



By: USAWTFM Admin Team

Over the years, [U.S. Army WTF! Moments](#) has grown from a couple of guys messing around on Facebook to a following of 1.2 million people. We've expanded to [internet radio](#) with hundreds of interviews under our belt, including 2 with General Officers, a [website](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), and we wield our influence everywhere you can find a guidon in the Army.

While we may be the bane of many officers and NCOs, we're also a venue for soldiers to share some of the more absurd moments of Army life and vent a little. We give a voice to those in the formation who may typically be voiceless. For those troopers who serve in

units, in units that are long on stupidity and short on sense, we provide a megaphone for their concerns to be heard.

We're not just modern-day muckrakers - we are also using our platform to raise awareness for great causes, including attracting crowds to funerals for unattended deceased veterans, raising money for troops and vets fallen on hard times, providing crisis counseling for soldiers and veterans, and helping the Army showcase major announcements and initiatives.

Below are ten of the most common ways leaders find themselves under the USAWTFM spotlight. We wrote this in hopes it helps commanders and NCOs think through their actions before they do something. A leader is always facing the exponential effect - it means that the more responsibility you have, the more people are watching your every move. So, think about that the next time you consider doing one of these ten things.

1-Break the standards

BLUF: Know the standard, be the standard, live the standard.

Part of leading men and women is carrying yourself in a way that reflects the standards of our Army. Keeping yourself clean and groomed, while the bare minimum, is also the first thing your subordinates will notice when they see you. Keep your hair in regulation, wear a clean and properly put together uniform that fits. These things should be second nature to every Soldier and leader, but they are also the things that most get complacent about. Your Soldiers are like (your) children; they always have their eyes on you, they notice everything, and to a large extent, they model their behavior from you. Don't let them down.

2-Having double standards

BLUF: Do the right thing, even when no one is watching, because someone most certainly is.

The term double standards should not be confused with privileges and responsibilities that are commonly associated with one's rank; instead, the term should be used to describe the gap in the application of the moral and ethical standards based on said rank.

We all know about it, and we all have seen it, an officer getting a smack on the hand, while an enlisted Soldier is getting the maximum punishment for the same infraction. There is less willingness to attempt and rehabilitate a junior Soldier versus a Senior NCO. Make sure to thoroughly examine every case as it's the first time you ever encountered such a situation, because you are holding the proverbial sword, and its swing may be terminal for someone's career and path in life.

3-Put self first

BLUF: Leaders lead by example.

We've already discussed RHIP (Rank Has Its Privileges) and how privileges are afforded because of one's increased responsibilities. Understand the difference between having and exercising a privilege. Most leaders have families, and so do most of the Soldiers they lead. Everyone wants to be with their loved ones or spend some time away from work. If you are at NTC for 30 days + in the suck with your Soldiers, don't take those quick trips back to civilization (cough Vegas). If you must attend a meeting you don't need to be part of in the rear, send your XO instead, or a relevant subordinate. Stay with your Soldiers; Be the first one in, and the last one out. Your Soldiers will see that, others will pass it on, and they will know you care enough not to exercise the privilege that is yours by rank.

4-Unit lockdowns that last past 24 hours

BLUF: Be proactive, not reactive.

Mass punishment is always a bad idea unless it is a joint infraction, for example, unkempt barracks. Unit lockdowns destroy morale, more so when it has to do with items that have

been missing for a long time. No commander wants to be the one that has to FLIPL equipment due to "whereabouts unknown." But every commander also knows how to mitigate the risk of that happening.

If you only inventory your equipment once a year, don't expect to have 100% equipment accountability 12 to 16 months after your last one. Make your subordinates responsible, ask them to produce inventories for their section at regular intervals within the year (we think there's a regulation about that...). That way, you won't have any reason to do a 24-hour lockdown because someone misplaced a sensitive or high dollar item.

We have seen many units initiate lockdowns to find missing crates of live ammunition ranging from bullets to grenades, and the common theme was lack of inventory control. If you're missing something for months, you're probably not going to find it in 24 hours.

Organize a search party and have them turn everything upside down, if it's there it will be found. Otherwise, the only thing you will find is your unit's morale in the dumps.

5-Forcing Soldiers to violate profiles and miss mandatory appointments to meet numbers for the field, NTC, and JRTC

BLUF: You are responsible for the lives and wellness of your soldiers in wartime AND peacetime alike.

OBJ T status. A commander's "precious" (Smeagol's voice). We need everyone and their goldfish to come to the field with us, in NTC, JRTC or elsewhere it's all bodies in. You'll have Soldiers that are on a physical limitation profile. It is okay to use those Soldiers within their profile limitations. It is not okay to force Soldiers, currently in a rehabilitation cycle, to "deploy" for training in violation of their profile.

We have seen time and time again, Soldiers that need to have almost daily medical appointments for rehabilitation purposes getting dragged along to JRTC with the excuse of

“they can use local medical facilities.” Doing so is almost always not an option due to medical personnel availability, not to mention that it also acts as a hindrance toward Soldiers rehabilitation. Something that ultimately may have long-term effects for your unit's readiness and everlasting consequences for your Soldier's health. You never stop being responsible for the welfare of Soldiers. Commanders should use discretion with any medical recommendations and do the math. Rarely do a few individuals make the difference for that awesome OBJ-T score.

6-CDRs that make policies without legal review that violates regulatory guidelines

BLUF: Check with JAG first.

Remember when your mom wanted you to become a lawyer, but instead, you chose to join the military? I have news for you; you were not a lawyer then, and you are not one now. **Every unit has a JAG that can provide a legal review of any policy, memorandum, or decision that commanders make. Too often, young commanders skip the legal review** before issuing ridiculous policies that have so many holes in them that IG will send you a gift basket for keeping them in business. Your Soldiers of all ranks are watching, and many of them have the experience to differentiate between a legal and illegal policy.

7-Emotional emails, texts, or messages that are disseminated

BLUF: Avoid putting things in writing that you are not comfortable seeing posted on the front page of the Washington Post (or Army WTF!).

Even though you're not using an OPORD or an official memorandum for record, your words have power. Don't send unprofessional communications through email, apps like WhatsApp, or text messages and expect them to stay among the group. We've seen (and posted) plenty of screenshots of leaders sending out mass texts to subordinates, venting when things don't go as planned or unprofessional threats to make sure they do. If you're angry about

something, take a minute before you hit send. And remember, if you think it's going to make you feel better after you hit send, don't send it!

8-Inappropriate relationships

BLUF: Everyone is watching you; you are not smarter than anybody else, or even as smart as you think. Have integrity. Always.

Don't do it. The attraction between people is natural. There is a reason why UCMJ prohibits relationships between officers, enlisted, and service members with superior/subordinate relationships.

Don't do it.

No matter how good it may be in your mind, no matter how much you need it. It will never turn out well for you. You will end up ruining everything you've worked years on for a minute of pleasure. No matter how careful you think you are, no matter how different than anyone else, it will come out, it will hurt you, the other person, potentially your families and your unit. Remember, everyone is watching you because you're the leader.

9-Senior Leader misconduct (DUIs, SHARP, arrests, etc.)

BLUF: The things you do when no one's looking, are the ones that define you. Always strive to do the right thing. Integrity is everything.

As a leader, more so as a senior leader, you are held to a higher standard than anyone else. Many soldiers and younger leaders in your formation are looking to you as their standard for ethical behavior. The standards are the same as with any other Soldier: don't drink and drive, don't be inappropriate to your fellow Soldiers, don't break the law (civilian or otherwise). If you violate those, you will be under more scrutiny than any of your Soldiers, and a harsher punishment within the limits of UCMJ or the civilian law will be expected to

befall you. Soldiers look up to you for guidance; they look up to you to remind them what's right and wrong.

10-Telling Soldiers that CID will search phones and internet history to determine who liked or commented on a post

BLUF: F3EAD the problem, not the messenger.

Yes, we've heard about this happening....a lot. When you make threats like this, it's another morale torpedo for your organization. Instead, focus on your culture. Make it a culture where soldiers come to you with their problems instead of venting on social media. Build a unit where people are so proud of it that they don't want to embarrass you or anyone else. Create an atmosphere where everyone enforces standards, not rules set by one or two leaders.

So these are some basic rules of the road to keep yourself off our page... if we had to boil it down to a sentence, we'd say this: follow your oath/creed; put your troops first in ALL cases; have the moral courage to protect your troops from those above you who are malicious or incompetent; and finally, these are America's sons and daughters - just like our own children, we even love the dumb ones. You should too!

The USAWTFM Team is a 100% non-profit, all-volunteer JTF with more than 300 years of Army experience, hundreds of deployments, across all branches, from PFC to FGO (and a few WO's we can't find), dozens of missed birthdays, and divorces.

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