



Non-Deployable Soldiers Are Hampering Army, SMA Dailey Says

NCO Journal Staff Report

The number of non-deployable Soldiers is having a direct impact on readiness, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey said at the NCO Solarium II this week at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Dailey said the situation is unsustainable in today's complex operational environment. Currently, about 50,000 Soldiers are non-deployable.

"That's huge," Dailey said. "That's three out of the 10 divisions" the Army currently has.

The Army's mission is to fight and win the nation's wars, he said. That mission must apply to every Soldier, no matter what military occupational specialty they're in.

"If you will not or cannot fight and win, then there's no place for you in the Army," Dailey said. "We have to become unemotional about this. We have a job to do."

Dailey is suggesting to the Army's chief of staff that a box should be added to every Soldier's evaluation form that can be checked to indicate whether that Soldier is deployable. Under his proposal, Soldiers with long-term medical profiles would be evaluated against their ability to recover and be deployable.

Dailey said he realizes this will take a large shift in Army culture. It's natural to want to keep someone who has a profile, he acknowledged, especially if that person is of good character and skilled.

But having so many Soldiers in non-deployable status is not good for the Army or good for the nation, he said, particularly as the Army draws down from 490,000 to 450,000, and as more deployments loom on the horizon.

Dailey also is working on ways to increase deployment pay, and he would like boost promotion opportunities for Soldiers who deploy. He said he's recommending reducing the retention control points to 20 years for staff sergeants, 24 for sergeants first class, 26 for master sergeants, and 30 for sergeants major. He also said he plans to recommend reducing the time-in-grade requirements by one year for the sergeant first class ranks through sergeant major ranks.

These changes would stimulate initiative in young leaders and offer more opportunities for promotion by moving stagnant leaders into their transition phase, he said.

Leader Development

Dailey is also concerned about leader development. He said the Army is still using old standards of multiple-choice testing and rote-memory drills in training, instead of training leaders to be critical thinkers.

Having said that, he said, “we have the best trained Army in the world in leader development.”

However, other nations, including potential adversaries, are catching up in their leader-development efforts. The Army’s leader-development training needs to be more realistic and relevant, Dailey said.

One big problem in leader development, he acknowledged, is the number of Soldiers shying away from attending courses. That’s going to change soon, Dailey said. By next year, if Soldiers are not attending, they risk Qualitative Management Program screenings under the Select-Train-Education-Promote, or STEP, program.

That will create more opportunities for Soldiers who do want to develop their leadership skills and get promoted, he said.

Talent Management

“We’re really good at moving people around, but terrible at managing talent,” Dailey said. The Army’s struggles with managing talent has a lot to do with the

service’s size and its bureaucracy, Dailey conceded. “We’re working very hard to change that,” he told the symposium.

The Army is in the process of evaluating all of the skills needed in each military occupational specialty, and will be comparing that against the knowledge, skills and attributes of Soldiers, as well as what’s on their noncommissioned officer evaluation report.

Speaking of NCOERs, Dailey noted, “80 percent of the Army thinks they’re in the top 20 percent” of the ratings, “because we told them they are.”

The new NCOER, which starts next year, promises a fairer assessment and more honest ratings, he said. Simple statistics bear out that only “25 percent of the Army is in the top 25 percent of the Army,” he said.

The Noncommissioned Officer Solarium II 2015 is an effort by the sergeant major of the Army to to inform and shape the future direction of the U.S. Army. The on-site session at Fort Leavenworth ran from Tuesday through Friday and brought together 60 sergeants first class. In addition to Dailey’s address, the NCOs in attendance identified issues that will have an impact on the Army into the foreseeable future and provided recommendations to Dailey, who will brief that “unfiltered feedback” to the chief of staff of the Army. ■



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