

4. COMMENTS REGARDING TRAINING i.e. SUCCESSES, BARRIERS, FEEDBACK:

SUCSESSES:

1. June 2021, trained 13 new Equal Opportunity Leaders.
2. Conducted a Native American Diversity Engagement/Cultural awareness event with food samples.
3. Conducted 100% Unit Command Climate Surveys.
4. Published EO and Diversity/Inclusion annex in the state's Yearly Readiness Guidance, outlining all EO requirements to Commanders.
5. Conducted education of EO program and training requirements to newly assigned Commanders and First Sergeants.
6. State has a large percentage of trained EOA's creating a diverse team based on gender.
7. Increase in EO IRR cases, which EOA's are directly supporting. EOA engagement had been utilized more this FY than previous years.
8. Utilized training at NG-PEC and other states in order to train five EOL's.

BARRIERS:

1. Lack of dedicated EOA MTOE position authorized at Brigade level. This position is currently an additional duty until the unit is mobilized, once mobilized the EOA then becomes a dedicated full time requirement, removing the person from their MTOE duty assignment, which subsequently affects the units DMD/manning capabilities.
2. Unit visits, EO observations of unit climate as well as participation in community engagement events were initially limited due to COVID 19 restrictions. The majority of the unit visits were conducted on the full time side by the SEEM. However, we did support four unit DEOCS focus groups along with EOL training during AT.

5. IDENTIFY COMMUNITY AFFAIRS INVOLVEMENT:

The South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG) was able to reengage community involvement this year through three major recruitment events. The 153rd EN BN conducted a Warrior Challenge Recruiting event, the 109th EN BN conducted the Gut Check Endurance Recruiting event, and the SDARNG also supported the Lakota Nation Invitational Basketball Tournament. These events showcase the diverse opportunity which our organization has to offer High School students as they make decisions and prepare for their futures. The SDARNG was also able to resume the Timber Haul mission to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This provided much needed firewood to nine communities. Unfortunately, most High Schools and Colleges had strict "no outside visitors allowed" due to continued COVID restrictions, restricting our presence. All Native American Schools within the Reservations were limited to virtual meetings as well.

6. ADJUTANT GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL HUMAN RELATIONS CLIMATE:

In FY 21, the South Dakota Army National Guard's (SDARNG) end strength was 3130 with females and minorities making up 27.85% of our overall strength, while maintaining an attrition rate of 8.8%. The SDARNG continues to work toward increasing our female and minority populations, specifically Native Americans. The demographics of the SDARNG are monitored monthly to maintain visibility, awareness, and track the progress towards our stated goals. The diversity of the SDARNG is a vital part of our state's strategic plan which is updated annually. The SDARNG continues to prioritize the increase of cultural diversity of our organization by creating an environment of dignity, respect, and inclusion. We closely monitor our unit's climate and environment for issues with unfair promotions, command climate, and training opportunities through the Command Climate Surveys and focus groups. Our MSC commanders understand equal opportunity, diversity, and sexual assault prevention all require continuous command emphasis. We also work closely with the recruiting staff ensuring we are doing everything we can to connect with under-represented groups with a progressive marketing approach. The SDARNG continues to focus on recruiting top quality personnel, retaining top quality Soldiers, and an attrition management plan fostering readiness. The SDARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion has capitalized on its own diversity with its recruiter staff of nine females, one Native American, and one African American to increase the diversity of our organization. In FY21 25.27% of the total Soldiers recruited into the SDARNG were females, 5.86% were Native Americans and 2.2% were Hispanics, allowing us to be a more diverse and inclusive fighting force. Each of our deployed units has met all Equal Opportunity training requirements prior to arrival at their mobilization station. However, at the Brigade level there is no dedicated EOA MTOE position authorized. This position is currently an additional duty until the unit is mobilized, once mobilized the EOA then becomes a dedicated full time requirement, removing the person from their MTOE duty assignment, which subsequently affects the units DMD/manning capabilities. New initiatives implemented, removing this past year include the restructuring of the Senior Officer Management Board creating a more equal and transparent process for consideration of command assignments and promotions, FY21 was the first full year this was implemented. This last year we also expanded our "Be in the Green" prevention of discrimination and sexual harassment program. This program is based on the continuum of sexual violence, but focuses on what it takes to gain and maintain a "Positive Unit Climate". We have provided the posters and basic training approach for this to the units, presented it during the Company Level Pre-Command Course and use it to sponsor programs where young influential leaders can generate impact such as the Best Warrior competition. This prevention program was initiated in FY20, was expanded upon in FY21 and we intend to carry it over in FY22 or beyond. We continue to have great success with the SHARP Program and leveraging the SARC to ensure that these programs act as the vaccine to prevent possible incidences.

We have experienced an uptick in EO informal complaints based on sexual harassment and gender discrimination. The basic trend in younger female soldiers influenced by the #MeToo Movement have filed more complaints; demonstrating the importance of reporting and no longer tolerating inappropriate behavior. Leadership is promptly engaging to address/investigate allegations which promotes the no tolerance of harassment and discrimination. Subordinate leaders are also more engaged in ensuring their EOL and EOA's are trained and prepared to assist with all aspects of the EO program. We also conducted a NGB-CMA VTC in September of 2021 for EOA's and Investigating Officers of EO cases. Five EOA's and two Investigating Officers attended this training along with the SEEM. This training was impactful to the investigation process for EO cases and was the first formal type training we've ever had. We are committed to building a more diverse organization by continually valuing our Soldiers, leveraging their knowledge, skills, and the abilities they bring to our organization so we can continue to achieve even greater success!

ACTION OFFICER: LTC Sarah M. Gadbois

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 20 DEC 21

TAG: MG Jeffrey P. Marlette

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 20 DEC 21