

HISTORIC DRUM



10th Mountain Life features soldier shoutouts, photos of Fort Drum events, memories from post and more.

To recognize your favorite soldier or share photos, email news@wdt.net with subject "10th Mountain Life"

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole addresses a Fort Drum news conference as part of the 1985 reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division, with which he served in World War II. With him were, from left, U.S. Sens. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Alfonse M. D'Amato, U.S. Reps. David O'B. Martin and Sherwood Boehlert, Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh Jr., U.S. Rep. Samuel S. Stratton, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. John A. Wickham Jr. From the Watertown Daily Times Archive

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10TH MOUNTAIN LIFE

How does winter weather impact Fort Drum operations?

Fort Drum Public Affairs

Winters in the north country can be harsh and unpredictable. To address this, Fort Drum officials follow an established weather call policy designed to balance mission requirements with the safety of Soldiers, Army civilians, and their families. The installation's weather call process is based on multiple factors, including forecasts from the National Weather Service and 18th Combat Weather Squadron, road conditions on and around the installation, and input from multiple organizations, including the directorates of Public Works, Emergency Services, and Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

Under this policy, installation leaders may implement a Delayed Report, Early Release, or Do Not Report order. Rich Hughes, the installation emergency manager, said Fort Drum personnel are notified of the initial weather call before 4 a.m.

"Many of our Soldiers and civilian employees live across the North Country and report to work early each day, so we want to get the information to people for their awareness before they begin their morning commute," he said. The early decision also allows Fort Drum DPW snow removal crews to clear roadways and lots, unimpeded by normal traffic. Additionally, the installation informs local school districts about on-post conditions to inform their separate decisions on delays or closures. If weather conditions worsen, the data collection process is repeated for a potential status change before 7 a.m.

"If the severe weather is projected to continue, or roads and parking lots can't be cleared even by the delayed reporting time, we may recommend a 'Do Not Report' for non-essential personnel," Hughes said. For severe weather developing during the duty day, an early release decision is made before 11:30 a.m. "If we're already here and see that severe weather is going to impact the afternoon

hours and/or the drive home, we may recommend an early release to prevent personnel from having to drive in hazardous conditions," he added.

Hughes said the weather call policy is reviewed annually as part of a broader effort to maintain readiness while reducing unnecessary risk during severe weather events.

"There is so much more that goes into a decision than what the weather looks like at any given moment," he said. "It's not an exact science, but it is as informed a decision as we can make it based on multiple factors."

These include:

— The ability to clear snow in time for personnel to report for duty.

— Current weather and road conditions across a 40-mile commute radius, which involves canvassing local law enforcement agencies, monitoring travel advisories and bans in the tri-county area, and tracking 511NY.

— Forecasted weather conditions across the commute radius for the entire duty day. The unpredictability of lake effect snow bands in some areas can make this difficult to project. Any minor variations to wind speeds and directions can greatly affect the amount of snow.

— Mission-essential activities such as deployments, redeployments, special events, and critical training. The command team may designate certain activities as mission-essential to ensure personnel are available.

STAYING INFORMED

Information on post status, road conditions and how weather impacts Fort Drum is available at <http://wdt.me/FortDrumAlerts> and accessible through MAPA (My Army Post App). Status updates are also posted on the U.S. Army Fort Drum & 10th Mountain Division Facebook page. Community members can also call the Fort Drum Information Hotline at 315-772-3786 for road conditions, and delay and closure information.

Above: Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division and across the U.S. Army ski in the annual D-Series event at Fort Drum on Jan. 29. This event tested the strength and agility of different squads in the U.S. Army to build cohesion while honoring the legacy of the 10th Mountain Division ancestors. Check back this month for more D-Series photos in 10th Mountain Life. Courtesy of the 10th Mountain Division

NEWS FROM POST

■ The parents of a 10th Mountain Division soldier who embodied the values of courage and selflessness were notified this week that their son, Staff Sgt. Michael H. Ollis, who died in the summer of 2013 during combat in Afghanistan while protecting a comrade in arms from Poland, will posthumously receive the nation's highest military decoration. On Tuesday, Bob and Linda Ollis received a call at their Staten Island home from President Donald Trump informing them that Michael deserved the Medal of Honor for his actions.

In August 2006, Ollis enlisted in the Army at age 17 after excelling in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at the Michael J. Petrides School on Staten Island.

He completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and was assigned to the 1st Armored Division in Baumholder, Germany. In April 2008, he deployed to Iraq and was promoted to sergeant before the combat tour ended. Ollis moved to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where he served as a fire team leader with 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. He completed Air Assault School before deploying to Afghanistan with his unit. Ollis returned to Fort Campbell in May 2011, but he was soon reassigned to the 10th Mountain Division. He arrived at Fort Drum in November to join the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team. While stationed at Fort Drum, he lived in Sackets Harbor at Madison Barracks. He told his father he hoped to retire there after his Army career.

In 2013, Ollis was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Following two tense combat deployments in the mountains of Afghanistan, he earned the U.S. Army's Ranger tab. On Aug. 28, 2013, Ollis and his entire coalition military base, Forward Operating Base Ghazni, were caught in the middle of a major Taliban assault.

■ The 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team is set to deploy to the Middle East.

The Army announced Monday that the 2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team will be replacing the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Iowa National Guard, as part of its regular rotation of forces. The 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team was deployed from Iowa in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.



Michael H. Ollis during his first deployment to Afghanistan.
St. Martin's Press