

It is the Drill Sergeant who is responsible for training, mentoring and molding soldiers that are fully capable of performing all missions vital to national interest and security. Training abuse hinders training, hurts the cohesion of a unit and is overall unprofessional and unacceptable. The key elements that prevent training abuse in the Initial Training Environment are: Leadership interaction, Drill Sergeant buddy teams, and the Chaplain.

To have a successful cycle in the training base you must have Leadership involvement. Soldiers are immersed in a totally positive environment and brought through the solderization process step by step. Drill Sergeants also need to be monitored step by step. Drill Sergeants need to be kept on their toes. This reminds me of the old saying when the cat is away the mice will play. This also applies to IET units. Commanders and First Sergeants need to hold nightly meetings. They need to be not only involved in training, but in the barracks at night. Walk through at all different hours of the duty day. In other words, the leadership cannot be predictable and complacent in their duties. The biggest key when it comes to the Leadership is to hold Drill Sergeants feet to the fire. Drill Sergeants must be held accountable for what they do or fail to do. If this means a counseling statement then so be it. I can remember the first time I was counseled on the trail; it was a serious eye opener. Standards have to be maintained by trainees. Someone has to constantly insure the Drill Sergeants set the example with these same standards and values that they will expect from their platoons. If this is not done the Company will become lax and when this happens I believe you get training abuse. Drill Sergeants will always complain that the chain of command is spying on them and questioning them, but I would counter if you were doing nothing wrong then what does it matter. Drill Sergeants also would never feel like they were being watched if there was more consistent command presence.

Drill Sergeant buddy teams are of vital importance. You are a team. My peers have taught me many great training techniques that I can use still today. You spend more time with your Drill Sergeant partner than you do with your own family. You learn a great deal about one another, both weaknesses and strengths. Drill Sergeant teams need to look out for one another. Drill Sergeants are like the Mom and Dad of the Platoon and they need to be on the same sheet of music at all times. The female and male Drill Sergeant mix is a must. Female and males both see mannerisms in soldiers of the opposite sex that each can stop before it could be perceived as something else.

If you see your buddy start to stray the wrong way it is your duty is to reel them in before it is too late. Understand that Drill Sergeants cover for one another, but trainee abuse is something that cannot be buried. Drill Sergeant buddy teams can be your greatest assets in prevention of Trainee Abuse.

The chaplain is not just available for the soldiers going through training. Our chaplain used to bring muffins and give a class on suicide prevention and sex in the forbidden zone before the start of every cycle. Along with the Chaplains office, Jag office would give a class on types of trainee abuse using examples from prior cases. Although Drill Sergeants may think it is redundant, it is a positive way to get the message across about Trainee abuse. It is a friendly reminder. A chaplain can get a snapshot of a Company and be able to see Stress in Drill Sergeants. NCODP is another great way to get messages across to your Drill Sergeants and it is just as important to have in the Training environment as a FORSCOM unit.