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## Brothers train together at Fort Leonard Wood

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – For two Fort Leonard Wood Soldiers in training, the word brother has a stronger bond than the Army brotherhood.

Pvt. Austin Ketcherside, 21, and his brother, Pvt. Jordan Ketcherside, 20, are currently learning to be Soldiers in Company D, 3rd Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment.

“We have done everything together our whole lives,” Jordan said.

When the brothers enlisted together at the Paragould, Arkansas, recruiting station, they said they expected to go their separate ways for the first time in two decades. Fate wasn’t quite ready to split them up.

“Our recruiter offered to give us the same jobs, but we decided to pick our own. After we chose our military occupational specialties, he was surprised that we picked similar jobs, because we ended up with the same Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training. It was a complete accident,” Jordan said. “We were originally in the same platoon, but our drill sergeants took care of that right away.”

Not only are the brothers in basic training together, but after graduation they both head to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

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In Oklahoma, the brothers will focus on their individual MOSs, which are both in the Army MOS Series of 13-Field Artillery. Austin will train to be a multiple launch rocket system operator and fire direction specialist, while Jordan will train to be a cannon crewmember.

Of the more than 150 Soldiers in Co. D, 3-10th Inf. Bn., 1st Sgt. Robert Bragg was surprised to learn that two of them were related. Bragg said this was a first for him.

“It is very uncommon that two brothers go through BCT together and be in the same unit,” Bragg said. “Although they are bonded as Family, they are also individualist in their thinking.”

Austin said the other Soldiers in training and even the drill sergeants are having fun with the situation.

“Our battle buddies try to make it competitive between us. It’s fun. We’ve been competitive our whole lives,” Austin said. “My drill sergeant actually calls me ‘Brother,’” Austin said.

Jordan agreed. “The other Soldiers love that we are brothers. They like to cheer for one or the other,” Jordan said.

Bragg said he witnessed the competitive spirit of the Ketcherside brothers during rifle marksmanship training.

“One of them had a hard time mastering his weapon, and he was being teased by the other brother, who shot down his targets with ease. Just some brotherly love,” Bragg said.

Austin said friendly competition is nothing new to the two, because their birthdays are only a year and two-days apart.

“We have always had a pretty close relationship. We are best friends. But, this experience has definitely strengthened our relationship,” Austin said.

Bragg said being blood relatives hasn’t affected the Ketchersides’ BCT experience.

“I think they are doing a very good job in channeling their focus on the BCT tasks. They are good privates who don’t give their drill sergeants or battle buddies any issues. They seem to be well liked across the company. They are quiet, and they go about their duties with dignity and respect,” Bragg said. “They support each other, and sometimes you see them talking during breaks in training, but not as often as you would think. I believe they are just focused young men looking to grow and make a promising career.”

A promising career — that is all younger brother, Jordan, said he was looking for when he asked his big brother to drive him to the recruiting station after completing work at the factory where they were both employed.

“A lot of people that are from Paragould, stay in Paragould. I wanted to get out and explore the world,” Jordan said.

Jordan said he was glad when Austin decided to join him on his Army adventure, and he was thankful, especially this time of year, he would have his brother by his side.

“I am very grateful that I got to spend Thanksgiving with him. I know that was an opportunity that most Soldiers in training don’t get,” Jordan said.

The Ketcherside brothers will graduate later this month and travel to Fort Sill together. From there, the brothers said they are looking forward to what the future holds – even if they aren’t side-by-side.

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145. Photos are available for download at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fortleonardwood/>.

*(Melissa Buckley is a Guidon photojournalist)*

#### *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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