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## **Fort Leonard Wood recognizes women's contributions in the Army, STEM**

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. (March 29, 2013)** -- Soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood honored women's roles in the U.S. Army's 237-year history, during a Women's History Month observance and luncheon Thursday at the Pershing Community Center.

The theme for this year's observance was "Women Inspiring Innovation through Imagination: Celebrating Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics."

Lt. Col. Mark Rodwell, 1<sup>st</sup> Engineer Brigade executive officer, who was the master of ceremonies for the event, said it was appropriate for the Army Engineer, Military Police, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear schools at Fort Leonard Wood to focus on STEM by encouraging those with talent to pursue the sciences and technology.

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Rodwell introduced Dr. Tommie Turner, Institute for Science and Mathematics director for Harris-Stowe State University, one of Missouri's oldest public institutions for higher learning, as the guest speaker for the event.

"Turner comes to us as a leader, a scientist, and an educator," Rodwell said.

Turner, who is a sustaining member of the Association of Women in Science, said that STEM is not only a topic that is near and dear to her heart, it is important in the United States.

It has been projected that employment in professional, scientific and technical services is expected to grow 29 percent by 2020, adding 2.1 million new jobs that are going to require STEM, she said.

"In order for the United States to remain successful, we must incorporate technological innovation to support economic growth and employment, so STEM is here to stay," Turner said.

Currently the U.S. is failing to produce enough workers to supply STEM fields, which represents challenges and opportunities for women, she said.

"It's pretty much equal between males and females in non-STEM related jobs. But then when you look at the percentage of women and men in the STEM-related fields, only 24 percent of women are holding down positions within STEM," Turner said. "The majority of the people who are working in STEM are males."

Turner said factors which contribute to lower female participation in STEM careers include the lack of female role models, gender stereotyping, and less family-friendly flexibility in the STEM field.

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“Although we have a limited pipeline, there are several women that are prevailing, that are making contributions, and are educating,” Turner said.

Turner cited female contributors to the sciences including Dorothy McClendon, Army microbiologist, Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu, known as the “First Lady of Physics,” and Dr. Rita Levi-Montalcini, who lived to be 103 years old and was a Nobel Prize winner for her work in medicine.

Turner recognized the work that is currently underway to mentor young women on the importance of STEM and discussed programs that are being created to prepare them for the future.

“Women are here, we are making contributions, and we are here to stay,” she said.

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130328-A-WN220-021.jpg: Dr. Tommie Turner, Institute for Science and Mathematics director for Harris-Stowe State University, provides the keynote speech for Fort Leonard Wood’s observance of Women’s History Month March 28 at the Pershing Community Center. The theme for this year’s observance was “Women Inspiring Innovation through Imagination: Celebrating Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.” Army photo/Michael Curtis.

130328-A-WN220-037.jpg: Lt. Col. Mark Rodwell, 1st Engineer Brigade executive officer, presents Dr. Tommie Turner with a plaque of appreciation for speaking at the Women’s History Month observance held March 28, 2013, at Fort Leonard Wood’s Pershing Community Center. During the event, which was hosted by the 1st Engineer Brigade, Turner was also recognized for her efforts to encourage progress in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Army photo/Michael Curtis.

### *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 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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