

MEMO

To: The Honorable Christopher Smith

From: Carly Miller, Research Librarian, Congressional Research Service

This email is in response to your request to CRS:

It has come to our office's attention that the Secretary of Defense intends to use Joint Base Maguire-Dix-Lakehurst to temporarily house illegal aliens. Please provide a list of the instances in which the joint base has been used for temporary housing in the past, both before and after the 2009 realignment. For example, it was used to house Afghan refugees after the Afghanistan withdrawal.

CRS identified the following instances in which Joint Base Maguire-Dix-Lakehurst (or their predecessors before the 2009 realignment) was involved in temporarily housing or assisting with the transport/logistics of immigrants and refugees.

To identify the following instances, CRS consulted CRS reports and conducted targeted searches on Department of Defense (DOD) and military websites, as well as open source and subscription databases. Please note that this may not be a comprehensive list.

Events are listed in reverse chronological order. Selected excerpts (italicized) are provided for context and are taken directly from the resources.

1. **Afghan Refugees (2021/2022)**

According to U.S. Northern Command page, DoD Support to Operation Allies Welcome, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst supported about **16,500 Afghan refugees** between August 24, 2021 and February 19, 2022 as part of Operation Allies Welcome. Refer to the following excerpt (highlighting added):

On August 29, 2021, President Biden directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to lead and coordinate efforts across the federal government in support of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW). OAW assisted vulnerable Afghan nationals, to include those who worked alongside the United States in Afghanistan for the past two decades, as they safely resettled in the United States ([DHS.gov/AlliesWelcome](https://www.dhs.gov/allieswelcome)).

*The Department of Defense (DoD), through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), provided temporary housing, sustainment and support inside the United States to Afghans on eight DoD installations: Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; Fort Pickett, Virginia; Fort Lee, Virginia; Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Fort Bliss, Texas; **Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst**, New Jersey; and Camp Atterbury, Indiana. For nearly six months, these installations hosted 72,600 Afghans prior to their resettlement throughout the United States. The final Afghans were resettled from the last open installation at **Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst** on February 19, 2022.*

See also the following press releases:

- [DOD ceases Afghan Evacuee Safe Haven operations at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst](#), Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, March 17, 2022.
- [Operation Allies Welcome Announces Departure of All Afghan Nationals from U.S. Military Bases](#), U.S Northern Command, February 19, 2022.
- [DOD Building Capacity to Support up to 50,000 Afghan Evacuees](#), DOD News, August 27, 2021.
- [New Jersey Military Base Available to Receive Afghan Evacuees](#), DOD News, August 23, 2021.

2. Haitian Earthquake Evacuees (2010)

According to the following press releases, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst provided support to evacuees from Haiti following an earthquake.

- [“Haitian Evacuees Sent to Joint Base McGuire,”](#) Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS), January 18, 2010.
WASHINGTON - Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., welcomed and provided resources for more than 500 evacuees from Haiti this weekend at an evacuation center created on base...

...Several federal agencies including the Departments of Defense, State, and Health and Human Services, along with state government and community groups, helped to ensure the evacuees were properly cared for when they arrived back in the United States.

The team provided immediate care such as showers, food, medical care and transportation to make sure that each evacuee reached their final destinations. Local Haitian churches also provided translators to help with language barriers.

- [“New Jersey base gets evacuees from Haiti on road home,”](#) Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Public Affairs, January 18, 2010.
JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. -- A flight carrying 44 evacuees arrived here late Saturday in a continuing effort to assist U.S. citizens in Haiti after the country was devastated by a 7.0-magnitude earthquake Tuesday.

JB MDL personnel, along with civilian agencies and individual volunteers, have assisted nearly 500 people evacuated from Haiti since receiving the first flight of evacuees early Friday.

- [JB MDL welcomes evacuees from Haiti](#), U.S. Marines, January 17, 2021.
Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst officials welcomed more than 250 evacuees from Haiti Jan. 15 following a 7.0-magnitude earthquake there.

JB McGuire officials are facilitating support efforts with various governmental and civilian organizations to ensure the evacuees are properly cared for. The team has provided food, clothing, medical care and transportation to ensure to assist evacuees until they reach their final destinations.

3. Kosovo Refugees (1999)

According to archived CRS Insight IN10937, [History of Use of U.S. Military Bases to House Immigrants and Refugees](#) (July 26, 2018), Fort Dix was used to temporarily house ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo in 1999:

*From May to June 1999, **more than 4,000 ethnic Albanian refugees** from Kosovo were housed at Fort Dix NJ. According to the Army's FY1999 Historical Summary: Tension in Yugoslavia between Serbs and ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo resulted in a growing refugee problem in the Balkans by March 1999. To assist the Republic of Macedonia in dealing with the influx of displaced people, the United States agreed to accept twenty thousand refugees from Kosovo in the spring of that year. The U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) at Fort McPherson, Georgia, assumed command of Operation Provide Refuge and in early April selected Fort Dix, New Jersey, to host the Kosovar refugees.... On the morning of 6 May, the first 447 refugees landed at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, and proceeded to their temporary quarters at Fort Dix. Between 6 May and 9 July, the installation processed 4,025 refugees, more than a quarter of the 13,989 Kosovars admitted to the United States during this time.*

Note: The above paragraph originally contained embedded hyperlinks to resources that are now no longer active. These resources can be accessed at the following updated hyperlinks identified by CRS:

- [Refugees' Plight Touches American Hearts](#), American Forces Press Service, undated.
Note: The above link is from the [Internet Archive Wayback Machine](#). For background on the Wayback Machine, see [Wayback Machine General Information](#).
- [Department of the Army FY1999 Historical Summary](#), U.S. Center of Military History.

See also the following press releases:

- [U.S. Closing Refugees' New Jersey Safe Haven](#), DVIDS, July 7, 1999.
- [Today's Refugees Recall America's Past](#), DVIDS, June 15, 1999.
- [Life in "The Village": From Chaos to Calm](#), DVIDS, June 13, 1999.

4. Hungarian Refugees (1956-1957)

The following resources indicate that Hungarian refugees were transported to McGuire Air Force Base (AFB) between 1956 and 1957. Note that after landing at McGuire AFB, refugees were then moved to [Camp Kilmer](#) to be processed for settlement in the U.S. For a more general overview of the Hungarian Refugee Crisis, see [Operation Safe Haven: The Hungarian Refugee Crisis of 1956](#) (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, undated).

- ["65 Years Ago: Providing a Safe Harbor,"](#) U.S. European Command, October 1, 2021. *After flights lasting over 15 hours with multiple stops across the North Atlantic, the refugees would disembark at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, where they could be bussed to nearby Camp Kilmer to begin the resettlement process.*
- ["This week in McGuire AFG History,"](#) Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, (July 1, 2009),

McGuire completed its pivotal role in Operation SAFE HAVEN I/II--the evacuation of *Hungarian Freedom Fighters and their families*. From Dec. 11, 1956 to July 1, 1957, McGuire handled more than 10,000 refugees on 173 flights from Europe--without a single accident.

- ["Safe Haven I and II,"](#) Air Mobility Command Museum, undated.
*During Safe Haven I and II, MATS planes **airlifted 10,184 Hungarian refugees on 173 flights** from West Germany to New Jersey. Commercial contract airliners flew 4,170 refugees on 58 flights. After landing at McGuire AFB, the Hungarians moved to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, where they were processed for settlement in the United States.*