



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey speaks with Staff Sgt. Errol Taylor, motor section sergeant, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, about family life after eating Meals Ready to Eat together during his first troop visit to JBLM on March 3. Dailey toured the base and held question-and-answer sessions with Soldiers to discuss the future of the Army and what it takes to have a successful Army career.

JBLM Transition Services Take Center Stage During SMA Visit

By Staff Sgt. Jennifer Spradlin — 19th Public Affairs Detachment

In 2016, projections say that more than 9,500 of the service members stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., will transition from military service to seek civilian employment or further their education.

During an installation visit March 5, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey met with senior leadership, education advisers, transition program managers and representatives from industry partners to get an update on the success of JBLM's transition program and to address some of the challenges service members face when leaving the military.

"The amount of energy, focus and effort that has gone on over the past few years to ensure that our soldiers are just as prepared for leaving the service as they are for their missions — is something that I'm excited about," Dailey said.

"We have always given a better product back to the civilian sector, but now we're tailoring our training, not only to meet the needs of the requirements of a soldier on the battlefield, but also to find maximum equivalent

credentialing and academic equivalency [to help their transition]," he continued.

Transition assistance

Dailey received a brief on JBLM's Service Member for Life Transition Summit, a transition event held at the installation in October. Part job readiness training and part hiring opportunity, the summit featured representatives from more than 200 businesses. Dan Verbeke, JBLM's Service Member for Life-Transition Assistance Program manager, said the event netted more than 260 on-site job offers.

"I think JBLM is on the forefront. They have worked so hard with their industry partners to find all these great opportunities [for transitioning service members]," Dailey said. "I spent some time with the local union for pipe fitters and welders, and they're taking these service members who are not welders in the Army, Air Force or Marines, and training them at no cost to the service member or the government.



William McLaurin, a representative from the JBLM HVAC training program, briefs Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey on the HVAC Program during Dailey's visit to JBLM on March 2. Dailey toured the HVAC Trailer after meeting with students from the program. (Photos by Sgt. Ryan Hallock)



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey visits with 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment Soldiers during a training exercise at JBLM on March 3. During his two-day visit, Dailey stressed the importance of leaders being present for training and beginning each morning with challenging physical fitness training.

Making them certified and guaranteeing them jobs before they leave the service — it's amazing.”

Help for veterans

The Washington State Military Transition Council was also recognized during Dailey's visit. The council, enacted in May 2013, is the first organization of its kind in the nation. It empowers state agencies to work with various levels of government, private and non-profit organizations, on the issue of veteran unemployment.

According to the Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs, in December 2011, 18 percent of service members transitioning from JBLM reported that they had a job. In April 2014, that number rose to 42 percent.

Although highly encouraged by the progress and programs discussed, Dailey said there was a lot of work to be done.

“My goal for the civilian world is that every major corporation and every small business in America should want to be a part of the Soldier For Life, to want to be able to have a sign that says, ‘I support Soldier For Life,’” he said.

“... We really have to get the American public to recognize the value of the American Soldier. What they bring is not only a vast amount of knowledge and skills that directly correlate to technical skills in the civilian sector, but a high level of maturity and discipline,” Dailey said. ■

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