



INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING

Premier Military Training for a
Secure and Prosperous America

JULY 2026 | NEWSLETTER

Real-World Training Drives Environmental Restoration

From April 27 to May 8, 2026, the Army partnered with the Broward County Natural Resource Division for an IRT dive support activity to maintain and revitalize the area's artificial reef system. Service members experienced crucial hands-on training in a real-world environment while delivering no-cost dive services to Broward County, FL.

The project addressed the degradation of the county's artificial reef system, established in 1993 after the grounding of the USS Memphis. Over time, 160 concrete reef modules for supporting marine ecosystems had settled into the surrounding sand, reducing their ecological functionality and creating hazards for vessel navigation.

Through this civil-military partnership, 11 skilled Service members performed vital tasks, including inspecting, maintaining, salvaging, and relocating the reef modules. The team relocated 38 concrete modules, each weighing 1,400 pounds, to designated locations, restoring their intended ecological purpose. These efforts not only improved the marine habitat but resulted in safer pathways for vessels navigating the area.

The complex process of relocating the reef modules required the team to employ specialized techniques and adapt its strategy to overcome the challenges of deeply buried modules. Working with Broward County's boat crews, the team executed precision excavation, expertly maneuvered lift bags, and coordinated the towing of modules using the Army's rigid-hulled inflatable boat.

By the end of the training activity, Service members completed over 1,000 hours of vital, real-world training across eight Training and Readiness standards, delivering an estimated fair market value of \$95,000 in no-cost dive services to the community. This immersive experience sharpened Service members' operational skills, improved readiness, and underscored their capability to solve challenges in dynamic conditions. In addition, the revitalized reef system now supports marine life and enhances vessel safety in the waterways of Broward County.

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.



An Army diver enters the water to restore segments of the artificial reef.

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
Dive Training
Waterway Safety

IRT LEADERSHIP TEAM

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

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Kirk Kilfoyle

Broward County Marine Resources Section
and Artificial Reef Program
Environmental Project Coordinator



"The Broward County Marine Resources Section and Artificial Reef Program was incredibly fortunate to have this team of skilled and talented professionals help us solve challenging underwater engineering problems. Thanks to their efforts, dozens of artificial reefs that were in danger

of settling completely into the sand were salvaged and used to create a new beneficial feature on the seafloor. The engineering dive team also appreciated the chance to hone their skills in the clear nearshore water of Broward County, which in turn will help to increase their effectiveness in more challenging conditions abroad."



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IRT STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CAPTAIN RAMSEY HOFFMAN

ARMY ACTIVE DUTY
TASK FORCE REEF RESCUE OFFICER IN CHARGE



“This partnership highlights the unique, high-value capabilities the Army brings to the table. Our soldiers received world-class training that directly translates to their wartime mission, all while providing a lasting, positive impact on the local environment and community.”

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

CALL FOR IRT LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINATIONS

Do you know someone who went above and beyond to implement IRT’s mission? The 2026 IRT Joint Workshop for Operational Mission Planners features an annual awards ceremony recognizing exceptional IRT staff, communities, and participants. Awards include Civil-Military Partnership of the Year, Enlisted of the Year, Officer of the Year, and Program Management Team Member of the Year. Visit [FY26 Award Instructions and Nomination Form](#) to download a nomination form with instructions.

DATES:

Aug. 14: Call for Award Nominations

Sep. 30: Call for Award Nominations Closes

Oct. 5–9: Voting Panel

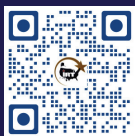
Oct. 15: Award Winners Finalized and Announced by Leadership

Dec. 10: Awards Presented during Award Ceremony

IRT EVENTS & SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- July 1: Tropic Care Big Island, End Date
- July 1: Operation Arctic Shelter, Start Date
- July 4: Camp V-Bar Road Repair, End Date
- July 9: Operation Forest Sentinel, Distinguished Visitor Day
- July 12: Operation Healthy Nueces, Start Date
- July 13: Cyber Chicopee, Start Date
- July 13: Buffalo River Wellness, Start Date
- July 13: Nueces County Community Needs Assessment, Start Date
- July 14: Redwoods Fish Hatchery, Distinguished Visitor Day
- June 22: Cyber Chicopee, Distinguished Visitor Day
- June 22: Operation Healthy Nueces, Distinguished Visitor Day
- June 22: Nueces County Community Needs Assessment, Distinguished Visitor Day
- June 23: Buffalo River Wellness, Distinguished Visitor Day
- June 24: Cyber Chicopee, End Date
- June 24: Nueces County Community Needs Assessment, End Date
- June 26: Operation Healthy Nueces, End Date
- June 27: Buffalo River Wellness, End Date
- June 31: Operation Forest Sentinel, End Date

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

Lieutenant Colonel Edward Brouch
Air Force Reserve