

Sgt. Major of the Army talks issues

By James Brabenc
Visiting Fort Sill Nov. 15-18 for the Army Professional Junior Leader Forum, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler III addressed some issues he viewed as important for the Army's future.

With words like "I just can't understand how as an army profession we're going to accept violence committed on our own," sexual harassment and assault are near the top of the Army senior enlisted member's list.

"We have to have a more frank discussion at the junior level to stop this type of behavior immediately," said Chandler.

Although much focus has been placed in high-density population areas, such as barracks, he said sexual assault and harassment happen in the field, at work centers and everywhere else throughout the Army.

"It's up to each one of us as an Army to decide that we're not going to accept this behavior and stop it when it occurs," said Chandler. "We have to take a hard stand against it, and we can do better."

With the war in Iraq draw-

ing to a close and demands in Afghanistan slowing down, Chandler said Soldiers and their families can expect fewer deployments.

"This is a good thing, because it means we've done what the nation asked us to do: fight and win our nation's wars, protect the American people and uphold the Constitution," he said.

As demand for military forces diminishes the supply of troops will respond in kind. The Army's top enlisted man said retention will become a hot topic for many Soldiers who volunteered to serve and did so admirably through 10 years of war. For those who intend to continue to serve he reminded them that career maps help Soldiers determine the steps they need to take to continue to be of value to the Army. Re-enlistments are one point in a Soldier's career that may offer significant opportunities.

"When it comes time to re-enlist, the Army is going to offer you the privilege to serve. If you choose to accept it, you may be asked to do something other than the job you're in right now,

but you have to accept that that is part of the privilege," he said.

This enables the Army to fill job slots needed to maintain the fighting force. Accepting this will lead to further professional growth and development.

Soldier fitness also factors into a ready fighting force. Chandler said the Army Physical Fitness Test helps commanders assess their units' physical fitness. Carrying that one step further, the program gives commanders the option to develop tactical tests tailored to the requirements of their units' assigned missions. For example, a commander who is preparing his troops for mountainous patrol duties in Afghanistan may create exercises that focus on climbing.

"We've been fighting like light infantrymen for the last 10 years, so let's take a look at how to sustain that in our Army, perhaps push the envelope and do more with fitness, because we believe we're going to be in this type of combat for the foreseeable future," he said.

Moving in tandem with fitness, weight standards are



Photo by Marie Berbre

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond Chandler III speaks to Soldiers at Fort Sill about what it means to be a professional for the Army Profession Junior Leader Forum Nov. 15 at Snow Hall.

another issue the sergeant major addressed. He said the last 10 years have provided insights into diet, nutrition and exercise as the Army is adopting a more holistic approach about dealing with weight control. He raised the question, "Are the standards that the Army uses in line with who we say we are as a profession from

a fitness and appearance level?"

Chandler also brought up consideration of wounded warriors and how standards would be applied to them.

"When you talk about Soldiers who have been burned or who have lost limbs, the standards we have used for 20-plus years don't really apply anymore,"

he said. Chandler said the challenge is how the Army will incorporate these factors, "because we want them to still be a part of the Army."

Regarding weight management, he said Army leaders will consider these points and have some proposals in front of the secretary of the Army by spring.

Month honors Indian culture, service

Did you know November is Native American Heritage Month?

This started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the United States. Since then, it has resulted in a whole month being designated to share the culture and heritage of these people.

During November, we recognize the diverse cultural contributions that Native Americans have made to this nation. President Barack Obama proclaimed November as Native American Heritage Month

and called upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to celebrate Nov. 25, as Native American Heritage Day.

Equal opportunity special and ethnic observances are conducted to enhance cross-cultural awareness among all Soldiers, civilian employees and their families. This year's celebration was Nov. 17 at the Patriot Club.

Stepping away from his duties as the curator and director of the Fort Sill National Historic Museum, Towanna Spivey was the guest speaker. Although he didn't share some of his



Did you know?

By Col. Paul Hossenlopp
Fort Sill Garrison commander

extensive knowledge of Fort Sill and Native American contributions to the area, he spoke of his service in the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 45th Infantry Division and the countless Native Americans who served in the military.

In the military

During World War I, about 9,000 American Indians served in the armed servic-

es. They fought and died in defense of a nation that still denied most of them the right to participate in the political process.

Congress, as a result, enacted legislation Nov. 6, 1919, granting citizenship to Indian veterans of World War I who were not yet citizens. The 1919 American Indian Citizenship Act did not grant automatic citizenship to American Indian vet-

erans who received an honorable discharge. The act merely authorized those American Indian veterans who wanted to become American citizens to apply for and be granted citizenship. Few Indians actually followed through on the process, but it was another step toward citizenship.

More than 44,000 Native Americans, out of a total American Indian population of less than 350,000, served with distinction between 1941 and 1945. Many of these service members fought in the Korean War too. During the Vietnam War, more than 42,000 Native Americans served, including about 90 percent who volun-

teered. They have the highest record of service per capita of all the ethnic groups in America.

Native Americans served on all fronts in American conflicts and received many Purple Hearts, Air Medals, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, Distinguished Service Crosses, and of the 3,469 Medals of Honor awarded as of 2010, 28 were awarded to Native Americans.

Many veterans are also Native Americans, and I invite you to join me in thanking them not only for their unique contributions to the American way of life, but especially so, for their service to our great country.

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