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## Educators give post, Army an A+

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – Educators and recruiting battalion Soldiers from the Chicago and Cleveland metropolitan areas joined for a familiarization tour of Fort Leonard Wood July 23 and Friday to learn about the transition from civilian to Soldier and the Army way of life.

The group, consisting of high school and collegiate-level teachers, administrators and counselors, visited single-Soldier housing, Basic Combat Training facilities and the Truman Education Center to gather insight and information to relate to their students who may join the military.

"We call it an education tour. It is all about educating our educators from all across America, so they can see what we do when a student becomes a Soldier," said Lt. Col. James Jensen, Chicago Recruiting Battalion commander. "It's not just holding a rifle. It's all about the technical skills that we learn and all the things to become a professional Soldier."

The tour influenced one educator's mind about what opportunities a Soldier has available to them.

"It's like a college here, they can do so much beyond getting trained and fighting in a war," said Leslie Keil, a post-secondary counselor for Chicago's Ombudsman High School Northwest. "They can actually do real-world things, and it really taught me that they grow up here."

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Keil said she had relatives who had served, but they didn't speak about their service, so she didn't have much experience regarding the military. "I learned so much from the tour," she added.

The group saw much of what Fort Leonard Wood had to offer in the way of training and received first-hand information from Command Sgt. Maj. N.C. Laird, Chicago Recruiting Bn. command sergeant major, a career MP who just happens to be working at the recruiting battalion.

"We were able to see the (MP) K-9 training, which is the new military occupational specialty in the Army," Laird said.

"One of the things the K-9 instructors spoke to the educators about is when they find that individual who has that passion to maybe become a Soldier – a self-disciplined individual who has patience – that is what the K-9 instructors are looking for," he added.

According to Laird, these types of tours happen all across America, but he praised Fort Leonard Wood as a great place for these educators to visit because of the variety of technology, engineering and math skills the Soldiers learn here.

James Orbeson, an English professor with Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, said the tour was very eye opening for him.

"Every semester I usually have two or three students who are either veterans, or are about to enlist or are concurrently going to college and doing their training. I thought this would be a good experience to sort of see what they get to do," Oberson said.

Ultimately, the tour is to inform our nation's educators about the Army life, Laird said.

"We are giving them a broad spectrum of everything that is here. On top of just letting them see training and what training is all about, we're taking them to the education center, we have taken them to the Exchange, they've seen housing, we have shown them what an Army life looks like," Laird said.

"We get beyond basic (combat) training, get beyond advanced individual training. This is a profession just like any other profession in the civilian community. The only difference is this profession defends our country," he said.

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For more information, contact the Fort Leonard Wood Public Affairs Office at 573.563.4145.

### *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 about 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, and the Army's largest Noncommissioned Officers Academy.*

*Over the past several years, Fort Leonard Wood has received numerous additional responsibilities to include supporting 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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