LOCATION GUIDE

Fort Hood, Texas

Housing, BAH, schools, gates, contacts and the local know-how for the Great Place in Central Texas.

SERIES

CONUS

PCS

FROM	TO	GUIDE
Your current duty station	Fort Hood, TX	Location
BRANCH	**BAH AREA**	**MAIN GATE**
Army	Fort Hood, TX	Bernie Beck

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- Quick facts and the name change
- Before-you-arrive checklist
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WELCOME

Fort Hood at a glance

One of the largest Army installations in the world, Fort Hood sits between Killeen and Copperas Cove in Central Texas — with affordable homes, no state income tax and Austin about an hour away.

FACT	DETAIL
Location	Bell and Coryell counties, TX, between Killeen and Copperas Cove
Nearest cities	Killeen (next door), Temple (about 30 mi), Waco (about 60 mi), Austin (about 70 mi)
Major units	III Armored Corps, 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Cavalry Regiment
Size	About 214,000 acres; roughly 36,000 active duty Soldiers
BAH housing area	Fort Hood, TX
On-post housing	Fort Hood Family Housing (Lendlease)
Main gate	Bernie Beck Gate, off U.S. 190 / I-14
Hospital	Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center

Getting here

OPTION	DETAIL
Killeen airport (GRK)	Killeen–Fort Hood Regional, minutes from post. Reception provides 24/7 pickup for in-processing Soldiers.
Austin airport (AUS)	About 1 hr 15 min; more flights and often cheaper fares
Shuttle bus	The local connector bus runs from the airport for about $2
By car	I-35 to U.S. 190 / I-14 west through Killeen to the Bernie Beck Gate

About the name

The post was renamed Fort Cavazos in May 2023. In 2025 it became Fort Hood again, now honoring Col. Robert B. Hood, a World War I Distinguished Service Cross recipient. Older orders, signs and websites may still say Fort Cavazos.

COUNTDOWN

Before you arrive

Fort Hood is a big, busy post with constant turnover. Two early moves make everything easier: apply for housing the day orders arrive, and ask your sponsor which side of post your unit is on before you pick a town.

As soon as you have orders 90+ DAYS OUT

- [ ] Apply for on-post housing, even if you're unsure
- [ ] Ask which gate you'll use most
- [ ] In EFMP? Call the Fort Hood EFMP office now
- [ ] Enroll kids on MilitaryChildCare.com
- [ ] Request a sponsor from your gaining unit
- [ ] Call the School Liaison Officer about districts
- [ ] Look up your BAH for Fort Hood, TX
- [ ] 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
- [ ] Check vet records and breed rules for on-post housing
- [ ] Reserve lodging (IHG Army Hotels, pet-friendly)
- [ ] Gather school, shot and IEP/504 records

Final prep 30 DAYS OUT

- [ ] Print 5 copies of orders and amendments
- [ ] Hand-carry dental records
- [ ] Set up utilities and internet at the new address
- [ ] Print 5 copies of your signed leave form
- [ ] Register any personal firearms on arrival

Summer heat and peak season

June through August brings the most moves and triple-digit days. Lodging fills fast, and pets and kids need a plan for hot moving days.

DAY ONE

Reception and in-processing

Every Soldier signs in at the Installation Reception Center, which is open 24/7. Civilian clothes are fine after duty hours; wear OCPs Monday to Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM.

1

Installation Reception Center

Building 16008, 42nd Street. Enter at Bernie Beck Gate, take T.J. Mills Blvd to Old Ironsides Ave, then right on 42nd Street. Call (254) 449-3976.

2

Marvin Leath Visitor Welcome Center

Visitor passes and privately owned firearm registration. Open daily 5 AM to 9 PM; after hours, register firearms at the Main Gate.

Bring to reception

- Assignment orders and any amendments — 5 copies
- Dental records and your CAC
- Marriage, divorce and birth certificates for dependents
- Signed, approved leave form — 5 copies, signed out by your losing unit
- LES, travel receipts over $75, PPM weight tickets
- Lease or mortgage papers, if you already have them

Gates to know

GATE	GOOD FOR
Bernie Beck (Main)	Main entrance off U.S. 190; route to Reception
Clear Creek	Harker Heights side and Clear Creek Road
Fort Hood Street	Downtown Killeen side
West Fort Hood	Copperas Cove side and the airport area

Free child care during in-processing

Hourly care is available for children while you in-process. Register with Child and Youth Services first so you can use it on day one.

WHERE TO LIVE

On-post and off-post housing

Fort Hood Family Housing manages 2- to 5-bedroom homes assigned by rank. Off post, most families pick a town based on which side of post they work on.

On post FORT HOOD FAMILY HOUSING

- Apply as soon as you have orders at forthoodfh.com; waits change with the season and the home size
- Army breed restrictions apply in on-post homes — check before you sign
- Your full BAH goes to rent, with a set utility allowance
- Short commutes and on-post elementary schools are the big draws

Off post PICK BY GATE

TOWN	FEEL	TYPICAL COMMUTE
Killeen	Closest, most homes and the lowest prices near post	Minutes to most gates
Harker Heights	Suburban, newer builds, well-liked schools	Clear Creek side
Copperas Cove	Quieter and budget friendly	West side gates
Nolanville	Small town between Killeen and Belton	East side, easy drive
Belton / Temple	Lake Belton, I-35 access, higher prices	Longer east commute
Salado	Upscale village with more land	Longest commute

Use the Housing Services Office

The Housing Services Office (254) 287-4212 can review a lease before you sign, check landlord complaints and explain temporary lodging allowances.

THE NUMBERS

2026 BAH and rent vs. buy

BAH for Fort Hood is set by the Fort Hood, TX housing area. Monthly rates below; always confirm yours with the DoD calculator.

GRADE	WITH DEPS	WITHOUT	GRADE	WITH DEPS	WITHOUT
E-1 to E-4	$1,662	$1,374	W-5	$2,544	$2,109
E-5	$1,695	$1,530	O-1	$1,731	$1,623
E-6	$1,920	$1,626	O-2	$1,917	$1,689
E-7	$2,070	$1,668	O-3	$2,340	$1,833
E-8	$2,238	$1,746	O-4	$2,577	$2,076
E-9	$2,409	$1,806	O-5	$2,748	$2,169
W-1	$1,938	$1,665	O-6	$2,769	$2,325
W-2	$2,139	$1,743	O-1E	$2,100	$1,692
W-3	$2,346	$1,812	O-2E	$2,313	$1,788
W-4	$2,433	$1,950	O-3E	$2,451	$1,908

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?

- Killeen's median home price is around $235K in 2026; Copperas Cove often runs lower, Harker Heights and Belton higher
- Texas has no state income tax, but property taxes are among the highest in the country — get the real tax bill, not just the price
- Buying usually makes sense for a 3+ year tour; it also tends to rent well to the next military family

Budget for the tax bill

In Bell and Coryell counties, property tax and insurance can add hundreds a month to a mortgage. Ask your lender for a full payment estimate before you compare it with rent.

KIDS

Schools and child care

Killeen ISD serves most families on post and runs several schools on the installation. Off post, your address decides the district.

DISTRICT	SERVES
Killeen ISD	On post, Killeen, Harker Heights and Nolanville; high schoolers on post attend campuses in town
Copperas Cove ISD	Copperas Cove and the west side
Belton ISD	Belton and parts of south Temple
Temple ISD	Temple
Salado ISD	Salado

Free pre-K

Texas offers free public pre-K for 4-year-olds of active duty members; some districts also serve age 3.

Military Interstate Compact

Helps with records, course placement and graduation rules when you move mid-year.

School Liaison Officer

Call (254) 288-7946 for district maps, enrollment help and IEP or 504 transitions.

Child care

- Request care for on-post Child Development Centers through MilitaryChildCare.com as soon as you have orders
- Hourly care is available during in-processing once you register with CYS
- Family Child Care homes on post can fill gaps and odd hours
- Central Texas College and Texas A&M University–Central Texas are close by for spouses and teens

Check the attendance zone

District lines in this area don't follow city lines. Confirm the school for any address before you sign a lease or make an offer.

FAMILY LIFE

Spouse, family and Texas rules

Spouse support

- ACS Employment Readiness (254) 287-6067 helps with job searches and federal applications
- Texas lets licensed military spouses practice with an out-of-state license while the state verifies it
- Army Family Team Building and the Army Volunteer Corps meet new families fast
- MyCAA can fund certificates for eligible spouses

Family programs

- EFMP (254) 287-6070 — register before you arrive
- New Parent Support and Family Advocacy (254) 286-6774
- Financial Readiness (254) 553-3101 for budgeting and car-buying help
- Chapels and religious support (254) 288-6545

Texas rules for military families

TOPIC	WHAT TO KNOW
State income tax	None in Texas
Driver's license	Service members and dependents with a valid home-state license can keep it
Vehicle registration	You can keep your home-state registration; register in Texas only if you choose to become a resident
Inspections	Most passenger vehicles no longer need a Texas safety inspection; Bell County has no emissions test
Sales tax	About 8.25% in the Killeen area
College tuition	Military families stationed in Texas can qualify for in-state tuition

Weather readiness

Spring brings severe storms, hail and flash flooding. "Turn around, don't drown" is serious here — low-water crossings flood fast.

OFF DUTY

Living here

You'll need a car. U.S. 190 / I-14 is the main road along post, and I-35 connects Belton and Temple to Austin, Waco and Dallas.

Climate

Long, hot summers often top 100°F. Winters are mild, with an occasional ice storm.

Shopping

Two commissaries and exchanges on post. Killeen's Market Heights and Harker Heights have the main retail.

On post

Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area, golf, bowling, fitness centers and the 1st Cav museum.

Day trips

DESTINATION	DRIVE	WHY GO
Belton Lake and Stillhouse Hollow	~20 min	Boating, swimming and fishing
Salado	~30 min	Historic village, shops and creek-side parks
Mother Neff State Park	~40 min	Easy hikes and picnics
Waco	~1 hr	Magnolia Market, the zoo and Cameron Park
Austin	~1–1.25 hr	Live music, Barton Springs, the Capitol
Georgetown / Inner Space Cavern	~45 min	Cave tours and a historic square
Fredericksburg	~2 hr	Hill Country wineries and peach stands
San Antonio	~2 hr	River Walk, the Alamo and theme parks
Dallas–Fort Worth	~2.5 hr	Pro sports and big-city weekends

KEEP THIS HANDY

Key contacts

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

OFFICE	PHONE
Installation Reception Center	(254) 449-3976
Visitor Welcome Center	(254) 287-9909
Housing Services Office	(254) 287-4212
DEERS / ID Cards	(254) 287-2518
Army Community Service	(254) 287-4227
Relocation Readiness	(254) 287-4471
EFMP	(254) 287-6070
School Liaison Officer	(254) 288-7946

OFFICE	PHONE
Darnall Medical Center	(254) 288-8000
Darnall appointments	(254) 288-8888
Military Police (24/7)	(254) 287-4001
IHG Army Hotels	(254) 532-5157
Veterinary Clinic	(254) 287-2823
Legal Assistance	(254) 287-7901
Employment Readiness	(254) 287-6067
TRICARE West	(888) 874-9378

Links

Fort Hood home page · Fort Hood MWR · Fort Hood Family Housing · Darnall Medical Center · DoD BAH calculator · Plan My Move

Sources: Fort Hood Installation Reception Center and inbound PCS pages; Fort Hood MWR ACS directory; MyBaseGuide; Army Times (July 2025); DoD 2026 BAH rates.

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	$
Property tax and insurance (if buying)	$
Utilities (summer A/C estimate)	$
Left over (BAH minus costs)	$

Neighborhood comparison

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

First-week checklist

- [ ] Sign in at the Reception Center
- [ ] Update DEERS; get dependent IDs
- [ ] Turn in travel and moving paperwork
- [ ] Register with Child and Youth Services
- [ ] Register firearms at the Visitor Center
- [ ] Enroll in TRICARE at Darnall
- [ ] Enroll kids in school
- [ ] Visit ACS for the lending closet