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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Fitness Training Unit focused on getting Soldiers healthy, back to training**

**FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.** – Their numbers are few, but one unit on post is focused solely on getting Soldiers who are injured or unable to pass an Army Physical Fitness Test a second chance.

Headed by Capt. Jacob Naylor, an Army physical therapist, the Fitness Training Unit takes pride in knowing that the Soldiers who pass through their doors are getting the best care and attention to ensure they graduate.

“The Fitness Training Unit is a unique opportunity for a subject-matter expert in rehabilitation and exercise to command a unit with that very mission,” he said. “My entire purpose is to facilitate the return to duty of as many Soldiers as possible and save the Army their investment.”

While he does not get as involved with the care as he would in a clinical setting, Naylor still oversees and manages the training programs the drill sergeants carry out; drill sergeants who Naylor credit for their success.

“We have great drill sergeants and cadre who truly care about their Soldiers,” he said. “Our success will ultimately be determined by our Soldiers and how hard they work.”

During fiscal year 2015, the FTU facilitated the return to duty of 308 Soldiers through the APFT-Improvement program, and 89 Soldiers through the Warrior Transitional Rehabilitation Program.

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That success translates to an estimated savings of more than \$25 million for the Army, Naylor said.

Additionally, the FTU assists Soldiers going through the Medical Evaluation Board process in their transition out of the Army.

It's not just about the savings to the Army or the number of Soldiers they return to duty that drives the FTU staff.

"It's not a numbers game," said Sgt. 1st Class Mark Sibayan, senior drill sergeant at the FTU. "We care about each Soldier. We want them all to succeed."

The benefits of having the FTU reach beyond just training the Soldiers who end up there, Sibayan said.

"(The FTU) removes possible training distractors from the units so that they are not applying resources and manpower to supervise Soldiers who have constant appointments or are on their way out of the Army," Sibayan said. "We remove those distractors, bring them here to an environment where everybody is going through the same process and we facilitate getting those Soldiers to their appointments."

Naylor indicated that the FTU managed 40 Soldiers for a combined 2,400 days for their Medical Evaluation Board process.

"This is managed by the FTU so that training units could allocate all of their personnel and resources toward their training mission," he said.

One recommendation Naylor gives for training units to help expedite the RTD process, is to get their Soldiers to the FTU as soon as possible.

"We are most effective at rehabilitating and/or retraining someone the sooner we have them," he said. "WTRP and APFT-I packets should be turned in to the FTU the week the recommendation is made or the final APFT is failed, respectively."

As a physical therapist and commander of the FTU, Naylor is trying to pass along his knowledge and experience to units that want to learn.

"I have the opportunity to use my professional background to educate drill sergeants, AIT platoon sergeants, and command teams from around post, and do this regularly," he said. "If I can share knowledge that prevents APFT failures and injuries in the first place, that's even better."

Naylor takes pride in knowing he can help a Soldier continue their career.

"It is very rewarding to see an injured Soldier rehabilitate and recover from his or her injury, pass the APFT and return to their unit in better shape than when they first arrived," he said.

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

*Encl. (1) Photo*

*Photo Cutline: Staff Sgt. Ramon Juarez, Fitness Training Unit drill sergeant, monitors the sit-up portion of an Army Physical Fitness Test, to determine if the Soldier taking the test will train with the FTU or return to her unit.*

### *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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