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Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute
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Perseverance Pays Off

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PATRICK SPACE FORCE BASE, Fla. — U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Tony Cohen, human resources noncommissioned officer in charge of Personnel & Student Services at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, promoted to the rank of Master Sgt. during a ceremony held January 17, 2023.

Cohen's promotion comes at the end of a six-year pursuit for the highly sought-after rank. Master Sergeant continues to be one of the toughest ranks for Soldiers like Cohen, in service support career fields, to achieve throughout the Army. Nevertheless, Cohen did not let this discourage him.



Cohen, a native of Brunswick, Georgia, began his Army career as an active-duty Soldier in November 2003. He has held multiple human resources positions throughout the Department of Defense, both stateside and overseas, during his 20-year career.

Cohen came to DEOMI in 2020 as an instructor and facilitator for the institute's Equal Opportunity program. In this position, he helped create and establish the virtual Equal Opportunity Advisor courses, which were vital to institute's mission during the height of pandemic operations.

In 2022, an opportunity became available where he was able to take a break from teaching. He was then reassigned to his current position as NCOIC of DEOMI's Personnel & Student Services directorate. Cohen said transitioning to the new position was seamless because of his background and extensive expertise in human resources.

Cohen's first-line supervisor, U.S. Army Capt. Norman Singleton, director of DEOMI Personnel & Student Services, said that Cohen is the type of Soldier who is always willing to go the extra mile to ensure mission success.

“He does a phenomenal job whenever I need something. I generally never have to ask,” said Singleton, referring to Cohen’s dedication is to the mission.

U.S. Navy Capt. Delmy Robinson, DEOMI Commandant, highlighted Cohen’s illustrious career and acknowledged his contributions to the institution in a speech she gave during the ceremony. In her speech, she expressed her gratitude for Cohen’s unwavering support to the institute and its mission.

Robinson also expressed her gratitude to Cohen’s wife and eight children for supporting him—a sentiment Cohen addressed first during his speech.



“I could have not done it alone,” said Cohen, referring first to his wife, Vanessa, and then to his current and former leaders.

He said his wife’s persistent encouragement motivated him to complete his Master of Business Administration degree from Purdue University Global, an achievement that helped him remain competitive amongst his peers.

“Thank you for always being there,” Cohen said to his wife.

Cohen then said there have been several current and former leaders who helped him get to where he is today, and he took his promotion ceremony as an opportunity to show his appreciation.

“I just want to say thank you across the board to every leader, peer, and subordinate. I appreciate you. I could not have done it without you,” said Cohen.

The DEOMI team is an inclusive force that values and develops all individuals and thrives on their contributions. Since its inception in 1971, then known as the Defense Race Relations Institute, DEOMI has developed and delivered innovative education, training, research, and collaborative solutions to approximately 52,000 DEOMI military and civilian graduates.

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