



IG Newsletter



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Thoughts from the IG

By LTC Christopher Hatley

As the IG for JRTC and Fort Polk I have the opportunity to be around our organizations, units, and facilities on a regular basis. Let me say, up front, that it's a given that we have a great team of folks here at Fort Polk and this is great place to soldier. Our people are very well intentioned, motivated, and trying their utmost to earn their pay (I use the words "earn their pay" in the same context as General Patton did in his book titled, "War As I Knew It.") and contribute to the needs of the Army. We cannot ask for much more than that, or can we?

That said, I continue to come across situations in which leaders, both officers and noncommissioned officers, may be over doing it a bit. I'm talking about how we deal with and treat subordinates. There is no substitute for disciplined and dedicated leadership. Leaders should be aware that most of our people want to get the job done and done correctly. With this in mind, consider how we communicate and interact with those with whom we work.

I hearken to my days at the Military Academy and the way the upperclassmen treated us. In those days, the philosophy was to haze and harass those under you and make them bend to your will and get with "the program." This is an over simplification, but I think you understand my point, i.e., things are a little different nowadays in how we interact with our subordinates.

Actually, I will say that maybe things aren't really as different from what they should have been all along. I had to memorize "Schofield's Definition of Discipline" when I was a plebe at West Point. It didn't dawn on me at the time, but I realize there was an inconsistency in how we dealt with those cadets under us and the definition of discipline advocated by Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield. Schofield's definition of Discipline:

The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than make an army.

It is possible to impart instruction and to give commands in such manner and such a tone of voice to inspire in the soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite resentment and a desire to disobey.

The one mode or the other of dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due to others cannot fail to inspire in them regard for himself, while he who feels, and hence manifests, disrespect toward others, especially his inferiors, cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself.

*Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield
Addressing the Corps of Cadets
August 11, 1887*

Notice the date of General Schofield's message to the Corps of Cadets. It was way back in 1887. Evidently, the way we are training leaders is consistent with the leadership of old. Yet, I continue to encounter the perception that a kind, steady, and deliberate approach to working with subordinates is not warrior-like. I contend that being respectful and caring of those in our charge is not mutually exclusive with being a warrior. Sure, there may be times when a little more aggressive approach may be appropriate, but this is not the rule. We should remind ourselves of General Schofield's words, "It is possible to impart instruction and to give commands in such manner and such a tone of voice as to inspire in the soldier an intense desire to obey...."

The leadership demonstrated by our officers and noncommissioned officers is what directly influences our subordinates. We should strive to treat our people with dignity and respect. We must never be demeaning or overly harsh with the folks entrusted to our care. We have an

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enormous responsibility to treat our soldiers properly and to maintain a trained and ready force that is capable of fighting and winning our Nation's wars. With the proper leadership we will always be able to accomplish our mission and take care of our soldiers.

Basic Rules for Use of the Government Commercial Credit Card

By MAJ Karen Ward

There is a perception on Fort Polk that some of the rules for the use of the government commercial (VISA) credit card have changed. The Directorate of Contracting (DOC) credit card SOP, dated January 2001, contains the basic rules for the use of the credit card. Here is a brief overview of the most important points.

There still remains a "required priority of sources," as required by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 8.7, titled, "Acquisition from Nonprofit Agencies Employing People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled." The Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, commonly referred to as "the JWOD Act," requires federal procurement agents (i.e., credit card holders), to purchase supplies from certain non-profit agencies who employ the blind or severely handicapped. The National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH) manufacture and distribute a variety of SKILCRAFT® and other "JWOD" products including office and general supplies/cleaners (ever wonder why the Army has so many SKILCRAFT pens?)

There is no option to bypass this requirement without a "statement of non-availability," although many agencies and units do purchase office supplies from Walmart and other Leesville/surrounding area office supply stores. By regulation, cardholders will purchase supplies in the following priorities (1) Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (trademark name "UNICOR"), (2) JWOD participating nonprofit agencies, and (3) commercial sources. Although GSA is no longer a "mandatory source," the GSA catalog is where most cardholders can look to find JWOD products. When you hear the statement, "GSA is no longer a mandatory source," do not think that this relaxes the JWOD source priority requirement!

The one circumstance when cardholders can purchase supplies from a commercial source is when "...The JWOD participating nonprofit agencies cannot provide the supplies or services within the time required, and commercial sources can provide them significantly

sooner in the quantities required...." Under these circumstances, "...The central nonprofit agency granting the exception shall specify the quantity and delivery or performance period covered by the exception." This exception should be in writing and attached to the documentation that the cardholder maintains on file for the current fiscal year and the completed prior fiscal year. Failure to plan the unit's office supply needs is no excuse to run to the most convenient commercial source to purchase office supplies when needed. Exceptions to the JWOD priority of source should be very few purchases, if any.

Another common problem among cardholders is a failure to receive a written request that requires the purchase of the supplies or services. This request can take any form, but serves as documentation for the cardholder that the supplies are necessary and meet some need within the organization. It is not a good plan for the cardholder to also be the individual who requests and receives the supplies. There also must be prior written approval to purchase "regulated items." Examples of regulated items include non-expendable property, printing services, newspaper advertisements, telephone equipment, computers and peripheral items, and construction or repair of real property.

Cardholders are bound to ensure that they shop with "price reasonableness" in mind. It is always a good idea to shop more than one source for a "best price" and maintain this documentation on file.

The credit card problem is not just a Fort Polk problem; it is a problem throughout all DoD agencies. In a recent memorandum, dated 13 August 2001, the Director, Defense Procurement, published guidance emphasizing the need for "proper oversight of DoD's purchase card program at all levels...." The most important points are, "[1] Billing officials/approving official must review each cardholder's billing statement every month to verify the card holder was authorized to buy the items on it, [2] the items have been received by the Government, [3] all pilferable items and other qualifying items have been properly recorded on government property records, [and 4] The same person should not buy and receive the item."

Activity Commanders and Directors, as part of their inherent "command responsibility," must develop and implement internal instructions for the installation's credit card program within their activity. Some very important requirements include: 1) a contingency plan to ensure the payment process is uninterrupted, 2) utilization of the Fort Polk regulation 20-2 checklist annually to ensure compliance with the Command Supply Discipline Program, and 3) establishment of specific internal control procedures designed to supervise the purchase request format, delivery procedures, and the process to add accountable items to the property books.

What Makes an APFT a Record Test?

By SFC Martha E. McClelland

What makes an APFT a record test? If a soldier fails an APFT while enrolled in an institutional training course, is it considered a record test, and does the commandant of the course have the authority to flag the soldier?

If you were to ask these questions to several soldiers, the answers received would likely vary. In July 2001, Department of the Army released a message that clarifies and reinforces some of the Army training policies and dissipates all doubts as to what a record APFT is, and who has and does not have, the authority to flag a soldier for failing a record APFT.

Message DAMO-TR, paragraph A (4), states, "Record APFT is defined as an APFT administered by the commander and specified beforehand that the results are for record, this is to include a make-up or re-test APFT. A make-up or retest APFT does not prevent a soldier from taking the next record APFT scheduled by the commander."

The message also clarifies that an APFT taken in preparation for institutional training and taken during attendance at said training is not a record APFT and only the soldiers' commander has the authority to impose a flag. Paragraph (4) d. of the aforementioned message also states, "An APFT given individually to a soldier in preparation for institutional training is a practice AFT. An APFT given during institutional training is part of course application and/or requirement. Flagging actions only apply to record APFT scheduled by the commander."

For more information regarding this article or if you would like to have a copy of the referenced message, please contact SFC McClelland at 531-7878/2100.

The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the Department. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or of the command, but wherever possible, are supported by referenced Army regulations, policies, or procedures.

What is the Definition of "Bonding Time?"

By SFC Matt Weegens

There has been a lot of discussion from leaders regarding how much bonding time a mother and child will receive after the birth of the child. According to Army Regulation 220-1, Unit Status Reporting, the female soldier is not available for deployment for up to 4 months after the birth of the child. Many people consider any field time or a rotation to the National Training Center (NTC) a "deployment." Per AR 220-1, a deployment is defined as "The relocation of forces, personnel or equipment from homestation to meet operational deployment requirements out of the area of operations."

According to the IG, PERSCOM, the intent of the regulation is to ensure that the commander does not send the mother into a theater of operation. It is still a commander's discretion to send the mother to NTC or on a field problem. The 42 days of convalescent time is included in the 4 months of bonding time. During the convalescent period, the mother is allowed to be at home full time with the child to recover from having the child. The other 78 days of the bonding time period are to ensure that the mother and child are not separated during the first 4 months by a deployment. This also applies to a single parent or married military couple who adopts a child. Either member of a dual military couple remains "unavailable" for the first four months after the child is placed in the home.

What is the Financial Obligation of a Male Soldier Alleged to be the Father of a Child Without a Court Order?

By SFC Richard Gregg

Army Regulation 608-99, Family Support, Child Custody, and Paternity, paragraph 2-2a, states, "...In the absence of a court order identifying a soldier as the father of a child and directing financial support, a male soldier **has no legal obligation** under this regulation to provide financial support to a child alleged to have been born to him and the child's mother out of wedlock. A soldier who admits paternity and agrees to provide financial support may, under certain circumstances, obtain "BAQ-WITH." Even if a soldier admits paternity and agrees to provide financial support, a soldier may terminate financial support at any time for any reason in the absence of a court order. However in this instance a soldier who is receiving BAQ-WITH based solely on the financial support provided on behalf of the acknowledged child will immediately notify the appropriate finance and accounting office (FAO) so that excess BAQ payments to which the soldier is not entitled

Can a Soldier Attend PLDC with a Profile ?

By SFC Joseph A. Pipes

Whether a soldier can attend PLDC depends upon the type of limiting profile that the soldier has. According to SGM Joel F. Cochrane, Commandant of the JRTC & Fort Polk NCO Academy, the current policy in effect is based upon a Department of the Army message, dated 25 July 2001, subject, Clarification and Reinforcement of Army Training Policies.

Temporary Profiles. Soldiers with temporary profiles that prevent full participation in a course will be removed from school attendance consideration by their immediate commander until the temporary profile is removed."

Soldiers with a permanent designator of "3" or "4" in their physical profile. Soldiers in this category must include a copy of DA Form 3349 and the results of their military Medical Review Board (MMRB) as part of the course application. Soldiers who have been before a MMRB, awarded medical limitations, and allowed to retain their occupational classification, will be eligible to attend appropriate courses and train within the limits of their profile provided they can otherwise meet course prerequisites and graduation requirements.

Pregnancy and institutional training courses. An attending physician must provide a determination of whether course graduation requirements would be harmful to a pregnant soldier. Pregnant soldiers must provide a copy of the attending physician's determination, as part of course of application. If it is determined that the soldier is pregnant during the course, the attending physician must make a determination if continuing the course would be harmful to the pregnant soldiers. A copy of the physician's determination will be provided to school commandant/commander to decide whether the soldier will continue or be dismissed from the course. Dismissal will be considered a medical dismissal, the soldier will be eligible to return to the course when the condition that led to the medical dismissal no longer exists.

What Should Commanders Know About Nonsupport?

By SFC James P. Jacks

Soldiers with dependents receive basic allowance for housing (BAH) based on geographic duty location, pay grade, and dependency status. The intent of BAH is to

provide uniformed service members (and their families) accurate and equitable housing compensation based on housing costs in local civilian housing markets, and is payable when government quarters are not provided.

In accordance with AR 608-99, when the service member is separated from the dependants (on good or bad terms), the service member must pay the dependents the BAH table II rate, when the dependants are not living in government housing. Paragraph 1-7a, states, "The financial support requirements of this regulation, in the absence of a court order or written support agreement, are stated in amounts equal to either of the following based on the soldier's pay grade... (1) BA[H]-WITH...(2) BA[H]-DIFF...." The Army's BAH table II rate is a fixed rate and (at the present time) is *greater* than the amount that the soldier receives being stationed here at Fort Polk (the BAH with dependents rate). For example, if you are a SGT, you currently receive \$523.00 (the BAH with dependent rate at Fort Polk, Louisiana). However, if you owe your dependents the BAH table II rate, you must pay \$557.40. The result is, you must pay the difference between BAH with dependent rate and the BAH table II rate, which is ultimately "out-of-pocket."

The BAH table II rates are available online at <http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/2002bah2.html>

Keep in mind also, if a spouse is living in government housing, the spouse is entitled to the "BAH Type II Differential" rate. This amount is completely out-of-pocket, and if you are a SGT, this equals \$177.60 per month. Commanders should understand AR 608-99 and always consult with the local Staff Judge Advocate when a nonsupport situation arises. Every nonsupport case is different, and the local IG will assist with all situations.

Who Are the New Units at Fort Polk?

By SFC James P. Jacks

There are several new "activated" units at Fort Polk since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack. New units have arrived to replace tenant military police and chemical units deployed to other locations around the world. Some of the units displaced are from the 519th Military Police Battalion. The 4013th Garrison Support Unit (GSU) and the 239th Military Police Company are filling the capacity of these displaced units. Both companies are reserve component units that activated and serve in "title X" status. Title X means that the soldiers.... In this situation, Fort Polk is housing both single and unaccompanied soldiers in barracks and bachelor quarters arrangements throughout the installation and in the Leesville area. Fort Polk agencies support these soldiers just like any other single or unaccompanied soldier residing and/or working on the installation.