



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473
VOICE: 573-563-4145
FAX: 573-563-4012
BY: Marti Yoshida
EMAIL: martha.i.yoshida.civ@mail.mil

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Vietnam veteran mentors law enforcement explorers at Fort Leonard Wood

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – A Vietnam veteran and former U.S. Army Military Police Soldier passed on corps' knowledge to youths during the 2013 National Law Enforcement Explorer Academy at Fort Leonard Wood.

Bob Clement, who enlisted in the Army in 1963, served two tours in Vietnam, and was stationed in Saigon during the Tet Offensive in 1968.

More than 40 years later, Clement rekindled his MP roots by passing on his experience and serving as lead adviser for 29 law enforcement explorers during the National Law Enforcement Explorer Academy held at Fort Leonard Wood. Explorers, ages 16-20, attended this year's academy, hosted by the U.S. Army Military Police School, July 13-20.

“This is like handing the baton down,” said Clement. “A large percentage of these kids will go into law enforcement.”

“They get to see leadership in action at different stages from where they are, to basic trainees, to drill sergeants and lieutenants,” he said. “They start to understand the difference.”

Clement said he enjoys the program, because it keeps him feeling younger and gives him an opportunity to guide young people.

“The program instills pride,” he said. “Explorers learn leadership, teamwork and how to push themselves to do things they thought they couldn’t do.”

Most advisers for the law enforcement explorer program are employed in law enforcement and volunteer to participate through their employer. Since he is a retired law enforcement officer, Clement makes the trip on his own.

“I attend on my own and consider it a vacation,” he said. “What better vacation than sleeping on an Army bunk? As long as I am healthy enough to do it, I’ll be out here. I look forward to coming out to Fort Leonard Wood in another two years.”

Clement said he hopes his story inspires others.

“If older people read about doing things with the younger generation, maybe they will start doing something too,” said Clement.

Clement left the Army in 1970 and accepted a job in federal law enforcement with the original “Sky Marshals” program, which placed armed officers, dressed as passengers, on aircraft to prevent hijacking. At the time, it was referred to as the Customs Air Security Officers Program.

Clement said he has always been involved in some aspect of law enforcement and has been working with the Law Enforcement Exploring Program since 1988.

Currently, Clement serves on the Board of Directors for the Nassau County Police Department and is on the Program Committee for the New York Police Department Explorer Program.

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Photo cutlines

DSC00248.jpg: FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – A Vietnam veteran and former U.S. Army Military Police Soldier, Bob Clement, revisits his MP roots during the 2013 National Law Enforcement Explorer Academy graduation, July 19, on Fort Leonard Wood's MP Memorial Grove. Army photo by Marti Yoshida, Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office/Released

DSC_0217.jpg: FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – From left: Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Cospers, 701st MP Battalion command sergeant major, and Lt. Col. Curt Schroeder, 701st Military Police Battalion commander, recognize Bob Clement during the National Law Enforcement Explorer Academy graduation ceremony on Fort Leonard Wood's Military Police Memorial Grove, July 19. Army photo by Marti Yoshida, Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office/Released

DSC07109.jpg: FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – A Vietnam veteran and former U.S. Army Military Police Soldier, Bob Clement, provides encouragement to law enforcement explorers during a low-crawl training exercise on Fort Leonard Wood's physical endurance course July 16. Army photo by Marti Yoshida, Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office/Released

DSC_0246.JPG: FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – Twenty-nine explorers graduate the National Law Enforcement Explorer Academy during a ceremony held on Fort Leonard Wood's Military Police Memorial Grove, July 19. The eight-day academy, hosted by the U.S. Army Military Police School and 701st MP Battalion, provided practical training and leadership experience, as well as an exploration of careers within the Military Police Corps. Army photo by Marti Yoshida, Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office/Released

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 80-90,000 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 Non Commissioned 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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