



## EOAC 19-3 GRADUATION

# ‘TODAY MARKS THE START OF A NEW CHAPTER IN YOUR LIVES’

45th Space Wing Commander encourages, challenges new Equal Opportunity graduates.

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Brig Gen Douglas Schiess, commander, 45th Space Wing, wasted little time making his point as he addressed 125 joint-service graduates of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute’s Equal Opportunity Advisor Course 19-3 here Nov. 15. “Today marks the start of a new chapter in your lives. With your graduation from the Equal

Opportunity Advisor Course, you will leave this schoolhouse more capable of increasing one of the more intangible strengths of our Armed Forces: the diversity of thought and backgrounds, and the experiences we bring to the fight,” he said. He was quick to remind them it won’t always necessarily be easy.





“To be realistic, we’ve all heard these talking points though. We all know diversity leads to a more successful team and inclusion guarantees unit cohesion,” he said.

“But not everyone lives by those words. Unfortunately, that’s why your career fields are vital. That’s where you come in,” he said emphatically.

***“One of the most important traits they have to have is the ability of being able to communicate to all levels. It’s a must.”***

“You have to ensure leaders, up and down the chain of command, provide an environment that allows for every single member of their organization to maximize their potential and be treated with dignity and respect,” he added.

“They have to be willing to come into commanders and report any problems within their organizations, or even report the good things they’ve seen within the unit,” he said.



The Commandant’s Award is the most prestigious of the DEOMI Class Awards and recognizes the best overall academic achievement. Col. Aimee Storm, DEOMI Commandant, and Chief Master Sgt. Gloria Weatherspoon present that award to Army Sgt. 1st Class Peter M. Aho. (above) Col Storm assumed leadership here Oct. 7, 2019.

“You’ll be a loudspeaker to amplify the voices of your commander in promoting acceptance and application of diversity – and you’ll be there to correct their path if they begin to stray,” he said.

***“You will need to be change agents when there is change to be made,” said Brig Gen Douglas Schiess, commander, 45th Space Wing.***

“You will need to have the courage and the strength to tell it like it is and don’t pull any punches when your commanders need to hear the real truth,” he said.

“With that said, I have full faith you’ll be the expert so many of our folks will look toward to advocate for what is right,” he said.

Directly after the graduation ceremony, General Schiess visited the DEOMI studio for an interview.

One of the first questions asked was what in his opinion are the most successful characteristics of Equal Opportunity and Equal Employment Opportunity professionals he has witnessed in his Air Force Career.

“That’s a great question and I’m happy to answer it,” he said.

“They have to be willing to come to commanders and report any problems within their organizations, or even report the good things they’ve seen within the unit,” he said.

“And they also have to be able to talk with each and every person from every kind of background ... be able to talk about what ever their issue is, complaint or even something good they want to talk about and find ways to make the environment best for everyone, and then have the courage to do the right thing,” he said.

He then had some parting words for the Defense Equal Opportunity Institute.

“I just want to say that DEOMI is an incredible organization that our military needs to be able to provide the advisors across the DOD to complete the missions we need to do,” he said.

“We have a great relationship here at Patrick Air Force Base. Great organization. Great leaders, faculty, trainers and support teams, and we certainly appreciate all that they do,” he added.

