LOCATION GUIDE

Fort Drum, New York

Housing, BAH, schools, gates, contacts and North Country winter know-how for the home of the 10th Mountain Division.

SERIES

CONUS

PCS

FROM
Your current duty station

TO
Fort Drum, NY

GUIDE
Location

BRANCH
Army

BAH AREA
Fort Drum / Watertown

MAIN GATE
Cerjan Gate

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Quick facts and getting here
- Before-you-arrive checklist
- Reception and in-processing
- On-post and off-post housing
- 2026 BAH and rent vs. buy
- Schools and child care
- Spouse, family and NY rules
- Living here and day trips
- Key contacts
- Budget and house-hunting worksheets

WELCOME

Fort Drum at a glance

Fort Drum sits in New York's North Country, near Watertown and less than two hours from Canada. Expect long, snowy winters, beautiful summers and a close-knit community.

FACT	DETAIL
Location	Jefferson County, about 10 miles northeast of Watertown
Nearest cities	Watertown (next door), Syracuse (about 1.25 hr), Canada (under 2 hr)
Major unit	10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)
Size	About 107,000 acres; about 18,000 active duty
Founded	1908, as Pine Camp
BAH housing area	Fort Drum / Watertown, NY
On-post housing	Fort Drum Mountain Community Homes
Health care	Guthrie Clinic on post (no ER); hospital care at Samaritan in Watertown or Carthage

Getting here

OPTION	DETAIL
Watertown International (ART)	About 15 minutes; very few flights
Syracuse Hancock (SYR)	About 1.25 hours; most families fly in here
By car	I-81 to I-781, which ends at the Cerjan (Main) Gate, open 24/7

No hospital on post

Guthrie is an outpatient clinic with no emergency room. For emergencies, go to Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown or Carthage Area Hospital.

COUNTDOWN

Before you arrive

On-post housing waits can run months, and winter is long. Apply for housing early and plan your move around the weather if you can.

As soon as you have orders 90+ DAYS OUT

- [ ] Apply for on-post housing
- [ ] Call School Support Services about districts
- [ ] Look up your BAH for Fort Drum / Watertown
- [ ] Get passports for Canada trips
- [ ] Request a sponsor from your gaining unit
- [ ] In EFMP? Call EFMP now: (315) 772-5476
- [ ] Request child care on MilitaryChildCare.com
- [ ] Join local military spouse groups

Book the move 60 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Schedule household goods or plan your PPM
- [ ] Start the off-post rental or home search
- [ ] Budget for snow tires and winter gear
- [ ] Reserve on-post lodging
- [ ] Gather school, shot and IEP/504 records

Final prep 30 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Print orders, your leave form and copies
- [ ] Book a DEERS/ID card appointment if needed
- [ ] Arrange your own ride from the airport — keep receipts
- [ ] Set up utilities and internet at the new address

Winter is serious here

Snow season runs from late October to late April, with lake-effect whiteouts and black ice. Get snow tires and a winter car kit before November.

DAY ONE

Arrival and in-processing

The Reception Activity is staffed 24/7, including holidays. Day 0 is at your unit; Day 1 in-processing is at Clark Hall.

1

Reception Activity

Building 4412, Camp Swift Road. Staffed 24/7: (315) 774-0165. Staff Duty: (315) 772-0423 or (800) 661-7158.

2

Getting here

There is no airport pickup. Arrange your own ride from Syracuse or Watertown and keep your receipts for the travel claim.

Bring with you

- Orders and any amendments, with copies
- Your CAC and dependents' IDs
- Travel receipts and PPM weight tickets
- Signed leave form (DA Form 31)
- Marriage and birth certificates for dependents
- Lease or mortgage papers, if you have them

Gates to know

GATE	NOTES
Cerjan Gate (main)	End of I-781; open 24/7
Plummer Gate	4:30 AM to 10 PM; closed some holidays
Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Gate	Open 24/7
Visitors	REAL ID required; day visits 7:30 AM to 10 PM

Calling 911 on post

Cell 911 calls go to Jefferson County dispatch. Tell them you're on Fort Drum so they can route the call.

WHERE TO LIVE

On-post and off-post housing

Fort Drum Mountain Community Homes has about 3,800 homes on post. Off post, families spread across Watertown and the small villages around the gates.

On post MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY HOMES

- Two- to five-bedroom homes; waits can run 3–9 months
- Mountain Community Homes: (315) 955-6644
- On-post living cuts winter driving
- Army Housing Office: (315) 772-3008

Off post PICK BY COMMUTE

TOWN	FEEL	COMMUTE
Watertown	Most shopping and services	15–20 min
Evans Mills	Small village near the main gate	About 10 min
Calcium	Close-in, mostly rentals	About 10 min
Black River	Quiet village	10–15 min
Carthage	Small town with a hospital	About 20 min
Sackets Harbor	Historic lakeside village	About 30 min

Ask about heat and snow removal

Before you sign, ask what heating costs in January and who plows the driveway. Both can change your budget.

THE NUMBERS

2026 BAH and rent vs. buy

Fort Drum BAH is set by the Fort Drum / Watertown, NY housing area. Monthly rates below.

GRADE	WITH DEPS	WITHOUT	GRADE	WITH DEPS	WITHOUT
E-1 to E-4	$1,569	$1,356	W-5	$2,631	$2,154
E-5	$1,665	$1,422	O-1	$1,701	$1,470
E-6	$1,893	$1,476	O-2	$1,890	$1,638
E-7	$2,103	$1,578	O-3	$2,469	$1,902
E-8	$2,331	$1,749	O-4	$2,655	$2,115
E-9	$2,526	$1,896	O-5	$2,784	$2,244
W-1	$1,914	$1,548	O-6	$2,805	$2,457
W-2	$2,196	$1,713	O-1E	$2,145	$1,662
W-3	$2,478	$1,899	O-2E	$2,436	$1,827
W-4	$2,544	$1,938	O-3E	$2,559	$1,920

Source: DoD 2026 BAH rates via FedRateCalc

Double-check your rate before you budget — BAH changes every January: travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Basic-Allowance-for-Housing/BAH-Rate-Lookup/

Some high-cost areas also pay CONUS COLA: travel.dod.mil/Allowances/CONUS-Cost-of-Living-Allowance/

Rent or buy?

- Rents in the North Country are moderate, but heating adds a lot in winter
- Some families buy, but homes can sell slowly — think about resale
- Short tours often fit renting or on-post housing better
- Road salt is hard on cars — budget for rust care

Budget for winter heat

Heating oil, propane or electric heat can add hundreds a month from November to April. Ask for last winter's bills.

KIDS

Schools and child care

There are no DoDEA schools at Fort Drum. On-post homes are zoned for Indian River or Carthage Central, and off post your address decides the district.

DISTRICT OR SCHOOL	SERVES
Indian River Central School District	Much of on-post housing, Evans Mills, Calcium and Philadelphia
Carthage Central School District	Part of on-post housing, Carthage and Black River area
Watertown City School District	Watertown
Other options	Sackets Harbor, General Brown and private schools

School Support Services

Call (315) 772-3214 for district maps, enrollment help and IEP or 504 transitions.

Military Interstate Compact

New York is a member — it helps with placement and graduation rules.

Colleges nearby

Jefferson Community College in Watertown and SUNY Potsdam.

Child care

- Request Child Development Center care on MilitaryChildCare.com as soon as you have orders
- Youth programs run before and after school and in summer
- Family Child Care homes on post fill gaps
- Fee assistance can help with off-post care

FAMILY LIFE

Spouse, family and New York rules

Spouse support

- ACS Employment Readiness helps with job searches and federal applications
- New York offers licensing help for military spouses
- Jobs are fewer than in big cities — remote work is popular
- MyCAA can fund certificates for eligible spouses

Family programs

- ACS Relocation Readiness: (315) 772-6556
- EFMP: (315) 772-5476
- New Parent Support and Family Advocacy through ACS
- Outdoor Rec for skis, snowshoes and gear

New York rules for military families

TOPIC	WHAT TO KNOW
State income tax	Nonresident service members aren't taxed by New York on military pay; NY residents are
Spouse income	Spouses who keep another legal residence may be exempt
Driver's license	Service members and dependents with a valid home-state license can keep it
Vehicle registration	Nonresident service members can keep home-state registration
Winter parking	November to April, parking rules on streets and lawns are strict

OFF DUTY

Living here

You'll need a car, and in winter a good one. I-81 connects Watertown to Syracuse, and the St. Lawrence River and Canada are close.

Climate

Long, snowy winters with deep cold; mild, green summers in the low 80s.

Shopping

PX and commissary on post. Salmon Run Mall in Watertown; Destiny USA in Syracuse.

On post

Cross-country skiing, the Remington Park pavilions, golf and MWR events.

Day trips

DESTINATION	DRIVE	WHY GO
Sackets Harbor	~30 min	War of 1812 battlefield and lakeside dining
Clayton	~45 min	St. Lawrence waterfront and Antique Boat Museum
Thousand Islands / Boldt Castle	~45–60 min	Island cruises and castles
Syracuse	~1.25 hr	Zoo, shopping and college sports
Gananoque, Ontario	~1 hr	Island cruises — bring passports
Kingston, Ontario	~1.5 hr	Fort Henry — bring passports
Old Forge / Adirondacks	Under 2 hr	Hiking, lakes and water parks
Lake Placid	~3 hr	Olympic sites and mountain town

KEEP THIS HANDY

Key contacts

Phone numbers change — call ahead to confirm hours before you drive over.

OFFICE	PHONE
Reception Activity (24/7)	(315) 774-0165
Staff Duty	(315) 772-0423
ACS Relocation	(315) 772-6556
EFMP	(315) 772-5476
School Support Services	(315) 772-3214

OFFICE	PHONE
Mountain Community Homes	(315) 955-6644
Army Housing Office	(315) 772-3008
Guthrie appointments	(888) 838-1303
Lodging	(315) 773-7777
Samaritan Medical Center	(315) 782-4100

Add your own

TRANSPORTATION (HHG/PPM)

ID CARD OFFICE

MILITARY POLICE

SPONSOR

Links

Fort Drum home page · Fort Drum MWR · Guthrie Army Health Clinic · BAH Rate Lookup · Plan My Move

Sources: Fort Drum official pages (newcomers, reception, housing, directory); Guthrie AHC; Military OneSource; NY Dept. of Taxation; DoD 2026 BAH rates via FedRateCalc.

READY FOR THE FULL PLAYBOOK?

Go step by step with the kits.

Worksheets, trackers and a complete binder setup for every stage of your move.

pcslikeapro.org

hello@pcslikeapro.org

WORKSHEET

Plan your landing

My housing budget

ITEM	AMOUNT
My monthly BAH	$
Rent or mortgage	$
Utilities (estimate)	$
Renter's or homeowner's insurance	$
Left over (BAH minus costs)	$

Neighborhood comparison

AREA / ADDRESS	RENT OR PRICE	COMMUTE TO GATE	SCHOOL DISTRICT	NOTES

First-week checklist

- [ ] Report to the Reception Activity
- [ ] Update DEERS; get dependent IDs
- [ ] Turn in travel and moving paperwork
- [ ] Register with Child and Youth Services
- [ ] Attend newcomers orientation
- [ ] Enroll in TRICARE at Guthrie
- [ ] Enroll kids in school
- [ ] Build a winter car kit