

Prevention of Trainee Abuse

After 29 months of commanding a BCT Battalion - I offer the following nuggets for consideration in Prevention of Trainee Abuse. These Techniques, Tactics and Procedures (TTPs) have enabled us to limit the number of founded trainee abuse cases over the duration of my command. Of note, these TTPs holistically apply to reserve component cadre based on our Training Base Expansion Mission as well as active Component Cadre and to an extent were in place when I assumed command.

Command Philosophy-Engaged Leadership. Soldiers are my paramount focus. My Battalion CSM and I visit training often. Each Company conducts sensing Sessions with Privates after each phase. In addition, my CSM and I conduct a sensing session with each cycle of Graduating Privates. The sensing session is done normally on day 61 of the 63 BCT cycle and is done on a non-retribution basis. Results of the sensing session are provided to the CO cadre after the soldiers have shipped.

In addition, My CSM and I conduct a Newcomer's Inbrief for all permanent party cadre and each increment of reserve component Training Base Expansion cadre. These in briefs include an overview of the BCT Mission, Training Regulations and Trainee Abuse Vignettes. Moreover, I conduct a Quarterly huddle with all available cadre to reinforce my priorities and emphasize my intent. An example of my non-negotiables:

- Don't lie, cheat, or steal
- Don't act immorally
- Don't abuse/harass others
- Don't abuse drugs or alcohol
- Don't act for personal gain
- No continued gross incompetence

These bullets are part of my command philosophy that is reinforced to all cadre.

CDR's Inquiry-When a case of Trainee Abuse is suspected and verified by the CO CDR-I notify the BDE CDR and then suspend the DS until a CDR's inquiry is conducted. If the CDR's inquiry substantiates an allegation then depending on the abuse-the DS receives administrative action and is required to develop a vignette and then talk about the allegation during the next NCOPD. If the abuse is more severe, then the NCO receives due process under UCMJ.

A vignette discussed by the guilty DS at a BN NCOPD is depicted here:

Vignette: Checking Training

Situation: Drill Sergeant M was assigned to a summer surge company. When walking by his parent unit he noticed Privates performing guard duty on some

platoon equipment. DS M walked up and picked up a dummy weapon to test what the Privates had learned so far in training. The Private said "Halt." DS M kept walking with the weapon. The Private said "Halt" again then stepped in front of the Drill Sergeant. The Drill Sergeant and the Private then ran into each other. DS M then told the Private not to get near him. DS M then threw down the dummy weapon and went back to his company.

Discussion Topics:

1. Is the physical contact by Drill Sergeant M within the guidelines of TRADOC Regulation 350-6
2. Did Drill Sergeant M abuse the soldier by bumping into him?
3. How could have this situation been handled differently?
4. Discuss times where physical contact with soldiers is authorized.

This discussion at NCOPD facilitates the training and all of our DS' learn from the mistake.

Summary An "engaged chain of command" and then decisive action through a CDR's Inquiry have enabled me to insure that soldiers are treated with dignity and respect. Moreover, retraining TTPs such as the Vignette discussed above in a professional forum emphasize the reality of stepping outside the parameters of TR 350-6, local REGS and the CDR's intent.