



Center for the Army Profession and Ethic

Written Case Study

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Case Study 1: Nicholas Goodman¹

Part I

Cutting Corners

During his first annual training with the Army National Guard Engineers, 2LT Nicholas Goodman, a new platoon leader of the Company's horizontal construction team, was conducting pre-deployment certification training. Part of the certification training was to erect a transport bridge across a ravine containing an intermittent stream. As he prepared for the mission, he noticed some of the parts needed to construct the bridge had been damaged during shipment. Unsure of what to do, 2LT Goodman went to speak with the Company Commander, CPT Sharp, about the equipment. He explained to CPT Sharp about the damaged parts, and identified some potential concerns if the parts were not replaced, but the Captain was not concerned. CPT Sharp told him that what he has on hand will have to do for the training mission. The new parts would not be in until right before deployment and waiting would delay their upcoming mission. 2LT Goodman left the Captain's office feeling uneasy, but his commander told him to complete his mission.

The following week, 2LT Goodman led his platoon to the crossing site. They began assembling the bridge across the ravine. 2LT Goodman was solidifying his team, not only building the bridge, but also building cohesion and trust with his platoon. The bridge was coming along without any problems until the crew realized some important parts were damaged and unusable. 2LT Goodman urged his platoon to proceed, even amid the skeptical looks, and improvised as needed.

At midday, 2LT Goodman called a break for lunch and the team gathered together to eat. When the break was nearing its end, the platoon heard a rumbling crash and a splashing noise coming from the crossing site as the bridge collapsed and fell into the stream of water in the ravine. Looking at the place where the nearly completed bridge once stood, 2LT Goodman realized that he had failed his first training mission. Luckily, no one was injured. He gathered his platoon and questioned them to be certain that all the proper procedures were followed, but he knew it was because of the damaged parts that CPT Sharp insisted they use. Looking at the collapsed bridge, he recognized at least some of the costs of the decisions, so far.

Unsettled by the situation, 2LT Goodman went to 1SG Ackerman for advice on how to proceed. He explained to 1SG Ackerman what had transpired between him and CPT Sharp, and the results of the training mission. 1SG Ackerman assured him that the CPT

¹ All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.



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meant no harm, and he would have his back. He was under a significant amount of pressure to get the company ready to deploy on time, and would not let anything get in the way. This response did not sit well with 2LT Goodman, but he trusted 1SG Ackerman. However, when leaving 1SG Ackerman's office, 2LT Goodman swore to himself that he would never again let anyone or anything keep him from doing what is right.



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which 2LT Goodman responded to the situation? What does he do well? What might he have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from 2LT Goodman's experience?



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Part II

The Extra Mile¹

“I cannot in good conscience leave someone to their doom.”

CPT Nicholas Goodman’s company had been assigned a mission to establish the first company-level patrol base in the city of Aleppo to assist and advise the Syrian Democratic Forces in defeating the Islamic State extremists that had taken over the city. As the Syrian force began to push the extremist group back toward Aleppo, CPT Goodman and his company seized a small cluster of abandoned buildings to establish a patrol base. In three days, his Soldiers set up a defense for the patrol base. On the fourth day, the extremist group attacked, but his Soldiers were ready. After a day of fighting the extremists, machinegun and mortar fire continued, rain poured down in sheets, the motor pool area was completely flooded, the Soldiers were covered in mud, the generator broke down, and the radios were not working. Luckily, the fighting had died down once the rain started.

On day six, just as CPT Goodman and his exhausted Soldiers were to begin their patrols, a frantic man and his wife approached the entry control point. In his arms was his 3-year old daughter struggling to breathe. One of the young Soldiers standing guard called for the company medic and an interpreter. The medic evaluated the little girl and told CPT Goodman her windpipe was swollen and it appeared she was having an allergic reaction. He told the interpreter that she has 30 minutes to make it the hospital or she would die. CPT Goodman ordered the family to go to the nearest hospital. The man shook his head and explained, through the company interpreter, that the hospital was controlled by the extremists. If they went there, they would all die. The man asked if they could take them the 40 miles to the safest hospital. He pleaded for CPT Goodman to save his little girl.

CPT Goodman weighed his options quickly....

He called over 1LT Wright and told him of the situation and asked if his platoon was ready for this mission to escort the family to the safest hospital. 1LT Wright confirmed that they were ready and able.

“All right, let’s go!” he ordered. “We are going to save this little girl.”

Although the mission was successful, CPT Goodman received a call from an angry MAJ Quade several days later, questioning him about his decision. MAJ Quade accused CPT Goodman of endangering the mission and putting Soldiers’ lives in danger unnecessarily. The little girl was not the Army’s problem. CPT Goodman waited until MAJ Quade had finished and explained, “With all due respect sir, I understand the risk involved by helping that family, but I could not allow that little girl to die when I was able to help.”



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which CPT Goodman responded to the situation? What does he do well? What might he have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from CPT Goodman's experience?



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Part III

Checking It Twice¹

Mr. Nicholas Goodman was about ready to ETS upon returning home from a deployment in the Regular Army and wanted to continue his service as a Soldier with the National Guard. In addition, he landed a great new position as a Department of the Army Civilian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as a Project Manager. In this new position, he could make further use of his architectural engineering background by overseeing the inspection and maintenance of bridges, levees, and dikes in the district. Though he oversees significant USACE operations, he is not in command of the Regular Army portions of the maintenance projects.

While reviewing inspection reports, the Assistant Project Manager, Ms. Shay Rahm noticed that there were discrepancies in one Soldier's reports. She immediately took the report to Mr. Goodman. He examined the documents closely. Noting the trip report times and the time needed on-site to complete inspections, he could not see how the Soldier traveled to and from the sites he visited and had time to actually complete the inspections. Although the Soldier's inspections were complete on paper, Mr. Goodman had been in his field a long time, and he knew the Soldier would not have been able to travel and complete his inspections in the eight-hour period he consistently recorded on the reports. Either he was not inspecting the sites thoroughly, or he lied about how long it took him to do each inspection.

"These reports are falsified, Shay. We need to question the Soldier and bring this to the attention of the department chief," Mr. Goodman said.

"That would be Major Slack," Ms. Rahm replied.

Since Mr. Goodman could not take action against the Soldier directly, he brought the matter to MAJ Slack, who was in charge of the Regular Army's inspection department.

"That's interesting," MAJ Slack responded when Mr. Goodman told him about the reports. "I'll make sure someone investigates this right away."

A month passed, and Mr. Goodman did not hear about any investigation of the Soldier's reports. He asked Ms. Rahm if she had heard from MAJ Slack. When she told him that she had not, he went again to MAJ Slack and inquired if anything had been done? Mr. Goodman told him that if nothing was done, he would take the matter to someone higher in the Army's Chain of Command. He was adamant that, judging from past experience, the inspections should be done properly and safely so that no harm would befall the structures or the people who utilized them.



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This time, MAJ Slack listened, impressed with Mr. Goodman's determination and dedication to make sure things were all in order. An investigation was done, and it turned out that the Soldier was falsifying his reports and not performing the number of hours of inspection that he claimed. Soon after, the Soldier was re-assigned to a different project, and MAJ Slack approached Mr. Goodman. "I just want to let you know that I admire your dedication to the Corps and to your job," the MAJ said. "It took a lot of guts to get that investigation into motion, even if it means more work for you in the future."

Mr. Goodman smiled. "If there's one thing I've learned in my Army career, it's the importance of doing what I believe is right, MAJ, no matter what."



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which Mr. Goodman responded to the situation? What does he do well? What might he have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from Mr. Goodman's experience?



Case Study II: Laura McCoy

Part I

Covering for a Friend¹

PVT Laura McCoy was about to graduate from Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at the Transportation School where she learned more of the skills she would need to prepare for her Army career. Part of the course of instruction involved the end-of-cycle Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), and both PVT McCoy and her friend and fellow recruit, PVT Jane Harrington, were anxious about completing the test.

One day, PVT McCoy and PVT Harrington were talking about the upcoming APFT. PVT Harrington confided in PVT McCoy that she had injured her shoulder and lied about it on her initial medical form.

“Jane, the APFT is in a couple of days!”

“Can you do me a favor? Please don’t tell anyone,” PVT Harrington said. “I think I can make it through the push-ups, but if anyone asks you about my shoulder, just say you don’t know anything. Everything worked out in basic. I just don’t want to get snagged here. Okay?”

The two had been acquainted in high school, and got to know each other better during basic training. PVT McCoy knew PVT Harrington was a hard worker and a good Soldier, but she was uneasy about this. But given their friendship she reluctantly agreed. She kept PVT Harrington’s secret, even though her instincts told her not to cover for PVT Harrington.

When the day of the test arrived, PVT Harrington took PVT McCoy aside and motioned to the two instructors that the recruits had lined up in front of. “I heard that the scorer on the right scores a little easier than the other one,” PVT Harrington whispered. “I think I can get by on the push-ups if he’s overseeing my test. Let’s get in that line.”

Sure enough, PVT McCoy noticed that more recruits tried to line up in front of the scorer on the right. She liked the idea of having a scorer who would grade easily, but something about the idea of not being graded to standard did not seem right. “Shouldn’t we try to do them correctly anyway?” she asked.

“As long as we pass, it doesn’t matter,” PVT Harrington responded.

PVT McCoy allowed her friend to persuade her in joining the easy scorer’s line, and both recruits passed the test without incident. PVT McCoy felt guilty, but believed that since she had passed the test, she would soon move on to her first assignment with no harm done.



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PVT McCoy and PVT Harrington ended up being assigned to the same post and platoon for their first assignment. Soon after their arrival, they were informed that they had 30 days until they must complete a new PT test. Their platoon was getting ready for a scheduled deployment in four months and wanted to assess the physical readiness of each Soldier.

During the PT test, PVT McCoy was in front of PVT Harrington. PVT McCoy failed the push-up event by one push-up. The grader was stricter than the AIT grader. While doing her push-ups, PVT Harrington cried out and fell over, clutching her right shoulder. PVT McCoy raced up to her friend. PVT Harrington was lying on the ground, and could not raise her arm. PVT McCoy knew PVT Harrington was hurt badly, and called for the Platoon Sergeant. It was determined that PVT Harrington had severely damaged her shoulder even further, and would soon need surgery.

The next week at lunch in the dining facility, PVT McCoy overheard her Platoon Sergeant and the Squad Leaders discussing the upcoming deployment. The Squad Leaders were complaining about the newest Soldiers who had arrived from AIT. They were upset that PVT McCoy and PVT Harrington couldn't meet APFT standards. The Squad Leaders were angry because the other members of the squad would have to do more to make up for PVT McCoy's physical limitations and the absence of PVT Harrington due to surgery. The Platoon Sergeant agreed with them, but also stated that it was too late to get replacements. PVT McCoy felt ashamed that she was potentially causing her squad members more work.

Over the next three months, PVT McCoy was assigned to remedial physical training. She worked really hard and passed her APFT one month before deployment. PVT Harrington had shoulder surgery, but it did not go well. During the surgery, the doctors discovered pre-existing damage that, when combined with the new injury, disqualified PVT Harrington from continued service in the Army. She had to be chaptered from the Army and was unable to deploy, leaving her squad one Soldier short for the deployment.

Afterwards, PVT McCoy called her father, a retired Army Major, and told him what had happened. "It seems you have learned your lesson," her father said. "Lying for your friend caused her to hurt herself more and lose her career. You've learned that your actions have consequences, for you and for others. What seems like a small thing at the time can have more serious consequences in the future. Now your unit is deploying understrength."

PVT McCoy knew that her father was right. She resolved that she would always work toward taking the right action in the future, even if it seemed more difficult.



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which PVT McCoy responded to the situation? What does she do well? What might she have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from PVT McCoy's experience?



Part II

We're All in This Together¹

SSG Laura McCoy, squad leader in a Reserve unit, had been deployed to serve overseas. Her team was attached to a Regular Army unit. SSG McCoy's squad was part of a transportation detachment being shipped out to provide additional capabilities for a Regular Army infantry unit.

While overseeing a vehicle inspection, SSG McCoy came up behind a group of infantry Soldiers who were not in her Squad. She heard them making rude remarks about women in combat, particularly their new Platoon Leader, 1LT Matilda Appleby.

"She's going to be useless," one of the Soldiers said. "She doesn't know what she's doing. Women should never have been allowed to serve in combat roles anyway. Why should we have to listen to her?" The men all seemed to agree that women had no place in combat roles, and that they should instead stick to more "feminine" jobs like medicine or administrative work if they wanted to be part of the Army.

SSG McCoy was very disturbed overhearing these comments. But because she was in a Reserve transportation unit, she was not too familiar with the infantry chain of command. Nevertheless, she knew she could not sit around and do nothing after the comments she had overheard. She believed unit cohesion should come from building up each other and the Army. What she heard was an insult to women and to the Profession as a whole.

SSG McCoy knew 1SG Mac Moody was in charge of the company. In a short period of time, she had developed a lot of respect for 1SG Moody and knew he took the Army Ethic very seriously when dealing with the Soldiers he led. Unsure of where else to go, she brought the matter to his attention. 1SG Mac Moody was pleased SSG McCoy had brought this matter to his attention. He agreed that the men should never have made those remarks about female Soldiers.

Later, 1SG Moody called a company meeting to address the issues. He reminded the company that women and men were both essential to the success of the Army as a whole, regardless of their combat roles. He emphasized that working together and building trust would provide far better results than creating divisions within the unit.

A few days later, 1LT Appleby approached SSG McCoy. "I heard what you did, and wanted to thank you," the 1LT said. "I know that I'm new to this, but I'm trying to gain the trust of my Soldiers. I can't imagine it was easy for you to go to 1SG Moody about what you overheard. I've worked really hard to be commissioned as an infantry officer, but their comments were very hurtful to me, and I'm grateful you spoke up about them."

Three weeks later, SSG McCoy and her squad were picking up 1LT Appleby's platoon after a particularly tough multi-national training event. SSG McCoy watched as the



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platoon loaded the trucks and couldn't help noticing that they now operated as a cohesive team in loading the equipment and taking accountability. 1LT Appleby seemed to be fully accepted by the Soldiers and there was mutual respect between the NCOs and their platoon leader. As she checked on her drivers and gave them the order to move out, SSG McCoy felt good about having talked to 1SG Moody and the potential future of her profession.



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which SSG McCoy responded to the situation? What does she do well? What might she have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from SSG McCoy's experience?



Part III

Can't Just Check the Box¹

1SG Laura McCoy was participating in the validation exercise briefing to the BN Commander. All training was reported as being completed and to standard. Yet the 1SG felt that something was amiss. She had reviewed the training logs prior to the report being forwarded and recalled that the report being submitted showed the unit as amber. Now it was green. She noticed that 3rd Platoon completed their training on a day when all but two of the tankers were not fully operational. She knew that the motor pool could not dispatch all of the trucks because several of them needed maintenance. Concerned by this discovery, she went to find SFC Aaron Anderson to ask about the training logs his platoon submitted.

When she found SFC Anderson, she asked if his platoon had completed the tasks necessary for the training as the logs indicated. Each Soldier was required to drive the truck forward, maneuver it in reverse, attach the trailer that carried the fuel tankers, and complete a 5-mile test drive. SFC Anderson told her that his platoon was trained and ready. She looked at SFC Anderson skeptically, said okay, and left.

As 1SG McCoy was walking back to her desk, she could not shake the feeling that something was wrong with SFC Anderson's logs. How was he able to get all of the necessary training completed so quickly without all of the necessary equipment? As she passed the motor pool, 1SG McCoy noticed Ms. Hooks, the dispatcher, in the maintenance bay, and decided to speak with her about the status of the trucks on the day of training. She had to be certain that she had the correct information. Ms. Hooks informed 1SG McCoy that only two of the tankers were operational that day. Knowing it was impossible for the entire platoon to have enough time to complete their training, she took her concerns to CPT Taylor, the Company Commander.

1SG McCoy expressed to CPT Taylor her suspicions that 3rd Platoon had not accomplished all of the training tasks reported on the training summary. She stated that on the day of the training exercise, only two of the tanker trucks were available, and she could not see how the entire platoon had finished the training as the logs reported.

"When I asked the platoon sergeant if his platoon had completed the tasks, he said they were trained and ready, sir," 1SG McCoy explained to CPT Taylor.

CPT Taylor told her to go back and check with SFC Anderson and get their explanation of the events, then report back to him, stating that everyone needed to be trained properly. Again, she questioned SFC Anderson about his platoon's training. "Did all of the Soldiers have a chance to complete the training exercise to standard?" she asked.

"Well, as you know, 1SG, we only had two tankers available for us to use for training and very little time. I had to make the call for them to do only selected, important tasks," SFC Anderson replied.



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“They have to do all of the tasks, Sergeant, to be certified,” she said.

“They *can* do all of the tasks,” he replied angrily. “What were 1LT Fredrick and I supposed to do? We didn’t have the equipment we needed and the training had to get done. I got it done.”

“No, you didn’t. You just checked the box.”

Later, 1SG McCoy went to CPT Taylor to inform him of her encounter with SFC Anderson. She explained to CPT Taylor that the platoon needed to be retrained before deployment. CPT Taylor agreed with 1SG McCoy. He was concerned both with the false report to BN and the readiness of his Soldiers. Should they correct the report to BN even though it might result in a butt-chewing? Should they just try to retrain under the radar and not let BN know? He asked the 1SG for a recommendation.

“Sir, I think we need to correct the report with BN. If we don’t, BN will assume we met the standard and fill our training schedule with other tasks. We may lose some face in the short term, but the BN CDR and CSM will respect that we want to do the mission in the right way. Then we should have a face-to-face conversation with 1LT Fredrick and SFC Anderson, making sure they understand the importance of accurate reporting and training to standard. We can work with them on a plan to use other trucks in the company to complete the training to standard while their trucks are in maintenance.”

CPT Taylor said, “I agree, however, we need to have the conversation about accurate reporting and training to standard with all the platoon leaders and sergeants. We may have unintentionally pressured our subordinates to take shortcuts in order to make the reports and the mission look good. We could have a wider problem on our hands if we don’t address this with everyone. I’ll call BN; you set up the meeting. I’m glad you ran this to ground, 1SG. The mission comes first, but we’ve got to accomplish it in the right way.”



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which 1SG McCoy responded to the situation? What does she do well? What might she have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from 1SG McCoy's experience?



Case Study III: Hitch Mercer¹

Part I

Helping the Locals

Sergeant Hitch Mercer, team leader of a Human Intelligence (HUMINT) team, and Specialist Kristine Fair were sent on a recon mission. They were to gather information on an extremist group hidden in a small community in Libya and forge alliances with local militias. Attached to an infantry platoon, SGT Mercer and SPC Fair received information that extremists had infiltrated the area, confiscating homes of residents, diverting relief supplies from those in need, and imposing strict rules on the remaining residents.

On their way into the area, the platoon encountered the local militia organized to resist the extremists. The militia leader told SGT Mercer that several of the extremist leaders were hiding in a neighborhood where a small clan of families were located. The extremists had also captured three militia members. He asked SGT Mercer for help to get them back.

SGT Mercer turned to SPC Fair to discuss the information they received and to determine a course of action. He knew their primary mission was to observe and report, but they were also there to establish a relationship with the militia. When SGT Mercer and SPC Fair entered the area to survey the surroundings, they witnessed first-hand the range and full extent of abuse the citizens received at the hands of the extremist group. He could only imagine what the prisoners were suffering.

“Sergeant,” SPC Fair expressed to him. “We can’t leave these people behind. We have to help them.”

“I agree, SPC Fair.” SGT Mercer replied.

The rest of the platoon approached the team. Acting platoon sergeant, SSG Dave Thomas asked SGT Mercer what was going on, and SGT Mercer informed him of the situation.

“The local militia needs our help to rescue their people,” SGT Mercer explained to SSG Thomas. “We need to help them.”

“If we do, we risk discovery by the extremists and potential casualties. We don’t have sufficient intelligence for a rescue operation. We may be walking into a trap,” SSG Thomas replied.

Knowing the possible risks to both teams, SGT Mercer presented some potential benefits. “If we turn our backs on the local militia, how are we going to create a much-needed alliance? If the rescue succeeds, the recovered militia could supply both the



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necessary intelligence and the community support we need to push the extremists out of the area.”

“It’s too risky!” SSG Thomas said. “Let’s gather as much intelligence as we can from the people. When we get back to the base, we can let the Commander know what we’ve got and see if there is enough to plan a proper rescue mission.”

SGT Mercer reluctantly accepted SSG Thomas’ direction and continued the mission. Later on SGT Mercer explained to SPC Fair the reasons for SSG Thomas’ decision and discussed with her that right decisions and actions have to be ethical, effective, and efficient.



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which SGT Mercer and SSG Thomas responded to the situation? What does each of them do well? What might each of them have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from their experience?



Part II

The Reluctant Soldier

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Hitch Mercer was with a human intelligence section tasked for deployment. During a pre-deployment orientation, CW2 Mercer was instructed to prepare his team for tactical training and be set to deploy within 60 days. There had been a resurgence of extremist activity in Libya, and based on CW2 Mercer's experience in that area and his relationship with the local militia, his team had been tasked with gathering information on the extremist leader.

CW2 Mercer implemented a rigorous training schedule to get his Soldiers ready for deployment. Several weeks into training, he noticed that one of his Soldiers was slowing down. SPC Rose Tyler, normally an excellent Soldier, was not executing her duties to standard. Her performance was deteriorating as the deployment date drew closer and closer, and her emotional state seemed to change as well. She was withdrawn, disinterested, and at times even angry.

CW2 Mercer began to grow concerned about the changes in her behavior and attitude. He knew she had never deployed and only recently returned to duty after her scheduled maternity leave. SPC Tyler had a 6-month-old daughter at home, her first child. He was afraid she may be experiencing post-partum depression and need more time before deploying. Aware that the situation was delicate, CW2 Mercer talked to SPC Beth Bridger to find out if she could provide more insight into what might be going on.

"SPC Bridger, do you have a moment? I'm worried about SPC Tyler," he said. "Is she okay?"

"Well, Chief, I don't know if this is my place to say, but I think she's afraid to deploy and leave her little girl for so long, especially because she's so young," SPC Bridger explained. "I will volunteer to go in her place if it's allowed. I deployed with you last time, so I know what I'm getting into."

"Thank you, SPC Tyler. I'll keep that in mind."

CW2 Mercer took his concerns to the company 1SG. The 1SG insisted that SPC Tyler deploy, stating that they needed her for this mission, and that it was her turn to go. CW2 Mercer explained that SPC Bridger had volunteered to deploy with him in SPC Tyler's place, but the 1SG still insisted that it was SPC Tyler's turn. The 1SG urged CW2 Mercer to recommend SPC Tyler for deployment.

At last, CW2 Mercer decided to speak with SPC Tyler directly. SPC Tyler admitted that what her friend had said was true: not only was she scared to deploy, having heard about the last deployment, but she was afraid of leaving her newborn daughter behind.



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“I’m here for you to come to me with problems like this,” CW2 Mercer said. “Since I’m making the deployment recommendation, it’s important for me to know about these things. Let’s meet with SPC Bridger and the Commander and see if we can’t get something worked out.”

CW2 Mercer organized a meeting between himself, the Commander, and his two Soldiers to sort out the deployment issue. The Commander agreed with the 1SG that SPC Tyler should go on deployment, but a compromise was agreed upon: SPC Bridger would split the deployment with SPC Tyler, so that each Soldier would only be deployed for three months. SPC Tyler would seek counseling with behavioral health to overcome her anxiety with deployment and separation from her child. In addition, CW2 Mercer would assist SPC Tyler in completing her overdue Family Care Plan, so that her daughter would be looked after while she was deployed.

CW2 Mercer felt good about the compromise. He was glad he had waited to recommend SPC Tyler for deployment until he gathered all of the facts. As an Army leader, he knew that it was important and necessary to have a vested interest in his Soldiers and their lives.



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Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which CW2 Mercer responded to the situation? What does he do well? What might he have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from CW2 Mercer's experience?



Part III

Steward for the WO Corps

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hitch Mercer arrived at his new assignment as an instructor of tactical intelligence at Fort Huachuca for junior and mid-level warrant officers. He and his warrant officer (WO) colleagues were tasked to create curriculum and lesson plans to share with the course director for a presentation to the director of training (DOT). Before the presentation, CW4 Mercer was approached directly by the school's DOT, a Colonel. The DOT told CW4 Mercer that he was the senior WO among the instructors, and as such the DOT expected CW4 Mercer to teach, coach, and mentor the more junior WOs.

"Yes, sir. You can count on me," CW4 Mercer replied.

CW4 Mercer noticed the morale of the other instructors seemed to be low, and they did not interact with one another. He was puzzled by this observation. However, by the end of his first meeting, he understood why. During the scheduled presentation, the course director was the only briefer to the DOT. As he listened to the course director present their work, CW4 Mercer realized he had changed most of his and the other instructors' work, apparently because he did not understand the technical differences between the intelligence disciplines. The DOT was not pleased by the course director's presentation and looked at the instructors in the room.

"This is all wrong," the DOT said and reprimanded all the instructors for poor work. The course director did not say a word and allowed the DOT to blame the instructors, even though he had changed their work.

CW4 Mercer also noticed that the warrant officers were not being utilized properly. Instead of serving as tactical and technical experts in their various intelligence disciplines (e.g. signals intelligence, human intelligence, etc.), the WOs were expected to teach in all disciplines with varying results. They were also given numerous additional tasks, some of which were necessary but others seemed to be meaningless bureaucracy not contributing to any tangible result. CW4 Mercer circulated among the other instructors and saw how their morale was affecting their students as well.

CW4 Mercer began having weekly lunches with his fellow WOs to discuss their challenges but also professionalism of the WO Corps in general. After several weeks of listening to the others, CW4 Mercer decided to go on a long bike ride to clear his head. He thought: *Something has to be done. The course manager is changing our work and making us look foolish in the process. Not to mention all of the extra tasks that get piled on. No wonder everyone's morale is low. I need to fix this, but as the new guy what can I do?* Pedaling home, he started to formulate a plan.



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CW4 Mercer took the issues directly to the course manager. “Mr. Steele, I’ve noticed some issues that need to be addressed.” CW4 Mercer explained the effect Mr. Steele’s actions were having on the instructors.

“That is how I run things,” Mr. Steele spat back. “If you don’t like it, get a new assignment.”

Taken aback by Mr. Steele’s response, CW4 Mercer turned on his heel to walk out. “Let’s see what the DOT has to say,” he replied as he walked out.

Later, CW4 Mercer requested a meeting with the DOT and Mr. Steele, hoping to resolve the issues and thereby building trust and cohesion among the instructors. When he entered the director’s office, Mr. Steele was fuming, but CW4 Mercer stood his ground, explaining to the DOT his concerns and observations.

“Sir, morale is low; it’s affecting the students. The instructors are overloaded with additional duties, and they can’t devote the time they need to teach effectively. We spend a tremendous amount of time creating our lesson plans, just to have them changed. We could also easily rebalance the workload to ensure each WO is teaching within their area of expertise, increasing their ability to teach, coach, and mentor while also improving the quality of instruction for our students.”

The director turned to Mr. Steele. “This is news to me. Mr. Steele, do you have anything to add?”

“I don’t know what he’s talking about,” Mr. Steele barked. “I haven’t heard any complaints.”

“I think we need to investigate this matter further,” the director said. “I want to see the original curriculum and lesson plans the instructors created and discuss several alternatives for how we can organize to better accomplish the mission. Chief, please work with your fellow WOs to pull this together. I’d like all of us to meet and share ideas as a group in two weeks. Mr. Steele and I are open to any ideas that improve learning for our students. Right, Mr. Steele?”

“Yes, sir,” Mr. Steele meekly replied.

CW4 Mercer walked out of the room with a heavier workload, but he also felt pride in being a steward of the Warrant Officer Corps as well as the Army Profession.



Center for the Army Profession and Ethic

Written Case Study

Questions for Discussion

Topic 1-5

1. What do you think of the way in which CW4 Mercer responded to the situation? What does he do well? What might he have done differently? What would you have done?
2. What can you learn about stewardship of the Army Profession from CW4 Mercer's experience?