



# INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING

Premier Military Training for a  
Secure and Prosperous America



FEBRUARY 2026 | NEWSLETTER

## Community Applications: The Cornerstone of the IRT Program

Community applications are the starting point of the IRT program's civil-military partnerships, serving as the foundation for all support activities. These applications follow a specific timeline that requires advance planning. Applications are due September 30, two years ahead of the proposed training's fiscal year. For example, community applications for FY27 missions were due September 30, 2025. While this is the standard timeline for Office of the Secretary of War-funded missions, the Services consider out-of-cycle applications on a case-by-case basis and may implement them more quickly through local or regional partnerships.



*Retired Navy aircraft mechanic, Donald Montgomery, talks to Technical Sergeant Sergio Gamboa, 355th Wing Public Affairs, Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, in Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum Hangar 79 during an IRT support activity at Ford Island, Hawaii, July 16, 2024.*

A community's application for IRT support is a proposal for civil-military assistance and services. The actual scope of work is determined by several factors: the approved military application, congressional budgets, training needs, and available resources. The IRT program is designed with clear boundaries, meaning there are certain types of support it cannot provide. For example, projects that lack military training value are ineligible for consideration. Similarly, the program does not support immediate disaster response, commercial development efforts, training conducted outside the United States and its territories, initiatives resulting in fewer than 100 hours of training, work that competes with the private sector, or the use of the Armed Forces for civilian law enforcement purposes.

When preparing an application, communities should prioritize highlighting military training opportunities. To craft a strong, competitive application, we recommend that community applicants also consider the following:

- Minimize scheduling risks.
- Submit applications as early as possible.
- Clearly articulate how the mission contributes to the community's long-term vision.
- Showcase resources available to accommodate Service members (e.g., lodging, meal preparation facilities).
- Complete non-competition notices as soon as possible. This is a critical part of the application process that should be completed as soon as possible.
- Secure necessary land use permits and facilities permissions.
- Highlight the community's ability to sustain results, ensuring lasting project value.
- Explain how the mission improves civil-military relationships, fostering strong local ties.

IRT thrives on a clearly articulated proposal to provide military training opportunities while simultaneously addressing community needs. We sincerely thank all communities for their time, interest, and contributions that make these opportunities possible for our Service members. Should you have any questions about the IRT program or the application process, please contact [irthehelpdesk@lmi.org](mailto:irthehelpdesk@lmi.org).

IRT's civil-military partnerships continue to strengthen relationships between military members and American communities, enhance unit and deployment readiness for Service members, and provide essential services to local communities. To learn more, visit [irt.defense.gov](http://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
- Community Application
- Mission Planning

### 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

**Colonel James Hogan**  
IRT Director



"Military readiness is the core of every IRT mission, and it all begins with the community application. Each application represents a critical opportunity to enhance the real-world skills of our Service Members. We achieve this through powerful partnerships that not only deliver vital training but also strengthen our nation's communities. We look forward to building these valuable relationships together."



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## IRT STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### COMMANDER SHAUN SHILLADY

NAVY ACTIVE DUTY | NAVY RESERVE  
PROGRAM MANAGER



During my tenure as program manager, I have helped to plan more than 40 missions, resulting in 27,000 training hours and the treatment of more than 18,000 patients. This IRT Program offers real-world training and experience, which is immensely useful in preparing our medical personnel for treating patients in various environments throughout their service. When you combine that experience with the camaraderie of working with our sister services on these missions, it helps to deliver ready and capable officers and enlisted to the force. I consider it an honor, and the highlight of my military career, to have been a part of the IRT Program.

## IRT STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### MAJOR PENNY CANNON

ARMY ACTIVE DUTY | ARMY RESERVE  
PROGRAM MANAGER



I was drawn to IRT for its dual mission of training while serving American communities, but my time in the IRT Program revealed its unparalleled value as a readiness platform. It's incredibly rewarding to know our complex, long-term planning directly empowers our citizen-soldiers to build readiness by applying their skills in service to their fellow citizens.

## IRT EVENTS & SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- Feb 2: Wildwood Hills Ranch Iowa, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 4: Nimiipuu Health, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 9: Buffalo River Wellness, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 9: Redwoods Fish Hatchery, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 16: Operation Colonia Improvement, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 16: Green River Wellness, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 17: Wellness Across the Marianas, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 23: Nueces County Community Needs Assessment, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 23: Shepard Point, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 23: Tropic Care Big Island, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 23: Operation Arctic Shelter, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 24: Operation Healthy Nueces, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 25: Camp V-Bar Road Repair, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 26: Operation Footprint, Mid-Planning Meeting
- Feb 27: Cyber Tatanka, Mid-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

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