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Department of Environmental Protection Rededicates Former Army Reserve Center in Kingston as the New Staff Sgt. Robert H. Dietz DEP Police Academy

Photos from the police academy ceremony can be found on [DEP's Flickr page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that the former Army Reserve Center in Kingston has become the permanent home of the DEP Police Academy, which trains roughly 30 new recruits each year to protect the nation's largest unfiltered water supply. DEP announced its acquisition of the building during a ceremony on Thursday, at which it also rededicated the building in memory of the late Staff Sgt. Robert H. Dietz, a Kingston hero whose bravery and valor during World War II earned him the Medal of Honor.

"The Staff Sgt. Robert H. Dietz DEP Police Academy will provide our new police recruits with appropriate space to train, study and learn about the vast water system and infrastructure they will be protecting every day," **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd** said. "Securing the water supply for the largest city in the United States requires a highly trained force of professional officers, especially as environmental and criminal threats become more complex. We are especially proud that this new facility will carry the name of Staff Sgt. Dietz, and we hope his legacy serves to inspire all who are trained at the academy in the future."

"The local veterans community is very happy that the DEP Police Academy will

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retain the name of Staff Sgt. Robert H. Dietz," said **Sgt. First Class William Forte, chairman of the Kingston Veterans' Association**. "It's been 70 years since his heroic actions in Germany, and we know that Staff Sgt. Dietz's legacy continues to inspire his hometown of Kingston."

DEP acquired the former Army Reserve Center on Flatbush Avenue after a two-year application and vetting process. The federal government had declared the building as surplus after the Army moved into a new reserve center in Saugerties in 2011. The 16,658-square-foot building is located on 4 acres of property less than a mile away from DEP's Kingston laboratory building on Smith Avenue. The DEP Police Academy was formerly located in a conference room on the second floor of the laboratory building, and many of the academy's physical training exercises were conducted in the parking lot.

At the rededication ceremony on Thursday, DEP also announced that it would name the academy after the late Staff Sgt. Robert H. Dietz. Dietz, a Kingston native, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor, in 1945 for his valor and heroism in World War II. Dietz ran through enemy fire and single handedly opened a road that led to the capture of the German town of Kirchhain, "and left with his comrades an inspiring example of gallantry in the face of formidable odds," his Medal of Honor citation said. The full citation was read during Thursday's ceremony.

The latest class of DEP police recruits began training in the new academy building in late March. The new building includes classroom space, offices for academy and police personnel, and a drill floor that can be used for physical training. DEP police recruits go through a rigorous program that comprises 1,275 hours of training over the span of seven months. New York State requires new police officers to undergo 750 hours of training. Recruits who train at the DEP Police Academy learn law enforcement fundamentals such as criminal procedure law, vehicle and traffic law, penal law and defensive tactics. They also focus on special topics that prepare them to protect the reservoirs, lands and infrastructure that provide high-quality drinking water to 9.4 million people every day – nearly half the population of the State of New York. These special topics include environmental enforcement, counterterrorism, and a detailed overview of the water supply's infrastructure and facilities. Upon graduation, new recruits and their colleagues in the DEP Police Division are charged with protecting 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, more than 165,000 acres of watershed land, roughly 300 miles of aqueducts, 29 water supply dams, 57 bridges, 7 wastewater treatment plants, and more than 280 shafts, chambers, laboratories and other facilities that help the water system function. These facilities and lands stretch across parts of eight counties and roughly 2,000 square miles of watershed.

Recruits trained at the DEP Police Academy will eventually be stationed at one of seven DEP Police precincts in Ashokan, Beerston, Downsville, Eastview, Gilboa, Grahamsville or Yonkers. The DEP Police Division, which was established more than 100 years ago, patrols the watershed by foot, bicycle, all-terrain vehicle, motorcycle, boat and helicopter. It also maintains specially trained units that include a detective bureau, emergency service unit, canine unit and aviation unit.

Nearly 1,000 engineers, scientists, planners, watershed maintainers and other professionals work for DEP in the upstate watershed. That includes nearly 200 people who are stationed at DEP's Kingston Laboratory building. Now that the DEP Police have moved into the new academy building, the department expects to locate additional employees at its other Kingston facility in the future, increasing its positive economic impact in Kingston, Ulster County and the Catskills. Also, DEP's ownership of the former Army Reserve Center will put the property back on the local tax rolls for the first time in decades.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total

gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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