

TRAINING ABUSE CASE STUDY

SSG Ruder is a male soldier married with 2 dependents and 13 years service. He was an EOR prior to his assignment as an instructor for AIT/IET soldiers.

SSG Ruder was a very relaxed and friendly instructor that instructed hands-on repair for heavy equipment. He worked a majority of his time instructing in the open bay but also worked in the tool room. On occasion, he would go to the break room and socialize with some of the students in his class, particularly the female soldiers. It was during one of his break room sessions that he became friends with PVT Jane. They exchanged phone numbers and routinely called each other after class. On the day PVT Jane graduated, she invited SSG Ruder to a hotel party. SSG Ruder attended the party and was seen (by some of his future student who didn't know him) hugging and kissing PVT Jane on the hotel couch. After PVT Jane PCS'd, she not only left him with a fond memory but also the phone number of her roommate and two other female soldiers.

SSG Ruder saw PVT Good at a company basketball game. She was sitting in the stands by herself, so he went over to talk to her. The conversation didn't last long, because PVT Good's Drill Sergeant saw SSG Ruder and told him to leave. The next day while in class, SSG Ruder followed PVT Good into the tool room. Upon entering the room, SSG Ruder called for SGT Day. When SGT Day didn't answer, he asked PVT Good if she had a boyfriend and then told her that what she was wearing at the basketball game had not only excited him but had also made him mad because he couldn't do anything about it. PVT Good was surprised by what the sergeant said and not sure how to react. She quickly got her tool and went back to the bay area. Later that evening when PVT Good went back to her room, she found a phone message left by SSG Ruder. She remembered what she saw at the hotel party and didn't want the sergeant calling or hitting on her, so she reported what had happened in the tool room to the on-duty Drill Sergeant.

The next day SSG Ruder's Company Commander instructed him not to have contact with any IET/AIT soldiers and that he was being removed from the platform, pending the results of a commander's inquiry.

Disciplinary Action

The Commander's Inquiry revealed that SSG Ruder did engage in an improper relationship with PVT Jane two weeks prior to her graduation, a violation of AR 600-20, para 4-5a; that he verbally and physically sexually harassed PV2 Good and another female soldier, violating AR 600-20, para 4-15 and 7-5; TRADOC Reg 350-6, para 2-6j; Brigade policies 01-04 and 01-05, and Bn policies 06, 07, and 12. He violated the battalion battle-buddy policy as well as AR 600-20, para 4-5 by being alone with PV2 Good on two occasions, and he violated Article 134 by providing a false statement.

SSG Ruder received a relief of cause NCOER, a General Letter of Reprimand that was placed in his official military records and a PCS to another military installation.

Lessons learned:

1. The Commander's Inquiry revealed that the training atmosphere within the training department was too relaxed; their attempts to not have a drill sergeant mentality in the schoolhouse took away their professional edge.
2. Although the NCO concerned had received mandatory EO/POSH training and SCTC TRADOC Reg 350-6 orientation training, he chose to ignore it.
3. The battle buddy rule was followed and must be enforced, not only for the IET soldier but also for all cadre members when they come in contact with IET soldiers.
4. Educate and encourage soldiers to report misconduct immediately when they hear and see it and not just when it happens to them.
5. Instill in our NCOs that they not only need to correct the situation but also report it.