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U.S. ARMY MANEUVER SUPPORT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FT. LEONARD WOOD, MISSOURI



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Internship program lands Soldier realtor's job

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – For one Soldier preparing to transition out of the Army, the thought of going from active-duty to being a 24/7 stay-at-home mom was overwhelming.

The Soldier for Life internship program was the answer.

Capt. Jymette Watrous, 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade S-4 logistics officer, completed the Soldier for Life internship program and will have her real estate license and a job before she officially leaves the military in May.

“I did not want to stay home; I wanted to work,” Watrous said. “We have a unique situation in my Family because my husband is also active duty. He’s not getting out for another 18 months, so I knew I was going to be staying in this community, and I had no idea what I was going to do.”

During a mandatory Soldier for Life — Transition Assistance Program, formerly Army Career and Alumni Program, pre-separation class several months ago, an Army representative talked about the Soldier for Life internship program, and Watrous rekindled her life-long interest in real estate.

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“I’ve always been interested in real estate,” she said. “My mom and I would always get real estate magazines at restaurants and grocery stores, and we would look through them together. So, I just raised my hand and asked if a real estate internship was an option. They said Century 21 in St. Robert was on board. Everything started to fall into place from there.”

Watrous contacted the Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program office, where she made an appointment to discuss requirements for the SFL internship program with Sgt. 1st Class Eric Rohal, Transition Assistance career counselor.

“The internship program has been in place since December and is continually improving,” Rohal said. “This new program is designed to let transitioning Soldiers participate in a local internship program prior to their separation.”

Through the program, the transitioning Soldier reports to a civilian employer for up to six months while being paid by the Army. The civilian employer covers the training costs during that 180-day period.

However, Soldiers should not wait to apply.

“The Soldier should contact SFL – TAP one year before they transition out of the Army and no later than eight months before their transition,” Rohal, a Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, native, said. “Eight months is pushing it to do everything they need to do.”

Soldiers will have plenty of support, Rohal said, but they are responsible to determine the program they are interested in, do the research, talk to several companies, pick a company and get the required paperwork completed.

“We don’t want Soldiers getting off active duty and not having a career,” Rohal said. “Anybody can get a job anywhere. This gives them an opportunity to set themselves up to be successful. I think it’s a great program, especially for someone who is looking for a certain career opportunity.”

Watrous couldn’t agree more about the program benefits.

“This is allowing me a gradual transition to working as a civilian and being a mom and balancing spending time with my son and still working,” Watrous said. “I am grateful for the fact that I can learn new skills and do something that I am interested in while I am here.”

Watrous said she is very grateful for the support received from her new employer.

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“Century 21 has been extremely supportive with reimbursing me for my education costs, initial fees, and just giving me time to work on my class and study,” she said. “If I had to try to complete the class and study and watch my son while still active duty military, I’m not sure I would have been able to do it at all. They really set me up for success.”

Watrous, a Bakersfield, California, native, recommends that other Soldiers look into the Soldier for Life internship program.

“I definitely recommend that Soldiers take advantage of this, it doesn’t have to be real estate,” she said. “Doing a civilian internship can help so much with just the mental part of the transition from Army to civilian. Just spending a few months working in a civilian environment, wearing civilian professional clothes and adapting to the transition is so beneficial.”

The internship is just one component of the SFL-TAP program. SFL-TAP offers transitioning Soldiers and Families support with resumes, interviewing techniques and additional employment-related resources.

For more information about the program, Soldiers may visit the Soldier for Life — Transition Assistance Program office in Building 470, Suite 2218, call 573.596.0131 ext. 63378/67070 or email Rohal at eric.s.rohal2.mil@mail.mil, or Alfredia Williams, transition services specialist, at alfredia.williams.civ@mail.mil.

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

Encl(s): Photos

(Photos by Marti Yoshida, Guidon assistant editor.)

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 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.
