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



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MSCoE champs ready for next test

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – Fort Leonard Wood's Drill Sergeant and Advanced Individual Training Platoon Sergeant of the Year are both preparing to defend their home turf during the upcoming U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Best Warrior competition.

Fort Leonard Wood will host the TRADOC competition Sept. 11 through 15. Staff Sgt. Chad Hickey, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence DSoY, said there isn't any added pressure with the competition being held here.

"No matter where we were competing, we would be representing the same community of Fort Leonard Wood," he said. "No matter what, I will try my hardest to represent Fort Leonard Wood well."

Staff Sgt. Benjamin Dippolito, MSCoE AIT Platoon Sergeant of the Year, agreed, saying he is hoping for the best, but planning for the worst. The worst could include weather, he said, referencing the heat and humidity that accompany the early autumn season in the Ozarks.

"Weather has huge impact on performance if you are not used to it," he said. "I like it, because we are able to train in the consistent humidity and heat here."

Dippolito said while he is looking forward to the competition, he is also not looking forward to the competition.

"It's a double-edged sword," he said, referring to the different events they will likely see during the competition. "I am not looking forward to the ruck, because I have not been training on them a lot."

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Hickey looked at the competition from another light, saying he is looking forward to seeing where he stacks up against the rest of the drill sergeants across TRADOC.

"Am I really at the top or just the bottom of the competitors?" he said.

Both MSCoE competitors indicated their game plan is to take each event as it comes and to not let the results of the previous event affect how they complete the next one.

"Looking at it as a whole, right now, is a big daunting task," Hickey added. "We've got four and a half days of competition physically and mentally testing us. I hope I can break it down to each individual task"

"Each event is its own event," Dippolito agreed. "If I let it affect me, it will throw me out of my game. Focus on one task and one task only."

Both said their ultimate goal is to win, but even if they are not on the podium at the end, they hope to have represented the post, MSCoE and the Military Police Regiment well.

Dippolito said their participation and success would be a credit to the leadership, units and Soldiers who have helped along the way.

Hickey agreed, saying a win would be just as much about those who helped get them ready.

"At the end of the day, if I don't win, I hope to do myself proud and everybody else proud who has put in the effort to help me prepare," he said.

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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 a colonel-commanded Marine Corps Detachment and an Air Force Detachment, which are both the largest on any Army installation, a large Navy Seabee Detachment and elements of the Coast Guard train here as well.