

Ethical dilemma concerning fraternization in the United States Navy between Officers and enlisted personnel to include Chief Petty Officers and junior enlisted E6 and below.

Fraternization in the Navy

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Abstract

Every organization, regardless of its size, geographical location and diverse composition faces ethical problems with the leadership. This paper provides a greater understanding of the Navy enterprise, one of the ethical problems it faces within the leadership structure.

Fraternization in the Navy

The establishment of the United States Navy took place 232 years ago on 13 October 1775. It is comprised of approximately 340,000 men and women from diverse backgrounds. Several different job fields (ratings) exist, each carrying various levels of responsibility. The Navies mission ensures the sea lanes and shipping channels remain open, protect various ships from pirates, counter-narcotic operations, and humanitarian assistance. In addition, it provides communications and delivers supplies to warriors engaged in combat operations and lastly has the ability to deploy a massive amount of fire power to the air and sea as well as deliver personnel to the beaches. However, just as any organization we face ethical challenges. The one I will discuss is fraternization.

Fraternization is the unduly relationship between Officers and enlisted personnel to include Chief Petty Officers and junior enlisted E6 and below. The Chief Petty Officers are the senior enlisted personnel and the back-bone of our service however, held to a much higher standard and therefore the reason we are listed separately from the junior enlisted personnel in the ranks of E6 and below. This includes other relationship with Navy personnel and sister services to include all foreign militaries regardless of that services rules and regulations. Demonstration of fraternization comes in various forms throughout the Navy and only a few will be discussed. Some of these forms are demonstrated by showing favoritism toward a specific person by allowing them to depart the ship earlier then other personnel to giving them awards or better evaluations when not deserving, spending numerous off duty hours together without inviting the entire division or department, to engaging in a relationship and having a sexual affair with the opposite sex.

This may appear as a ridiculous regulation to other services however, fraternization within a command is detrimental to that unit accomplishing the mission as well as the leader found guilty of this violation. The impact on the command is severe because it causes a negative effect on moral and this can affect the entire battle-group. Depending on the severity of the situation and level of the leadership involved it can impact the training and deployment schedule of the entire command. Additionally, the Sailors commence to focus on the fraternization situation and lose focus of the mission. The leader is destined for failure, his or her ability to continue leading personnel becomes tarnished. Respect is one of many various characteristics which encompass a leader. Respect is divided into two categories and the first is instant respect based on the leaders actual pay grade. My personal opinion this respect carries very little weight when leading personnel. The second type is that which the leader earns from his or her personnel based on their leadership attributes. I refer to this as personal respect a leader earned based on his or her ability to mentor their personnel. Let us now turn our focus toward the training program established in an attempt to diminish such action from our leaders.

The Navy is a proud and professional force which expects, demands and relies on solid leadership for continued successful. We expand a vast amount of time on training and educating our personnel. We are proud of our leadership and want to refrain from the public's eye in a negative manner. Training and educating are Sailors on fraternization is paramount to include instructing them on the proper procedures to report such actions without reprisals. Training is commences during the recruiting process while participating in the delayed entry program and continues during recruit training until retirement. Each command has a qualified equal opportunity Officer which is responsible for educating personnel at all ranks with reference to fraternization. Additionally, every leadership course of instruction discusses fraternization with

the students as well as strictly outlines their responsibility. Throughout the command are posters educating Sailors on this subject to include guidelines for reporting a violation without fear of reprisal. Our leaders are fully knowledgeable of the rules and regulations concerning this lewd act however some leaders still demonstrate acts of immaturity and fall victim to fraternization. Let's turn our focus toward the reason punishment is of order for violating this offense as well as discuss the punishment.

The Navy made the utilitarian decision to punish personnel found guilty of violating this policy because it violates our rules and regulation; it's not conducive to our tradition and could project a negative image of our service. If allowed to continue, it could impact morale, safety, command climate and overall mission accomplishment. The decision to reprimand sailors convicted of this offense bases on the approach of consequentialism. The utility, over time, is more beneficial because it could depict a negative image of the United States Navy and its leadership. Various levels of reprimand may be placed on the guilty and this demands on the rank of the Officer conducting the mast case. The higher rank the Officer the more severe punish may be imposed. Those cases which are severe can result in discharge from the service without pay to a punitive letter of reprimand.

The naval enterprise is faced with fraternization and many times leaders turn a blind eye allowing it to happen. Officers and enlisted from different commands are dating and often marry immediately after transferring commands. There are E6 personnel dating E3 personnel in different departments within the same command. Another example is an enlisted Sailor dating another enlisted Sailor and one of them is selected to the medical enlisted commissioning program and they continue to date or often times marry. The ultimate decision to reprimand

these Sailors in direct violation of fraternization rests with the Commanding Officer after he or she receives counsel from the Command Master Chief and legal Officer.

The Navy established policies in which the utilitarian decision was made to severely punish those violating the policy of fraternization. The consequentialism approach the Navy takes ensures the professional image of their enterprise is not tarnished. To rid the Navy of this ethical problem it will require all levels of leadership to operate firm, fair and consistent across the board when dealing with fraternization.

References

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