

Ethics and the Army Total Force

by

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Abstract

Senior leaders from the three Army components – Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve – continue to engage in ethical misconduct despite years of experience, knowledge, education, and training. Though ethical misconduct occurs at all levels of leadership amid uniformed and civilian members of the Army Total Force, this paper focuses on this unique group of uniformed senior leaders and the prevalent ethical violations, both perceived and substantiated, between the three Army components. The intent is to look at this unacceptable problem with a balanced approach to determine if the unique cultures of the three components influence ethical misconduct or if there is a systemic Army problem among senior leaders. Using Department of the Army Inspector General data, the top three substantiated allegations against colonels and above are identified, the findings analyzed, and recommendations provided to help prevent future senior leader ethical misconduct and potential strategic implications for both the Army Total Force and the nation.

Ethics and the Army Total Force

Playing by the rules involves internalizing the warrior code of ethics. It is something you have to practice at 24 hours a day. Unethical actions not only can get you or your Soldiers killed, they can also hurt the Army.

—General Mark A. Milley¹

Ethics are the foundation of the Army Profession and a strategic-level imperative for the future viability and readiness of the United States Army Total Force. Ethical concepts, principles, and now doctrine are not foreign to the Army's senior leaders. Ethical misconduct, however, persists among senior leaders across all three components of the Army. This research project conducts an analysis of ethical misconduct across the Active and Reserve Components to determine if there are cracks in the Army's ethical foundation or merely surface blemishes unique to each component.

In the volatile strategic environment facing the nation and the world, professional and ethical leaders are what the American public and our allies not only expect, but demand. Thus, any violation of trust degrades the nation's or allied partners' trust and confidence in the Army Total Force to perform its range of missions, whether combat operations, humanitarian assistance, or defense support of civil authorities. Such violations may have strategic implications and consequences, which are immediate and potentially enduring, undermining the positive impact the Army Total Force makes throughout the world, therefore damaging national interests.

Using the Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG) data, this paper will examine and present ethical misconduct that are the most persistent and common among senior leaders from the three Army components – Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve – and assess factors that may contribute to unacceptable

behavior. The project will then present recommendations to improve ethical conduct within the Army Total Force. As the Army Total Force continues to operate and deploy in a multi-component, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment, the desired end state is the Army Total Force must be a professional entity with all components held to the same standard of conduct.

Background

As the Army Total Force comes through sixteen years of continuous overseas contingency deployments and an operational tempo with little signs of relief, all three Army components must analyze not only where they have been, but importantly, their current culture and ethical climate. Ethical dilemmas and problems are nothing new to the Army. Though this analysis will focus on where the three U.S. Army components stand ethically today, arguably all modern militaries face ethical issues. Even the great Prussian strategic theorist Carl von Clausewitz stated, “Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war....Countless minor incidents—the kind you can never really foresee—combine to lower the general level of performance, so that one always falls far short of the intended goal.”²

This quote from Clausewitz articulates his views on the “friction in war” and one can deduce as part of the friction, and the attendant “fog of war,” an environment without an ethical barometer for senior leaders will leave an organization and its members vulnerable. Accordingly, violations of ethical codes of conduct may negate planned or achieved strategic objectives. Incidents like the 1968 atrocities at My Lai in South Vietnam, the 2003 detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib, and the 2006 barbarism committed by the “Blackhearts” in the village of Yusufiya, Iraq underscore how ethical

misconduct undermines overall strategic objectives.³ In each instance, the Army and the Department of Defense as a whole, suffered severe damage to the faith and confidence held by the citizens of the United States and the world community. For the current War on Terror, ethical misconduct distorted and diminished coalition objectives achieved as well as those still pursued throughout the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters.

Throughout the 21st century, ethical misconduct has continued to occur across the Department of Defense. Though military operations and war are corrosive to the moral fabric of the profession of arms, many gross violations of ethical conduct have no connection with overseas contingency deployments nor are the most egregious violations committed by junior commissioned or enlisted soldiers.⁴ Rather, the main issue is the dereliction of senior leaders not adhering to moral and ethical standards presented to them in commissioning sources and throughout their careers in operational assignments as well as during professional military education settings.

Examples include Active Army Major General David Haight who not only had an 11-year extramarital affair with a government employee, but also misused government property by using a government provided cellular telephone to keep in contact with his adulteress.⁵ Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel David Young defrauded the Department of Defense and used the money he gained to live lavishly, laundering millions of dollars.⁶ And, Army National Guard Brigadier General Michael Bobeck participated in an extramarital affair and brokered a deal with a defense contractor for a job and to live free in the contractor's home.⁷ To appreciate why these actions are indeed ethical as well as criminal misconduct, the Army Profession and the Army Ethic must be defined

and explained as a basis of understanding to work towards the strategic implications of ethical misconduct and the Army Total Force.

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1 – The Army Profession conveys, “The Army Profession is a unique vocation of experts certified in the ethical design, generation, support, and application of land power, serving under civilian authority and entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people.”⁸ This doctrinal statement addresses the privilege the profession holds within U.S. society and directs that military professionals in the Army Total Force must “...earn and maintain the trust of society through the ethical, effective, and efficient application of their expertise on society’s behalf. The profession’s ethic establishes the moral principles that guide the application of service on behalf of society.”⁹ There is explicit trust the nation has with the Army Total Force and violations of the profession and ethics may have strategic implications for the nation.

These implications were recognized during both the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. After the massacre at My Lai, already waning public support for the war was further diminished as media coverage reported the atrocities and the efforts by some in the Army to suppress information and cover-up the mass murder. Those U.S. citizens who had not supported the war only solidified their opinions and called for an immediate end to the war while those who had supported the war blamed the enemy and the war itself.¹⁰ The eventual outcome was pressure to speed the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam without achieving U.S. strategic objectives.

Over 30 years later, as the nation went to war in Iraq, the detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib brought a similar response from the public. As abuse of Iraqi prisoners was

revealed by 24-hour media outlets, the public's reaction "...showed support for the war at its lowest since before it began, with only 44 percent saying they believed it was worthwhile."¹¹ An already controversial war was significantly challenged as American public and international support further declined. The insurgents used the images as propaganda and reason to retaliate in a barbaric manner, and ultimately the abuse "...undercut America's democratic values" with those throughout the region.¹² In both the U.S. wars in Vietnam and Iraq, ethical misconduct affected what Clausewitz defined as the "paradoxical trinity" represented by the government, the people, and the military.

Important for the U.S. profession of arms, the Army Ethic is "...the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, embedded within the Army culture of trust that motivates and guides the conduct of Army professionals bound together in common moral purpose."¹³ Ethics are indispensable to the Army Profession as "The Army Ethic is inherent within the Army culture of trust. It is manifest as the Army demonstrates its essential characteristics. It motivates and guides Army professionals within mission command, in the conduct of every operation, in performance of duty, and in all aspects of life. The Army Ethic is the heart of the Army."¹⁴ The Army Profession and Army Ethic are the foundation of the Army Total Force as it addresses its responsibilities under United States Code, Titles 10 and 32 and supports the nation's security interests.

As stated in the *National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2015* (NMS 2015), "The U.S. military's purpose is to protect our Nation and win our wars."¹⁵ There is no confusion with this concise statement, but the additional requirements the Army faces to promote and support the nation's enduring national interests is where ethical conduct or the lack of will make a strategic impact. The 2015 National Security

Strategy outlines the enduring national interests and includes "...the security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges."¹⁶ To achieve these strategic goals, the Army Total Force must ensure ethics are woven into the fabric of each component from the senior to the most junior levels so the three components adhere to the same common value system the nation espouses and promotes throughout the world.

Ethical Misconduct

Unfortunately, ethical misconduct within the ranks, especially senior officers, is a problem senior leaders of the Army Total Force must manage. The following analysis of ethical lapses across the three Army components will use data obtained from the DAIG and only address the misconduct of "senior officials." The DAIG defines a senior official to include "...general officers (active Army and reserve components), colonels selected for promotion to brigadier general, retired general officers, and current or former civilian employees of the Department of the Army SES or equal positions and comparable political appointees."¹⁷

It might be assumed the focus of the Army Profession and Army Ethic is solely on uniformed service members, but civilian employees are also addressed in Army doctrine and held accountable for their professionalism and ethical conduct as part of the Army Total Force. Accountability is at every level of the three Army components and this project is not in any way intended to dismiss or diminish ethical misconduct at the

junior commissioned, enlisted levels, or by civilian employees of the Department of the Army Senior Executive Service (SES). It will focus on the uniformed senior leaders and the perilous strategic consequences their ethical misconduct may produce.

To grasp the state of ethical misconduct by senior leaders as described by the DAIG, misconduct trends, allegations by type, and substantiated data by component from the DAIG, fiscal years (FY) 2011 through 2015, is used. To look at each component and where they currently stand regarding ethical misconduct, a starting point must be identified and trends is where the analysis will begin.

To analyze the trends from FY 2011 through 2015, a few terms need to be defined. First, an allegation as defined by the DAIG is "...a statement or assertion of wrongdoing by an individual, formulated by an Inspector General."¹⁸ An allegation typically starts with "'Who', improperly, did or failed to do something, in violation of an established standard."¹⁹ These allegations are made by a complainant, which is "a person who submits a complaint, allegation, or other request for assistance to an IG."²⁰ Typically, the complainant focuses his or her allegation against an individual known as a subject, who is "a person against whom a non-criminal allegation(s) has been made such as a violation of a non-punitive policy or regulation."²¹

As illustrated in Figure 1, the total allegations and subjects from FY 2011 through 2015 are increasing. These numbers represent the cumulative number of allegations across the Army's three components, Active Army (AA), Army National Guard (ARNG), and Army Reserve (USAR), made against senior leaders during this five-year period. The bar graph represents perceived misconduct with 2,918 allegations against 2,446 subjects.²²

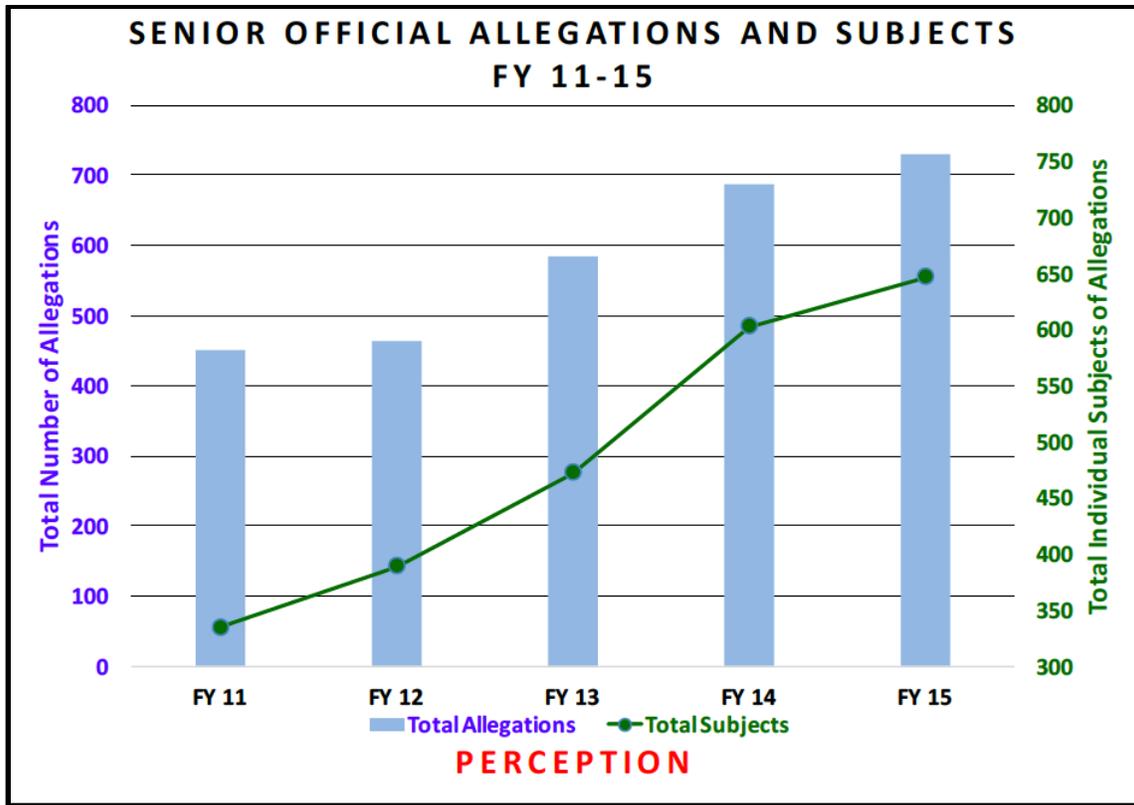


Figure 1. Perceived Senior Official Misconduct FY 11-15²³

These allegations were deemed serious and viable enough that they required an Inspector General examination. Depending on the severity of the allegation, either an inquiry (no potential for serious consequences foreseen) or an investigation (potential for harm to a Soldier or negative impact on the Army's image) is conducted.²⁴ The result of an Inspector General being involved in an allegation is a result of a determination as either substantiated or unsubstantiated.

The DAIG defines these outcomes as “A conclusion drawn by an Inspector General at the close of an Inspector General Investigation when the preponderance of credible evidence (e.g., 51%) indicates that the allegation is true.”²⁵ Using this definition, the net results of these allegations are represented in Figure 2.

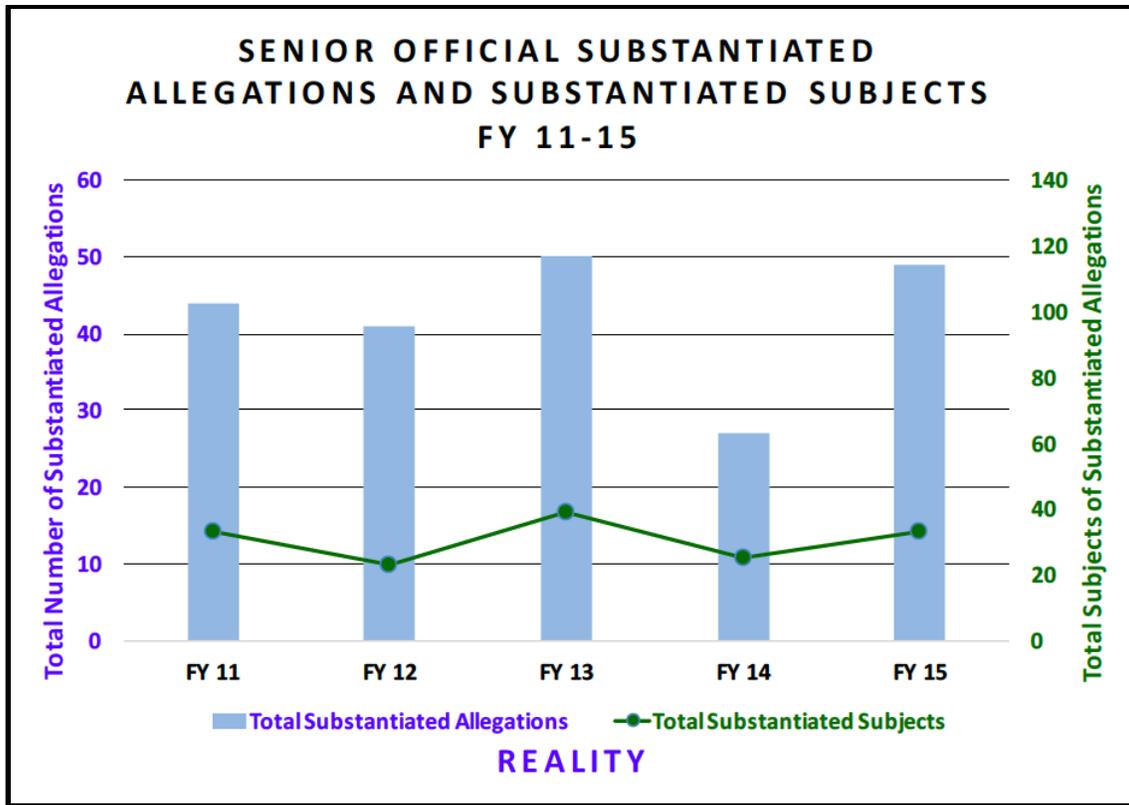


Figure 2. Substantiated Senior Official Misconduct FY 11-15²⁶

The numbers for senior leaders regarding the five-year trend data are 211 or 7% of the allegations and 153 or 6% of the subjects were substantiated—far less than the perceived numbers from Figure 1, but still unacceptable for senior leaders of the Army Total Force.²⁷ This trend data supports continued analysis of more specific areas of ethical misconduct.

The trend among senior leaders may not be as severe as first identified, but is still of substantial concern to the Army Total Force. The types of allegations will be analyzed next to see what are perceived and substantiated. Like the previous data, the percentages in both Figures 3 and 4 represent the Army’s three components cumulative numbers of perceived and substantiated allegations against senior leaders during the

period of FY 2011 through 2015. The Figure 3 pie chart identifies the top five allegations defined and categorized by the DAIG.

The “Failure to Take Appropriate Action” is the top category at 21%. This category is defined as the subject of the allegation or “senior leader” as an individual “...who was aware of alleged misconduct by a subordinate and the leader failed to take action to address the alleged misconduct.”²⁸ The least represented category is the “Failure to Treat Subordinates with Dignity and Respect,” with 4%, which is defined as the subject or senior leader’s “...alleged failure to treat subordinates with dignity, respect, fairness, and consistency.”²⁹

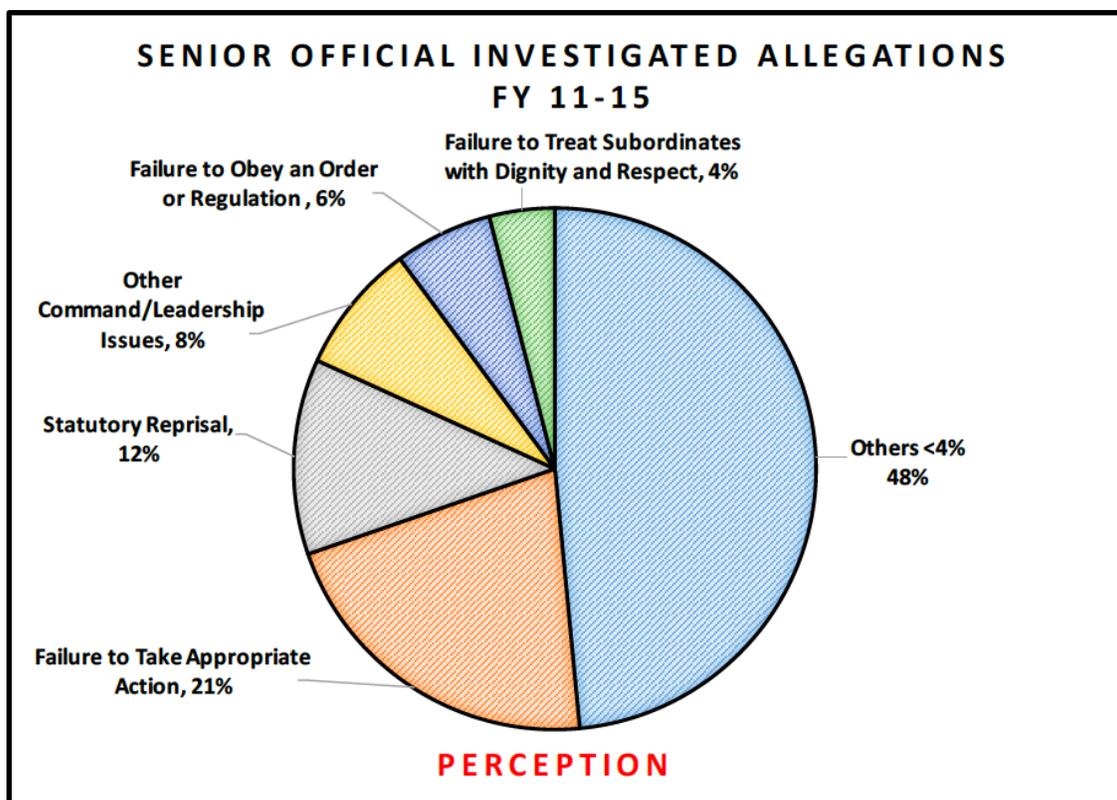


Figure 3. Perceived Senior Official Misconduct by Type, FY 11-15³⁰

The Figure 4 pie chart identifies the top four substantiated allegations, defined and categorized by the DAIG, against senior leaders. The most prevailing category is

“Other Travel Violations” with 10%. This category is defined by the DAIG as “A ‘catch-all’ allegation sub-type for improper travel related actions that do not match any other defined allegation sub-type.”³¹ The least represented category is “Failure to Treat Soldiers with Dignity and Respect” at 5%, which was previously defined.

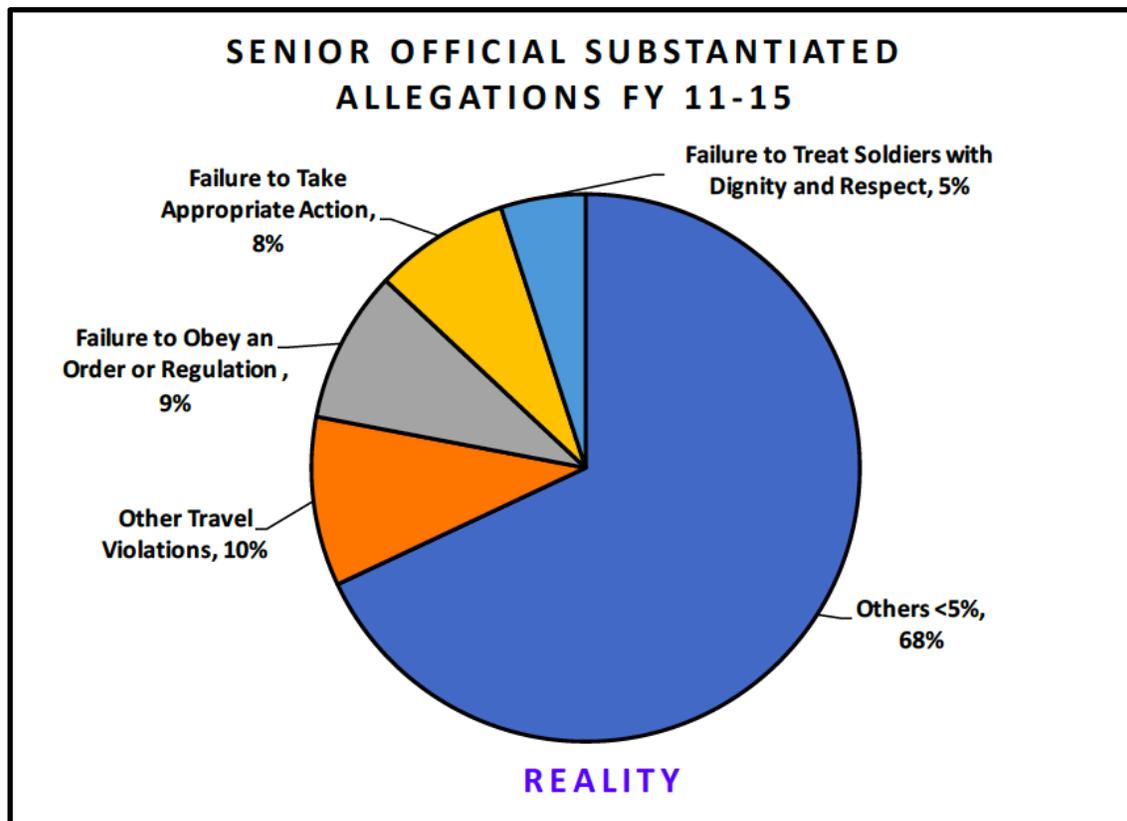


Figure 4. Substantiated Senior Official Misconduct by Type, FY 11-15³²

Though any of these allegations and substantiation of them is troublesome for senior leaders, Figures 3 and 4 further narrow the analysis of the Army Total Force’s ethical misconduct at the senior-leader level. These are obvious areas which need focus, but the final phase of the analysis is Army component specific to determine if these senior leader trends are systemic problems throughout the Army Total Force or if each component struggles at the senior leader level with ethical misconduct unique to itself.

Table 1 separates the perceived senior leader misconduct by component, displaying the top allegations made against senior leaders and investigated from the AA, ARNG, and USAR. The allegations are sorted by the percentage for the Army Total Force by each allegation type from FY 2011 through 2015. For these same years, presented are the ranking of these allegations for each of the three components and the percentages associated with them. The table also provides the allegations, which did not fall into one of the defined categories, by percentage, at the very bottom of the table.

Table 1. Perceived Senior Official Misconduct by Component, FY 11-15³³

| SENIOR OFFICIAL INVESTIGATED ALLEGATIONS FY 11-15 | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|------|-------------|------|---------------------|------|
| ALL ARMY % of Total | Top Allegations Investigated* | ACTIVE DUTY | | ARNG | | ARMY RESERVE | |
| | | % of Total | Rank | % of Total | Rank | % of Total | Rank |
| 20% | Failure to Take Appropriate Action | 25% | 1 | 16% | 1 | 19% | 1 |
| 13% | Statutory Reprisal | 13% | 2 | 12% | 2 | 18% | 2 |
| 8% | Other Command/Leadership Issues | 9% | 3 | 9% | 3 | 5% | |
| 6% | Failure to Obey an Order or Regulation | 8% | 4 | 5% | 4 | 7% | 4 |
| 4% | Dignity & Respect | 4% | 5 | 3% | | 3% | |
| 4% | Dereliction of Duty | 3% | | 5% | 5 | 3% | 5 |
| 4% | Command Climate | 3% | | 2% | | 8% | 3 |
| 45% | All other Allegations | 35% | | 48% | | 45% | |

* Sorted by ALL ARMY Investigated Allegation Percentages

PERCEPTION

As the above table displays, all three components have the same number one and two allegations with the AA and ARNG sharing the same top four allegations. The USAR has continuity with the other two components as well, by sharing three of the same top four. However, these numbers reflect perceived ethical misconduct and not misconduct which is substantiated. The ranking and percentages are still important, because they still show perception of unethical behavior conducted by senior leaders that results in allegations.

Though all of these categories are important, for the purpose of comparing the three components, only the top three allegations will be analyzed. The “Failure to Take Appropriate Action,” which was defined previously, is the top category for all three components. Second is “Statutory Reprisal” for the three components. This category is defined as a subject’s “...alleged execution of retaliatory personnel actions that result from a subordinate making or preparing a lawful communication to a Member of Congress, an IG, a Member of a DoD Audit, Inspection, Investigation or any other person designated to receive such a communication (includes chain of command).”³⁴

The third category for both the AA and ARNG is “Other Command and Leadership Issues,” which is defined as a “catch all” allegation for command and leadership issues that do not fit into one of the other categories that address specific command items like “Failure to Obey and Order or Regulation.”³⁵ The USAR’s third top allegation category is “Command Climate,” a category which does not find itself in either the AA or ARNG’s top five. This category is defined as “...alleged failure to establish and maintain positive expectations and attitudes, which produce the setting for positive attitudes and effective work behaviors (includes situations of ‘toxic’ leadership).”³⁶

These perceived allegations help glean data to identify the top three ethical misconduct categories to be addressed with each of the Army components. Though these are not substantiated allegations, they still send a message to the Army Total Force and potentially to those joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners of perceived unethical behavior by senior leaders across the Army’s three components.

Table 2 presents substantiated allegations against senior leaders by Army component. Now that the data of ethical misconduct between the components is identified, the top three substantiated allegations that are common to all three components will be analyzed.

Table 2. Substantiated Senior Official Misconduct by Component, FY 11-15³⁷

| SENIOR OFFICIAL SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS FY 11-15 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|------|-------------|------|---------------------|------|
| ALL ARMY % of Total | Top Allegations Substantiated* | ACTIVE DUTY | | ARNG | | ARMY RESERVE | |
| | | % of Total | Rank | % of Total | Rank | % of Total | Rank |
| 10% | Failure to Obey an Order or Regulation | 14% | 3 | 9% | | 2% | 4 |
| 9% | Failure to Take Appropriate Action | 9% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 16% | 1 |
| 8% | Other Travel Violations | 15% | 2 | 3% | 3 | 2% | 5 |
| 5% | Other Misuse or Abuse of Government Resources | 3% | | 6% | 2 | 8% | 2 |
| 5% | Misuse of Government Funds (Other than Travel) | 5% | 4 | 6% | 4 | 2% | |
| 5% | Dignity and Respect | 4% | 5 | 6% | 5 | 4% | 3 |
| 4% | Endorsement of Private Organizations | 2% | | 9% | | 0% | |
| 54% | All other Allegations | 48% | | 56% | | 66% | |

* Sorted by ALL ARMY Substantiated Allegation Percentages

REALITY

The purpose behind this methodology is to find common ethical misconduct and compare and contrast by component, who, what, and why these behaviors are happening and allow the Army's senior leadership to conclude how to address them. Though these substantiated allegations may not be in the top three for each component, the Army's senior leadership must address the ethical misconduct of each component to ensure the foundation of the Army Total Force is solid.

Findings

Regardless of Army component, senior leaders within the Army Profession and Army Ethic are expected to be exemplars and role models. As General Colin Powell stated, "The most important thing I learned is that soldiers watch what their leaders do.

You can give them classes and lecture them forever, but it is your personal example they will follow.”³⁸ Using General Powell’s leadership example as a reference for the importance of ethical conduct, the following analysis will compare and contrast three substantiated ethical misconduct categories common to all three Army components.

The first category is the “Failure to Take Appropriate Action,” which ranked first for substantiated allegations for all three Army components. The second category is “Other Travel Violations.” This category ranked second for the AA, third for the ARNG, and fifth for the USAR. The last category is the “Failure to Treat Subordinates with Dignity and Respect,” which ranked fifth for both the AA and the ARNG, and third for the USAR. Only one of these categories ranked the same for each component, the other two are prevalent for the Army Total Force.

Since each of these categories were previously defined, who, what, and why will be applied to each category by component. The first category, “Failure to Take Appropriate Action,” was the top substantiated allegation for all three components, so it appears there is a systemic problem for the Army Total Force and common themes at the senior-leader level, regardless of component. Since this category refers to ethical misconduct by a subordinate and a senior leader failing to take action, there may be various reasons for the ethical misconduct across the Army Total Force.

As senior leaders continue to serve their respective components, competition amongst peers continues to increase to the point where a self-imposed “zero defects” mentality can take root in the decision-making process. As a Colonel promotable or above who looks towards his or her evaluation, selection for coveted duty positions, or the next promotion, ethical misconduct within his or her command or staff section are

feared for potentially unrepairable effects. No leader wants a blemish or negative evaluation include in an official record. Thus, there is a temptation to overlook or not address ethical misconduct at subordinate levels, which "...seems to come from a paternalistic place..." but "...when subordinates listen to what their leaders say and observe their actions, it's made clear that higher leaders are simply trying to protect their own reputations."³⁹

Some senior leaders may also have participated in the same ethical misconduct as junior officers themselves or failed to address the misconduct of their non-commissioned officers (NCOs) or junior enlisted earlier in their careers. So, as senior leaders, they do not recognize the ethical misconduct as something out of the ordinary or not in compliance with the Army Profession. Individuals are flawed by nature and senior leaders, like others who commit ethical misconduct, may have no malicious intent in this type of leader failure, but rather just do not see certain conduct as an ethical issue, but rather the way the Army works. It simply may be the way these senior leaders were trained and developed in the Army, regardless of component.

However, something as simple as not addressing "pencil whipping" of Army Physical Fitness Test scores, weapons qualification numbers, Army "Ask, Care and Escort" (ACE) Suicide Intervention training, or the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) training have a lasting effect on the good order and discipline of a unit. Senior leaders have "become 'ethically numb,' using 'justifications and rationalizations' to overcome any ethical doubts."⁴⁰ Failing to take appropriate action by senior leaders towards ethical misconduct like this impacts readiness at all levels and causes issues with units and individuals as to trigger warranted allegations.

Allegations of Army travel violations by senior leaders have appeared in the various media, fueled by another government agency, the General Services Administration (GSA), and their outrageous, unethical, and taxpayer abusive travel expenditures. The Army Total Force does not want to be lumped into the same category as the GSA. Thus, the next substantiated allegation category to be analyzed is “Other Travel Violations.”

Unfortunately, senior leaders have their travel violations spread throughout the media. For instance, General William “Kip” Ward, former Commander of United States Africa Command, was alleged to have unauthorized expenses and participating in lavish travel by spending excessively and including his family in his official travel, benefiting them. The allegations against General Ward were substantiated and the outcome was his requirement to reimburse the government \$82,000.⁴¹

Examples like this undermine the Department of Defense and Army’s negotiations with Congress and give detractors of military spending data to wage their campaign, especially in a fiscally constrained environment. Surveys conducted by nonpartisan organizations in 2012 and 2016 found the majority of registered voters surveyed want cuts in defense spending. In the 2016 survey, voters proposed the core defense budget be cut to 2012 levels of under \$500 billion.⁴² Supporting this opinion with the voters is the impression the “...military branches do a poor job of ‘tracking where money goes,’” which is only exacerbated by ethical misconduct.⁴³

“Other Travel Violations” ranked as the second highest rank for the AA, third for the ARNG, and fifth for the USAR. Since this category appeared in the top five substantiated allegations for all three components, it speaks of a systemic problem

throughout the Army Total Force with it showing as a greater issue with the AA than the reserve components.

There may be simple explanations for this increased frequency with senior leaders from all three components. One may be senior leaders conduct more travel and thus have more opportunities (and vulnerabilities) for potential ethical misconduct, with those participating in the behavior either not understanding or choosing to disregard the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR). The JTR pertains to all uniformed service members and Department of Defense civilian employees. Senior leaders, regardless of component, should have accountability partners and access to knowledgeable personnel regarding travel, avoiding any ethical issues or skewed belief "...that societal and organizational norms do not apply to them."⁴⁴

Since this category also affects the two reserve components elements, the question must be asked if there is something in the culture of the ARNG or USAR that lends itself to conducting official travel in an unethical manner. One theory is the reserve components do not interact with Government Travel Cards, official travel, and the systems which regulate it as much as the AA. However, with the current operational tempo in both the ARNG and the USAR, this is highly unlikely. So, why is this ethical misconduct happening?

A possibility, which affects all three components at the senior leader level, is the mentality that rules and regulations can be stretched or overlooked to achieve strategic objectives. Senior leaders become celebrities. Celebrity may appear to be an inappropriate term, but it is a "form of leadership that emerges from visibility and branding" and leads to "little thought to the moral or ethical implications" of actions.⁴⁵

This form of leadership and mentality bleeds into everyday decisions made and leads to abuse like using official travel to attend a golf outing in Tokyo when no official business is conducted.⁴⁶ Though abuses like this may seem like minimal ethical issues, they indicate a pattern of failing to do what is right and thereby not living up to the Army Ethic. Such attitudes and behaviors may lead to further ethical misconduct like treating subordinates contrary to the values of the Army Profession.

The third category of substantiated allegations is the “Failure to Treat Subordinates with Dignity and Respect.” This category ranked fifth for the AA and ARNG, and third for the USAR. Like the previous listed categories, it appears this issue affects the Army Total Force, since it is in the top five of substantiated allegations for all three components. It will be addressed as an Army systemic issue, not a category with unique implications for each component.

One theory applied is “toxic leadership,” which has become a popular catchphrase. Abusive and inconsistent senior leaders who show no dignity, respect, or fairness towards their subordinates are the subjects of these allegations. These leaders fail to follow the same Army Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage they expect from their subordinates. The end result of this type of leadership is a command climate which destroys morale, retention, and potentially worse, “trains” junior officers and enlisted personnel this is acceptable and consistent with Army culture and the Army Profession.

So, why is this style of leadership at the strategic level not identified and allowed to continue? One theory is the Army, regardless of component, in many ways measures success by numbers trained on the topic of the day (i.e., SHARP training), rather than

addressing the root causes of the problem or establishing an environment which roots out toxic leaders. By using metrics to show the success of addressing an ethical issue, the true problem falls somewhere in between the intent and execution of training the force. This is not an indictment of the Army's senior leaders, but rather of the system and processes that results in "knee-jerk reaction" to issues and subsequently reduce readiness and are detrimental to good order and discipline.

Senior leaders who lack common courtesy, fail to show any care or concern for subordinates, treat them unfairly or inconsistent with their peers, and actively display favoritism participate in ethical misconduct. This negative command climate and toxic environment encourages favoritism based on military occupational specialty, branch, race, gender, or religion and the inconsistent treatment of subordinates (i.e. different punishment or reward for the same behavior or accomplishment).⁴⁷ The result of the mistreatment of subordinates by senior leaders is the detrimental effect on the development of subordinates, the readiness of units, and the overall health of the Army Total Force.

Recommendations

General Colin Powell stated, "You don't get to decide which lessons people take from your example or when they decide to learn from your behavior. You're always 'on' and you will likely never discover the true impact of your leadership. This is both the burden and the blessing of leadership...make it count."⁴⁸ The ethical misconduct by senior leaders is ultimately about leadership, living as a member of the Army Profession, and following/embracing the Army Ethic. So, why do all three components with the Army Total Force continue to experience ethical misconduct? To address the

substantiated allegation categories and ethical misconduct, two recommendations are provided.

Senior leaders are people first and all people are flawed, which is indisputable. However, to overcome this and ensure all leaders are given the same opportunities, the Army trains, mentors, and coaches its members to live by the Army Profession and Army Ethics. Thus, the first recommendation is for General Officers, regardless of component, to remain engaged with their subordinates at the Colonel level and above, not take them and their mental and physical wellbeing for granted, and to continue to invest in them. Regardless of years of service and military experience, senior leaders at the Colonel level and above must be actively monitored by their superiors for their command climate and sound judgment to ensure leadership and command pressures don't lead to ethical misconduct.

The Army's multiple programs which assess and provide feedback and climate surveys like the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) are important tools to aid raters and senior raters with monitoring, engaging, and developing senior leaders.⁴⁹ Since senior leaders are drivers of change in the Army, they must be stewards of the profession, trusted to ensure ethical conduct is the cornerstone of their behavior, climate, and decision-making. Use of these tools is one of the few ways to get relevant feedback in these areas to senior leaders and must be taken seriously by those assessed and their leaders. Ultimately, senior leaders of the Army Total Force are responsible for acting on feedback of indications that soldiers are not aligned with the Army Profession or Army Ethic. However, developing a way to synchronize these assessments and surveys with

previous ethical misconduct or substantiated DAIG allegations may be an endeavor for the Army's personnel professionals in the G1 to track and provide to the Army's Senior Leader Development Office (SLDO), Colonel Management Office (COMO), and General Officer Management Office (GOMO). This may help mitigate the risk of further promoting senior officers who have shown a pattern of ethical misconduct or a toxic climate throughout their careers.

This monitoring, engagement, and development is not meant to discount officers in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and below or senior NCOs, but rather to focus on the senior leaders in the rank of Colonel and above who will advise and make the strategic decisions for each component and the Army Total Force. These are leaders, who in many ways, are taken for granted.

Though tough to achieve for many senior leaders, engagement entails getting out of the office and spending time face-to-face with subordinate senior leaders to ensure they are well in all facets of their personal and professional life. The Army Total Force gains its strength from its people and thus, the investment in caring must be foremost the priority. There is no point in a leader's life where he or she no longer needs attention from a superior. This is in no way a plan to coddle or alleviate a senior leader of his or her duties and responsibilities. Rather, this should be viewed as preventative, during, and after maintenance to ensure the senior leadership is fully mission capable.

In many ways, this is harder for the ARNG and the USAR to accomplish due to dispersion of forces, but the time spent with this endeavor may just prevent another strategic incident like the failure of leadership during the ethical misconduct during the war in Iraq at Abu Ghraib in 2003 and Yusufiya in 2006. However, just as the

substantiated allegations applied to the Army Total Force, this investment must be applied with the same standard for each component. The Director of the Army National Guard, Lieutenant General Timothy J. Kadavy, articulates this well: “The Army National Guard of 2025 must be part of the Army’s operational force, made up of disciplined Soldiers and ready units that are led by competent leaders of character.”⁵⁰ The investment must be made to ensure the Army Total Force has competent and ethical senior leaders.

The second recommendation is for the senior Army leadership at the Colonel level and above, regardless of component, to continue professional development and professional military education. Though there are numerous military schools for this distinguished group of senior leaders, like the Senior Leader Seminar (SLS) and Army Strategic Education Program (ASEP), the ethical side of the Army Total Force must be addressed even if to remind these senior leaders of the Army Profession and the Army Ethic. This is not to say these leaders do not understand the doctrine or to insult them, but rather to reinforce their knowledge of the doctrine and reiterate what is expected from them as senior leaders.

The effectiveness and how to evaluate the success of senior leader training is debatable. Senior leaders who have completed education programs like SLS and ASEP and who still engage in ethical misconduct, as defined by DAIG substantiated allegations, are easily identified. However, it is hard to prove that those who have completed these education programs and have not engaged in ethical misconduct is the result of Army training.

Despite this indeterminate data, the intent is not to add another “training requirement” to senior leaders who are already taxed with limited time, but to conduct the reinforcement and development of senior leaders to prevent further ethical misconduct. As the Army’s operational tempo continues to remain high, the three components continue to work in multicomponent units, deploy and operate in a joint, allied, or combined force, it is imperative the message and leadership at the senior leader level is ethical. The strategic implications of ethical misconduct are too great for the Army Total Force not to address.

Conclusion

The Army Profession and Army Ethic are the foundation for the Army Total Force, but have been disregarded in numerous instances by senior leaders. Unfortunately, there are too many instances of senior leaders engaging in ethical misconduct, which has potential strategic ramifications in the current joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, and political environment. Every unethical action has a reaction with consequences and the potential of souring partnerships throughout the government, internationally, and with the American public is something the Army Total Force cannot afford.

To help shed some light on the Army’s senior leader ethical misconduct, the three Army components were compared using DAIG ethical misconduct data. Though each Army component is unique and have their own culture, there are common ethical misconduct issues that are systemic Army problems and consistent among the three components. These ethical misconduct categories were addressed and recommendations provided to help the Army’s senior leaders move forward with an

action plan to help prevent and reduce future ethical misconduct at the senior leader level.

This topic must be one the senior Army senior leaders address because continued ethical misconduct has the potential for adverse impact on strategic readiness, affecting good order and discipline, unit cohesion, recruiting, retention, and the overall combat readiness of Army units, regardless of component. The end state is the Army Total Force must be a professional entity with each component held to the same standard of conduct. The nation expects nothing less and it is the duty of the senior leaders to meet the expectation.

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