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Command outlines reductions, position losses

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – Fort Leonard Wood’s commanding general officially announced expected changes and reductions to units and organizations on Fort Leonard Wood at a town hall meeting Feb. 19 at Nutter Field House.

The changes will mean a net loss of approximately 1,000 Forces Command Soldiers and about 180 Department of the Army civilian authorizations in the Training and Doctrine Command, Forces Command and the Installation Management Command activities on post.

Maj. Gen. Leslie Smith, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, along with members of his staff, outlined support resources for those affected by the planned changes and restructuring.

Under the Department of the Army’s accelerated downsizing plan, the 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, a Forces Command unit that is responsible for all deployable capabilities at Fort Leonard Wood, will continue its Defense Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear mission until May 2015 prior to its inactivation. Fort Leonard Wood is also expected to gain the 595th Engineer Company.

The unit’s 5th Engineer Battalion and 92nd Military Police Battalion companies will continue to support Operation Enduring Freedom and other requirements in the coming years.

In addition to the 4th MEB headquarters company, the 94th and 193rd Engineer Battalions; 103rd, 232nd and 77th Engineer Companies; 94th Brigade Signal Co.; and 156th, 49th, 67th, and 94th Eng. Detachments are scheduled to inactivate.

The estimated net loss of the restructuring within the 4th MEB is 1,000 military positions and six civilian authorizations.

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The Training and Doctrine Command's initiative to "reinvest" military members into civilian authorizations across the command's eight centers of excellence will potentially affect between 140 and 150 civilian position authorizations at Fort Leonard Wood.

"A few years ago, we took military positions and put civilians in those positions, as we were growing the Army," Smith said. "So now these civilian-to-military changes could impact positions in three brigades and combat training companies as early as current or next fiscal year."

The 1st Engineer, 3rd Chemical and 14th MP Brigades could see the bulk of impact due to the civilian-to-military changes.

Smith said they won't know the exact numbers until early March. Affected permanent employees will be included in a surplus placement program and receive priority consideration for assignment to any vacancy for which they qualify.

Thirty one civilian position authorizations are known to be impacted by the Installation Management Command's approved and mandated fiscal 2015 Table of Distribution and Allowances, commonly known as TDA.

Two-thirds of those position authorizations are vacant, meaning nine are affected, said Smith. Those IMCOM employees will also be included in the surplus placement program.

"It is important that people are receiving the correct information from their leaders," Smith said. "It is also vital that employees are updating their resumes and records. Most of all make sure that you make the decision that is right for you, not the decision that's right for somebody else."

Rachell Tomlinson, acting Civilian Personnel Advisory Center director, echoed Smith's remarks about having an up-to-date resume and providing a copy to the personnel office. "We will be using that resume to determine (employee) qualifications to make placements," she said.

Tomlinson also said Fort Leonard Wood is working with the Missouri Career Center, Army Career and Alumni Program office and Army Community Service to provide resume writing classes. There are also USAJOBS workshops scheduled March 19 at Lincoln Hall.

"If at any time, any surplus individual has any questions about being a surplus employee or about the status of placements, they can come by my office or give me a call. I'll answer all your questions," Tomlinson said.

In addition to Nutter Field House other members of the workforce were watching and participating by videoconference at MSCoE headquarters.

Smith provided an update of events since his last town hall meeting. He mentioned that Congress appropriated \$90 million for Advanced Individual Training barracks and a simulator training facility.

He highlighted visits by the Missouri's secretary of state and legislators, the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program director and the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

Additionally, attendees asked questions that were answered by Smith and subject-matter-experts.

“I ask everyone to be patient with us as we receive this information,” Smith said in closing. “We will keep you updated. We’re going to share what we can share. Please use the resources that are available for you to do what you need to do.”

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at (573) 563-4145. *(Editor’s note: Article written by Fort Leonard Wood Guidon managing editor Mike Bowers; Assistant editor, Dawn Arden, contributed to this article.)*

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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