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Soldiers learn to master fitness

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – The difference between a pushup and an eight-count pushup is a higher Army Physical Fitness Test score. That knowledge and other secrets were unveiled as the U.S. Army Physical Fitness School conducted a four-week class on Fort Leonard Wood.

Fifty Fort Leonard Wood Soldiers will become Master Fitness Trainers on Friday with a new additional skill identifier and an additional duty in their units.

Staff Sgt. Jared Balog, Company A, 701st Military Police Battalion drill sergeant, said he is proud to accept the additional responsibility.

“I am looking forward to taking this information back to my unit to improve our readiness,” Balog said.

Master Fitness Trainers serve as additional-duty special advisers to unit commanders — company through division — to facilitate physical training based on Army doctrine.

Balog said he has wanted to take the 20-day course since 2013, when mobile training teams from the U.S. Army Physical Readiness Division at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, started traveling to different installations.

“I have always been interested in nutrition and physical fitness,” Balog said. “There is a lot more to learn other than Physical Readiness Training. We have focused on kinesiology and anatomy like bones and muscle groups.”

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According to 1st Lt. Brian Mouton, U.S. Army Physical Fitness School, Master Fitness Team lead, the Fort Leonard Wood Soldiers learned about the science of exercise, physical-fitness assessment, exercise training principles, exercise prescription, exercise leadership and development of individual and unit physical-readiness programs in accordance with current Army doctrine and regulations.

The course included hands-on training that incorporated basic military skills associated with PRT, such as marching, running, swimming, jumping, vaulting, climbing, carrying, lifting and load carrying.

Classroom training focused on exercise physiology, anatomy, injury prevention, exercise science and Army physical training regulations and doctrine.

The course taught Soldiers more about the new PRT program, a total body workout that incorporates traditional Army strength and endurance exercises, such as the eight-count pushup and the squat bender, with new drills such as the back bridge and medial leg raises.

Sgt. Phaneslyn Williams, General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital radiology specialist, said learning all of the checkpoints was one of the most difficult things about the course.

“The most challenging part for me was remembering the checkpoints for each exercise. Each little checkpoint is important, that is what makes the difference,” Williams said.

Williams said she was impressed with her instructors.

“They are very knowledgeable. Some of them are civilians, and some of them have military backgrounds. The fact that they know all of the checkpoints and can teach us is motivating,” Williams said.

Mouton said the instructors have to possess a degree in physical education, have experience in exercise and hold several different national fitness certifications before teaching Soldiers.

Mouton said the course is important to the Army’s mission, because it not only teaches knowledge of proper exercise techniques, planning considerations and achieving fitness goals in a unit — but also helps prevent injury.

“Preventing injury will not only allow a Soldier to remain effective in the force, but will help maintain an Army that is capable mentally and physically to handle the stressors of combat,” Mouton said.

The course is open to active and Reserve-component Soldiers who are recommended by their battalion commanders or equivalent. First priority of acceptance is given to staff sergeants, sergeants first class and second lieutenants through captains.

Students must meet Army height and weight standards in accordance with Army Regulation 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program and pass the Army Physical Fitness Test with a total score of 240 points or higher with a minimum of 80 points in each event.

A general technical score of 110 points or higher is recommended. Soldiers on temporary or permanent physical profiles are not eligible.

“I think this course is essential for any noncommissioned officer who is going to be leading Soldiers,” Williams said. “We have to be fit and ready to meet the demands of the Army.”

Once the course is completed, the USAPFS mobile training team will travel to a different installation with the goal of having a certified MFT in every company across the Army.

For more information on the USAPFS or the MFT course, visit www.jackson.army.mil/sites/usapfs.

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

(Melissa Buckley is a Guidon staff member.)

Encl. (1) Photo

Photo caption: JoAnna Corp, Anautics trainer, watches as Soldiers perform new exercises as a part of the 20-day Master Fitness Trainer Course.

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.
