

A Small Look into the Processing of Army Physical Fitness Test Failures

SGM Kellyanne O'Neil

Student #530

SGM Terry A. Branam

Faculty Advisor M-11

16 November 2005

## A Small Look into the Processing of Army Physical Fitness Test Failures

Thesis Statement: Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) failures are not administratively processed equally amongst the ranks.

How can our soldiers believe, have faith in and follow their leaders, when they don't enforce the standards equally amongst the ranks. Some leaders are given issues to deal with that fall into what is called the "gray area". This area is left open to interpretation but standards on performance are black and white. I will address the ethical dilemma that many leaders put themselves in when they don't follow the standards for administratively processing APFT failures.

Here is the situation: It is April and your unit has just completed their semi-annual APFT. You are sitting at your desk and begin reviewing your companies' results. Unfortunately you had two failures. The first one is a 28 year old male Specialist, who failed the sit-up event. The second one is a 29 year old male Captain, who failed the run. Both of these Soldiers are assigned to the Intermediate Care Ward (ICW).

At this point the playing field appears pretty equal. According to the standards Soldiers who fail any or all of the events during a record APFT are considered a NO-GO.

You check the calendar and schedule to have both Soldiers come in for their counseling. You prepare the counseling forms and ensure the following is documented on them:

- a. Inform the soldier they have not met the standards and what event they failed.

- b. That they are flagged for failing the APFT and the flagging action will remain in effect until they pass the retest.
- c. They are officially enrolled in the Special Population Physical Fitness Program (Spec Pops).
- d. The date of their retest.
- e. Consequences of failing two consecutive APFT's.

After completing all of the paperwork you bring them into the commander for review. The Commander looks over the paperwork and states "that the Captain should not have to be enrolled into the Special Population Physical Fitness Program". He feels the Captain can do it on his own and that it would be awkward for him because he works with the Specialist. He also feels that the flagging action will ruin the Captains career. The Commander has no issues with any of the Specialist's paperwork. His career is not a concern for the Commander. You sit there for a minute looking at the commander in disbelief. If you follow what the Commander wants without even questioning it, you are condoning a double standard. One of Webster's Dictionary definitions states, "ethics- the rules or standards of conduct governing the members of a profession". Are standards written that govern this situation? Or do we go with the good old boy system? So what are the rules for APFT failures? Some leaders forget and must be reminded. Any Soldier who fails the APFT standards (does not say only enlisted men) will be enrolled in Spec Pops, flagged and retested within 90 days. The commander finally comes to his senses and agrees.

Both Soldiers have been attending Spec Pops and are scheduled to take their retest tomorrow. Unfortunately neither soldier passed the retest. This now represents two consecutive APFT failures in a row.

According to both AR 635-200, Personnel Separations and AR 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges. Initiation of separation proceedings is required for any Soldier who has failed two consecutive APFT's.

As leaders, we promote doing the right thing even when no one is looking. So what is the right thing in this situation? Should both of these Soldiers be separated? Is it ethically correct to allow the officer to stay in and put the enlisted man out? This happens quite often. What does this tell our enlisted men about our leaders? Are they leading from the front? Or are they covering up things. As senior NCOs we must maintain and enforce the standards. At times this will put you on the Sugar-Honey-Ice-Tea list. Oh well that's life. Using what ever means necessary we must encourage our leaders do the same. We must be the conscience for those who do not have one. We are in the most prestigious army in the world and we should never allow our ethical behavior or decisions to take away from that. The buck stops here.

We are the NCO!!!!