

SMA: 'PRT is not the problem; 6:30 to 9 is the problem'

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NCO Journal staff report

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After an Army Times article detailed the seven-day workout plan for Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey, he got a lot of comments telling him, "That's not PRT."

Dailey has also heard Soldiers using their dislike of Army Physical Readiness Training as an excuse for not exercising. During a recent interview with the NCO Journal, Dailey made it clear that he believes in PRT, but that PRT is just the beginning of staying physically fit. Dailey said he does his workout routine in addition to PRT to maintain his fitness for the things he has needed to do throughout his career as an infantryman.

"I think PRT is actually very good, and it's proved a success in our training environment," Dailey said. "We've reduced injuries, and we've increased physical fitness scores coming out of basic training and AIT. What I need units to understand is PRT is not the end. ... We shouldn't be blaming PRT for our failure to have success in physical fitness. It's a tool to use in achieving that success. ... PRT is not the problem; 6:30 to 9 [a.m.] is the problem. We've failed the sacred hour. We need to get that back. It's something that's not going to take months; it's not going to take years. Leaders can change this tomorrow morning. All they have to do is find a flag, wait for the music to go up, salute it and start getting after it."

Dailey agrees with concerns that there should be stricter consequences for failing the Army Physical Fitness Test, and he said there will be stricter consequences as the Army continues to implement STEP (Select, Train, Educate, Promote).

"When we moved into Select, Train, Educate, Promote about two and a half years ago, we made physical fitness a critical part of succeeding in your institutional training experience," Dailey said. "So if you go to your institutional training experience now and fail the APFT, you will get a derogatory [DA Form] 1059, which will remain in your records. Previously, that was not true. You could fail your school, and then when you passed, that 1059 would come

out. It stays in there now. That's critically important, because when we look for promotion we need to see the whole Soldier concept. So now with STEP, you have to go to your institutional training experience before you can get promoted. It's a gate. So we've said that noncommissioned officers need to be promoted because they're certified across all three leadership development domains, and now that's going to be true with STEP. So until you've completed your selection, your training in your organization, your education through self-development, and your institutional experience, then and only then will you be able to be promoted. Physical fitness is a key and critical part of that."

New NCOER

Recently, Dailey announced that the new Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report would be delayed until 2016. Dailey expressed complete confidence in noncommissioned officers adapting to the changes in the coming NCOER, but he said it was necessary to slow the process down to make sure the NCOER is implemented correctly.

"We have to get this right," Dailey said. "We worked really hard on the new Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report. It is an excellent product. But how we roll it out and how we make it applicable to our noncommissioned officers is essential to the move forward. It's OK if we slow down to take the time to make sure we train and educate the force on how to appropriately do it. We need buy-in from all the leaders here and across the Army, because this is intended to fix our Noncommissioned Officers Evaluation Report. So I'm not concerned about the Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report; it's the right way to go. But I am concerned that we make sure that we get it right as we roll it out to the Army. And we're going to do just that."

Talent management

Because the Army as an organization is so large, it has suffered from moving people administratively instead of really managing talent, Dailey said. Though it will be difficult, Dailey hopes leaders can begin to be more involved in some of those decisions.

"We're a leadership organization," Dailey said. "I want leaders involved in that. That doesn't mean leaders will control every facet about where someone PCSes or where they're going to stay or extending them. But I do need leadership involvement with regard to managing the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to move an individual to the appropriate position that maximizes the capabilities of the organization and strengthens the mission of the United States Army. That's complex stuff. As big as we are, that's very complex and very hard to do. So as we move forward, my senior enlisted counsel will work on doing that. Of course, a lot of that will occur at the senior noncommissioned officer ranks. But internal to the organization, I need talent management from the perspective of, 'I have to give back to the Army sometimes. I have to invest in the future of the Army by sending our young men and women to school to enhance their performance.' Sometimes that takes sacrifice from a unit. Maybe they're going to miss a unit field training problem. But what's more important? Is it more important to invest in that noncommissioned officer for the future or just that two-week field training exercise?"

Social media

At the NCO Solarium in May at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Dailey expressed concern about how some Soldiers are behaving on social media. "When Soldiers harass, put [damaging] things on the Internet, they are not in keeping with the honor, tradition and the stewardship of the profession," he said.

Dailey told the NCO Journal he thinks NCOs can solve the problem without needing new rules and regulations in place. He wants NCOs to have an attitude of "Not in My Squad."

"It sounds very simplistic, and that's exactly what I want it to be," Dailey said. "I want noncommissioned officers to

know we trust them, because this is about trust. Trust runs both ways, up and down the chain of command. I want them to understand that we do trust you. We trust you with the lives of ... the young men and women that we've given you. We've bestowed the greatest honor the American society can give to one individual and that is to lead those men and women into combat. That same trust applies when we're back in garrison. More accurately, there's no such thing as combat leadership. There's no such thing as garrison leadership. There's something called military leadership and Army leadership. It exists regardless of where we are and what we do."

Every Soldier a billboard

Another topic of discussion that began at the NCO Solarium was the effectiveness of Army branding campaigns. Dailey said he wants Soldiers to see that what is more important than the slogans of "Army Strong" or "Army of One" is the everyday effect a Soldier has walking around his or her community. Dailey wants NCOs to know they are walking billboards for the Army.

"My billboard has and will always say Army Strong," Dailey said. "I encourage leaders to think about how they are going to paint their own billboard for Soldiers. What is it going to say? You have so much influence on what that billboard says. It can affect whether a Soldier stays in the Army or they transition. It's critically important that our nation clearly understands and knows that we will always be the organization that is most trusted in America. It takes a lot of billboards to maintain that. It takes a lot of hard work as well. But I always ask this: What do you want your billboard to say? What does it say today? What is it going to say tomorrow?"

Working on their personal billboards and striving to be the best will also help Soldiers have a better chance of staying in the Army as it downsizes, Dailey said. He offered his advice to Soldiers and NCOs looking to take charge of their careers.

"I'll tell you that you can start first and foremost by listening to your noncommissioned officer every day," Dailey said. "Do good PT and keep yourself physically fit. When you get the opportunity to go to a military school, stay in it and study hard. Strive to be in the top 10 percent of every school you go to. You should want to, if you want to maintain that edge over your peers. Those are the things you have to go after."