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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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## Heroic action earns Soldier's Medal

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – When a Fort Leonard Wood Soldier saw a private struggle to get a live grenade over the wall, he grabbed the Soldier and used his body to shield the Soldier from the ensuing blast.

For his heroic actions, Staff Sgt. Kenneth Kam, Combat Training Company, 43rd Adjutant General Battalion, Range 31 hand grenade instructor/writer, was presented with the U.S. Army Soldier's Medal April 9 for, according to the citation, having the courage to do the right thing and to do it quickly to save the life of a Soldier in training at Fort Leonard Wood.

In June 2014, during hand grenade training at Range 31, Kam was supervising a young Soldier from Company D, 795th Military Police Battalion, 14th Military Police Brigade, as she attempted to throw a live hand grenade over the wall. The grenade did not clear the wall and ended up coming back into the pit, putting the Soldier and Kam in harm's way.

When he saw the grenade on the ground, Kam said his first thought was, "Crap, got to get out of the pit."

He knew it was his job to protect the safety of the Soldiers in training.

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“He had about 3 to 4 seconds tops,” said Brig. Gen. Kent Savre, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, who presented the medal to Kam in front of his leaders, peers and Family. “He didn’t even have to think about it. He knew what to do. He didn’t hesitate. He grabbed the young Soldier and took her out of the pit.”

The grenade went off and almost ripped through the walls. Neither was wounded.

“He saved a life, maybe two, through his quick thinking, but through his training, as well,” Savre added.

Kam said he took action because that is what he is trained to do.

“It’s OK if I get injured,” Kam said. “But a brand new kid coming into the Army doesn’t really know better. His or her instincts aren’t as sharp, and they haven’t been tested in those types of situations yet. That’s why it is our job to take care of them – even if it means putting our own life at risk. My training kicked in the moment the grenade didn’t make it over the wall.”

Savre took a few moments to explain the award's significance.

“The Soldier’s Medal, to me, is the most honorable medal you can receive in peacetime for a valorous act, and you don’t see them very often,” he said. “That’s why this is a big, big deal.”

Savre explained that Kam did not initially want to have a ceremony, but it was important.

“It (the ceremony) is not just for him. It’s for you. It’s for Fort Leonard Wood. It’s for our Army to see that Soldiers and noncommissioned officers do the right thing when the time comes,” Savre said.

Kam, a Marysville, Washington, native who joined the Army in 2005, thanked his unit for their support.

He said he had mixed emotions about the ceremony and was just glad that everything worked out.

Kam’s Family, including his wife, son, father and mother-in-law, were there to see the presentation.

Wallace Kam, Kam’s father, who served 20 years in the Navy and made 10 Vietnam deployments, said his son called him just two days before the ceremony and asked him to come to Fort Leonard Wood, but he didn’t say why.

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“I was in Utah, so I got here yesterday afternoon,” he said. “I thought it might be quite important. He didn't say anything, just ‘Dad, can you be here?’”

“I'm very proud of him,” he added.

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

Encl. Photo

Photo outline:

Staff Sgt. Kenneth Kam, Combat Training Company, has his Soldier's Medal pinned by Brig. Gen. Kent Savre, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, April 9. (Photo by Marti Yoshida, Guidon assistant editor)

### *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 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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