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



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Dixon Elementary students learn military basics

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – Open mouths and wide eyes were seen on the faces of 66 students from Dixon Elementary School as they entered Grant Hall May 20. Four fifth grade classes spent a full day learning about new Soldier training and touring post facilities.

“It’s really cool to see what they do, but scary too,” said 11-year-old Caitlyn Baker. “I bet they’re scared to leave their parents,” Baker said of the new recruits she saw waiting for medical checkups.

Approximately one quarter of the visiting students were related to post personnel, but for many, this trip was their first opportunity to experience the military.

Sandra Cross, mother of 11-year-old Jacob, was surprised by her son’s reaction to the field trip’s activities.

“He has never shown interest in the military before today. I made sure to tell Jacob he would be away from me for a long time if he joined the Army,” Cross said with a laugh.

The group’s morning tour continued as students observed mine detection training and explored the interior of three different military vehicles at the Motor Transport Operators Course.

“We have a valuable resource at our back door,” said Crystal Russell, principal of Dixon Elementary. “Visiting Fort Leonard Wood helps us to better liaison with the community and allows our children to be open to different career opportunities.”

“This visit allows the students to focus on a career earlier and to have the opportunity to see a full spectrum of what is available in the local job market,” she added.

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The group stopped for lunch at the garrison dining facility before wrapping up their day at the Basic Military Police Training Division and hospital.

“Most of our students don’t know what careers are out there, and hopefully this trip will spark their interest, one that will last a lifetime,” said Brandi Vanzant, the fifth grade teacher responsible for coordinating the group’s field trip.

“It’s a pleasing feeling as a teacher seeing career opportunities and education go hand in hand,” she said.

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Kate Mansell is a volunteer staff writer with the Guidon.

Encl. Photo

Cutline: Dixon Elementary School children observe mine detection training here at Fort Leonard Wood.

### *About Fort Leonard Wood*

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*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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