TRADOC chief wants emphasis on defining 'the profession of arms'

Posted by Chris Kelly | October 11th, 2011 | AUSA 2011

Tweet 7 Like 10 SHARE

By MICHELLE TAN — The Profession of Arms campaign is one of the most important initiatives in the Army, the commanding general of Training and Doctrine Command said.

"I think it's very important that we as a profession take a very hard look at what is our profession. What are the guide posts for the future?" Gen. Robert Cone said Tuesday during a panel on the Army profession at the Association of the United States Army annual meeting. "What is the profession of arms? Do we want to be a profession, and if so, what does it take to be a profession? You can take the bedrock that comes from this particular campaign and build the Army of 2020."

The campaign, initiated last year by former Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, is a comprehensive review to examine the state of the profession after a decade of war.

It includes renewed focus on issues such as trust, leader development, going back to the basics and professional certifications, said Brig. Gen. Sean MacFarland, deputy commanding general for leader development and education at the Combined Arms Center.

"When you have 95 percent promotion rates to major and lieutenant colonel, we're not really helping the Army identify who our potential strategic leaders are," he said.

Also, many basic Army skills, such as policing the ranks and enforcing discipline, have atrophied, MacFarland said, adding that deployments can not be an excuse for not enforcing standards.

The key is to push this discussion out into the Army, MacFarland said.

"What we don't want this to become is another annual requirement, where for one hour a year you pull everybody into the post theater and talk to them about the Army profession," he said. "What we need to do is make the Army profession part of our everyday conversation. That's how we really move this outside of the institutional force and into the operational force."

Soldiers and civilian employees alike must invest in the professionalism of the Army, MacFarland said.

"We can not allow this campaign to be just another rock in our rucksack," he said. "It is our rucksack that allows you to carry the rocks around. If you don't have a professional force out there, how will you accomplish your missions?"