



**Unethical Behavior in Units Before and During Operation
Iraqi Freedom**

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Introduction

Ethical conduct by noncommissioned officers within the United States Army is one of the cornerstones of good leadership. Officers and NCOs are responsible for establishing good ethical climates within their units. The pressure to accomplish the mission or achieving unit goals sometimes causes leaders in some units to act unethically as well as issue unethical commands to subordinates. Leaders must demonstrate ethical conduct daily and never succumb to unethical practices. Operational readiness rates for vehicles within a unit must be reported accurately to ensure Soldiers lives are not put in jeopardy and leaders must set proper examples of ethical behavior in combat. Once unethical behavior has been identified every effort should be made to correct the behavior and to prevent further acts of the same.

In Operation Iraqi Freedom officers and leaders of the US Army are put in situations daily where their ethical behavior is on display. This paper will examine two situations during Operation Iraqi Freedom in which unethical behavior took place and what should have happened in its aftermath.

Situation 1

An Armor unit has just returned from the National Training Center (NTC) back to its home base at Fort Stewart, Georgia. The unit has just completed a 45 day mission rehearsal exercise that included Gunnery qualification and Opposing Forces (OPFOR) training. The following Monday after removing the vehicles off the railhead the battalion conducted Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) on all the vehicles. Once the completed 5988's were collected by the company maintenance sergeants they were turned into the Battalion Maintenance NCO (BMNCO). The BMNCO examined the 5988's and found that the 5 ton truck fleet busted the battalion's total Operational Readiness Rate (ORR) because four of the twelve in the battalion were non-mission capable. The BMNCO reported to the

Battalion Executive Officer (XO) that the 5 ton fleet had busted the battalion ORR of 90% fully mission capable. The XO told the BMNCO to get them up before the OR report goes to Brigade on Friday. The BMNCO said that he will try, but he doubted that it will happen. The XO stated that they must and will come up. The BMNCO held a meeting with the company motor sergeants he told them that the 5 tons will come up before Friday and he didn't care how the motor sergeants did it. The motor sergeants left the meeting confused and angry.

The ethical dilemma that the XO and BMNCO put the company motor sergeants in was one of a typical nature in today's Army. The pressure to maintain operational readiness is so great that leaders forget that they must take their time and do things right. The BMNCO upon receiving the orders from the XO should have told him this is not possible because the parts are out of stock. In addition, he should have also told the XO I will not jeopardize the safety of the soldiers that will ride in those vehicles by issuing an order to my maintenance sergeants that the vehicles will come up or else. Just as he was put into an ethical dilemma to bring the 5 ton fleet up by the XO, the BMNCO turned right around and issued the same order to the company motor sergeants who will issue it to their subordinates. This creates a standard of not following the proper procedures for repairing vehicles. Army leaders must not cave into the unethical pressure to report false vehicle readiness. The pressure to report that all vehicles are 100% operational is great but honest reporting must be done in order to take care of our soldiers and to ensure that we remain an ethical army in war and peace.

Situation 2

An infantry platoon has been tasked to set up a checkpoint outside of the green zone in Iraq to confiscate weapons and suspicious characters. The platoon convoyed to the checkpoint location and began setting up the different areas for the checkpoint. The platoon sergeant is angry because of a mortar attack that took place a day earlier on the

forward operating base that killed one of the platoon's soldiers. He has sworn revenge. The first cars enter the checkpoint area and the drivers and passengers exit as ordered to the personnel search area. An hour later a car comes through the checkpoint and the driver refuses to get out of the car. The staff sergeant and sergeant physically remove him and take him to the search area. They find hand grenades and AK-47s in the vehicle. The platoon sergeant walks up to the area where the driver is sitting flexed cuffed and butt strokes him with his weapon knocking him out. The two NCOs are told by the platoon sergeant that they did not see anything.

The staff sergeant and the sergeant did the right thing by removing the individual by reasonable force from the car to the search area. However, the platoon sergeant was wrong for butt stroking the flexed cuffed individual and telling the junior NCOs that they saw nothing. The platoon sergeant clearly put the two younger NCOs in an ethical dilemma. Should the two NCOs notify their chain of command what they have witnessed? Yes, they should notify their chain of command what they had witnessed to prevent them from becoming accessories to the unethical behavior. The platoon sergeant should be counseled and possibly replaced because he no longer can uphold the ethical standards demanded of leaders in the US Army.

Summary

The United States Army is founded on values based upon ethical behavior. Leaders are put in ethical dilemmas daily. However, leaders must not cave into the unethical behavior of giving false maintenance reports or harming civilians in foreign lands that they conduct operations in. Soldiers suffer when their leaders are involved in unethical behavior. They look to us to set the example. The United States Army has the best Soldiers in the world and they deserve leaders who conduct themselves ethically everyday. This is the duty of the officers and noncommissioned officers of the United States Army.