**My Questions:**

1. What was the most challenging*ethical issue* you encountered while in a leadership/command position?
2. How did you address the issue? Was it fully resolved? If not, why?
3. What resources did you use (peers, JAG, mentors, etc.) to make your decisions?
4. What factors (theories, frameworks, beliefs, values, contextual elements) influenced your decision-making process?
5. Which (if any) decisions would you change and why?
6. Did you receive criticism (internal or external) for any of the decisions you made?
7. If so, how did the criticism influence your professional development and/or your unit?

**Commander Answers:**

1. The finance office on base handles military pay and leave for over 30,000 service members. DFAS expects us to process all documents within three business days, but during the holiday season, we get hit with over 1,000 documents a day. It’s tough to keep up with those standards, even though our soldiers work really hard. Sometimes, we still miss the deadline, and we’ve failed the DFAS inspection three years in a row. Some employees started timestamping documents when they processed them to make it look like we met the deadline, but that’s not really the right way to handle it.
2. Yeah, we came up with a couple new ways to tackle the issue. Paper documents were hard to keep track of, so we scan and upload them to a central repository. We also built a script that automatically timestamps everything as soon as we get it. On top of that, we created another script that pulls the data from the e-documents and imports it straight into eMILPO. What used to take 8 hours to process 200 leave docs manually now takes just 11 seconds.
3. The scripts were developed by one of our solders. I talked to our IT and my supervisor at the DFAS. They gave us the green light to change the SOP. The soldier who developed the scripts, was invited by my supervisor to demo his work at the DFAS director conference in Indianapolis.
4. Several factors influenced my decision-making process:

**First off,** The primary goal was to improve efficiency and ensure timely processing, which directly impacts the readiness and well-being of our service members.

**Secondly, our ethical Responsibility** – I had to balance finding a practical solution without compromising integrity. Transparency and accountability were key principles guiding the decision.

Additionally, **Efficiency vs. Quality** – I wanted to improve the speed of processing without sacrificing the quality or accuracy of the work. Given the technical capabilities of the team, I encouraged innovation to solve the problem in a way that was scalable and sustainable in the long term.

**Futhermore, Team Collaboration** – Collaboration with IT and DFAS was crucial, as it allowed us to build a solution that was technically sound and aligned with organizational standards.

**Finally, Organizational Alignment** – Any change had to align with DFAS standards, military policies, and our unit's broader objectives.

Ultimately, the decision was about finding a balance between innovation, operational needs, and ethical standards while keeping the well-being of the personnel at the forefront.

1. Looking back, one decision I might reconsider is how we initially handled the paper documentation process. While the scripts and automation have dramatically improved efficiency, I wish we had addressed the root cause of the paper trail earlier. We could have asked S1 to turn in digital copies to us, which would have saved time and reduced the workload on scanning the documents by our finance soldiers.
2. Yes, we did receive some criticism, both internally and externally. Internally, there were concerns about the speed at which we implemented the changes, especially from some team members who were worried about the learning curve associated with the new system and scripts. Some felt the transition might disrupt operations temporarily, which created a bit of resistance to change. Externally, we faced some pushback from higher-ups who questioned whether automating the timestamping process might compromise accountability or create new errors. There was a concern that automating too much too quickly could lead to oversights or a lack of proper oversight. However, I addressed the criticism by faciliting additional demonstration of our capabilities, which save manhours I also made sure that the automated processes were thoroughly tested and aligned with our quality control measures, which helped reassure stakeholders that the integrity of the system would be maintained. The criticism ultimately helped refine our approach and improve the implementation process.
3. The criticism, while challenging at the time, played a significant role in both my professional development and the overall growth of the unit.

* I learned to be more adaptable in the face of resistance. Initially, I focused on the technical solution, but the criticism helped me recognize the importance of taking a more measured, inclusive approach when introducing change. I became more mindful of the human side of implementing new systems and the need for thorough communication and buy-in from everyone involved.
* The pushback forced me to think more critically about potential flaws and risks in the solution. It pushed me to refine my decision-making process, ensuring that I considered both the immediate challenges and long-term benefits more holistically.
* I learned the importance of clear and open communication. Addressing concerns and ensuring all team members felt heard strengthened my leadership abilities and taught me how to navigate complex situations with transparency.

**For the unit:**

* **Increased Resilience:** The criticism fostered a more resilient mindset within the team. They saw that we could address challenges and criticism constructively, and it became a learning opportunity rather than a setback. This helped the team embrace changes more readily over time.
* **Improved Collaboration:** The pushback highlighted areas where we needed better collaboration. I took extra steps to involve the team in problem-solving, which ultimately led to a stronger sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the system’s success.
* **Better Systems and Processes:** The feedback led to improvements in our implementation approach, ensuring that future changes would be more thoughtfully considered and executed. It also reinforced the value of balancing efficiency with quality control.

Overall, the criticism turned out to be a catalyst for growth, helping me refine my leadership approach while strengthening the unit’s ability to adapt and improve.