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FEATURED

Local teen revisits military academy, earns honor

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Kameron Adams jogs through the woods during a training at Meramec Ranch in Steelville, Mo., during the two-week Missouri Military Academy Leadership Camp. Photos submitted.

Thirteen-year-old Kameron Adams knows that grit runs deep, and has consistently proven that throughout his five years attending the two-week Missouri Military Academy (MMA) summer camp in Mexico, Mo.

“I am super proud of him,” Danni Adams said of her son, who has attended the camp since age 9. “I know he’s gone and knows what to expect, and each year we see him grow from this… and we see the growth when he gets back here [home] as well.”

Out of around 150 students, Adams was chosen as the top five of his class. This comes after his long-awaited promotion to platoon leader at this year’s Leadership Camp, which is a camp that instills responsibility and leadership into young men aged 12-17. According to MMA’s website, activities of the camp included pugil sticks, first aid, and rifle marksmanship along with daily physical training and general skills, like rope skills and orienting.

The Confidence Camp he attended at age 9 was to build self-esteem and had activities like rappelling, paintball, and high rope courses. Other camps offered by MMA include a Summer Academy for grades 7-12 with the choice of a day camp and an Equestrian Camp, a co-ed camp teaching horseback riding for youth aged 8-12.

The seasoned camp veteran said the camps have gotten “easier” in a sense because he has attended for a long time, that the nervousness slowly fades each time he visits.

“I won’t say it was really easy, but it [camp] was still challenging, and I knew what was going to happen,” Adams said.

The South Hardin Middle School eighth grader said the camp is rewarding, and the relationships built there are different than the typical camps other kids attend. He also had the same roommate from the previous year, so both young men knew what to expect.

“They’ve been fun, and it’s easier to make more friends there than normal camps because you always have to be together,” Adams said. “If someone else is homesick, you’re there for them, they’re there for you.”

Throughout the courses and trials of the camp, campers are assigned a “Battle Buddy” that is to participate with them in daily activities. The day typically begins at 5 or 6 a.m. followed by breakfast and an activity. After lunch, more activities are held or a physical training session will be held, which may include running or callisthenic exercises, before the day wraps up with dinner.

Adams said that if there are young people out there thinking about joining the forces or wanting to learn discipline, then an MMA camp is a step in the right direction.

Despite having veteran status, the courses weren't easy for Adams. More specifically, the Crucible was one course that Adams struggled with, as many surely do.

"That is everything we've worked on those past two weeks put into one thing," he said. "It's a five-mile obstacle course, and there's some obstacles that are really challenging."

Adams said that he's considering joining the armed forces upon graduation, taking with him the skills and things learned from the camp into adulthood, but he wants to see how his time as an athlete plays out.

"It depends on if I get a scholarship for football or maybe wrestling," Adams said. "It [camp] works on team building — how to be there for your teammates. You're only as strong as your weakest link."