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McCaskill: Fort Leonard Wood crucial to nation's strength

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – The highest ranking Democratic woman in the history of the Senate Armed Services Committee visited Fort Leonard Wood April 24 and said the post's mission is critical to the nation's military and its future.

"Whether it's hazardous waste ... IEDs ... corrections ... military police, whether it's all the engineering, this is a base that is crucial to our nation's strength," U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill said. "(Fort Leonard Wood) is where a lot of the most important technical training that is forward looking occurs."

While on Fort Leonard Wood, McCaskill got a first-hand look at some of the technical training that occurs here, such as the U.S. Army Military Police School's Special Victims Unit Training.

"I am very proud of the cutting edge training that is going on teaching our criminal investigators throughout the military how to appropriately and effectively interview victims of sexual assault," McCaskill said. "(Fort Leonard Wood) is obviously ground zero for that investigative training so that part of my visit was particularly important to me today."

McCaskill said the brief she received from the Staff Judge Advocate regarding the special victim counsel program and on the successful prosecutions of sexual assault perpetrators within the military, something she has been very involved with, was also significant.

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Col. Rob Resnick, Fort Leonard Wood SJA, said McCaskill was interested to hear from the professionals on the ground and their thoughts on the program.

“We offered our perspective on how the Special Victim Counsel program is working in its first few months and how we used the discretion given to us to build and shape this program so it works most effectively for the Fort Leonard Wood community,” Resnick said.

Another area McCaskill said was important to Fort Leonard Wood was the Sapper Leader Course.

“(Sappers) have figured out how women can serve in challenging roles – roles that are physical. Not by lessening the standards but by informing women the standard they must train up to and expecting from them the same they expect from men,” she said.

In the long run, McCaskill said, lessons from female Soldier integration during Sapper training at Fort Leonard Wood can be applied to other military specialties.

“As women are integrated into these roles, I think this is a place where Fort Leonard Wood deserves investment, attention and frankly, they can teach the rest of the military how to do this right,” she said. “I believe that the integration of women fully into our military will only make us stronger.”

Ending her visit as the guest speaker for the Mid Missouri Chapter of the Association of the United States Army’s annual meeting, McCaskill expressed the pride she has for Fort Leonard Wood.

“This is where we train leaders, and it’s situated in a place where there is unparalleled community support, where there are no encroachment issues, there are no environmental issues, it’s a low-cost of living ... excellent school systems,” she said. “I am so proud of Fort Leonard Wood and what it represents to our nation.”

- 30 -

For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at (573) 563-4145.

About Fort Leonard Wood

Fort Leonard Wood is a thriving and prosperous installation that has evolved from a small basic training post 70 years ago to a premier Army Center of Excellence that trains more than 80,000 military and civilians each year.

Home to the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood now trains and educates service members and develops doctrine and capabilities for the Training and Doctrine Command’s U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School, U.S. Army Engineer School, and U.S. Army Military Police School, three gender

integrated Initial Military Training brigades, one of only five reception stations in the Army, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a large Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood. A colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, are located on Fort Leonard Wood; a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.

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