Leadership Authority and Responsibility

Cognitive Lesson Objective:
• Comprehend the concepts of leadership authority and responsibility.

Cognitive Samples of Behavior:
• Identify the “ultimate” and “direct” sources of an officer’s authority.
• Identify the types of officer authority.
• Explain the guidelines that must be met for an order to be enforceable.
• Given a scenario, distinguish between properly and improperly applied military authority.
• Identify an officer’s responsibilities.
• Given a scenario, correctly prioritize tasks with respect to an officer’s responsibility.

Affective Lesson Objective:
• Respond to the importance of understanding the concepts of leadership authority and responsibility.

Affective Samples of Behavior:
• Assert the importance of properly applied leadership authority and responsibility.
• Actively participate in discussion of case studies.
In accepting your commission, you gain a position of “special trust and confidence” in the eyes of the President – trust and confidence in your “patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities.” By virtue of your commission you are placed in a position of authority and responsibility over “personnel of lesser rank.” You are also charged with obeying the lawful orders of those appointed over you. Before you can function as an officer, you take an oath of office in which you swear to “support and defend the Constitution,” to “bear faith and allegiance to the same,” and “to well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office” upon which you are entering. You, the Air Force officer, are charged with the defense of our nation.

At one time it was enough for a military leader to excel in strength, stamina, and courage. Today, however, the range of talents required is infinitely broader, with the emphasis on brainpower and character. We need military leaders who understand the complexities of the world in which we live, the philosophies we live by, the leaders and people of other nations, their history, their customs, their aspirations, and their problems. We need military leaders who understand the scientific revolution of recent years, the physics and mathematics and other sciences that have given us the power to relieve human misery or to destroy one another. We need military leaders who understand the techniques of managing complex organizations. But no intellectual brilliance and no technical capacity is enough to qualify for military leadership, unless it is combined with qualities of character that inspire other people to give forth their best effort in common cause.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy, in addressing the United States Military Academy, emphasized the nation’s dependence upon the military officer for both military and non-military responsibilities. His discussion of the role of the Air Force officer were paraphrased in The Inspector General Brief, August 1962, as follows:

...He must broaden his knowledge to cope with these added responsibilities [responsibility to complement U.S. diplomacy, act as a diplomatic arm, deter our adversaries, and symbolize our determination to support our allies]. This includes having a clear understanding of our foreign policy; being familiar with the policies and general structure of other countries where he may help to keep peace, deter, or roll back insurgency; and knowing what is going on in all corners of the world. He must know military, economic, and political backgrounds to be able to make wise, mature recommendations and decisions that any occasion may demand. Every USAF officer should be encouraged to expand considerably the breadth of his education, training, and skills to meet broadening responsibilities.

These are but some of the obligations and responsibilities required of you and every other Air Force officer. If you are to discharge these responsibilities, you must have the authority to do so. For that reason, you must understand the sources of an officer’s authority, the limits of that authority, the legal force of an order, and the responsibility to properly prioritize courses of action.
SOURCES OF OFFICER AUTHORITY

Officers with any degree of responsibility for the actions of others must be delegated sufficient authority to control and direct their subordinates. The commissioned officer’s ultimate source of authority stems from the Constitution. But an officer’s authority is not clearly spelled out in the Constitution. An officer’s authority to act is derived from the powers specifically given to Congress and to the President.

Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution provides that, insofar as the Armed Forces are concerned, “Congress shall have the power to declare war, to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a navy; to make rules for the government and regulations of the land and naval forces” and to “make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers.” Congress, pursuant to this authority, enacts legislation pertaining to the armed forces, to include laws establishing the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the grade structure, pay, and leave for military personnel. It also includes provisions for management of the state militias and reserves the right to appoint officers of the state militias to the states. Article II, Section 2, provides that the President “shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States” and “shall commission all the officers of the United States.” In exercising his power to commission, the President gives to each officer a direct grant of authority commensurate with that officer’s rank, and in effect is the direct source of the officer’s federal authority.

The officer exercises two types of authority. The first is legal authority. This type of authority is passed from the President through the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Air Force, and so on down to the lowest levels of command, and is clearly expressed in hundreds of instructions, regulations, manuals, and other directives.

Although much of the authority officers need is spelled out in directives and instructions, their commission also grants them broad authority to use discretion and judgment to conform to our national moral values. Officers are expected to do what is right under all circumstances even if no directive specifically authorizes the actions they take. This type of authority is known as moral authority.

There may be rare occasions when officers, basing their decisions upon a judgment of circumstances, will find it necessary to act contrary to instruction. These instances should be kept to a minimum and must be fully justified by unforeseen circumstances. When officer’s deviate from instructions they are acting on moral authority.
LIMITS OF AUTHORITY

In defining an officer’s authority, we must also define its limits.

**An officer doesn’t have the authority to order any person to perform an act that is unlawful.** If a person receiving an unlawful order knows the act is illegal and performs it anyway, the fact that the person was carrying out the orders of a superior doesn’t constitute a valid defense. Both individuals can be found guilty of the wrongful act. Likewise, the fact that the person issuing the order wasn’t near the scene of its execution doesn’t constitute a valid defense for the individual issuing the order.

**An officer may not deprive subordinates of life or property without due process of law.** If an officer is to give a valid and enforceable order to perform an act that might result in loss of life or in serious injury, there must exist compelling military necessity to act or some duty to act growing out of law, regulations, or customs. Subordinates can only be deprived of their property through established procedures such as a courts-martial sentence, punishment under Article 15 of the UCMJ, or a report of survey. Arbitrary orders to pay for loss of government property aren’t enforceable. Regulations often specify personal property that may not be kept in the barracks. These prohibitions are made because retention of the property is considered detrimental to good order and discipline or hazardous to the occupants’ personal safety. An officer may not arbitrarily order the confiscation or destruction of subordinates’ personal property.

**An officer may not deprive a subordinate of liberty as punitive measure without due process of law.** It’s commonly recognized that a person surrenders a certain amount of personal freedom when entering military service. However, a person may be deprived of personal liberty as a punitive measure only in accordance with the UCMJ. Mass punishment of subordinates for faults of a few isn’t condoned either. Do not confuse mass punishment with restrictive authority. Restrictive authority allows commanders to restrict the use of unit property (examples: dormitory dayrooms, snack bars to include vending machines, picnic areas, athletic fields and courts, etc.).

**An officer may not deny a military subordinate the right to pursue a private life, as the subordinate chooses unless military necessity requires otherwise.** The concept that a person, even though a member of the military forces, is entitled to pursue private life, as the individual chooses, unless military necessity requires otherwise imposes other limitations. For example, a subordinate may not be ordered to pay a private debt, forced to live in a certain house off base, or prohibited from purchasing private property.

An officer may not exercise moral authority indiscriminately. An officer is expected to do what’s right and proper whenever exercising moral authority. Only in rare instances where there’s strong justification, and the situation demands it, should an officer deviate from directives, instructions, and orders. The assumption of authority and display of initiative in disobeying an order may be a proper use of moral authority only when the person who had authority for directing your efforts can’t possibly be aware of the changed conditions that compel you to usurp that authority.
Disobedience in the armed forces is hazardous. An individual who decides to disobey does so at personal risk. An officer must be extremely careful when invoking moral authority, the officer must be right.

Officers have the responsibility to exercise this authority and do what’s proper in situations where the conduct or behavior of military personnel of lower rank may be prejudicial to good order and discipline. Furthermore, it’s their duty to enforce observance of military customs and courtesies and to act in situations where the safety or health of personnel, the interests of the Air Force, and violations of laws and regulations are involved. Additionally, this authority, and the duty to act, extends to situations even when military personnel aren’t directly under the chain of command of those officers, when officers are off duty, in or out of uniform, or on or off base.

LEGAL FORCE OF AN ORDER

To be enforceable, an order must be:

- within the authority of the issuing officer
- related to military duty, morale, or discipline
- clear and unequivocal
- received and understood

An officer shouldn’t issue an order to settle personal and private disputes. The officer must at all times refrain from issuing an order as a matter of personal convenience. Additionally, since no person can execute an order that one doesn’t understand, the officer must ensure that the order states clearly and exactly what is or is not to be done. If necessary, the officer should also state who will accomplish the action, what is required, when it is to be accomplished. Furthermore, an officer must make certain any order issued is received. For example, an order posted on an official bulletin board is assumed received if the individual has initialed the order. However, it’s not necessary for the receiver to always acknowledge orders. When a procedure, like reading an official bulletin board, is established and acknowledged by an individual, it becomes his/her responsibility to read and respond to all orders posted on the board. In either of these cases, there’s sufficient evidence for disciplinary action to be taken against the person who fails to obey the order.
RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRIORITIZATION

Strictly speaking, the responsibilities of command are the responsibilities of the commander. The commander obviously can’t do all the things for which he/she is responsible. The commander must, therefore, give orders to subordinate officers to perform a wide range of duties to accomplish the mission of the unit. When you direct, manage, supervise, or lead an activity in accomplishing duties assigned by your commander, you’re exercising the functions of command. You’re sharing the commander’s responsibilities for accomplishment of the unit’s mission. The responsibilities of command, then, are also your responsibilities. Frequently, these responsibilities will appear to conflict, and this problem of divided responsibility may be difficult to solve. You must continually choose one line of action from amongst several apparently correct lines of action. The following guidelines should help you ascertain the correct course of action when confronted with the problem of conflicting responsibilities.

• **Responsibility to the Mission.** The successful accomplishment of the mission is your primary responsibility, as an officer. Mission accomplishment is the only reason for the existence of the military instrument. Your attitude toward the Air Force, your approach to the task at hand, the way you think, your philosophy—all will have a great effect upon the way your people will act and think about their work and, in turn, upon mission accomplishment. This is why we, in the military, have one agreed-upon axiom, to be effective; every military leader must have a sense of mission.

Ideally, your sense of mission should include the belief that accomplishment of the mission is the ultimate goal, that you’ll willingly sacrifice self, unit, and personnel, if necessary, to attain it. A realistic approach to this responsibility is to develop sensitivity to the importance of the mission and then use the following guidelines to attain mission accomplishment.

a. Mission accomplishment has priority over all other responsibilities.

b. In combat, mission success must be achieved with a minimal loss of personnel and material.

c. Outside of combat, economy of effort and use of resources are imperative in accomplishing the mission.

d. The mission must be accomplished within the authorized structure, within the proper chain of command, regulations, traditional customs, and legal authority.

e. Instill a sense of mission in your subordinates by impressing on them the importance of the mission.
You will be delegated the appropriate authority necessary to accomplish your mission. It is your responsibility to establish and understand the limits of your authority. You must understand the requirements imposed by your superiors, regulations, and laws pertaining to your job.

• **Responsibility to Higher Headquarters.** Just as the individual person is responsible to the commander for accomplishing the squadron mission, the squadron commander is responsible to his/her superiors for performing a mission. And this responsibility follows up the chain of command. In each step, the higher echelon is presumed to be in a better position to visualize and interpret the overall mission. The higher echelon interprets its mission and delegates lesser objectives to subordinate commands.

  a. Remember your responsibility is to first accomplish the mission, then to accomplish the directives and obligations of the higher headquarters.

  b. *Do not* impair your people’s confidence in higher echelons of command.

  c. Deal directly and confidentially with your superiors whenever you disagree with directives. Let your disagreement be known tactfully.

  d. *Do not* disclose to your people your disagreements with directives.

  e. *Do not* criticize your leaders and their methods.

• **Responsibility to Collateral Units.** Collateral units are considered organizations outside your unit with which you have contact. By the very nature of the assigned mission, an officer operates as a follower, a coordinator, and a leader. Every officer is acting as a follower in carrying out the orders received from above. As a coordinator or cooperator, one must correlate the mission with all units related to it or affected by it. This means the principle of teamwork must be a part of your sense of mission.

The capacity to view one’s assignment in its larger context requires knowledge of the broader organizational mission. Every assignment given to an officer carries the implied command, “Accomplish this in such a way that all related activities of your organization are continually aided to the maximum in accomplishing their mission.” Sometimes higher headquarters will specifically indicate this responsibility to collateral units, but often it’s only implied. Whether implied or specifically indicated almost any association between your unit and other organizations may be considered as a responsibility closely associated with your mission.

*Your responsibility to collateral units could be greater than your responsibility to your unit. If supporting a collateral unit increases overall mission effectiveness then support the collateral unit.* However, if overall mission effectiveness decreases or stays the same, you’re not obligated to support the collateral unit.
a. Understand your unit’s organization and mission.

b. Understand the organization and mission of your major command and intermediate commands.

c. Understand the effect your unit and the collateral units have on mission accomplishment.

d. Your responsibility to collateral units transcends the responsibility to your own unit when your resulting combined effort better serves the overall mission.

• **Responsibility to Unit Welfare.** The responsibility associated with the opportunity of leading your own unit is very gratifying. It is your unit, and you are responsible for its success or failure, and the actions of your subordinates. Your sense of achievement will make the worry and frustration associated with this responsibility worthwhile. Your unit will be composed of people you’ll come to know well; people you will see daily; people with whom you will share joys and sorrows, successes and failures; people you’ll respect and admire. Even though you will be deeply concerned with their welfare, you must subordinate your unit’s welfare to that of the mission, higher headquarters, and collateral units.

Your responsibility to your unit’s welfare will entail a variety of obligations. To meet this responsibility, you must carry out the following duties:

a. Plan, develop, and implement efficient administrative and operational procedures.

b. Maintain adequate supplies and equipment for mission accomplishment.

c. Ensure your subordinates are properly clothed, fed, and billeted.

d. Ensure the safety and welfare of your unit and people.

A concern for your people’s safety, food, clothing, and shelter requirements is implicit in an officer’s responsibility and needn’t be emphasized. It’s obvious that a lack of efficient administrative and operational procedures or necessary supplies and equipment may impede mission accomplishment. However, what is less understood is the responsibility for the more intangible elements that make up the welfare of the unit and its members. These include the development of self-confidence and self-respect within each person and the development of confidence in the mission, your leadership, and the unit. There must also be concern for morale, discipline, and esprit de corps.

a. Know your people. Identify their personal problems and needs and those of their dependents, and assist them when appropriate.

b. Develop a sense of empathy, or sensitivity, to your subordinates’ needs and feelings.
c. Exercise keen judgment in helping your subordinates arrive at solutions to their problems. Tread lightly and consider the questions: How will my action affect the troops? How will their reactions, in turn, affect mission accomplishment?

d. Do not attempt to resolve personal problems that require the assistance of professionals. Refer personnel to the Equal Opportunity and Treatment Office, the commander, the inspector general, the base legal office, or the chaplain, as appropriate.

• **Responsibility to Individuals.** Apart from your responsibility to the mission or to the unit’s welfare, you have a definite responsibility to the individuals of your unit. The treatment of your people according to the concepts of democracy and the dignity of people is an element of your responsibility fundamental to your leadership. The turmoil in our country regarding civil and individual rights has multiplied the problems attached to this responsibility. Some situations will occur where your responsibility to the individual may run afoul of your responsibility to the unit’s welfare or to the mission. For example, a subordinate may be having domestic problems involving debts, spouse, or children. There may be personality clashes between military and civilian employees. There may be allegations of discrimination by a subordinate against a fellow worker. Subordinates will seek your permission to work off-duty, part-time jobs, or to attend schools during their off-duty time. Unknowingly and unintentionally, your actions or the actions of your subordinate supervisors may cause discontent. Perhaps you might tend to favor certain persons. Perhaps you may be too harsh in disciplining or correcting someone. Perhaps you may fail to recognize someone’s achievements.

If any of the above situations occur, you’ll probably have to take action on your own initiative or at somebody else’s request. Whatever action you decide to take must be weighed carefully. You should avoid action that might lessen or destroy the unity, confidence, or morale of your people. There is, of course, no standard solution. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) was approved and became law in July 1964. The Air Force implemented the provisions of the act:

It's the policy of the Air Force to conduct all of its affairs in a manner that is free from discrimination and provides equal opportunity and treatment for all members irrespective of their color, race, religion, national origin, or sex and is consistent with requirements for physical capabilities.

This policy ensures all military personnel have free access to commanders, staff judge advocates, chaplains, inspectors, and other appropriate staff agencies to discuss all matters bearing upon discrimination.

• **Responsibility to Self.** As a leader, you’ll also have a responsibility to yourself, but to be more accurate you’ll have a responsibility for yourself. You must strive for self-discipline, have the courage to carry out your convictions, keep yourself in good physical and mental condition, etc. Some leaders have been broken by these responsibilities. You’ll probably have some assistants to help you, and you’ll
be expected to delegate authority to well-chosen and trustworthy subordinates to perform certain duties for you. But remember, you’ll continue to carry the responsibility for all duties you’ve delegated.

- **Responsibility to Act Decisively.** Your authority carries with it the responsibility to make decisions and to act. You are responsible to know your mission, to study the problems of your unit, to get all the advice possible, to decide the course of action, to plan, to coordinate, to issue directives, and to see that those directives are carried out. When advice on an intended action is split, it’s your responsibility to make a “command decision.” You must judge the pros and cons and decide the line of action. You may feel it right to decide contrary to all advice. As the leader you have the prime responsibility. You’ll be required to make many on-the-spot decisions, which must be acted upon immediately and which will affect your unit.

Learn from your mistakes and ensure they don’t happen again. If you’ve acted sincerely and according to your best judgment cast aside any sense of guilt and continue to the next problem with a clear conscience.

Seek the advice of your superiors, peers, or subordinates. NCOs have years of rich and meaningful experience; use that experience.

- **Responsibility to Maintain a Proper Image in the Civilian Community.** In the past, military personnel were far removed from the considerations of the civilian world; maintaining good public relations was a bothersome chore and was avoided whenever possible. Today, the services realize that the American public has a right to know certain facts about its military forces. The public pays for the equipment and salaries and provides the recruits. You’re encouraged to participate in community projects.

  a. You and your unit represent the Air Force to the civilian community. It’s your responsibility to adhere to community and Air Force standards of conduct and appearance.

  b. Unless it’s specifically part of your job, your superiors and the base public affairs officer must clear the public release of official information regarding Air Force activities.
CASE STUDIES

These case studies are composed of situations similar to those that you may find in your first few years of duty. Be prepared to answer questions concerning these case studies in class. It’s important to remember the key to applying authority is flexibility, and you should feel free to provide your own reasons for your decisions.

After reading each case, circle your choice and provide a rationale for why you made that particular choice. Use information from this study guide to defend your choices.

Case Study #1

A base regulation prohibits keeping privately owned firearms in the dormitories. It requires firearms owned by Airmen living on base be registered and maintained at the armory.

You’re a squadron commander and your unit has just undergone a command Inspector General inspection. You were written up because one of your Airmen had a rifle in his dormitory room. The weapon had not been discovered before, since the Airman had kept it in the trunk of his car. He should have registered the rifle with the base Security Forces and left it with them for storage.

Because of this incident, you issued an order to your Airmen that they obtain permission from you prior to purchasing firearms. You intended to discourage your personnel living in the dorms from buying firearms.

Was your order a proper exercise of authority?

a. Yes. Your order will insure the elimination of a possible safety hazard. It is proper since it will also prevent the occurrence of another violation of the base regulation.

b. Yes. The order promotes good order and discipline.

c. No. Airmen living in the dormitories are entitled to pursue their private lives as they see fit (within regulations). You may not dictate what personal property may be purchased.
Case Study #2

You’re a captain and one of your Airmen was reported to you as being uncooperative and failing to perform assigned duties properly. After reprimanding her, you directed her to work two hours extra each day, for a week, as punishment for her behavior.

According to the guidelines, regarding the limits of your authority, was your order to work extra hours a proper exercise of authority?

a. No. In imposing extra work, you improperly punished her, which deprived the Airman of her liberty. Only the commander has the authority to do this.

b. Yes. You properly exercised your authority by depriving the Airman of two off-duty hours each day, for a week, to impress upon her that she is your subordinate.

Case Study #3

Your group commander issued a policy requiring Airmen to remove all pictures of “pinups” displayed on dormitory walls. Such pictures could be placed inside the door of their lockers, but could not be displayed in open view. As squadron executive officer, you’re inspecting the Airmen’s dormitory and discovered a photo of an unclad woman on a desk. You ordered the owner to destroy the photo.

Was your order to destroy the photo proper?

a. No. Only the commander may order the destruction of personal property, based on the authority inherent in his/her position.

b. Yes. The photo was detrimental to good order and discipline.

c. No. Officers cannot arbitrarily order an Airman to destroy personal property.

d. Yes. The Airman should have placed the photo inside the door of the locker. You had to assert the need to obey orders.
**Case Study #4**

As a communications officer, you gave an A1C a verbal order and told the A1C to relay it to the NCOIC of your branch. This was an important order affecting your mission. The A1C informs you he/she has relayed your order to the NCOIC. The order isn't carried out. You charged your NCOIC with disobedience.

Was your order legally enforceable?

a. Yes. You may relay an order to your NCOIC through other subordinates.

b. No. Orders must be given directly to the person concerned.

c. No. The NCOIC doesn't have to obey an order given to him/her by an A1C.

d. Yes. The order pertained to the mission.

**Case Study #5**

You, a newly commissioned second lieutenant, are downtown in uniform and see an enlisted Airman, in uniform, acting in a disorderly manner. You call him/her aside for a reprimand on conduct unbecoming an Airman.

Is your reprimand a proper application of authority?

a. No. You may not reprimand an Airman unless he/she is on base.

b. Yes. You may admonish an Airman about his/her conduct anywhere, anytime.

c. No. You must contact an Airman's supervisor instead of admonishing him/her yourself.
Case Study #6

You’re chief of administration in a basic military training squadron. A colonel stationed at a nearby base comes to your office and requests an afternoon pass for his son who arrived 5 days ago. Unable to contact your commander, a major, you advise the colonel it’s the commander’s policy not to grant passes to Airmen until they have completed the 15th day of training. The colonel states he will accept full responsibility and orders you to grant his son a pass.

According to the guidelines, must you obey the colonel’s direct order?

a. Yes. A junior officer doesn’t disobey a direct order from a senior officer.

b. Yes. All orders from senior officers are presumed lawful unless there’s convincing proof to the contrary.

c. No. You need not obey orders from senior officers not in your chain of command.

d. No. It would cause you to disobey specific orders given to you by your commander.

Case Study #7—Air National Guard Scenario

You’re a captain in the Air National Guard who is part of the full-time force. One of your Airmen, also a full-time technician, a title 5 employee, is uncooperative and fails to perform the assigned duties properly. After reprimanding her, you direct her to work two hours extra each day for a week as punishment for her behavior. According to the guidelines regarding the limits of your authority, is your order to work extra hours a proper exercise of authority? Why or why not?

a. No. In imposing extra work you improperly punished her, which not only deprived the Airman of her liberty, but endured an overtime expense to the government.

b. Yes. You properly exercised your authority by depriving the Airman of two off-duty hours each day for a week to impress upon her that she is your subordinate.
Case Study #8—Air National Guard/Air Force Reserve Scenario

The Air Force Chief of Staff directs all Air Force units, including the Air National Guard and Reserve components, to conduct health and welfare inspections within their organizations. This inspection is to identify and remove items displayed in the work area that have the potential to negatively impact good order and discipline and/or present an unprofessional environment. At an Air National Guard base, the wing commander ensures the organization is compliant with the tasking and directs all units to proceed with the inspection. During the inspection, the maintenance squadron commander orders her Airmen to collect all posters, “pinups,” and other visibly inappropriate material be taken to the dumpster for destruction. Were her actions within his authority? Why or why not?

a. Yes. She was following the orders of the wing commander.

b. No. Officers cannot arbitrarily order an Airman to destroy personal property.

c. Yes. The material was detrimental to good order and discipline and shouldn’t be visible.

Case Study #9

As a logistics readiness officer, you’re authorized 20 Airmen, but only 12 are assigned. To meet all of your job requirements, you require every individual to work 10 hours a day, 6 days a week.

Are your actions consistent with the guidelines? Why or why not?

a. You have a mission to accomplish. It is proper to require your people to work these long hours.

b. The well-being of your people is paramount. You’re improperly requiring them to work these long hours.

c. Your responsibility to unit welfare requires you to maintain a high degree of morale. Your action is not proper.

d. The well-being of your unit takes precedence over that of individuals, including yourself. Your action is proper.
Case Study #10

You’re a cyberspace officer, and one of your Airmen has a disabled child. This Airman is very important to the accomplishment of your mission. He has only one car and drives his child to a special education class every morning. The child’s classes begin at 0800 hours. You allow the Airman to come in 45 minutes late every day so he can drive his child to school. Describe your actions in relation to the guidelines for a responsible leader.

a. This is a clear case of partiality. It is unfair to allow the Airman to be late. You must be fair and impartial in discharging your responsibility to unit welfare.

b. If the Airman’s tardiness doesn’t impair his productivity and mission accomplishment, the permission you granted is proper. You’re helping the Airman with a personal problem, and your people’s welfare is your concern.

c. Something important may come down from higher headquarters that requires use of material in the files. If the Airman is not on duty, the work may be delayed. According to your responsibility to higher headquarters, you cannot allow this to happen.

d. How you run your shop is your own business. If you want to allow an Airman to be late for work, it is your prerogative. As the boss, you’re responsible for acting decisively.

Case Study #11

Your commander has assigned your security forces section the task of putting personnel on traffic control at the end of the regular duty day. You vigorously protest this requirement. You’ll have to work your people overtime, and it’ll mean a drop in their morale. Your commander disregards your protest and insists you meet the requirement. You tell your NCOs the task must be accomplished on orders from the commander. You tell them of your futile efforts to get out of doing this task. Describe your actions in relation to the guidelines for a responsible leader.

a. You failed in your responsibility to higher headquarters because you didn’t unquestionably obey directives from your commander.

b. You should protest the accomplishment of directives from higher headquarters, especially when they affect the morale of your people. Their welfare has priority.

c. Your protest is permissible. However, what you told your NCOs was inexcusable. You must carry out directives from your commander enthusiastically, as if they were your own ideas.

d. You’re concerned for your people’s esteem. Your actions will increase your standing in their eyes, and this is properly fulfilling your responsibility to self.
Case Study #12

You’re the executive officer and a member of your squadron’s softball team. You also hold the highest batting average in the base league. Your team is in the semifinals. You know how much your commander wants her team to win the base championship. In yesterday’s game you collided with the second baseman and hurt yourself. Despite a painful and swollen ankle, you decide to play today. While trying to make third base, your foot gives way and your sore ankle gets badly wrenched. This aggravates the previous injury and you require hospitalization. Describe your actions in relation to the guidelines for a responsible leader.

a. Responsibility to the squadron is paramount, especially when the morale of the personnel is involved. You properly discharged your responsibility to unit welfare.

b. You’re a key player on the team. The commander wants the team to win. His wishes must be interpreted as commands; therefore, your decision exemplifies proper fulfillment of responsibility to higher headquarters.

c. You allowed your emotions to override the concern you should have for keeping yourself mentally and physically fit. Responsibility to self requires your concern with actions that may prevent you from carrying out your duties. Your decision to play was improper.

Case Study #13

While driving your vehicle, you’re stopped by a civilian policeman and accused of a minor traffic violation. Although you’re not on a military installation, you were in uniform. As you were asking the policeman questions about the purported violation, he progressed from impatience to rage. In front of a crowd that had gathered, you became angry with the officer because of his rude behavior directed at you. Bystanders witness the two of you heatedly arguing to include profanity. Describe your behavior in relation to the guidelines.

a. You were innocent of presenting the Air Force image badly, as the entire exchange was caused by the policeman.

b. Your honor demanded you defend yourself from the officer’s unjustified attacks.

c. You acted properly, as your being in uniform demanded that you present the civilian bystanders a militant impression of the Air Force officer.

d. Regardless of how difficult it would’ve been, your responsibility to maintain the Air Force image required you to remain calm. Your behavior was irresponsible.
Case Study #14

As a captain, you are the Chief of Personnel Readiness, and your office is responsible for drawing up personnel orders for all deployments. You were officially informed by the installation mobility officer of a deployment for one of the security forces teams to an unclassified location in support of Operation Cutting Edge. While at a chamber of commerce luncheon that day, the discussion turns to rumors about the upcoming deployment of the entire security forces squadron. What action do you take?

- To dispel the rumors, you tell the people at your table the rumors are overstated and only one security forces team is being deployed.
- You tell them the rumors are untrue, but confirm their suspicions when they guess the exact deployment information.
- While you are tempted to set the record straight, you are not a public affairs officer and releasing information is not part of your job, so you change the subject.
- Since you were officially informed, you see it as an act of good faith to tell the people at your table what you know about the security forces deployment.

As an officer, it is paramount that you understand the authority and responsibility you have. Once you fully understand these leadership aspects, you will be able to effectively control and direct your subordinates, have decision making direction and, most importantly, be able to successfully accomplish your mission.
Case Study #15—Air National Guard/Air Force Reserve Scenario

You're the OIC of the security forces section at an Air National Guard/Reserve base co-located on an active duty installation. Your commander assigns your security forces team to augment the active duty security forces mission while the unit is in the middle of a unit compliance inspection. You vigorously protest the tasking—your Airmen will have to work extra after normal duty hours to cover both the section’s primary mission and the augmentation duty—it will mean a drop in morale. Your commander disregards your protest and insists the tasking be met. You tell your subordinates that the task must be accomplished on orders from the commander and explain your futile efforts to get out of the task. Describe your actions in relation to the guidelines of a responsible leader.

a. You failed in your responsibility to higher headquarters because you didn't unquestionably obey directives from your commander.

b. You should protest the accomplishment of directives from higher headquarters, especially when they affect the morale of your people. Their welfare has priority.

c. Your protest is permissible. However, what you told your subordinates is inexcusable. You must carry out directives from your commander enthusiastically, as if they were your own ideas.

d. You're concerned for your people's morale. Your actions will increase your standing in their eyes and this is properly fulfilling your responsibility to self.
Case Study #16—Air National Guard Scenario

While driving home from drill weekend, you’re stopped by a civilian police officer and accused of a minor traffic violation. Although you’re not on a military installation, you are in uniform. As you ask the officer questions about the purported violation, he progresses from impatience to rage. In front of a crowd that has gathered, you become angry with the officer because of his rude behavior directed at you. Bystanders witness the two of you heatedly arguing, which includes profanity. Describe your actions in relation to the guidelines of a responsible leader.

a. You were innocent of presenting the Air Force image badly, as the entire exchange was caused by the officer.

b. Your honor demanded you defend yourself from the officer’s unjustified attacks.

c. You acted properly, as your being in uniform demanded that you present the civilian bystanders a manly impression of the Air Force officer.

d. Regardless of how difficult it would’ve been, your responsibility to maintain the Air Force image required you to remain calm. Your behavior was irresponsible.

Bibliography:
1. AFI 51-604. Appointment to and Assumption of Command, 4 April 2006.