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## Retired Sgt. First Class Mike Elam Gives Back to Lindenwood

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Mike Elam has experienced a fair share of conflict during his life.

For more than two decades, Elam served in the U.S. Army and held various roles. He was an air defense artillery Chaparral Missile system Gunner, a Commander, a Sergeant, and a teacher, among other jobs.

Throughout his 23 years of service, Elam traveled the world. He was deployed to Germany three times, as well as Bosnia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

“It seems like another lifetime ago,” Elam said of his time in the Army.

Elam’s commitment to serving his country transferred inside and outside the classroom. In the summer of 2008, Elam retired from the Army. The day after he retired, he began work as an ROTC instructor at Lindenwood University. He also served as the interim head coach of the shotgun sports team, a Student Life Sports program at Lindenwood.

“Everybody knew everybody, and everybody was helpful,” Elam said of when he first stepped foot on Lindenwood’s campus. “If you needed to get something accomplished or whatever, you could go to somebody or go to an office, and they would help you take care of things.”

Elam chose to work at Lindenwood despite having opportunities elsewhere because of the culture he had heard of and later experienced first-hand.

“That’s the truth,” Elam said. “It was the culture of the campus, the way things ran, everybody worked towards a common goal, and it was obvious that I wanted to be here, and I knew I wanted to start a new career at Lindenwood.”

Elam stepped down as the interim head coach of the shotgun sports team after the 2010 season and became Director of Student Life Support for nearly five years. In the meantime, Elam also graduated Magna Cum Laude and earned his BA in business administration from Lindenwood in 2015.

In 2019, Elam was re-hired as the head coach for the shotgun sports team – this time in a permanent capacity. Through his position, Elam bonded with his

student-athletes and shared insights and experiences he's learned over his career in the Army and as an ROTC instructor.

While working at Lindenwood, graduating from Lindenwood, and serving as the head coach of the shotgun sports team, Elam always found time to give back to the University.

"I probably donated the whole time," Elam said. "Probably small amounts early on. My bigger donations started coming during when I came back to the shooting team in 2019-20 – just helping with the team, whether it was financial donations or gifts in kind."

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country and the world, Elam knew he needed to make a difference through his generosity – especially during difficult financial times for the shotgun sports team and Lindenwood.

"A lot of things changed," Elam said. "Financially, a lot of things were different for everybody. There was just probably more need at that time as well because we were in a situation where people were going home and not staying on campus."

From his time in the Army, to working at Lindenwood in numerous roles, to helping his student-athletes achieve success both on the range and in the classroom, Elam is grateful for his time at Lindenwood.