Press Release

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10th Mountain Division SHARP hosts training summit

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Typically, when you hear about SHARP (Sexual Harassment / Assault Response and Prevention) training, it’s geared toward an auditorium full of Soldiers, a roomful of civilian employees or individuals taking a mandatory online course.

It will cover topics such as restricted and unrestricted reporting, warning signs of sexual assault and harassment, and bystander intervention.

However, the audience for the two-day training summit at Fort Drum, hosted by the 10th Mountain Division SHARP team, was for the professionals, with presentations that could aid them in their jobs of supporting Soldiers.

“The intent for our SHARP Training Summit is to ensure that we all have awareness of all the community resources, both on post and in the communities around us,” said Sgt. 1st Class Amber Satterwhite, 10th Mountain Division (LI) victim advocate and sexual assault response coordinator (SARC). “If a Soldier needs assistance, whether that is behavior health or legal assistance, it is important for us as victim advocates who are working with Soldiers to know about everything that could benefit them.”

Satterwhite said that after the long COVID-19 pandemic, where many organizations and agencies provided virtual or limited in-person assistance, it has been advantageous to re-engage with those resources and share new information.

“We are just trying to get back out there and reach out to all of our community partners, so we are better able to help our Soldiers when it comes to access-to-care issues,” she said.

She said the two-day event was open to all SHARP professionals on post and in the local community. Additionally, dozens more from Army installations across the U.S. participated online.

“We are reaching out to anyone who advocates for Soldiers and family members,” Satterwhite said. “We know that sometimes with our busy schedules or additional duties, not everybody can be here in person, so we offered access to the training virtually.”

Subject-matter experts provided presentations, and topics ranged from Staff Judge Advocate’s special victims counsel, post-traumatic stress, and domestic violence to Planned Parenthood and the Equal Employment Opportunity sexual harassment complaint process.

“It was important for us to include both Soldiers and civilians as guest speakers,” Satterwhite said. “Sexual harassment and sexual assault are societal issues and not just Army issues. So, we wanted to include military and civilian representatives to make sure we covered all aspects of victim advocacy.”

The SHARP team hosted a similar training event in April during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

“We are going to try and keep that going every year, so that our Soldiers can get the continuous education credits they need, and maintain that interaction with our community resources,” Satterwhite said.

Even though she helped to organize the event and moderated the discussion with online participants, she said there was still opportunity for her to learn from the subject-matter experts.

“I am big on family, and I feel like we are all a family here regardless of whether you are military or civilian,” Satterwhite said. “I think it is good that we can be here, and both teach and learn from each other. That way, we want to make sure that everyone receives the care they deserve and make the world a better place.”

Staff Sgt. Cordan Kennedy has served as a victim advocate with 10th Mountain Division Artillery since completing the foundational course in January.

“It’s good to learn more about the resources outside of Fort Drum and in the surrounding community, and meeting people so I could put a face to those organizations that I can refer clients to,” he said.

Kennedy said that he has seen the positive impact that the SHARP program has on the community, which is why he became involved.

“I want to do my part to help others,” he said. “I feel I owe it to the Soldiers to be there for them when they need it. As a Soldier, I know I got help when I needed it, so this is just me being able to give back.”

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For further information regarding this release, contact Fort Drum Public Affairs at 315-772-9043 or katherine.e.wright12.civ@army.mil