



WWW.WOOD.ARMY.MIL / MSCoE

U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
FORT LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI 65473
VOICE: 573-563-4145
FAX: 573-563-4012
BY: Melissa Buckley
EMAIL: shatara.r.seymour.civ@mail.mil

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No. 14-029

May 12, 2014

FLW Soldier performs with country music star, Lee Brice, at “ACM Presents: An All-Star Salute to the Troops”

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – From the Pershing Community Center’s stage to performing with a country music star on national television – Sgt. Christiana Ball has come a long way.

Last year, Ball, a drill sergeant for Company B, 787th Military Police Battalion, won Fort Leonard Wood’s Operation Rising Star contest and went on to win Army Entertainment’s 2013 Operation Rising Star contest.

“I didn’t even think I would make it to the finals. I just thought this would be a fun thing to do. I had no idea Operation Rising Star would impact me like it has. The opportunities that have come from it are amazing,” Ball said.

She was selected to participate in an Academy of Country Music concert, paying tribute to the armed forces, an honor she couldn’t have imagined just a few months ago.

April 4 to 7, Ball went to Las Vegas to tape “ACM Presents: An All-Star Salute to the Troops,” a two-hour concert special to honor service members through song and stories. While there, she also attended the ACM Awards Ceremony.

“It was surreal because Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood are my heroes, my icons, and I was so close to them,” Ball said. “I don’t get super emotional about being around famous people, but I had a knot in my stomach, and I could feel the hair on the back of my neck stand up when I saw Garth Brooks. I look up to him.”

- more -

The “ACM Presents: An All-Star Salute to the Troops” is slated to air at 8 p.m., May 20 on CBS. Ball was one of about 12 military members chosen to participate in the event.

During the taping, Ball got to sing with Lee Brice. They performed “I Drive Your Truck,” which won song of the year at the ACMA. When Ball first found out she was singing that song with Brice, she said she had a lump in her throat because she was familiar with the mournful lyrics.

“The first time I heard that song, I cried,” she said.

Ball only had two hours to practice with Brice before they performed the song in front of thousands of people and dozens of network cameras.

“He was awesome. He gave me feeling that I was back at home jamming on the back porch with him. It felt like we were family,” Ball said. “When we got on stage, I tried not to think about the crowd because I didn’t want to get nervous, but when I looked out I saw people crying. It’s a very powerful song,” she added.

When the song was over, Ball said she was overwhelmed with adrenaline, and she knew she could get used to that feeling. She said she loved performing for all those people.

Expected viewership for the broadcast is slated at 12 to 14 million, and Ball will be watching it for the first time with them.

“I have never seen myself on television. I have seen photos from the performance, but not video. I am looking forward to hearing myself with professional sound equipment,” Ball said. “I am looking forward to seeing what the performance was like.”

She said she never thought her military police career with the Army could give rise to a singing career.

Next month she plans to join Lee Brice in St. Louis to perform at the first of his two concerts.

“We have a night fire range the second night, so I have to rush home,” Ball said. “It’s a bit of a balancing act, but it’s worth it.”

Ball is looking forward to her future – singing and training new Soldiers.

“One of the producers of the Rising Star contest is flying here to help me write songs for the Operation Rising Star CD,” she said. “I really love the Army, and I love watching Soldiers be successful.”

- 30 -

For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at (573) 563-4145. Melissa Buckley is a Guidon staff member.

Encl: Photo of Brice and Ball

Photo caption: Sgt. Christiana Ball, right, as she performs with Lee Brice, country music star, at “ACM Presents: An All-Star Salute to the Troops” in Las Vegas, which is slated to air at 8 p.m., May 20 on CBS. Getty Images / Courtesy of Academy of Country Music.

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.

www.facebook.com/fortleonardwoodmissouri

www.wood.army.mil