant Henry Johnson's legacy should be celebrated and revered, not relegated to the pages of history. We will continue to work to ensure that his legacy and service are not forgotten

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/lawmakers-criticize-renaming-fort-johnson-to-fort-polk-john-mcdonald-iii-gabriella-romero-cbs6-wrgb>

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Army to rename Fort Johnson, named for Albany WWI hero

Times Union, June 11, 2025 :

ALBANY — A military base named for Army Sgt. Henry Johnson, a Black Medal of Honor recipient from Albany who Theodore Roosevelt described as one of the “five bravest Americans” to serve in World War I, will soon be renamed at the direction of the Trump administration.

Fort Johnson in western Louisiana will be renamed Fort Polk, the name it carried from 1941 until 2023, when it was renamed after the war hero as part of a Biden administration order to do away with military installations named for Confederate leaders. The facility had been named for Leonidas Polk, a Confederate general who was once one of the largest slaveholders in antebellum Tennessee.

Under the new designation, Fort Polk will be named in honor of Gen. James H. Polk, a white World War II Army officer. The Army Department, at the Trump administration’s direction, is following the same path with six other bases that had once been named for Confederate leaders. Bases with Confederate names that had been renamed under Biden will be renamed in honor of military figures with the same surname as the former Confederate officers.

Fort Gregg-Adams, a base in Virginia originally named for Robert E. Lee — which became the first base in the armed forces named for two Black people, Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg and Lt. Col. Charity Adams Earley — will again be known as Fort Lee, though the Army Department says the facility is now named for Fitzhugh “Fitz” Lee, a white Confederate general who was awarded the Medal of Honor during the Spanish-American War.

Trump announced the change in remarks at Fort Bragg on Tuesday.

“We won a lot of battles out of those forts, it’s no time to change,” Trump said. “And I’m superstitious, you know, I like to keep it going.”

The Trump administration has signaled its desire to see both a selection of military bases and several ships be renamed. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recently ordered Navy Secretary John Phelan to carry out the renaming of the USNS Harvey Milk. Milk was a civil rights figure, gay rights activist and University at Albany graduate.

Trump's remarks at Fort Bragg come more than two months after a U.S. Army website page about Fort Johnson was scrubbed following executive orders by Trump ending diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within the federal government. At the time, a U.S. Army spokesperson said the site was "temporarily archived and will soon be republished online." The page had still not been restored as of Tuesday.

Johnson was a soldier who first enlisted in 1917 with the all-Black 15th New York National Guard Regiment, which became the 369th U.S. Infantry Regiment, aka the Harlem Hell Fighters, and was shipped overseas to France. Johnson's unit and other Black regiments were assigned to the command of the French army, which needed fighters. In the U.S. Army, they were only allowed to serve in noncombat roles due to racial segregation policies.

Johnson was awarded France's Croix de Guerre for his bravery in single-handedly fighting off a German raiding party in May 1918, despite being seriously wounded. He sustained 21 combat-related injuries throughout his service.

"This is a vile insult to the memory and heroic patriotism of Sgt. Henry Johnson," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement, referencing the Trump administration directive. "For nearly a century, the nation for which he was willing to give his life shamefully failed to recognize Henry Johnson's heroics, simply because of the color of his skin, and now they are disgracefully removing his name from an honor he unquestionably earned via superhuman heroism on the battlefield."

"Henry Johnson loved America when America did not love him back," Schumer said.

State Sen. Patricia Fahy, a Democrat, state Sen. Jake Ashby, a Republican, and state assemblymembers John T. McDonald III and Gabriella A. Romero, both Democrats, said in a joint statement that the renaming of Fort Johnson is "yet another attempt to revise our nation's proud history."

"The implications of reverting to a name with such proximity to the original inspired by the Confederacy is an insult to Black Americans who have served this nation honorably," the statement reads.

"We strongly urge the Department of Defense to reconsider this decision and make it unequivocally clear whose legacy we are choosing to uplift," they added. "Sergeant Henry Johnson's legacy should be celebrated and revered, not relegated to the pages of history."

In 2020, Congress passed a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act requiring bases named for Confederate leaders to be renamed. The naming commission, a bipartisan body created by Congress, was tasked with identifying bases to be renamed and former Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin implemented its findings. By 2023, all seven bases had been renamed.

A U.S. Army planning document reviewed by the Times Union says Army Secretary Daniel P. Driscoll "will take immediate action to implement these redesignations."

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/army-rename-base-named-albany-wwi-hero-henry-20370971.php>

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Fort named after Albany war hero Henry Johnson renamed by Trump administration

Spectrum News, June 10, 2025 :

Fort Johnson, which was named after Albany war hero and World War I Sgt. Henry Johnson, is being renamed to Fort Polk. The Army made that announcement Tuesday along with a slew of other name changes to U.S. military installations.

Johnson was born in North Carolina but later moved to Albany.

The Louisiana fort will be named after World War II General James H. Polk. It had been named for Johnson since 2023.

Johnson worked at Albany's Union Station before enlisting in the New York National Guard's segregated 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment in 1917. He served under French command and became a national hero for valor on the battlefield. The 15th New York later turned into the 369th Infantry Regiment and became known as the "Harlem Hellfighters."

During the Battle of the Argonne Forest on the early morning of May 15, 1918, the 130-pound soldier singlehandedly held off a large German raiding party, and despite suffering 21 wounds, kept fighting to help rescue a fellow soldier from capture.

Johnson became one of the first Americans to be awarded the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme, France's highest award for valor.

He returned home unable to continue at his pre-war porter position due to the severity of his combat injuries. He died in July 1929 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va.

He posthumously received the Medal of Honor from former President Barack Obama in a 2015 White House ceremony.

In March, the DOD removed an Army webpage describing the renaming of Fort Polk in Louisiana to Fort Johnson in 2023, as part of its review of "culturally focused Army

websites" under President Donald Trump's executive order terminating diversity, equity and inclusion offices, positions and programs in the federal government. The web page recently returned to the web.

Trump announced his administration was restoring the names of seven military bases that were given the monikers of Confederate leaders until being changed by the Biden administration. Along with Fort Polk, Fort Pickett, Fort Robert E. Lee and Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia, Fort Hood in Texas, Fort Gordon in Georgia and Fort Rucker in Alabama will have their names changed back, Trump said.

As they did when they changed back Fort Bragg and Fort Benning, Defense officials announced Tuesday that they had identified service members with the same last names in order to make the change and not have the bases officially carry Confederate-related names.

In a statement released Tuesday, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer pushed back on the renaming of Fort Johnson, calling the move a "slap in the face" to Johnson's memory:

"This is a vile insult to the memory and heroic patriotism of Sgt. Henry Johnson, a Medal of Honor recipient and Albany resident who Theodore Roosevelt called 'one of the five bravest Americans' to have served in World War I. For nearly a century, the nation for which he was willing to give his life shamefully failed to recognize Henry Johnson's heroics, simply because of the color of his skin, and now they are disgracefully removing his name from an honor he unquestionably earned via superhuman heroism on the battlefield. Allied Commander Gen. John Pershing singled out Johnson for his valor in repelling a German raider party of at least 12 men, and Johnson protected his fellow soldiers under heavy fire and repelled the raiding party resulting in several enemy casualties, engaging in hand to hand combat. For this he received no American military honor because of a racist and segregated military. Henry Johnson loved America when America did not love him back. Yet he still willingly put his life on the line for our great nation. Some might call that the warrior spirit. I call it patriotism of the very highest order.

"Sgt. Johnson is a true American hero who displayed the most profound bravery on the battlefield, and returning this fort to its former name, that of a Confederate general, and taking this honor away from a medal of honor recipient is a disgusting new low for the Trump administration. It is utterly indefensible. All of America should be outraged at this slap in the face of a war hero. The Trump administration should be ashamed and should immediately reverse this decision."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2025/06/10/fort-named-after-albany-war-hero-henry-johnson-renamed>

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History

Conrad 'Gus' Shinn, first pilot to land at the South Pole, dies at 102

Washington Post, June 10, 2025 :

Note: this is being provided for your information since the 109th AW flies routinely to the South Pole.

As a lieutenant commander in the Navy, he skippered a historic 1956 flight that helped fuel scientific research in Antarctica.

On a brutally cold Halloween evening in 1956, a plane landed at the ice-covered bottom of the Earth, touching down at the South Pole for the first time in history. It was nearly 60 degrees below zero. Even after the plane completed its descent, bouncing on the hard snow with skis affixed to its landing gear, the crew kept the engines running to prevent a freeze-up.

"In retrospect, it was sheer madness," said the pilot, Lt. Cmdr. Conrad "Gus" Shinn, a veteran naval aviator who planned and executed the flight.

It was only the third time humans had set foot on the planet's southernmost point, following earlier expeditions led by Roald Amundsen, a Norwegian who traveled by foot, ski and sledge before reaching the pole in December 1911, and Robert Falcon Scott, a British naval officer who arrived weeks later, in January 1912, but died with his four companions while making the return journey.

Looking back on the flight, Cmdr. Shinn said that getting to the pole was the easy part. Getting back proved far more challenging, requiring the use of more than a dozen small rockets to dislodge the plane from the ice and provide enough thrust for takeoff.

Friends said that long after he retired, when he was introduced to strangers as "the first man to land at the South Pole," he would gently note: "Well, that's true. But more importantly, I'm the first man to take off from the South Pole."

The Que Sera Sera, the R4D transport plane that Cmdr. Shinn flew to the South Pole, in August 1957, partially buried after wintering at the Little America exploration base. (U.S. Navy)

By flying to the pole and back, Cmdr. Shinn — who died May 15 at 102 — helped open up a new era of Antarctic research, demonstrating that it was possible for

personnel and supplies to be flown to one of the world's most desolate places. By his count, he made about 17 South Pole flights, providing assistance to Navy construction workers who began creating a permanent research base, a precursor to today's Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, a few weeks after his first trip.

Scientists continue to conduct experiments at the pole, including on air quality, seismic waves and elementary particles known as neutrinos. Tractors make the weeks-long trek to bring supplies overland from McMurdo Station. And supply planes continue to fly in and out, although the aircraft — ski-equipped LC-130s, carrying as much as 42,000 pounds of cargo — are more powerful and better equipped than the planes flown by Cmdr. Shinn and his colleagues.

"Everything was critical in that day: attitude and altitude and air speed, weight and balance. We hardly stayed in the air," he said in a 1999 interview for the Antarctic Deep Freeze Oral History Project.

A North Carolina native who joined the Navy during World War II, Cmdr. Shinn started out as a multiengine pilot in the South Pacific, transporting medical supplies and wounded men. He later flew military brass and other VIPs, ferrying flag officers, Cabinet secretaries and friends of President Harry S. Truman, before volunteering for Operation Highjump, a Navy program that brought him to Antarctica for the first time in 1947.

By then, the Navy had been involved in Antarctic exploration for years, supporting scientific research while also — amid a Cold War standoff with the Soviet Union — seeking "to establish a foothold in a region of the world that could be strategically important," said Hill Goodspeed, a historian at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida.

To prepare for the mission, Cmdr. Shinn took a transport plane equipped with skis and tested it on the ice in Edmonton, Alberta. He went on to fly a ski-clad R4D, the military version of a Douglas DC-3 airliner, off an aircraft carrier, taking it hundreds of miles over the ice to reach Little America, the Navy's makeshift exploration base on the Ross Ice Shelf.

Cmdr. Shinn lived on the ice for about a month, sleeping in a tent — designed more for the tropics than the Antarctic — and flying photographic missions that were intended to help map the continent.

At the end of his tour, he was picked up by an icebreaker and joined the command ship of Rear Adm. Richard E. Byrd, who had made history in 1929 as the first person to fly over the South Pole. Cmdr. Shinn accompanied the admiral on a triumphant voyage to the Washington Navy Yard, where Byrd shook hands with the secretary of the Navy and presented the National Zoo with a gift of two-dozen penguins. (When a crate burst open during unloading, three of the birds disappeared into the Anacostia River.)

By 1956, Cmdr. Shinn had returned to Antarctica as part of Operation Deep Freeze, a Navy mission that was launched in support of the International Geophysical Year, a collaborative effort promoting scientific research at the poles and elsewhere around the world.

This time he lived in comparative luxury at McMurdo Sound, in a heated Quonset hut instead of a tent. Still, he noted that the solitude of the Antarctic could take a toll — “people get angry with one another; there were a few mental cases” — and that even with his experience navigating high winds and whiteout conditions, the risks of polar aviation remained high.

During an exploratory flight near the Beardmore Glacier, his airplane was caught in a wind shear and “fell out of the sky,” hurtling toward the ground before Cmdr. Shinn turned to a rocket system known as JATO, for jet-assisted take-off, in which rockets are fired to provide additional thrust.

“The wing rolled and the wingtip touched the ice. I’m sure it added to the deafening blast of the JATO firing,” he said in the oral history. “We were close enough to the surface to send up a huge balloon of ice crystals. The passengers must have been terrified. But we flew out.”

Cmdr. Shinn turned to the JATO system once again during his historic flight to the South Pole, aboard a propeller-driven R4D-5L named Que Sera Sera (Whatever Will Be, Will Be), after the newly released Doris Day pop song.

The plane carried seven passengers and crew members, including Rear Adm. George J. Dufek, who stepped outside and planted an American flag into the ice. (Technically, they had landed about four miles from the geographical South Pole. Observers deemed it close enough.) The group set up a metal radar reflector, intended to help future pilots make their way to the site, and spent about 45 minutes outside before readying for takeoff.

Cmdr. Shinn was already prepared for a difficult departure by virtue of the pole’s altitude, at more than 9,000 feet. But he was surprised to discover that while the plane’s engines were running, the snow under its skis had melted and refrozen.

They were stuck.

“We just sat on the ice like an old mud hen,” he told the Associated Press in 1999.

Overheard was an Air Force cargo plane, assigned to hang close and drop supplies in case of disaster. It wasn’t needed: Cmdr. Shinn was able to free the plane by firing JATO bottles, four at a time, enabling the Que Sera Sera to break loose and, at full throttle, take off — just barely.

Cmdr. Shinn and his crew flew through “a cloud of ice,” using their instruments to navigate while unable to see out of the cockpit, before making their way back to base at McMurdo, some 800 miles away. After landing, his colleague John P. Strider downplayed their difficulties at the pole, joking to a reporter that he dealt with only one problem on the flight: “My coffee wouldn’t percolate at 12,000 feet.”

As a result of the mission, Cmdr. Shinn was awarded the Legion of Merit. Antarctica’s third-highest peak, Mount Shinn, was named in his honor.

“I had been lucky,” he said in the oral history, looking back on his flying days in the Antarctic. “Lucky — that’s what I would call it.”

The second of six children, Conrad Selwyn Shinn was born in Leaksville, North Carolina — a mill town that is now part of the city of Eden — on Sept. 12, 1922. His father served in the infantry during World War I and worked as a YMCA secretary; his mother managed the home.

As a boy, he idolized Charles Lindbergh and Wiley Post, pilot heroes of the golden age of aviation. His high school yearbook, which he edited, seemed almost prophetic in its title: *The Pilot*.

Cmdr. Shinn graduated at age 16, first in his class, and studied aeronautical engineering at North Carolina State College, now a university. He enrolled in a civilian pilot training program, left school to join the Navy in 1942 and received his commission the next year.

After World War II, he married Gloria Carter, with whom he had three children: David, Connie and Diane Shinn. They divorced in 1954.

Cmdr. Shinn retired from the Navy in 1963 and settled in Pensacola, where he had been stationed. For years, he made regular visits to the National Naval Aviation Museum, where he was able to visit his restored former plane, the *Que Sera Sera*, and tell visitors about his flying days.

Long after he retired, he continued to dress in military-style flight suits, preferring to avoid fussing over questions of personal appearance and style, according to his family. He remained especially concerned with safety issues, a theme dating back to his Navy days: If he couldn’t sit in the pilot’s seat as a civilian, he refused to fly at all, preferring to maintain control over maintenance and safety procedures.

“He always had the military demeanor,” his son David said, “with one dramatic exception. While living in Florida, he developed the moniker Cat Man of La Rua,” after the street where he lived. “He always had a dozen or two-dozen cats in residence. They’d come to his door, having heard about town that there was this man who would take care of them if he needed help.”

Cmdr. Shinn lived in the city until shortly before his death, at a nursing facility in Charlotte. His son confirmed the death but did not cite a specific cause.

Survivors include his three children; a sister; a grandson; a great-grandson; and several of his cats, which he re-homed late in life.

Asked in the oral history what he was proudest of from his time in the Antarctic, Cmdr. Shinn replied: "I would guess if I were going to have a tombstone I would put on it, 'He tells it like it is.' There's just no substitute for honesty and integrity."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/obituaries/2025/06/10/conrad-shinn-dead/>

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New York Army National Guard

Four receive promotions in New York Army National Guard

Rome Sentinel , June 11, 2025 :

LATHAM — Four area residents have received promotions, according to an announcement by Major Gen. Ray Shields, adjutant general for New York, in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership. They include:

- William Gibbons, of New York Mills, assigned to the Company B, New York Recruiting & Retention Battalion, promoted to private first class;
- Jameer Watson, of Utica, assigned to Company B, New York Recruiting & Retention Battalion, promoted to private;
- Robert Merrill, of Sherrill, assigned to Company B, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, promoted to sergeant; and
- Anthony Larocco, of Utica (13502), assigned to 53rd Digital Liaison Support Detachment, promoted to sergeant.

Army National Guard promotions are based on a soldier's overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential, the announcement said, adding the the promotions recognize the best qualified soldiers for a career in the New York Army National Guard.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit www.dmna.ny.gov or

https://www.romesentinel.com/entertainment-life/notices/advancements/four-receive-promotions-in-new-york-army-national-guard/article_c1cbd6fc-d7d2-428d-984d-394c036b8fcf.html

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New York Guard Soldiers Marching in Army's 250th Birthday Parade

**National Guard.mil, June 11, 2025 :
Jun 13, 2025**

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – More than 400 Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division will be among the 6,700 troops taking part in the Army's 250th anniversary parade June 14 in Washington, D.C.

The division is responsible for Soldiers across the Northeast but has its headquarters in Troy.

The Soldiers left June 11 for Washington, D.C., and will return June 15.

Maj. Gen. Jack James, the commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and a color guard, is leading the contingent.

Marching contingents will represent 11 of the Army's 19 divisions. The 42nd Infantry Division is the only one of the eight Army National Guard divisions sending a contingent to the parade.

The marchers are coming from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, a part of the 42nd Infantry Division headquartered in Syracuse, with elements located across the state. The Soldiers come from units based in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica, New York City and the Hudson Valley.

Thirty Soldiers from the Massachusetts Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, which is assigned to the 27th Brigade, also are part of the contingent.

Another 30 Soldiers from the 42nd Infantry Division Band, which has its headquarters at Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill, also are marching.

The headquarters elements of the 42nd Infantry Division are training for a deployment to the Middle East at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

The marching units will be divided up to represent different periods of the Army's history. The 42nd Infantry Division contingent, along with marchers from the active Army's 4th Infantry Division, will represent World War I.

Soldiers in World War I uniforms will march in front of the two division contingents.

"The 42nd Infantry Division is honored to represent the entire U.S. Army in WW I at the Army's 250th birthday parade," James said.

"The legacy forged by Rainbow Division Soldiers on battlefields across France marked the 42nd ID as one of the premier Divisions of the American Expeditionary Force. We are honored to represent our predecessors and all brave Americans who fought in that conflict 100 years ago," he added.

The 42nd was created during World War I by taking National Guard units from 26 states and forming a special division that could go quickly to France in the fall of 1917. The division was organized in Garden City on Long Island and nicknamed "The Rainbow Division."

The division's first chief of staff, Douglas MacArthur - who later commanded American forces in World War II - said the division would "stretch across the country like a rainbow."

The Army traces its birthday to June 14, 1775. On that day, the Continental Congress voted to enlist Soldiers into a force serving all the colonies. Previously, each colony had raised its own troops when required.

The Soldiers moved from locations across New York and Massachusetts to Washington. They are being housed in an empty Department of Agriculture office building and an unused General Services Administration warehouse.

The 500 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who helped at the presidential inauguration in January stayed in these buildings then.

The Army is covering the cost for the New York National Guard to send Soldiers to the parade.

The Soldiers will receive meals ready-to-eat for breakfast and lunch, as well as a hot meal for dinner, along with a per-diem of about \$69.

The parade will include 28 M1A2 Abrams tanks, 28 M3 Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles, 28 Stryker wheeled infantry vehicles and four M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers.

The parade will march on Constitution Avenue along the Mall past the White House. Flyovers from historic aircraft and Army helicopters will be part of the event.

<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/4213561/new-york-guard-soldiers-marching-in-armys-250th-birthday-parade/>

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400-plus NY Army National Guardsmen will march in June 14 military parade in DC

Olean hub, June 112, 2025 :

The New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division will have 436 soldiers among the 6,700 troops taking part in the Army's 250th anniversary parade in Washington D.C. on Saturday.

The division is responsible for soldiers across the northeast but is headquartered in Troy. The soldiers left for Washington D.C. this morning and will return June 15.

The contingent will be led by Major General Jack James, the commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, and a color guard.

Eleven of the Army's 19 divisions will be represented by marching contingents. The 42nd Infantry Division is the only one of the eight Army National Guard divisions sending a contingent to the parade.

The marchers are coming from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, a part of the 42nd Infantry Division, with elements located across the state. The soldiers come from units based in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica, New York City and the Hudson Valley.

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The 500 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who helped at the Presidential Inauguration in January stayed in these buildings then.

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<https://orleanshub.com/400-plus-ny-army-national-guardsmen-will-march-in-june-14-military-parade-in-dc/>

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New York National Guard to March in June 14 Parade

Daily Gazette, June 11, 2025 :

WASHINGTON – Four hundred thirty-six soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division will be among the 6,700 troops taking part in the Army's 250th anniversary parade in Washington D.C. on Saturday, June 14.

The division is responsible for soldiers across the Northeast, but is headquartered in Troy.

https://www.dailygazette.com/hv360/new-york-national-guard-to-march-in-june-14-parade/article_b6599083-2e61-4b69-80df-e57e64dff015.html

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Assembly Approves Renaming Rotterdam Bridge for Fallen Hero

IHeart Radio, June 10 :

A bill to rename a bridge in Rotterdam in honor of Chief Warrant Officer Two John M. Grassia III has been passed by the state Assembly. The legislation, introduced by Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, seeks to rename the Becker Road bridge as the "John M. Grassia III Memorial Bridge" to commemorate Grassia's bravery and sacrifice.

John M. Grassia III, a Schalmont High School graduate, served as a helicopter pilot for the New York Army National Guard. He tragically lost his life in a helicopter crash near Rio Grande City, Texas, in 2024, while on a mission with Joint Task Force North supporting U.S. Customs and Border Protection operations. The crash also claimed the life of Chief Warrant Officer Casey N. Frankoski.

The bill aims to honor Grassia's service and express the Capital Region's appreciation and regret for his loss. Grassia was also a New York State Trooper, remembered for his dedication to serving and protecting others.

Senator Patricia Fahy and Assemblymember Angelo Santabarbara jointly announced the proposal, emphasizing the importance of recognizing Grassia's contributions. The bridge, located on State Route 159 between Kellar Avenue and South Thompson Street, will serve as a lasting tribute to Grassia's legacy.

Grassia's family expressed gratitude for the recognition, stating, "Your recognition not only keeps his legacy alive but also celebrates him as an esteemed American hero." The bill is part of ongoing efforts to honor those who have served and sacrificed for their country.

<https://wgy.iheart.com/content/2025-06-10-assembly-approves-renaming-rotterdam-bridge-for-fallen-hero>

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As the Trump administration rebrands several military bases, the legacy of Albany World War I hero Henry Johnson is a casualty

WAMC, June 12, 2025 :

Albany World War I hero Sgt. Henry Johnson's legacy is among the casualties as the Trump administration renames seven military bases.

In 2023, Louisiana's Fort Polk was renamed Fort Johnson in honor of Albany's own Henry Johnson, a Black Medal of Honor recipient.

The Army base had been named for slave owner and Confederate general Leonidas Polk from 1941 until the Biden administration made the change as part of a broader effort to move away from names associated with the former Confederacy.

Now, the Trump administration is changing base names back, and Fort Johnson will once again be Fort Polk, although it will honor World War II Silver Star recipient Gen. James H. Polk instead of the Confederate general.

Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan attended the 2015 White House ceremony when President Barack Obama bestowed the Medal of Honor on Johnson for his actions in World War I – in which he fought off a German advance and rescued a fellow soldier from capture.

"As a young man, Henry Johnson joined millions of other African-Americans on the great migration from the rural south to the industrial north and people in search of a better life. He landed in Albany, where he mixed sodas at a pharmacy, worked at a coalyard and as a porter at a train station. And when the United States entered World War I, Henry enlisted," Obama said.

June 5th marked the 108th anniversary of Johnson's enlistment in the all-Black 369th Infantry Regiment, the Harlem Hellfighters.

On Wednesday, a tearful Sheehan said changing the name of the fort "is about white supremacy."

"There were people who were invited to that ceremony who never thought they would set foot in the White House, much less be in a room with the president United States. And it matters, and leaders are called upon to do the right thing, and I am watching Republicans in Washington not only not do the right thing, but allow the rule of law and basic human decency and dignity to be crushed, ignored. And it's not right, and

this is not the way that I wanted to spend the last six months of being the mayor of this incredible city," said Sheehan.

The Democrat is calling for the Department of Defense to reverse the decision. She said medals and monuments in the city honoring Johnson will remain in place. In 2017, Albany began celebrating the annual Henry Johnson Day.

The name Fort Johnson was bestowed by the Congressional Naming Commission, formed in 2021 following the racial reckoning that emerged from the 2020 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In 2024, WAMC spoke with one of the five commission members, Retired Brigadier General Ty Seidule, who noted the commission made more than a thousand changes to move away from associations with the Confederacy. He said heroes like Johnson deserved to be commemorated.

"Black soldiers in World War I, many of them including the Harlem Hellfighters, were given to the French. They served in French uniforms. And one of the people that we named it after, Henry Johnson, actually was one of the Harlem Hellfighters, who fought in French uniform because the American commander, John J. Pershing, did not want those soldiers fighting with him. So this is an ability to recognize true heroes for what they really did. And not those who chose the Confederates, chose treason, to preserve slavery," Seidule said.

Johnson also received the French military's highest recognition, the Croix de Guerre.

Despite being initially celebrated for his 1918 actions – including leading his regiment's homecoming parade up Fifth Avenue in New York City in February 1919 and sitting down to a dinner with Governor Al Smith – Johnson's heroics were later forgotten by many. Left severely wounded from combat, he died impoverished in 1929. Following advocacy efforts, Johnson was finally awarded the Purple Heart in 1996 – an award presented to every American service member wounded in combat. In 2002, Johnson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest award for valor.

<https://www.wamc.org/news/2025-06-12/as-the-trump-administration-rebrands-several-military-bases-the-legacy-of-albany-world-war-i-hero-henry-johnson-is-a-casualty>

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Army to rename Fort Johnson, named for Albany WWI hero

Times Union, June 11, 2025 :

ALBANY — A military base named for Army Sgt. Henry Johnson, a Black Medal of Honor recipient from Albany who Theodore Roosevelt described as one of the “five bravest Americans” to serve in World War I, will soon be renamed at the direction of the Trump administration.

Fort Johnson, Louisiana will be renamed Fort Polk, the name it carried from 1941 until 2023, when it was renamed after the war hero as part of a Biden administration order to do away with military installations named for Confederate leaders. The facility had been named for Leonidas Polk, a Confederate general who was once one of the largest slaveholders in antebellum Tennessee.

Under the new designation, Fort Polk will be named in honor of Gen. James H. Polk, a white World War II Army officer. The Army Department, at the Trump administration’s direction, is following the same path with six other bases that had once been named for Confederate leaders. Bases with Confederate names that had been renamed under Biden will be renamed in honor of military figures with the same surname as the former Confederate officers.

Fort Gregg-Adams, a base in Virginia originally named for Robert E. Lee — which became the first base in the armed forces named for two Black people, Lt. Gen. Arthur J. Gregg and Lt. Col. Charity Adams Earley — will again be known as Fort Lee, though the Army Department says the facility is now named for Fitz Lee, a Black soldier who received the Medal of Honor during the Spanish-American War.

Trump announced the change in remarks at Fort Bragg on Tuesday.

“We won a lot of battles out of those forts, it’s no time to change,” Trump said. “And I’m superstitious, you know, I like to keep it going.”

The Trump administration has signaled its desire to see both a selection of military bases and several ships be renamed. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recently ordered Navy Secretary John Phelan to carry out the renaming of the USNS Harvey Milk. Milk was a civil rights figure, gay rights activist and University at Albany graduate.

Trump’s remarks at Fort Bragg come more than two months after a U.S. Army website page about Fort Johnson was scrubbed following executive orders by Trump ending diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within the federal government. At the time, a U.S. Army spokesperson said the site was “temporarily archived and will soon be republished online.” The page had still not been restored as of Tuesday.

Johnson was a soldier who first enlisted in 1917 with the all-Black 15th New York National Guard Regiment, which became the 369th U.S. Infantry Regiment, aka the Harlem Hell Fighters, and was shipped overseas to France. Johnson’s unit and other Black regiments were assigned to the command of the French army, which needed

fighters. In the U.S. Army, they were only allowed to serve in noncombat roles due to racial segregation policies.

Johnson was awarded France's Croix de Guerre for his bravery in single-handedly fighting off a German raiding party in May 1918, despite being seriously wounded. He sustained 21 combat-related injuries throughout his service.

"This is a vile insult to the memory and heroic patriotism of Sgt. Henry Johnson," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement, referencing the Trump administration directive. "For nearly a century, the nation for which he was willing to give his life shamefully failed to recognize Henry Johnson's heroics, simply because of the color of his skin, and now they are disgracefully removing his name from an honor he unquestionably earned via superhuman heroism on the battlefield."

"Henry Johnson loved America when America did not love him back," Schumer said.

State Sen. Patricia Fahy, a Democrat, state Sen. Jake Ashby, a Republican, and state assemblymembers John T. McDonald III and Gabriella A. Romero, both Democrats, said in a joint statement that the renaming of Fort Johnson is "yet another attempt to revise our nation's proud history."

"The implications of reverting to a name with such proximity to the original inspired by the Confederacy is an insult to Black Americans who have served this nation honorably," the statement reads.

"We strongly urge the Department of Defense to reconsider this decision and make it unequivocally clear whose legacy we are choosing to uplift," they added. "Sergeant Henry Johnson's legacy should be celebrated and revered, not relegated to the pages of history."

Mayor Kathy Sheehan was furious about the name change.

"This is about white supremacy, plain and simple," she said. "This is about people seeking to remind us that at one point their boots were on certain people's necks and they can with the (stroke) of a pen make sure they're sending that message particularly to communities of color."

Republicans in Congress who have either not spoken up or have enthusiastically supported the Trump administration's anti-diversity efforts, mass deportation and what she described as "authoritarian" impulses were to blame, Sheehan said.

"(U.S. Rep.) Elise Stefanik was outraged when we moved the Schuyler statue," she said. "I have not heard from her on this issue. She should be outraged on behalf of New York state. He was a New York state hero and every member of Congress from New York should be telling the Department of Defense that this is the wrong decision."

Stefanik, who serves on the House Armed Services Committee and is believed to be weighing a run for governor in 2026, did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

In 2020, Congress passed a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act requiring bases named for Confederate leaders to be renamed. The naming commission, a bipartisan body created by Congress, was tasked with identifying bases to be renamed and former Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin implemented its findings. By 2023, all seven bases had been renamed.

A U.S. Army planning document reviewed by the Times Union says Army Secretary Daniel P. Driscoll "will take immediate action to implement these redesignations."

Sheehan was briefly moved to tears while meeting with reporters at City Hall on Wednesday. In a conversation that touched on free speech rights and threats faced by both documented and undocumented immigrants, she described her trip to the White House when President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Johnson the Medal of Honor.

"There were people who were invited to that ceremony who never thought they would set foot in the White House, much less be in a room with the president of the United States," the mayor said. "Leaders are called to do the right things and I am watching Republicans in Washington not only not do the right thing, but allow the rule of law and basic human decency and dignity to be crushed."

Correction: An earlier version of this story, due to an editing error, misnamed the serviceman for whom Fort Gregg-Adams will be renamed.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/army-rename-base-named-albany-wwi-hero-henry-20370971.php>

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