

**AETC Commander's Report
to the Secretary of the Air Force**

**Review of Major General Woodward's
Commander Directed Investigation**



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Executive Summary

This report is the culmination of Air Education and Training Command's (AETC) effort to correct deficiencies identified in the report of the commander directed investigation (CDI) led by Maj Gen Margaret Woodward, USAF.

As an increasing number of allegations against military training instructors (MTI) assigned to basic military training (BMT) came to light, suggesting that they had engaged in misconduct ranging from unprofessional relationships to sexual assault of trainees and/or students, AETC's leadership made four commitments: (1) to thoroughly investigate all allegations of misconduct; (2) to care for the victims of the misconduct; (3) to hold perpetrators of misconduct accountable while protecting due process for those accused, and; (4) to correct the underlying problems that led to the misconduct.

At the time of this report, 23 alleged offenders have been identified. Five MTIs have been court-martialed for sexual assault or unprofessional relationships with trainees or students. All five of those MTIs were convicted. More MTIs are pending charges or are under investigation. Additionally, one MTI received nonjudicial punishment under Article 15 of the *Uniform Code of Military Justice* for an unprofessional relationship that did not involve touching. At the time of this report, 48 alleged victims have been identified. Of those, 35 are alleged victims of an unprofessional relationship with an instructor—physical contact was involved with 26 alleged victims, and no physical contact was involved with nine alleged victims. The remaining 13 are alleged victims of

sexual assault; six were assaulted by a single MTI who was convicted of those assaults.

In concert with AETC's aggressive internal efforts to address misconduct, the AETC commander appointed General Woodward on 20 June 2012 to conduct an independent CDI into matters relating to misconduct between faculty/staff and trainees/students in the BMT and technical training (TT) environments and identify recommendations for corrective actions. This report documents AETC's response to the external CDI, giving context to the weaknesses and contributing factors in the BMT environment highlighted by the findings. Most importantly, it outlines those actions the command has taken or intends to take with regard to the CDI recommendations.

The CDI team members conducted 215 in-depth interviews, surveyed more than 18,000 personnel, and conducted focus groups with BMT trainees and with MTI spouses. They visited BMT at Lackland AFB, Texas; four TT bases; Air Force Officer Training School at Maxwell AFB, Alabama; and the US Army's basic combat training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Additionally, the team conferred with leaders responsible for US Navy and Marine Corps basic training.

Upon conclusion of the 60-day CDI effort, General Woodward's team produced 22 findings categorized into five major areas: (1) leadership, where deterrence was found to be hindered by insufficient leadership oversight; (2) the MTI selection and manning process, where the MTI corps consisted of members with minimal leadership experience and too much power resident

with a single MTI; (3) MTI training and development, where the MTI culture and training did not adequately emphasize noncommissioned officer (NCO) responsibilities; (4) reporting and detection, which addressed barriers that exist in reporting by MTIs, trainees, and students, and; (5) policy and guidance, where enduring institutional safeguards are necessary. Associated with those CDI findings are 46 recommendations for action.

Given the nature of the BMT environment, the opportunity for abuse of power must be understood and eliminated. To guard against misconduct, BMT incorporates institutional safeguards to dissuade, deter, detect, and hold accountable individuals who engage in unprofessional conduct. The CDI report highlighted weaknesses in those safeguards and flaws in the leadership oversight and MTI culture that enabled the weaknesses to be exploited.

The AETC Commander draws three overarching conclusions from General Woodward's CDI: (1) over time, weaknesses developed in each of the previously described institutional safeguards; (2) leadership failed to detect and prevent these weaknesses, and; (3) our MTIs did not sufficiently police themselves.

Of these three, leadership stands out as the most important area to address. Strong leadership can overcome weaknesses in institutional safeguards and/or weaknesses in the MTI culture. Average or weak leadership will struggle to successfully navigate through the unique challenges that exist in the BMT environment.

Given the singular importance of leadership in maintaining an effective, safe, and secure BMT environment, AETC is taking aggressive action in this area as recommended by the CDI.

Training squadron commander positions will be filled with high-potential officers. AETC will increase the number of leadership positions within the squadrons by adding operations officers and flight commanders to the rosters. AETC will increase the experience level of leaders by upgrading the squadron first sergeant positions from master sergeant to senior master sergeant and the squadron superintendent positions from senior master sergeant to chief master sergeant. Leadership preparation will also be strengthened considerably through an expanded leadership orientation course that will place additional emphasis on the potential for abuse of power, sexual assault, unprofessional relationships, and maltreatment or maltraining. Finally, AETC is instituting a set of policy changes to ensure that leadership receives timely notification of potential misconduct, that credible allegations of misconduct result in immediate removal from the training environment, and that more appropriate thresholds are set for the temporary or permanent removal of an MTI from the instructor corps. Taken together, these actions directed at strengthening the leadership team will provide the most effective means of ensuring that we are well positioned to address the critical issues impacting BMT today, and that we maintain this position of strength for the long run.

A second set of initiatives that will pay significant dividends involves placing MTIs in a stronger position to successfully execute their duties. In this

regard, AETC believes that the single most important decision they can make is to reduce the MTI duty day, which can extend as long as 16 hours for weeks at a time. To this end, AETC will assign two MTIs to each BMT flight, which will allow splitting the duty day in half. AETC will also increase the required grade level for MTI duty to technical sergeant, which will bring more experience and maturity to the MTI corps. MTI initial qualification and supplemental training will also be improved through changes in the qualification training course and the establishment of a deliberate development program.

AETC's goal is to raise professionalism in BMT to the highest level possible. The command cannot achieve this goal unless it selects the most highly qualified Airmen for MTI duty and then provides them with high-quality training and a reasonable workday. The changes AETC is making concerning MTI selection, professional development, and work period will contribute significantly to enhancing the ability of MTIs to execute their duties professionally.

Along with leadership and MTIs, there is a third group of people who are an instrumental part of the solution set for strengthening the effectiveness, safety, and security of the BMT environment. This group is the trainees, who play a critical role in the ability to detect and deter misconduct. Moreover, we must do better at taking advantage of the unique opportunity afforded in BMT to prepare our newest Airmen to deal effectively with sexual assault and unprofessional behavior throughout the remainder of their Air Force careers.

This process of increasing the capacity of our trainees to be part of the solution set will begin before they enter BMT. From their recruiter, they will receive a briefing that covers sexual assault, sexual harassment, unprofessional relationships, maltreatment and maltraining, and the reporting of misconduct during BMT. This briefing will be repeated after the trainees arrive at BMT.

Additionally, AETC will increase the number of sexual assault response counselors (SARC) in BMT. This will not only provide more trainee contact with SARCs but also increase the portion of the sexual assault prevention training curriculum instructed by SARCs.

Feedback from trainees is another area where we must improve. AETC has improved feedback mechanisms through better positioning of critique boxes and improved survey mechanisms, and will add hotline phones for direct connection to the SARC.

A significant policy change concerning trainee safety is expansion of the wingman policy, which now requires trainees to be accompanied by another trainee any time they are outside a group setting. This single policy change dramatically decreases the potential for sexual assault or misconduct since these types of activities almost always occur in a one-on-one setting.

As recommended by the CDI, AETC is taking other actions to repair the deficiencies discovered in BMT's institutional safeguards and to strengthen its leadership team—while revitalizing the MTI culture. These additional actions, as well as the actions mentioned above, are described in the report and are

grouped by changes directed toward leadership, the MTI culture, and institutional safeguards.

Of the CDI's 46 recommendations for corrective action, 14 are associated with strengthening leadership; 12 are associated with strengthening the MTI culture; and 20 are associated with strengthening the system of BMT institutional safeguards. AETC intends to fully or partially implement 45 of these recommendations. The single remaining recommendation, which suggests adjusting the length of BMT, will not be implemented as part of the current effort.

While AETC has thoroughly reviewed and responded to the CDI report with an effective action plan, the command's leadership also believes—based upon its overall comprehensive assessment—that there is even more that can be done to ensure that the conditions which contributed to the breakdown of good order and discipline at BMT do not reoccur in the future. Therefore, AETC's actions go beyond those recommended by the CDI report. The establishment of a quarterly oversight council, implementation of metrics, and the upgrading of BMT squadron superintendents to chief master sergeants are a few examples of additional improvements under way at basic training.

The misconduct discovered at BMT tears at the foundational trust and core values that hold the Air Force together. AETC is fully committed to enduring solutions for the BMT environment and a zero-tolerance standard for misconduct or abuse of power in this key training program.