



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

14 March 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Rebuttal for 15-6 Investigation

1. I respectfully submit the following as an official rebuttal to the findings of the 15-6 investigation into my leadership of [REDACTED] Company, [REDACTED] Support Battalion. I submit the following only in the hopes of salvaging what can be salvaged from my career and reputation.
2. It should be known that, prior to February 2022, I had received no indication of the majority of the issues raised by the Investigating Officer (IO). In fact, I had to that point primarily received praise from the officers and NCOs I worked with and my subordinates. This included, but was not limited to, retiring NCOs stating I was one of the best commanders they ever had during their careers, prior service officers expressing I was the best commander they ever had and hoped I was their Battalion Commander someday, and junior enlisted thanking me for being approachable and listening to them. I personally held multiple sensing sessions with the company where no issues were raised and I directed my EOLs to also conduct sensing sessions, again, with no issues about my leadership being brought to my attention. Furthermore, I directed the Brigade SHARP and EO reps contact information be liberally disseminated throughout all company areas and regularly reminded Soldiers where they could get help, with no issues being raised. This is not meant as a dismissal of any alleged wrongdoing, only meant to demonstrate I was unaware of the issues that would later be addressed.
3. I feel it also important to address the lack of support I received from 1SG [REDACTED]. During our initial and subsequent counselings, I expressed to him a need to teach, coach, and mentor NCOs. This was something expressed to me by multiple sections within the company when I first arrived. At no point, did 1SG [REDACTED] ever make an effort to do this, which lead to me get far too much into the NCO lane than I should have, but felt it necessary. Additionally, 1SG [REDACTED] tried to cover up SGT [REDACTED]'s altercation with another service member. It was not until I received a phone call from another company commander of the incident, that I was made aware of it, though SGT [REDACTED] had called 1SG [REDACTED] when the altercation took place, two nights prior. Furthermore, when I sat down with SGT [REDACTED] later on following a subsequent incident where a previously administered MPO had been violated, 1SG [REDACTED] derailed the entire meeting by laughing and joking with SGT [REDACTED] and making light of the situation. Every time I tried to bring the conversation back around to SGT [REDACTED]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

wrongdoing, 1SG [REDACTED] interjected and made it the fault of the other service members. To this end, every time in the past nine months I have been approached about problems within the company, they have always been directed at 1SG [REDACTED] and his complacency. The NCOs within the company have been extremely vocal to me about 1SG [REDACTED] poor performance, which I tried my best to mitigate through additional efforts of my own when CSM [REDACTED] made it clear there was no replacement for him.

4. Around July 2021, roughly one month into command, I scheduled an office call with LTC [REDACTED] to ask his assessment of my leadership style and areas I could improve. I explained where I thought I was doing well and where I was struggling. LTC [REDACTED] told me not to "expect a pat on the back" when I did something right and he would "tell you when you screw up". I took this to mean he would explain trouble areas I was having in the future and could count on critical feedback. LTC [REDACTED] also told me he never had wanted to hire me and it was only because Major [REDACTED] had vouched for me that he did end up hiring me for the job.

5. During Operation [REDACTED], COL [REDACTED] conducted a container walkthrough of all the containers in [REDACTED]. During the layout of [REDACTED] containers, it was observed all the radio mounts were out of vehicles and stored in a container. COL [REDACTED] addressed this was unsatisfactory and the expectation going forward. Following this, LTC [REDACTED] pulled me aside and berated me, saying I was "not commanding my company" and I "had no control". That was the second time that day he had accused me of poor leadership, with the first time openly criticizing me in front of Soldiers for not inspecting my line of trucks for PMCS'. Instead, I had been answering questions for Soldiers and helping direct the morning activities. From these exchanges, I took his meaning to be I needed to take a heavier handed approach to leading, as what I was saying was not being followed. Additionally, the two conversations this day led me to begin talking to CPT [REDACTED] with Behavioral Health due to the embarrassment and humiliation I felt.

6. The above exchange led to the two instances where I was openly harsh with my Lieutenants, LT [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED]. I do not recall the exact details of the conversation with LT [REDACTED], but they occurred during a container layout following the [REDACTED] walkthrough. I know I did not yell, because I hate yelling, though I admit I may have spoken sternly to convey the seriousness of the situation. I had a similar encounter with LT [REDACTED] around the same time over some failures in planning for a training event. LT [REDACTED] made me aware he was unhappy with how I handled things, which led to a great conversation about leadership styles and my explaining to him I felt I was not getting through to him and trying everything to do so. Additionally, I apologized to LT [REDACTED] for being too harsh. Following that conversation, our relationship improved dramatically. Had I known LT [REDACTED] had felt the same way, I would have also had a similar conversation. There was no ill-will or



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

malice behind me speaking to him the way I did, I meant only to impress a sense of urgency and importance into his work. It is also worth noting, during my recent out brief with COL [REDACTED] on [REDACTED], he stated to CPT [REDACTED], the incoming [REDACTED] Commander: **"Sometime I blow Battalion Commanders in place. That is something you can do when you are trying to set a tone. Otherwise, I tell them 'See me in my office after', if I want to handle it privately". This is exactly the goal I was trying to achieve** through my above actions, only wishing to set a tone about property accountability which I feel was being dramatically overlooked.

7. At the Battalion FTX that occurred around [REDACTED], the Brigade Support Area **was established prior to LTC [REDACTED] arrival**. When he arrived to the field, he was unhappy with how the BSA was arranged and ordered it torn down and moved. During this move, the BN S4 section, which I was responsible for, took an S3 TOC Airbeam tent for their ALOC. This left the TOC with a two beam and three beam Airbeam, instead of two three beams. I was directing the BDOC and company CP establishments and was unaware this occurred as S3 was leading the TOC setup. LTC [REDACTED] walked over to my CP area and began yelling at SFC [REDACTED], the S3 NCOIC about the situation and told him to fix it. He then walked over to me and began screaming in my face about how terrible of a commander I was and how I was clueless about anything going on. He continued to yell at me about how I needed to get control of my company and lead. This exchange happened directly in front of the medical platoon and the headquarters section, to the extent CPT [REDACTED] and Major [REDACTED] moved the platoon out of eyeshot of the exchange. After LTC [REDACTED] left, I tracked him down and asked he not be that openly hostile to me in front of my Soldiers because it makes it hard to lead them. He explained he was just doing what I do and my leaders complain about me but did not elaborate. **I thought this had been in reference to LT [REDACTED] and I's exchange until the IO brought up LT [REDACTED].**

8. Following this second exchange, I had planned to resign due to what LTC [REDACTED] said my Soldiers thought of me. I contacted CPT [REDACTED] who I regularly consult for advice and explained what had happened and how I wanted to resign out of respect for my Soldiers. Unbeknownst to me, she contacted LTC [REDACTED] and explained the effect he was having on me. At the end of the FTX, LTC [REDACTED] approached me and apologized and said he would work on how he talked to me and I should do the same with my Soldiers. After that, I felt much better and made a deliberate effort to approach my Soldiers and officers better. This was the only exchange prior to the IO arriving where there were any issues raised about my interactions with Soldiers.

9. On multiple occasions, beginning shortly after assuming command, I approached CSM [REDACTED] and LTC [REDACTED] with concerns about 1SG [REDACTED]. The common response from both was to continue to counsel him, which I did for a time until I felt the issue was not going to be addressed. At one point, around February 2022, I took more concerns



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

about 1SG [REDACTED] behavior to LTC [REDACTED] which point he said "Don't say that" and ended the conversation. On at least two occasions, LTC [REDACTED] mentioned to me he was considering an investigation, this being before the 15-6 that occurred around February-March 2022. Each time, I earnestly asked that he do conduct the investigation because I felt there were issues that needed to be addressed and shared my concerns and those of my Soldiers with him each time. It was not until I became a subject of concern that the investigation was finally initiated, though I had asked multiple times for eight months. I firmly believe, had my requests been actioned on, many of the issues that came out of this investigation could have been avoided or at the very least, addressed earlier. Furthermore, it should be stated that prior to my assuming command, CPT [REDACTED] the previous [REDACTED] commander, also took similar concerns to LTC [REDACTED] and CSM [REDACTED] on multiple occasions. He even had a conversation with me prior to the Change of Command where he told me he was going to ask CSM [REDACTED] to replace 1SG [REDACTED] before I took over to prevent me from dealing with similar issues.

10. In addition to the aforementioned inaction, I began a dialogue with CSM [REDACTED] in November 2021 concerning SGT [REDACTED] who worked in the Orderly Room and a possible relocation. SGT [REDACTED] was the subject of concern in the question [REDACTED] demonstrated favoritism to certain individuals. Concerns about this alleged favoritism had been going on since before I took command and the issue was only getting worse, so I approached CSM [REDACTED] to request she be reassigned since I was getting no forward progress on addressing the issue with 1SG [REDACTED] who had previously refused a written order by me to relocate her to the Motorpool PLL Office in October 2021. CSM [REDACTED] assured me he would handle the problem sometime after block leave, which resulted in four more months of issues. However, within five days of my suspension, SGT [REDACTED] was transferred to another unit. The refusal to move SGT [REDACTED] while 1SG [REDACTED] and I were in our respective positions and the subsequent immediate removal following our suspensions caused many Soldiers to comment to me after the fact how it seemed peculiar BN refused to action on the issue when it could have affected a positive change for the command climate.

11. Following Holiday Block Leave, there were issues with multiple Soldiers submitting 60 days blocks of leave. My leave and pass policy I originally published in June was extremely liberal and I submitted an amended policy memo to Brigade Legal in November 2021. I followed up four times, including hand walking a hard copy to them for review, but never got it back. This became a point of contention for multiple Soldiers, and I was openly mocked about it in company training meetings. In late January or early February, SGT [REDACTED] the orderly room NCOIC, submitted two consecutive leave forms totaling approximately sixty days. I did not sign the first leave form because it covered our last training exercise on BDOC operations prior to our validation exercise in June 2022 and SGT [REDACTED] is our BDOC NCOIC. I asked he be present to ensure a strong hand over with his replacement. I did sign his PCS leave



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

form which totaled 35 days. SGT [REDACTED] was extremely agitated by this and said 1SG [REDACTED] had already worked with him and he needs to be able to have the time to move his family and sell his house. He also asked to use LTC [REDACTED]'s open door policy. I emailed LTC [REDACTED] as it was after duty hours and asked for a time for SGT [REDACTED] to see him. The following day, SGT [REDACTED] refused to come to work because he had not gotten an answer on the open door policy fast enough so he said he would camp out in the BN area until he could get an audience with LTC [REDACTED]. After he did, he was told it was a valid reason to not approve leave. Additionally, he was told I would approve 50 days of leave in a slightly changed timeline that allowed for him to participate in our training activity. SGT [REDACTED] declined to take that option. I feel this is important to note because SGT [REDACTED] is an EOL representative for the company, and immediately following this incident, the complaints began.

12. During the same time the above was occurring, SGT [REDACTED]' NCOER was due. 1LT [REDACTED] the company XO and SGT [REDACTED]'s rater, asked 1SG [REDACTED] to review the NCOER. She asked him multiple times over the week to review it and eventually asked me to ask him to. After I asked 1SG to review it, he said he had and it was ready to be signed. During their sit down, SGT [REDACTED] became extremely upset with 1LT [REDACTED] bullets and stormed out and went to CSM [REDACTED] office to complain. CSM [REDACTED] spoke with 1LT [REDACTED] and told her to change her evaluation and what she rated SGT [REDACTED] was unacceptable. I sat down with both 1LT [REDACTED] and SGT [REDACTED] to discuss rewrites. During this meeting, we discussed SGT [REDACTED]' career and some struggles he had faced. I explained I did not know he had these issues and we could have helped him or gotten him to see Behavioral Health to get through it. SGT [REDACTED] then stated "You don't want me going to BH. I'd ruin your whole career". As stated above, this comment happened shortly before the complaints began.

13. SGT [REDACTED] continued to be unhappy with his NCOER until 1LT [REDACTED] changed the bullets. Then, he was unhappy with my senior rater comments which he stated "didn't make any sense". I asked 1SG [REDACTED] about my comments and in private, he explained to me they were fine. During a meeting with SGT [REDACTED], 1SG [REDACTED] and me, however, 1SG [REDACTED] explained to SGT [REDACTED] my comments were bad and I should change them. I asked to sit down with them both again and we could discuss rewrites. By this point, the complaints had begun and I was trying to not rock the boat any more. 1SG [REDACTED] was barely around during February, and I was uncomfortable speaking with SGT [REDACTED] without someone else present. On 28 February 2022, SGT [REDACTED] entered my office at the end of the day and asked to speak about his NCOER. I told him I would be happy to as soon as I cleared out my inbox, which I do every day. I immediately texted SFC [REDACTED] (acting 1SG) to come to the office because I did not want to be alone with SGT [REDACTED] there, and I had asked SFC [REDACTED] to review my bullets that morning. After fifteen minutes, SGT [REDACTED] came back and said he was not waiting anymore and we were doing this now. I told him I still had some packets to sign and emails to reply to and that I would not leave until we had our discussion. He



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

REDACTED

said: "no and we were doing it now" because I "always blow him off". SGT [REDACTED] then came around my desk blocking me behind my desk. We discussed the bullets I had amended but everything I said he tried to turn into something inappropriate by retorting with "what you're saying is" or "what you mean is" and then adding something wildly inappropriate and untrue. For instance, I explained there was nothing wrong with the bullets I wrote and SFC [REDACTED] had reviewed them for me this morning. SGT [REDACTED] then replied: "Oh so what you're saying is someone influenced your rating of me". I explained that wasn't the case and that I had my senior enlisted advisor check my verbiage. SGT [REDACTED] again said, "What you mean is someone influenced your evaluation of me." This followed everything I said. Finally, I changed his bullets to read what he wanted so he would leave due to the extreme discomfort I felt during the situation. I typed an MFR of the incident and emailed Brigade Legal about my options as I felt this constituted some form of entrapment.

14. I would next like to address the alleged EO complaint I did not act on and the subsequent EO complaints up to February 2022. Allegedly, on [REDACTED], I failed to address an EO complaint that was brought to me. I have no memory of this incident, it goes entirely against my beliefs to do so, and I speak daily with both company EOLs: SSG [REDACTED] and SGT [REDACTED]. SSG [REDACTED] regularly talks to me privately about issues and concerns, both before work, after work, and over weekends. If I had failed to hear a complaint, I know he would have emailed me about it or spoken to me after work in private. Again, I have no idea what this allegation is in reference to. As for the other issues the IO addressed that arose prior to February 2022, these had not been brought to my attention previously. As stated, SSG [REDACTED] is very open with communication and I have tried my best to support the EO program and foster a receptive climate. Multiple Soldiers stated I was the first company commander they had that reviewed a DEOCs survey with the company and discussed a way ahead. If these issues had been raised before, I firmly believe SSG [REDACTED] would have told me about them and had that conversation with me. But as I stated, no complaints against me were brought to my knowledge until February 2022, therefore I had no opportunity to adjust my approach. Furthermore, I have spoken to BDE EO multiple times during my command and scheduled additional training sessions throughout the year, yet at no time did he ever bring any concerns up to me about my actions.

15. As far as the disparaging terms complaints go, I accepted things I said were misconstrued and taken out of context. **The only person I ever described as an "ugly mother\*\*\*\*er" was myself.** Of the comments I did say, they were said in a manner and context of jest and joking. As soon as I learned SGT [REDACTED] took offense to my comment following his accident, I immediately apologized profusely. It was not until after meeting with the IO, multiple people approached me stating Soldiers did not understand my humor or realize I was joking with them. Again, it was not brought to my attention until the investigation, therefore I had no knowledge of the impact it was having on Soldiers. I do however wish to convey in the fullest and sincerest terms,



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

these were said in a joking manner and in a humorous context. My intent had been to repair the relationship between the command team and the Soldiers I had been told was eroded from before I took command. I accept I am fully in the wrong, joking or otherwise, and should never have made jokes of this nature.

16. To the charge of conducting quid pro quo with SGT [REDACTED], the situation revolved around a hand receipt with SPC [REDACTED] of the Motorpool who was signed for the Training Room hand receipt. SPC [REDACTED] asked to be moved to the Motorpool around October or November of 2021. As such, I directed someone take over the Training Room hand receipt as she was not there to manage the property. This went ignored for weeks. SGT [REDACTED] was directed to sign for the hand receipt but when he came down on orders, this was adjusted to SGT [REDACTED] who would be taking over for SGT [REDACTED] as the Orderly Room NCOIC. 1SG [REDACTED] had stated he would personally oversee the hand receipt hand over and therefore took point. Again, there was little forward progress until January or February 2022. I had just followed up on the situation and was told there was no change. After SGT [REDACTED] informed me there was no change, he asked to transfer. I stated that, due to no one emphasizing this hand receipt change and the situation it was putting SPC [REDACTED] in, we would consolidate the Training Room hand receipt under the supply hand receipt that SPC [REDACTED] of supply would sign for. I told SGT [REDACTED] I would not sign a transfer until this was complete. This occurred after hours on a Friday afternoon. The following Monday morning, I spoke with SGT [REDACTED] and explained I thought about what I said and I did not think that was the best way to move forward and directed he ignore that order. In no way was SGT [REDACTED] impacted adversely by this, nor was this a targeted attack on SGT [REDACTED]. The period of time from or initial conversation to the subsequent revocation of my order constituted no more than 6 duty hours.

17. To the charge of counterproductive leadership in banning SPC [REDACTED]'s husband from the company, the situation revolved around an open threat made by SPC [REDACTED]'s husband towards me to the effect of "If he (CPT [REDACTED]) speaks to me, I will murder him". This threat was made openly by her husband to 1LT [REDACTED] who relayed it to me. Additionally, at the time I notified the MPs, SPC [REDACTED] has just come out of being an inpatient at [REDACTED], and her husband had been with her at the company every day. This was fine, until I found them in an office with the light off and the door mostly shut and her husband giving her a massage. When I directed this be broken up and he leave, SPC [REDACTED]'s husband became belligerent with the NCOs. Before calling the MPs, I called CPT [REDACTED] as this threat made me extremely uncomfortable. Additionally, I consulted the BDE SJA and LTC [REDACTED] who both agreed calling the MPs is the right course of action. I have always supported SPC [REDACTED] and encouraged her to attend any and all BH related courses she wants. She is on our high risk tracker and carefully monitored. I have also accommodated her needs within the company as best as possible and shared multiple times my appreciation of mental health resources and always encourage her to do what she needs to do for her health and safety. The report



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

filed with the MPs was done out of safety for myself and the Soldiers at the company, not retribution.

18. On the allegation of saying I want to ruin SPC [REDACTED]'s career, the circumstances revolve around a meeting I allegedly had with his NCOs, who would have been SGT [REDACTED] and SGT [REDACTED] of the Orderly Room. SPC [REDACTED] had habitually been a failure to report and insubordinate. This included a brief activation of the Missing Soldier Battle Drill and SPC [REDACTED] being subsequently found in a hospital parking lot. During his Field Grade Article 15 reading, he asked LTC [REDACTED] for the chance to be rehabilitated and LTC [REDACTED] acquiesced. This was immediately pre-Holiday Block Leave. LTC [REDACTED] stated that if SPC [REDACTED] had one more failure to report, the separation packet would be submitted. This was told by LTC [REDACTED] to SPC [REDACTED], who immediately went on HBL out of state. I explained to his NCOs what LTC [REDACTED] had said and the conditions. I did explain that any failure on his part to report would mean the chapter would continue. I explained to his NCOs they needed to check on him daily while out of the state and they needed to remind him of his report time the night he got back and wake him up early before his report time so he did not miss first formation. I explicitly stated they needed to ensure he did not miss his report times and that if he did he needed to be counseled. SGT [REDACTED] then laughed and said "What you're saying is, you want me to ruin his career?" to which I replied to the effect of: "Yes, if he does something wrong". I then reminded them the night before SPC [REDACTED] was due to report to reach out and remind him when he would be at work as well as doing the same thing the morning of three hours before his report time. When he did not report, I sent NCOs to find him, told them to counsel him, and asked LTC [REDACTED] in his office if he would like the packet to be submitted. LTC [REDACTED] said yes, chapter him. I waited a full day and asked LTC [REDACTED] during a side bar at the [REDACTED] Company Christmas Party again because it had been such a short time during his rehabilitation. LTC [REDACTED] assured me he wanted the packet moved forward. It was only then we submitted SPC [REDACTED]'s packet to Legal. SPC [REDACTED] was afforded every opportunity to succeed and be successful in his rehabilitation and was given ample opportunity and resources to succeed. I firmly believe my actions were just and afforded him every opportunity for success. After explaining this to the IO, he accused of me having a vendetta against SPC [REDACTED] and that I held a resentment towards him stemming from his long history of wrongdoing and as such, did not give him a chance at rehabilitation. To quote COL [REDACTED] during our out brief on [REDACTED] "it is your job as the commander to know your Soldiers and try to rehabilitate them. Sometimes you have to know they cannot be rehabilitated" or words closely related to this. While I made every effort to rehabilitate SPC [REDACTED] according to LTC [REDACTED]'s guidance, I also feel SPC [REDACTED] fell into the category COL [REDACTED] mentioned of being unable to be rehabilitated, due to his multiyear history of misbehavior within [REDACTED] and the numerous counsellings and corrective actions which had been given to him to no effect.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

19. To the charge of saying "Of course the females know it's Valentine's Day", I absolutely said this. After asking Soldiers what Monday (February 14<sup>th</sup>) was, the male Soldiers all replied with "The Super Bowl". I asked what else, and two female Soldiers replied "Valentine's Day". My full statement was: "Of course the females know it's Valentine's Day. Guys, make sure you do something nice for your significant others and don't just think about the Super Bowl. I suggested to your section leadership a 1500 release may be a good idea so you can have dinner with your loved ones". I accept that I said this, but there was no malicious intent behind it. I only meant to remind the Soldiers it was Valentine's Day and to do something nice for their loved ones. The two female Soldiers then expressed this was inappropriate of me to say and they were offended, at which point I apologized on the spot, in front of everyone, and ensured them I had no ill meaning behind my words.

20. To the charge of being racist, this is completely preposterous. The situation discussed revolves around a conversation I had in the Motorpool with several Soldiers present. I am a firearms collector and discuss them all the time with Soldiers. One Soldier in the group approached me with a video from an Instagram channel called Black Rambo. The host showcases extravagant firearms and this video detailed a fully automatic Desert Eagle. I joked with the Soldiers how I had just purchased a Desert Eagle and the thought of a fully automatic one was foolish. About that time PFC [REDACTED] walked up and we continued talking about the fully automatic Desert Eagle. PFC [REDACTED] then began to joke about illegally converting guns to fully automatic. He was clearly joking in what he was saying but I used this as an opportunity to get back to the office as I had been in the Motorpool a while. I stated: "Oh, I can't hear that! I gotta go!", while dramatically throwing my hands up and smiling and laughing. I then told everyone I had to get back to the office and excused myself. The IO's questions about this incident came hours after I signed PFC [REDACTED] AAM for being [REDACTED] I had absolutely no reason to believe at the time anyone took offense to my exit, nor was that ever brought to my attention until speaking with the IO.

21. To the accusation of being sexist, this incident revolved around a conversation with 1LT [REDACTED] the new company XO and headquarters platoon leader, about PFC [REDACTED] who had went to BH during lunch following a nervous breakdown stemming from her menstrual cycle beginning following a recent miscarriage. I had directed we send someone to be with her to check on her to LT [REDACTED] prior to the company training meeting. After the meeting, I followed up to check on PFC [REDACTED] and see who we sent and LT [REDACTED] stated: "SGT [REDACTED] told me we did not have to send anyone". This was during the week the IO was conducting interviews so I was extremely careful with my tone and words. I explained that sending someone is the right thing to do and maybe we think about what caused her feelings and then try not to exacerbate them. I recommended since it was a sensitive topic and she may be uncomfortable, we do not send a male NCO, but instead send a female NCO and named SGT [REDACTED] who PFC [REDACTED] has confided in for a week or two, as SGT [REDACTED] could empathize with PFC [REDACTED]



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] experience. I further explained this made sense because, while I could offer all the sympathy in the world, I, as a man, could never empathize with her in what she is going through. Therefore, as leaders, we would be doing right by the Soldier in thinking like that. I, in no way, view these comments as sexist or wrong in any form or fashion. My sole goal is the safety and wellbeing of Soldiers and I was trying to teach, coach, and mentor a first time platoon leader to think that way.

22. In addition to the above, I firmly believe 1LT [REDACTED] complaint came at the behest of SGT [REDACTED] who was also in the vicinity of the conversation. This belief stems from another conversation which occurred the week after the IO's interviews and concerned LT [REDACTED] multiple CDDP school packets. I had asked for all the Lieutenants in the company to be sent to CDDP schools (UMO, HAZMAT, etc) as we were short school trained SMEs, none of them had any schools on their ORBs, and 4Q22 training focus is Expeditionary Deployment. For these reasons, I thought it best to give the LTs the opportunity to get all the schools they could. LT [REDACTED] approached me and stated her UMO packet was not being submitted. When I asked her why not, she stated: "SGT [REDACTED] said you were overloading me with too many additional duties". I then explained my intent as stated above, and that I did not want her to serve as a CDDP primary due to being the XO, but as an alternate for oversight and OER building. I found this conversation concerning because it was not the first time LT [REDACTED] had told me something was or was not going to happen due to SGT [REDACTED] telling her so.

23. To the claim I made a joke about vodka drinking at the expense of SGT [REDACTED] because of being Russian is also untrue. First and foremost SGT [REDACTED] was born in Ukraine but raised in Russia. While he identifies with his Russian upbringing, I believe it wrong to say he is Russian when that is not his country of birth. Second, SGT [REDACTED] has made multiple jokes to me about consuming vodka, at nearly every opportunity. This water bottle has a sticker on it that says "this is vodka" or words to that effect. It is a go-to joke for him and because he himself has made the joke multiple times to me before, I felt comfortable making the joke. Though, admittedly, I should have used discretion saying this in front of the formation. Furthermore, the IO stated to me during my interview, he never spoke to SGT [REDACTED] about the incident.

24. To the claim I called SPC [REDACTED] "A lying piece of \*\*\*\*", this is taken out of context. During a meeting with his entire chain of command where SPC [REDACTED] was not present, his squad leader SGT [REDACTED] and his Section Sergeant SSG [REDACTED] both laid out the multiple instances of lying and poor performance SPC [REDACTED] exhibited to them. They went into great detail for nearly twenty minutes of all the wrong doing and lies they had been told and brought along a detailed counseling packet. After they concluded, I summarized with "SPC [REDACTED] is a lying piece of \*\*\*\*. You have the evidence to support that here" as I tapped the counseling packet. This was after they had called him a liar multiple times. I then told them I would support them if they wanted to pursue UCMJ action. SGT [REDACTED] did not and instead asked for a Bar to



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Continued Service. Following this meeting, I spoke to LTC [REDACTED] about that option as I had promised SGT [REDACTED] I would and LTC [REDACTED] did not support it. SGT Parsons then became angry and wanted to drop the entire issue but finally agreed to pursue a company grade Article 15 at my insistence as I did not want it to look like misbehavior were going unpunished. Prior to my assumption of command, that had been a habitual issue in the Motorpool. However, due to a misplaced counseling form, the packet was **never continued by legal**. SPC [REDACTED] received no unfavorable action aside from a flag and was instead moved to the Orderly Room by 1SG [REDACTED]. SPC [REDACTED] considered this a positive change and was happy with this move as he felt he was being targeted by the NCOs in the Motorpool.

25. To the claim I used the term "Karen" during a safety brief, I did not. Despite the IO's assertion that I was lying because multiple people said I did, I used the phrase "rich old white women". This was during the first safety brief I had with the company in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Three of my NCOs addressed me privately afterwards that I could not say that and I acknowledged I was wrong and tried to learn from it. The fact this was never mentioned again until nine months later is surprising. Following the IO's questioning, I asked the aforementioned NCOs what I had said and they confirmed I never used the term "Karen".

26. I would like to also recount my efforts during the last nine months to maintain the good order and discipline of the company. Due to the lack of support and the constant harassment I received, I spent a part of nearly every day in the [REDACTED] legal office seeking advice and appropriate steps to handle issues. I made every effort to seek out and find solutions through legal when I could not find them elsewhere, and took all advice and guidance they gave to ensure the appropriate handling of every situation.

27. I would also like to discuss the multiple steps I took to improve the morale of the unit and foster a healthy and happy climate within [REDACTED]. During my time in command, [REDACTED] hosted a hail and farewell, in which I paid for the plaques and gifts for the departing Soldiers. We also hosted multiple unit breakfasts and lunches, usually at my expense. Additionally, [REDACTED] held multiple family PT sessions, team building activities such as hikes and the ninja warrior gym, and Org days, again being events I funded. For Thanksgiving, my fiancé and I cooked an entire Thanksgiving dinner for the barracks Soldiers of barracks building [REDACTED] this was done entirely on my own time and at my expense. I have never demeaned or belittled any of my Soldiers as is claimed. I have visited every section of a unit separated geographically across an entire installation on a daily basis. I talked to my Soldiers, laughed with them, learned their families and their problems, and discussed their goals and dreams. This is in keeping with COL [REDACTED] guidance during the [REDACTED] out brief when he stated all these things are what a good commander should be doing. If at any time, someone mistook my jokes as anything but, I did not know that was the case and would have apologized



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



Immediately, as I have done in the past, and better tailored my approach in the future. I never wanted to have to claim these acts as I believe they are what a commander should do, but under the circumstances I feel they are needed to show the accusations against me are entirely out of line for my character.

28. Furthermore, I wish to address the actions of the IO. During the interview, he did state multiple times what my rights were and at one point did offer to stop the interview. He did this by saying we could stop and then mockingly asking if he could call BH for me. I voluntarily elected to continue because I did not want to wait through a weekend with this continuing to hang over my head. However, I feel he was extremely biased in his approach and his questioning. **To this end, after the IO's out brief to COL [REDACTED], LTC [REDACTED] even commented to me on the IO's bias towards me after the meeting.** During our interview, the IO, at multiple points, got angry with me and accused me of harassment. He stated I marginalized my Soldiers and made them feel targeted, not that they had said that, but that he assessed that was the case. He also stated I did not know how to interact with my Soldiers and was incapable of understanding how they viewed me. When I tried to offer counterpoints and expand on circumstances which involved the battalion command team, I was shut down, despite that information being important to the context of several situations. Additionally, when I tried to bring up the fact the Soldiers who had accused me had openly threatened my career, he bushed it off and concluded the interview by saying "just write it down", and began packing his things. Not only was this NCO the star witness, another key witness who substantiated all the aforementioned claims was angry with me for trying to process UCMJ action against him for violating an MPO, a process which First Sergeant [REDACTED] derailed. This NCO is also roommates with another NCO going through a chapter for assault who has stated to his wife he wishes to hurt me because of the chapter. Thus, the two key witnesses to all these allegations have either themselves threatened me or are immediately connected to someone who has threatened me, while I was never afforded the opportunity to present any of my own witnesses to rebuttal any of these allegations. Again, I accept it is my fault for not stopping this interview as this was occurring, however, I feel it prudent to address the clearly demonstrated bias of the IO during the investigation.

29. My failures as a commander did not stem from malice or cruelty. Instead, they stem from my approach to fixing the morale problem which has existed in the company for years. As the command climate survey showed, the Soldiers felt leadership did not care about them at both the company and battalion levels. I was regularly told how the **commander I replaced wasn't seen by the Soldiers since his change of command inventories when he took over.** Furthermore, the Soldiers felt battalion leadership was openly hostile towards them and hated them, this was expressed in the survey and **during our numerous sensing sessions. This created within the company a sense of "us versus them".** In my hands-on approach, I tried to completely change the culture and climate rapidly by being friendly and joking with the Soldiers and NCOs. This was the



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

wrong approach, as these younger NCOs were on guard for the aforementioned reason, and my attempts at humor were misinterpreted by Soldiers and NCOs who had only experienced hostility within the unit. It did not help my cause that I did not have a First Sergeant to go behind me and explain to the NCOs what my intent was and what I was trying to accomplish, though to their credit, my senior NCOs did try their best. To that end, I as well should have explained myself and my approach to the Soldiers and explained what I was trying to do and what I was doing to get there, but again, I did not know at the time my efforts were being misunderstood. In hindsight, I should have approached the issue not through jokes and humor, but only through empowerment and compassion while being more hands-off, allowing Soldiers to approach me instead of seeking them out. This would have more slowly brought the company around to my intended goal of changing the belief their leadership did not care for them by allowing the Soldiers to feel they were being heard instead of injecting myself into their space daily.

30. This is merely to inform my leadership why these situations occurred and to clear any perception that I acted outside of good faith. This is a hard end to what has been a challenging command. I have tried my best to leave the unit better than I found it. In some ways, I have succeeded in that end, yet in others I have failed. I take full ownership and responsibility for those failures **because, as the commander, "the buck stops here"**. I only wish to say, had I been told I was having this effect, I would never have allowed things to progress this far and would have corrected myself as soon as I found out.

31. The point of contact is CPT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
CPT, [REDACTED]