



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS BATTALION
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION
SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, HAWAII 96857-6000

AFZC-JA-TDS

20 November 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR Action Officer, Defense Hotline, The Pentagon, Washington, DC

SUBJECT: Military Whistleblower Reprisal Complaint

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to raise a military whistleblower complaint against LTC Jennifer McDonough, Commander, Brigade Support Battalion; COL Kevin Williams, Commander, 2d Brigade Combat Team; and COL David Womack, Chief of Staff, 25th Infantry Division for reprisal actions taken against me in response to a protected complaint that I filed on 4 October 2018.

2. BLUF. I am MAJ Andrew Higgins, an active duty officer in the United States Army. I reside at 276 Langley Loop Wahiawa, HI 96786. I am stationed at Schofield Barracks Hawaii. I am currently assigned to "Special Projects" with the 25th Infantry Division. Prior to my removal as reprisal for my complaint, I was the Brigade S1 for 2d Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

On 4 October 2018, after numerous attempts to raise the issue of toxic command climate within my brigade, I sent an email to COL Williams, copying senior members of the 2d Brigade Combat Team, detailing my professional concerns with LTC Jennifer McDonough. (See Enclosure 1). The 25th Infantry Division reprised against me by removing me from my position as the Brigade S1, ordering me to a new position that was not commensurate with my skills and experience, forcing me to undergo two command-directed mental health examinations. This reprisal has the predictable effect of negatively affecting my career in the Army.

3. Request for Relief. I request the following relief:

a. Reinstatement as 2d Brigade S1 OIC or an Army position commensurate with my rank (major), experience (13-years), and education (PhD) in/around Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; and

b. Appropriate action to ensure that my career is not negatively affected.

4. Facts.

a. I arrived at Schofield Barracks, HI in June of 2018 after graduating from the Air

Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. My most recent assignment prior to coming to Hawaii was as the Joint Management Officer for the Army General Officer Management Office at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Subsequent previous assignments included Company Command at Headquarters, United States Army Garrison Bavaria, Germany and the S1 OIC for 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Rose Barracks, Germany. Deployments include Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan.

b. In early September 2018, I went to the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (2IBCT) Commander, COL Kevin Williams and his executive officer expressing concerns about the Brigade Support Battalion including low morale and BAH Fraud. No action was taken. I went to three other battalion commanders about the same issues and no action.

c. On 4 October 2018, I sent an email to COL Williams and other senior members of the command regarding my concerns. I accused her of toxic leadership and presenting false information to the brigade. I believe she fails to treat Soldiers with dignity and respect. She has a self-centered attitude and exhibited motivations, and behaviors that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance. To be classified as toxic, the counterproductive behaviors must be recurrent and have a deleterious impact on the organization's performance or the welfare of subordinates. An exacerbating factor may be if the behaviors demonstrate selfish reasons such as elevating one's own status, grabbing power, or otherwise obtaining personal gain.

d. On 5 October 2018, I was verbally counseled by COL Williams for my email for "over-communication."

e. On 8 October 2018, I was counseled in writing by COL Williams for my e-mail to all of the Battalion commanders concerning my "full transparency" of cooperating with CID and IG and ordered to undergo a command-directed mental health exam. The "counseling" was prepared on a blank write piece of paper as opposed to a DA Form 4856 that is typically used in the Army. I was reassigned to Special Projects at Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion. I complied with all directives and passed my mental health exam. After my mental health exam, I was ordered to work from home.

f. Despite the fact that the command directed me to undergo a forced mental health exam, I received only one call from my brigade asking about my health status.

g. I was counseled in writing again by COL Williams on Monday, 15 October 2018 for my email to all of the Battalion Commanders and forced out as the Brigade S1 OIC for 2nd IBCT and was told to have no further business communication with 2IBCT. In addition, I was directed to report to the Division G1 without a position commensurate with my rank and experience NLT Wednesday, 17 October 2018 by Colonel Kevin

Williams. Likewise, directed to clean out my office on Saturday, 20 October 2018. To the best of my knowledge and abilities, I complied with his directives.

h. On 29 October 2018, I was counseled in writing by Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion Commander, LTC Brian Hayes, that I was going to be flagged and was under investigation (AR 15-6).

i. On 16 November 2018, I was ordered to undergo a second command-directed mental health exam. I was again found fit for duty.

5. Discussion. I have raised the following points of concern regarding LTC McDonough. In general, there is a systemic pattern by LTC McDonough to misrepresent information, attempt to bully staff, belittle field grade officers, and attempt to manipulate her command authority for personal gain, thereby creating perceptions of a toxic leader.

a. In July 2018, LTC McDonough ordered the brigade S1 section to work on updating her personnel records for her upcoming SSC Board. I believe that ordering subordinates to assist with personal issues violates the Joint Ethics Regulation.

b. In July 2018, she falsely accused me of sending a captain on a WIAS tasker. I do not have the authority to make such a decision and merely facilitated the action.

c. In July 2018, she directed a convoy with ill-equipped and poorly training personnel. There was no convoy brief and vehicles got lost. Finally, my former NCOIS took over with my support. I feared to provide this information to LTC McDonough due to her overly defensive attitude and poor listening skills.

d. In September 2018, I attempted to set up an office call with LTC McDonough. I wanted to review the command slate and discuss our friction that had developed over the summer. She refused and said "no meeting."

e. In September 2018, LTC McDonough falsely reported that she was "short" on 68Ws.

f. In September 2018, she called an attempted to manipulate my supervisor into forcing me to make Troop Diversions to BSB to include 74-series personnel, 68W, 11-series, and 19-series. I sent her two CM NCOs that she was not authorized. She later stated that these CMs were diverted to her, which is false.

6. Reprisal. Since blowing the whistle on alleged BAH Fraud and toxic leadership - I have been railroaded. This is after a career with top-notch evaluations. After filing the complaints the following occurred: I was forced from my office, sent on two ill-advised mental health exams (passed), forced to work from home, then removed from my position as a Brigade S1 OIC and not given a job commensurate with my

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rank/experience. I was told I was "removed" for an e-mail I sent expressing my concerns about toxic leadership. I filed complaints with EO/IG. Now - I am under a 15-6 for EO/gender discrimination. The retaliation just continues for trying to do the right thing.

7. Conclusion. I request appropriate action is taken to stop the reprisal against me. I further request reinstatement as 2d Brigade S1 OIC or an Army position commensurate with my rank (major), experience (13-years), and education (PhD) in/around Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

8. POC is the undersigned.

5 Encls.

1. Whistleblower Email, 4 OCT 18
2. Written Counseling, 9 OCT2018
3. Email to MAJ Grabill
4. Command-Directed Mental Health Orders
5. ORB

ANDREW HIGGINS

Major, AG
Complainant