

HRC Leaders Reach Out to Fort Bliss NCOs at Town Hall

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Is it true that assignment officers at U.S. Army Human Resources Command save the great jobs for their friends? Or, that assignment officers sit on the promotion boards?

HRC's Command Sgt. Maj. Wardell Jefferson has heard many of the fallacies about HRC and urges Soldiers to reject the myths.

"A lot of [the negativity] is [because of a] lack of education," Jefferson said before a town hall for senior noncommissioned officers in December at Fort

Bliss, Texas. “What we try to do is inform the field of what we are doing and why we do it ...



If a Soldier doesn't get a promotion or assignment he or she wants, “it's not because the assignment manager doesn't like you or doesn't want to send you to those locations,” he said. “It's because you have to meet certain criteria. The way we dispel those myths is to talk Soldiers through it and educate the leaders. The leaders can help us to educate the Soldier on how the assignment process works.”

Jefferson and Maj. Gen. Thomas Seamands, HRC commander, visited Fort Bliss on Dec. 14 to reach out to both noncommissioned and commissioned service members. For Jefferson and Seamands, the advantages of doing these HRC road shows are twofold.

“There's a benefit for us at HRC because we get to come out here and listen to the Soldiers in the field, to find out what's on their minds and how we can make things better for them and their organizations,” Jefferson said. “The other part is for us to show transparency. We inform the Soldiers of what's going on and what kinds of changes are taking place within their career management fields. That way, they are aware of what's taking place and how it affects them and their families.”

As the Army downsizes, Jefferson said talent management is not just HRC's responsibility.

"We [at HRC] identify the Soldiers that need to move to these different positions in our Army, but once we place Soldiers on assignment, then the unit has the responsibility in managing that talent," Jefferson said. "The leaders on the ground ensure that Soldiers get to the right schools they need in order to develop the talent and go forward."

He also recently spoke about the issue during Army Training and Doctrine Command's third town hall in November at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Many questions and complaints heard during HRC's road shows are linked to recent revisions in Army policy.

"It's just the fear of change," Jefferson said. "When we decided to make the change to a new noncommissioned officer evaluation report, a lot of people were in an uproar about it. But now that we have been doing this NCOER for almost 12 months, not a lot of people are arguing about it. Now, it's just learning how to write those evaluations. Same thing with STEP," the Select, Train, Educate, Promote policy for promotion.

Jefferson often offers his assistance to Soldiers at the road shows. If, for example, a Soldier has an issue with his or her assignment and is not connecting with the assignment officer to discuss it, Jefferson will take the Soldier's information and meet with the assignment officer in an effort to get both parties in touch. Also, if Soldiers continue to take issue with a certain policy or question its relevance, they may count on Jefferson to take up the debate with the deputy chief of staff, G-1.

"If it's something we think we should look at, we'll take that back to the Army G-1 and say, 'We have got this feedback from the Soldiers out in the field. Maybe we could look at this policy, and see if it's still relevant or if we need to adjust it,'" Jefferson said.

As for those NCOs looking for advice on how to get ahead in the Army, Jefferson said it's all about self-improvement.

“The way you do that is by going to military schools, by taking the hard jobs and developing yourself and making sure that you are technically and tactically proficient in your career management field,” he said. “Also, reach out to your mentors and find out what else you need to be doing. But the most important thing to prepare yourself for promotion, regardless of what job you are in, is do the best you can and ensure that your evaluation says exactly how you did in that position. Along with going to the schools, that’s the major way to develop ourselves.”

The command sergeant major said he has grown a lot in his 18 months on the job and learns something new every day, especially in his interactions with Soldiers.

“I want to make an impact on the Soldiers and families because that’s what it’s all about,” he said. “Our job is to ensure that Soldiers and our families are taken care of, and I am very passionate about that. There are going to be some Soldiers saying, ‘It’s just HRC again,’ but there is another Soldier out here who I am going to have an impact on — something that I am going to say today is going to impact him and his family, or I am going to be able to assist them with something and they are going to put that trust back in HRC and think, ‘Well, maybe they are not the bad guys.’”

Jefferson often leaves NCOs with the same bit of advice — develop a passion for what they do, and success will come.

“If you are passionate about something, you are going to be successful in doing that,” he said. “Remain competent and relevant. If you are a leader, all these changes affect all of our Soldiers and their families. You have to know what’s going on in our Army today in order for you to be an effective leader.”