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Ethics

Profiles are a form of discrimination against leaders in the Army. In many cases Leaders with profiles face discrimination based on the unit and its leaders. Some Commanders will not allow a person to hold the position of Platoon Sergeant or Platoon Leader if they have certain types of profiles.

The military has many regulations and guidelines that we as leaders are governed by. Profiles are covered in these Army Regulations. A profile is a medical statement, stating a physical limitation. Temporary profiles are used for the rehabilitation of an injury that is expected to heal in a reasonable amount of time. Permanent profiles are used for those soldiers that have injuries that will not heal in a reasonable amount of time.

My point is a case involving a well seasoned leader that was diagnosed with a degenerative bone disease of the hip. This particular leader was a very capable and an effective leader that was responsible for a large platoon. Due to many years of running, climbing, Army Physical Fitness Test, and 16 years of regular army training this leader was unexpectedly diagnosed with this disease. The doctors determined it would be best that they stop running as much as possible, if they wanted to continue to serve in the military and not injure themselves further. After additional examinations and discussions the doctor gave the soldier a run at own pace and distance, permanent profile (P2).

The Company Commander believed that in order for you to be an effective leader you must be able to run. The Company Commander was determined that this soldier could not effectively lead because of their physical limitation. The Commander recommended to the Battalion Commander and Executive Officer that the Soldier be moved to another

platoon.

The soldier was confident and believed that they could still lead just as effectively as they had in the past. The only change is that they could not run as often as they had in the past at the cost of their health. The soldier disagreed with the Commanders proposed change and went to the next person in the chain of command for advise in this case it was the Battalion Executive Officer. After communicating with the Battalion Executive Officer the soldier went to the Battalion Commander and also explained the situation from their stand point. The soldier also suggested a couple courses of action to the Battalion Commander, one being to remain in their current position. The other course of action, if a move was necessary, would be to move out of the company and into another type of job.

Both the Battalion Commander and the Executive Officer had their different opinions on the courses of action. The Executive Officer wanted to make the immediate move of the soldier to a staff job at the Battalion level. The Battalion Commander wanted the soldier to stay in the same unit only to be moved to a smaller platoon.

The military uses profiles to help those leaders and soldiers when their bodies have succumb to injuries and illnesses both temporary and permanent. Sometimes units and their leaders in their attempts to adhere to the demands of the army can sometimes provide more negative results than positive. These decisions can create a more discriminatory practice for something that was presented to make a soldier better for the military.

Ethics are a number of moral principles and values. We all possess our own set of ethics, 'So does that mean we are right every time we make a decision'? Maybe not to

everyone, but in our minds there is usually no doubt that we made the right choice. The Army teaches us, when faced with an ethical decision to use the army values as our guide. Fortunately, most of us had these same values instilled long before joining the military by our parents and our parents had a great influence over how we prioritized these values.

In this situation the company commander made a decision based on the fact that a leader in his unit received a P2 profile. Due to his beliefs and value system he did not see a problem with the decision he made. Most leaders are brought up in the Army up under the concept that in order for you to be a good leader you must be able to lead from the front. This is not always true and should not be the determining factor when choosing leaders because not all leaders are required to be on the ground with the soldiers. Where he went wrong was he did not check the Regulation before he made a decision.

Leaders are the ethical standard bearer for the Army's values; they must live the Army values everyday. Leaders must build an ethical command climate in their units that supports the Army's values. They must ensure they set a proper ethical example themselves, and that there is free flowing communication throughout the unit. Soldiers must feel like they can come to the leadership for advice on ethical decisions they face. They must feel that they can do this without fear of punishment, but with the feelings that they helped with the decision making process.

When we as leaders consider all of the potential avenues of approach it makes us better leaders. When we evaluate each situation based on evidence presented and what is governed in military regulations, the soldier and the military gets a fair judgment, and there should be no remorse or misrepresentations for either participant.