

Fraternization and Sexual Misconduct on Senior Noncommissioned Officers

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As senior Noncommissioned Officers, it is very vital to be aware of ethical dilemmas in the Army because they can be detrimental to the unit's combat readiness and may ruin your career. As stated in FM 22-100, ethical leaders do the right things for the right reasons all the time, even when no one watching.

To express my thoughts on ethics, I will begin with the definition of the word "ethic." The 2004 Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives us five moderate variations to the definition of the word Ethic:

1. The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation.
2. A set of moral principles or values.
3. A theory or system of moral values.
4. The principles of conduct governing an individual or a group.
5. A guiding philosophy.

When I think about each of these definitions, I come to realize that our upbringing by our parents at home, our cultures, our religions, teachers in school, Drill Sergeants in Basic Training, and leaders throughout our military career. They have influenced us and molded the way we think. They were the foundation in the building of our character. They taught us how to think and, without realizing it, how to apply ethics in our decision-making, by learning what is the "right thing to do." Our behavior is a reflection of our character, and our character is a reflection of how we are a product of our environment, from birth through our present day military career. As

we develop our character, doing the right thing becomes a gut feeling when facing a challenge in the Army.

Being a Senior Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) in the Army, I would like to share some of my experiences of ethical dilemmas with Senior NCOs. When I was stationed in Korea, a Senior NCO in our NCO support channel was charged with fraternization and adultery with a junior enlisted female. This was going on for while on the installation between this Senior NCO and the junior enlisted female. They had consensual sexual relationships. To make the matter worst the Senior NCO was a Command Sergeant Major (CSM) at the time. He is married and have kids. When this happened it was a shock to many Senior NCOs on this installation and the word was heard all the way in the stateside posts. I asked myself, why did this CSM do it? First of all, in my own opinion, because perhaps the virtue of the position he was in and took advantage of it. Was he doing the right thing? Was he thinking what would happen to him when he gets caught? The CSM's behavior and action were unethical and set a substandard example for his subordinates NCOs to follow. As a result , of his seriousness of his unethical behavior and the embarrassment to the NCO Corps, the CSM attempted suicide but failed. This CSM was no longer a CSM and was forced to retire at a lesser rank after over 20 plus years of service.

My second experienced I had, it was another Senior Noncommissioned Officer, a CSM in the TRADOC side of the house at my previous assignment. I was a First Sergeant at the time when another fellow First Sergeant informed me that this CSM was gone because of what he had done. Again, it was about fraternization and sexual misconduct between this CSM and a female Drill Sergeant. The Chain of Command did an informal investigation, and as a result, the CSM was not formally charge. However, he was forced to retire immediately. What had happened was that the CSM would be gone on numerous Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) with the

female Drill Sergeant. While on their TDYs, they would both have consensual sexual relationships. But, the dilemma, they were both married at the time when the incidents occurred. The female Drill Sergeant was the Drill Sergeant of the year for the installation. The CSM was the top NCO in her NCO Support Channel. Again, I and my other fellow First Sergeant asked ourselves. What were these two Senior Noncommissioned Officers thinking during those times? Were they doing the right thing? Or were they just faced with hard ethical dilemma on both of them as Senior NCOs. I believed that these two Senior NCOs gamble their military career for personal pleasures because no one was watching. But, they were caught at the end. The CSM and the Drill Sergeant should known better instead of risking their military career. I think if they were really professional Senior NCOs, they could have prevents this ethical dilemma among the two of them. At the end of all of this, the CSM lost his job and his family. For the Drill Sergeant, she lost her husband. I am not sure if she still in the Army.

My third experienced of ethical dilemma was on a Senior NCOs during the Operation Iraqi Freedom One. Another Command Sergeant Major within my Brigade; this CSM was an outstanding CSM, but until he was investigated for fraternization and sexual harassment. I could not believe that this was happening at first. I was telling myself that there was no way that he did something unethical at this Base Camp in Iraq. The outcome of this was that this CSM was fraternizing and harassing one of the junior female Soldier at the Base Camp. The female Soldier reported the CSM to the Chain of Command for sexual harassment. The CSM was warned by the female Soldier to stop harassing her but the CSM didn't take the Soldier seriously until the Soldier reported the CSM to the Chain of Command. The Chain of Command did an investigation and within 30-60 days, the CSM was relieved of his duty. The CSM's unethical dilemma incident affected the morale of the Soldiers and the unit's Readiness at the Base Camp.

The unit had to put a First Sergeant to sit in as acting CSM until a replacement came in. The CSM was redeployed back to the states and was forced to retire.

As leaders in the Army, it is very vital to be aware of ethical dilemmas because they can be detrimental to our unit's combat readiness and may ruin your career. We are responsible for establishing the ethical climate in the unit. We must examine ourselves and determine how well we reflect the Army values and our own personal values. We must exercise good judgment at all times, even if no one is watching. We must also set good example for our Soldiers to follow. As Leaders, we are the ethical standard bearers that support the Army values. We must build an ethical command climate in our units because it is the right thing to do for our Soldiers.