



INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING

Premier Military Training for a
Secure and Prosperous America



JANUARY 2026 | NEWSLETTER

Training with Purpose: Looking Ahead to FY26



The Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) Office of the Secretary of War team at the conclusion of the 2025 Joint Workshop for Operational Mission Planners and Mission Leads.

As we begin 2026, the IRT program is preparing for another impactful year of real-world military training. This year, IRT will execute 22 training activities funded by the Office of the Secretary of War (OSW) across 16 states and territories, along with 5 additional training activities across 4 states which are not funded by OSW. The program anticipates training approximately 2,300 Service members and expects more non-funded training opportunities to emerge in the coming months. These training activities will provide no-cost services ranging from optometry and dental care to specialized diving operations and cybersecurity expertise, while helping Service members hone critical skills in realistic deployment settings and deliver essential services to communities in need.

This January, mission planning is already in full swing, with several events underway. Details of these dates and missions are outlined on page 2. The 2026 training activities are progressing through IRT's three-phase planning process, mirroring real-world deployment preparation. The cycle begins with initial planning meetings where military units and community partners establish preliminary requirements and timelines. The mid-planning phase follows, focusing on refining logistics, securing bed-down locations, and finalizing clinic sites. The process culminates in final planning meetings to confirm personnel rosters, equipment needs, and coordination among all stakeholders. This structured approach ensures mission success while providing Service members with invaluable deployment-like training to enhance military readiness.

In addition, after-action reports from last year's training activities are being carefully reviewed and analyzed to inform planning and improve operational efficiencies. By applying lessons learned, the IRT program continues to strengthen the effectiveness of its training activities.

The IRT staff looks forward to supporting all participating units and community partners in 2026. IRT's civil-military partnerships continue to strengthen relationships between military members and American communities, enhance unit and deployment readiness for Service members, and address critical needs across the nation. To learn more, visit irt.defense.gov.

UNITY OF PURPOSE

IRT strengthens joint coordination and hands-on military training that ensures real-world readiness and mission success in complex contingency environments.

ACCOUNTABILITY & INNOVATION

IRT increases fiscal discipline, ensuring best use of DoW resources for cutting-edge military training and threat resilience for American communities.

READINESS & LEADERSHIP

IRT develops strong military leaders who are prepared to meet the challenges of deployment, mission success, and deterrence abroad.

IRT TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

Civil Military Partnerships
Mission Planning
Mission Logistics

IRT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Colonel James Hogan, Director
Colonel Stephen Rubright, Deputy Director
Major Melford Simpson, Operations Officer
Chief Master Sergeant Mathew Forster, Superintendent

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Major Simpson
IRT Operations Officer



As we begin 2026, I'm energized by the potential ahead for the IRT program. Building on our legacy of excellence and the dedicated service of our team, we will continue delivering premier military training that transforms our Service members and the communities we serve. Beyond building infrastructure or providing healthcare, we're strengthening America's foundation through meaningful civil-military partnerships that embody the very best of who we are as a nation.



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IRT STAFF SPOTLIGHT

MAJOR EDWARD BROUCH

AIR FORCE RESERVE
PROGRAM MANAGER



If I had to pick one word to describe the IRT program and those who volunteer, it would be “passion.” This team embodies what it means to be an American, sacrificing through service to our country to safeguard the values and freedoms that we hold dear. As a recent addition to the IRT team, I am looking forward to my first mission season and witnessing how our training directly impacts communities across America while providing real world training to our Service members.

ENLISTED OF THE YEAR (E6-E9)

MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT LeROY RICHIE

MARINE CORPS
ENLISTED OF THE YEAR (E6-E9)

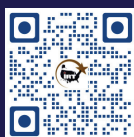


IRT Enlisted of the Year (E6-E9) is awarded to Master Gunnery Sergeant LeRoy Richie for exceptional operational and engineering leadership during four IRT support activities in FY25. The Enlisted of the Year award recognizes individuals who contributed to planning, supported, or worked an IRT support activity while displaying exemplary leadership in identifying opportunities to increase readiness and encourage collaboration and innovation. Master Gunnery Sergeant Richie exemplified these accomplishments through his role in leading and supporting pre-exercise site surveys from the Caribbean to Alaska. His detailed assessments and coordination during these surveys laid the foundation for effective training, planning, force integration, and interagency collaboration. His leadership created a challenging training environment that enhanced Marine Corps engineering capabilities and demonstrated the value of civil-military cooperation. Master Gunnery Sergeant Richie's strategic insight and deep understanding of IRT training requirements made him a trusted advisor in planning efforts.

IRT EVENTS & SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- Jan 5: Wellness Across the Marianas, Initial Planning Meeting
- Jan 5: Operation Healthy Nueces, Initial Planning Meeting
- Jan 5: Shepard Point, Initial Planning Meeting
- Jan 6: Nueces County Community Needs Assessment, Initial Planning Meeting
- Jan 12: Kodiak Arctic Care, Mid Planning Meeting
- Jan 14: Operation Footprint, Initial Planning Meeting
- Jan 19: Operation Forrest Sentinel, Initial Planning Meeting

More information
on missions at:



FY26 IRT PROGRAM MANAGERS

- Major Penny Cannon
Army Reserve | Army Active Duty
- Captain Scott Thurman
Army National Guard
- Captain Emanuel Mendez
Marine Corps Reserve | Marine Corps Active Duty
- Lieutenant Commander Shaun Shillady
Navy Reserve | Navy Active Duty
- Major Nathaniel Horwitz-Willis
Air National Guard | Air Force Active Duty
- Major Edward Brouch
Air Force Reserve