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Senior Leaders and Ethical Behavior in the New Millennium

Do senior leaders in the United States Army exhibit unethical behavior with respect to female soldiers? Not since Anita Hill's testimony before the Senate have we heard so much in the news about sexual harassment and unethical behavior in the Department of Defense. This paper will explore unethical situations which have occurred and been written about in regards to senior leader's treatment of females in the military. This paper will examine the many instances where unethical behavior exists between senior leaders and subordinate female soldiers which is an ethical dilemma in the United States Army.

The ethical dilemma that I feel is a crutch with senior leaders, especially male leaders, is that female soldiers receive different treatment than male soldiers. Ethics in the military is something that every military member uses as a guiding principle for standards and treating all soldiers with fairness, dignity, and respect, however, some male leaders seem to deviate from the standards when it comes to female soldiers. We all come from different backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and religions, however, all of us in the military should keep these guiding principles near and dear to our hearts. Military ethics is our guiding principle on how we as soldiers conduct our everyday lives, whether it is on or off duty.

Fort Jackson, South Carolina has integrated training; for a lot of drill sergeant's, this is their first time dealing with female soldiers. Some drill sergeants have no problem because they maintained one standard for all, regardless of gender, however, there were some drill sergeants

who allowed females to flirt with them, not stand at parade rest, and for the most part were unprofessional to them. Those drill sergeants not only succumbed to those females but some drill sergeants, who were married, ended up having sex with those females. Some drill sergeants found guilty of this behavior received punishment. Others drill sergeants exhibiting this behavior got away with and did not receive any punishment at all. The commanders and first sergeants of those drill sergeants faced ethical dilemmas in their decisions regarding punishment.

Drill sergeants are supposed to do the right thing and treat every soldier, regardless of sex, the same. Positions of power seem to make some drill sergeants think they are above the law and can get away with whatever they want. During the mid 90's, drill sergeants exhibited unethical behavior by raping and sexually harassing female trainees at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. This behavior opened the military's eyes to a national epidemic with females in the workplace.

It seems the higher in rank we get, the more we think we are untouchable. Case in point: a division commander who I will call MG Doe had an enlisted aide, who I will call SSG Jane. SSG Jane took care of three households (Camp Casey, Yongsan, and Camp Red Cloud). MG Doe was married and his wife resided in the residence in Yongsan, Korea.

SSG Jane came to me numerous times with complaints about MG Doe's behavior. SSG Jane stated there were times when MG Doe was in the house and wearing nothing but a robe. SSG Jane stated he would always ask her to come upstairs to get his uniform ready for the next day which made her uncomfortable since he was only wearing a robe. I asked SSG Jane if she told the General how she felt. SSG Jane did and the General's stated: "this is my house, I should be able to walk around however I want!" This was an ethical dilemma which needed rectifying. Should the General continue this behavior or should someone say something to him? This

behavior could not continue so the admin assistant and the General's aide-de-camp presented the unethical and moral behavior to the General's attention. MG Doe really thought there wasn't a problem but agreed to stop the behavior if it made SSG Jane uncomfortable. Would MG Doe's behavior been different if SSG Jane were a male?

Senior leaders treating females differently seems to be a constant moral and unethical problem, especially in the Combat Service Support field. Another recent example of a high level senior leader making an unethical decision is the mandatory retirement of a division command sergeant major. The division command sergeant major was married and had an inappropriate relationship with his admin assistant in IRAQ. The unethical decision caused him embarrassment and early retirement.

Some would argue that our culture, society, and values have paved the way we treat females in the military. Females are partly to blame because some try to use their sexuality to their advantage in an unethical way. Some females exploit males who they feel will let them get away with the unethical and moral behavior. Females blinking their eyes, smiling, or not standing at parade rest for a senior NCO are some examples of unacceptable behavior.

There are plenty of courses of action that senior NCOs and leaders can take to change our ranks and the perception by our junior soldiers. One of the ways to change is to modify our behavior both on and off duty. Senior leaders see the problem, but in many cases, say nothing. Leaders at all levels need to assist their peers and pull them to the side when identified immoral and unethical behavior happens which would assist in the good order and discipline of the unit and the Army. Treating female soldiers differently because we want to have a relationship with them or harass them violates the Army values and sets the tone for unethical behavior. Whether it be drivers, clerks, or admin assistants there is only one standard - the Army standard!