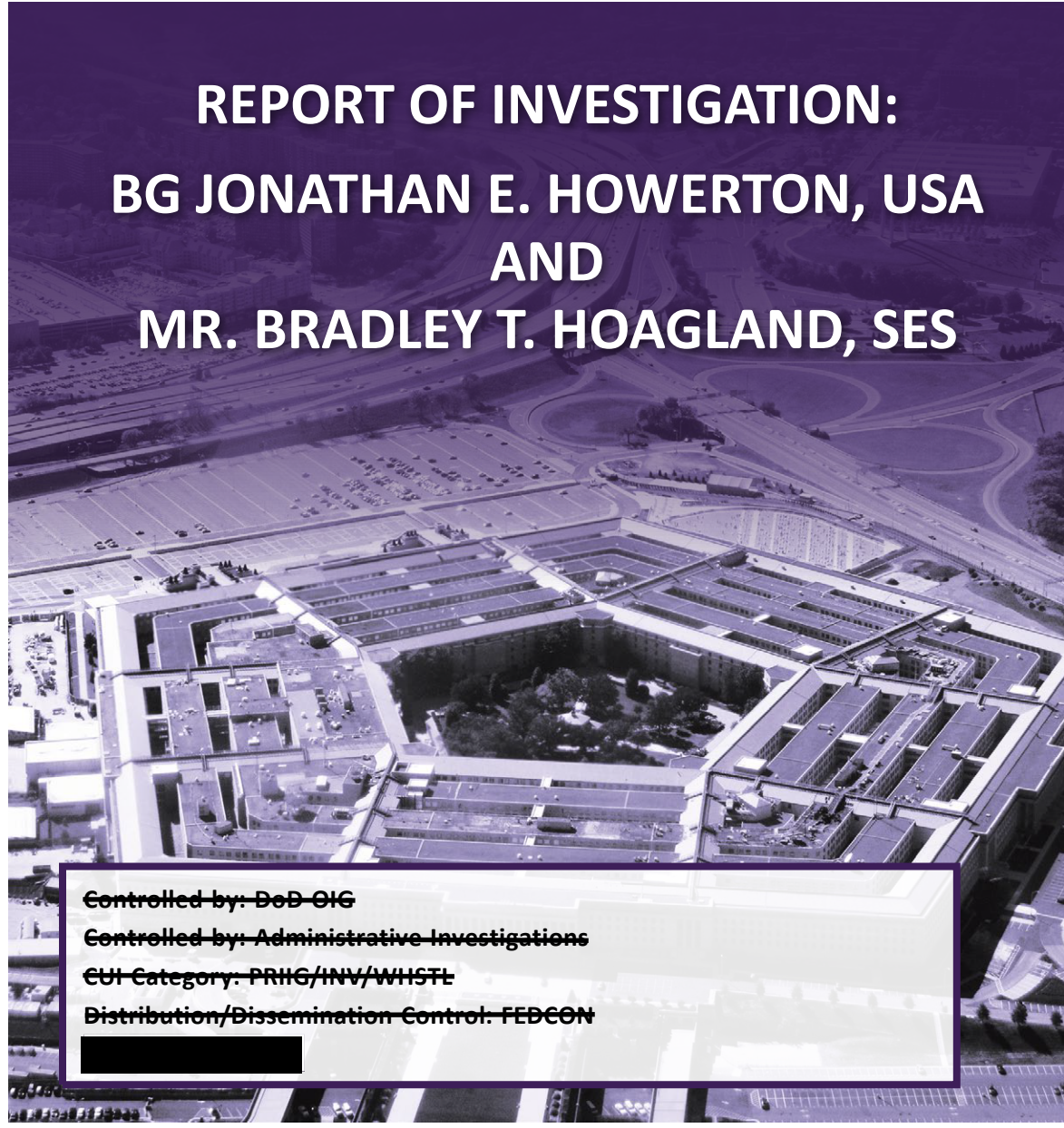


~~CUI~~

INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

DECEMBER 8, 2022



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION: BG JONATHAN E. HOWERTON, USA AND MR. BRADLEY T. HOAGLAND, SES

~~Controlled by: DoD-OIG~~

~~Controlled by: Administrative Investigations~~

~~CUI-Category: PRIIG/INV/WHSTL~~

~~Distribution/Dissemination Control: FEDCON~~



INTEGRITY ★ INDEPENDENCE ★ EXCELLENCE

~~CUI~~



Table of Contents

Introduction and Summary

Complaint Origin and Allegations.....	1
Investigative Delays.....	1
Scope and Methodology of the Investigation.....	2
Conclusions.....	2

Background

Brigadier General Jonathan Howerton, U.S. Army.....	6
Mr. Bradley T. Hoagland.....	6
White House Military Office.....	6

Analysis of the Allegations

Chronology of Significant Events.....	7
---------------------------------------	---

A. Allegations BG Howerton Led a Sexually Harassing Environment and Used Vulgar Language and Gestures.....

BG Howerton’s Pattern of Conduct.....	8
Conclusions on the Use of Vulgar Language and Gestures.....	15

B. Allegations Mr. Hoagland Led a Sexually Harassing Environment and Used Vulgar Language and Gestures.....

Mr. Hoagland’s Pattern of Conduct.....	17
----------------------------------------	----

C. Allegations of BG Howerton’s Failure to Follow Official Travel Regulation.....

Travel on Commercial Airlines.....	20
Use of the Government Travel Charge Card.....	22
Conclusions on the Failure to Follow Travel Regulations.....	24

Overall Conclusions.....

Recommendations.....

Appendix A – Standards

Standards Related to Exemplary Leadership.....	29
Standards Related to Travel Allegations.....	36

Appendix B – Other Allegations

Culture of Favoritism and Personnel Actions.....	39
Christmas Party Tickets.....	40
Commercial Travel.....	41
Military Travel.....	41
Conduct Unbecoming.....	41
Request for Autopsy Report.....	41
Presidential Support Duty Waiver.....	41

Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	42
----------------------------------------	-----------

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION: BRIGADIER GENERAL JONATHAN E. HOWERTON, U.S. ARMY, AND MR. BRADLEY T. HOAGLAND, SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

Introduction and Summary

Complaint Origin and Allegations

The DoD Hotline received complaints from January 14 through September 14, 2020, against Brigadier General (BG) Jonathan E. Howerton, U.S. Army, Deputy Assistant to the President and White House Military Office (WHMO) Director, and Mr. Bradley T. Hoagland, Senior Executive Service, Special Assistant to the President and WHMO Deputy Director. We received three of the complaints after we began our investigation on February 6, 2020. In summary, the complaints alleged:

- BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland participated in and encouraged a toxic, hostile, and sexually harassing environment, including “derogatory and foul or vulgar language directed toward women”;
- BG Howerton failed to follow travel regulations when he directed personnel to use specific airlines for his official travel and when he failed to use his Government travel charge card (GTCC) for official travel expenses; and
- BG Howerton engaged in other alleged misconduct including conduct unbecoming an officer, improperly directing a subordinate to obtain an autopsy report, and improperly granting a qualification waiver for a Service member’s assignment to the WHMO.

We evaluated the alleged misconduct against the applicable standards in Appendix A.

Investigative Delays

This investigation was delayed from February 2020 to February 2021 due to discussions between the White House Counsel’s Office, the DoD Office of General Counsel, and the DoD Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG) regarding interview protocols, document production, and the scope of the investigation. We initially received little cooperation from the White House Counsel’s Office or the DoD Office of General Counsel in obtaining documents and evidence relevant to our investigation or in interviewing witnesses. For example, the DoD Office of General Counsel instituted a review process that would periodically provide us with

a limited number of documents for our review. This process lasted until February 2021, when the DoD Office of General Counsel allowed us timely access to all of the information we had requested.

Scope and Methodology of the Investigation

To investigate the allegations in the complaints, we interviewed BG Howerton, Mr. Hoagland, and 39 current and former WHMO and former Executive Office of the President personnel identified to us as potentially having information relevant to our investigation.¹ We reviewed more than 800,000 documents and more than 63,000 images, photographs, and videos, including BG Howerton's official e-mails; Mr. Hoagland's official e-mails; personnel documents; mobile telephone images, photographs, and videos; and official travel documents. Finally, we reviewed applicable standards.

Although Mr. Hoagland left Government service during this investigation, we completed our investigation consistent with our standard practice.

Conclusions

Brigadier General Jonathan Howerton, U.S. Army

Use of Vulgar Language and Gestures

We concluded, through our review of witness statements, e-mails, photographs, and documents, that BG Howerton pervasively used vulgar language and gestures, as well as showed a lack of respect for a small number of subordinates.²

Failure to Follow Official Travel Regulations

We concluded, through our review of witness statements, e-mails, and documents, that the use of non-contract airfare without appropriate justification was inconsistent with the Joint Travel Regulations, resulting in an extra \$1,866 cost to the Government.³ Due to BG Howerton's assertion that White House operational concerns prevented him from providing a justification and from answering our questions regarding his flights, we are unable to determine by a preponderance of the evidence whether BG Howerton is personally responsible for the failure to comply with the Joint Travel Regulations.

¹ Although we interviewed 39 witnesses, not all had the same level of interaction with the subjects. Therefore, we specify the number of people interviewed on particular issues or allegations throughout this report.

² We based our conclusions on a preponderance of the evidence, consistent with our normal process in administrative investigations.

³ The contracted flights are through a General Services Administration contract, referred to as the City Pair Program, which can be found at U.S. General Services Administration, "City Pair Program (CPP)," June 13, 2022.

Failure to Follow Travel Charge Card Regulations

We concluded that BG Howerton violated travel charge card regulations when he failed to use his GTCC for multiple charges during official travel, totaling \$3,198.61, during five separate trips during a 6-month period.

Other Allegations of Misconduct

Regarding the other allegations of misconduct against BG Howerton, we determined that the evidence did not support some of the allegations and, for the remaining allegations, that the other alleged conduct did not violate a standard. We discuss our evaluation of these allegations in Appendix B.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take appropriate action regarding BG Howerton, including determining whether the substantiated allegations constitute a failure to exhibit exemplary conduct and leadership.

We recommend that The Executive Secretary, Office of the Secretary of Defense, examine the process of subordinates reviewing and approving the WHMO Director and Deputy Director travel authorizations and vouchers and consider appointing a separate alternate reviewer and approval authority from outside of the WHMO. Such a change in process would help ensure that WHMO Director and Deputy Director official travel complies with relevant DoD and other Government standards.

BG Howerton's Response to Our Conclusions

We provided BG Howerton our tentative conclusions on September 6, 2022, for his review and comment before finalizing our report. BG Howerton responded that he disagreed with our conclusion that he pervasively used vulgar language and gestures and showed a lack of respect for a small number of subordinates. BG Howerton also disagreed with our conclusion that he violated travel charge card regulations when he failed to use his GTCC during official travel. We carefully considered BG Howerton's comments regarding our preliminary conclusions, re-examined our evidence, and included his comments, in part, where appropriate in this report.

BG Howerton responded that the report mischaracterizes his conduct and leadership. BG Howerton stated that he was the first Army officer to serve as the WHMO Director, and he "brought a different culture and leadership style to a zero-fail mission." He stated that he did not have the benefit of serving as the WHMO Deputy Director for a full tour, as did his predecessors. BG Howerton asserted that he "challenged assumptions and asked deep

penetrating questions of commanders and directors” to understand the WHMO’s complex mission, which he stated contains classified and unclassified missions and programs. He further stated that personnel were “neither accustomed to, nor comfortable with,” his penetrating approach to learning. He acknowledged that there “may have been a level of discomfort or dissatisfaction among a small number” of staff members who were not familiar with him as a person or his direct leadership style.

BG Howerton admitted that he used vulgar language and gestures in the workplace, but he disagreed with our conclusion that his conduct was pervasive. He stated that he used the language as his emotional, physiological, and psychological reaction to the “high-speed, high-stress, no-fail” WHMO environment. He asserted that none of his employees told him that his language offended them. BG Howerton admitted that he used the middle finger gesture, but said that it was only in jest and never in a derogatory manner. He further asserted that his uttering an expletive “occasionally to multiple times per day or week,” the lack of mentions regarding expletives in over 800,000 documents, and a limited number of images in evidence depicting middle finger gesture use do not suggest pervasive behavior. We disagree. The complaint explicitly referenced BG Howerton’s verbal vulgar language in the workplace, not vulgar language in documents and e-mails. After considering BG Howerton’s response, we did not change our report and stand by our conclusions.

Additionally, BG Howerton disagreed with our conclusion that his language and gestures showed a lack of respect for subordinates. He asserted that our conclusion is based on a relatively small group of witnesses and is not a credible conclusion that his actions adversely affected the overall organizational climate.

Finally, BG Howerton disagreed with our conclusion that he violated travel charge card regulations when he used his personal credit card instead of the GTCC for official travel expenses. He argued that using his personal credit card for one of his trips was a valid exception because his spouse was on Invitational Travel orders and accompanied him on his official travel. Additionally, BG Howerton disagreed with our conclusion regarding the other five occasions identified in the report when he failed to use the GTCC for all official expenses as required, asserting that the five occasions were “Mission-Operational” travel covered by an exemption in the regulation allowing for personal credit card use. To support his assertion, BG Howerton provided us with copies of his travel authorization documents, and he stated that White House operational concerns prevented him from providing a complete justification explaining his exemption from GTCC use. We disagree with BG Howerton’s assertion. We reviewed the travel documents he sent, and we noted that they included explicit statements in the remarks sections advising BG Howerton that he was “non-exempt” from using the GTCC as required by regulation for all official travel expenses.

After considering BG Howerton's response and re-examining our evidence, we stand by our conclusions.⁴

Mr. Bradley Hoagland

Use of Vulgar Language and Gestures

We concluded, through our review of witness statements, e-mails, photographs, and documents, that while some of Mr. Hoagland's actions could be considered unprofessional, such as occasional use of vulgar language and gestures, such conduct was infrequent. While his actions had some negative impact on the organizational climate, we concluded that Mr. Hoagland's actions did not constitute misconduct.

Recommendations

We make no recommendations regarding Mr. Hoagland.

⁴ BG Howerton's response includes non-substantive arguments asserting that we should not substantiate the allegations in the complaint due to the length of time required to complete the investigation, and he characterized our report's descriptions of not-substantiated allegations as inappropriate. We considered these arguments and determined they are not relevant to our conclusions. We provided the Secretary of the Army a copy of BG Howerton's response for appropriate review and consideration.

Background

Brigadier General Jonathan Howerton, U.S. Army

BG Howerton initially served as the Special Assistant to the President and the WHMO Deputy Director from July 2, 2019, through August 22, 2019. BG Howerton then became the Deputy Assistant to the President and the WHMO Director on August 23, 2019, and served in that capacity until May 17, 2021, when he was reassigned to the U.S. Army G-8, Program Analysis & Evaluation Directorate.⁵

Mr. Bradley T. Hoagland

Mr. Hoagland joined the Senior Executive Service in February 2017 when he began his civilian career as the WHMO Director of Plans, Policies, and Requirements. Mr. Hoagland then served as the Special Assistant to the President and the WHMO Deputy Director from August 23, 2019, through July 24, 2021, when Mr. Hoagland retired from Federal service.

White House Military Office

The WHMO provides essential services to the President and has personnel in various locations in Washington, D.C. The WHMO Director has authority over units at Fort McNair, Joint Base Andrews, Camp David, and Marine Corps Base Quantico. The essential services are:

- White House military support: Transportation, food, hospitality, medical, and emergency medical services;
- White House operational support: White House Communications Agency, Presidential Airlift Group, White House Medical Unit, Naval Support Facility Thurmont (Camp David), Marine Helicopter Squadron One, Presidential Food Service, and White House Transportation Agency; and
- WHMO support elements: Operations; policy, plans, and requirements; administration; information resource management; financial management and comptroller; general counsel; and security.

The WHMO comprises military personnel from the Department of Defense (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) and the Department of Homeland Security (Coast Guard). Seven Army, Navy, Air Force, and DoD organizations fill and manage the WHMO's civilian billets.

⁵ The Director of the WHMO is a political appointment and due to the change in the administration, the Army reassigned BG Howerton.

Analysis of the Allegations

Chronology of Significant Events

Table 1 lists the significant events related to this investigation.

Table 1. Chronology of Significant Events

Date	Event
Feb. 2017	Mr. Hoagland begins work as the WHMO Director of Policy, Plans, and Requirements.
July 2, 2019	BG Howerton becomes a Special Assistant to the President and the WHMO Deputy Director.
Aug. 23, 2019	BG Howerton is assigned as a Deputy Assistant to the President and the WHMO Director, and Mr. Hoagland is assigned as a Special Assistant to the President and the WHMO Deputy Director.
Jan. 14, 2020	The DoD OIG receives an anonymous complaint against BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland.
Feb. 6, 2020	The DoD OIG initiates this investigation.
Feb. 2020 – Feb. 2021	The DoD OIG encounters delays in obtaining access to witnesses, documents, and other evidence.
Aug. 6, 2020	The DoD OIG receives two additional anonymous complaints against BG Howerton.
Sept. 14, 2020	The DoD OIG receives a fourth complaint against BG Howerton.
Sept. 17, 2020 – Feb. 2021	The DoD OIG receives small batches of WHMO documentation and other evidence.
Feb. 2021 – July 8, 2021	The DoD OIG receives the remainder of WHMO documentation and other evidence.
May 17, 2021	BG Howerton is reassigned as the Military Deputy Director, Program Analysis & Evaluation, U.S. Army G-8, Washington, D.C.
July 24, 2021	Mr. Hoagland retires from Federal service.

Source: The DoD OIG.

A. Allegations BG Howerton Led a Sexually Harassing Environment and Used Vulgar Language and Gestures

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton led, participated in, and encouraged a sexually harassing environment. The anonymous complainant described incidents in the WHMO that included, in the words of the anonymous complainant, “derogatory and foul or vulgar language directed toward women.”

We interviewed 26 witnesses who were identified to us as possibly having relevant information regarding potential sexual harassment, including verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. We also examined documentary and electronic evidence regarding potential sexual harassment. However, we found no evidence of sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, deliberate offensive comments of a sexual nature, or a pervasive sexually harassing environment at the WHMO.

The anonymous complainant also alleged that BG Howerton engaged in conduct that encouraged a toxic and hostile environment within the WHMO, and identified various incidents such as frequent use of vulgar language and gestures; degrading, belittling, and ostracizing individuals; and providing preferential treatment. First, we examine the allegations regarding BG Howerton’s conduct and leadership, and then we examine his impact on the WHMO organizational climate.

BG Howerton’s Pattern of Conduct

In this section, we discuss what witnesses told us about BG Howerton’s pattern of conduct toward WHMO employees. First, we discuss BG Howerton’s frequent use of vulgar language and gestures; next, we discuss his involvement with sharing an inappropriate video; and finally, we discuss his treatment of WHMO personnel and the impact he had on the organizational climate.⁶

Use of Vulgar Language

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton used “derogatory, foul, or vulgar language,” “cursing,” “profanity,” and profane gestures towards others while in the WHMO offices, hereafter described as vulgar language and gestures. We interviewed 26 witnesses who were identified to us as having information regarding these allegations. Seven of those witnesses, including BG Howerton, also told us about an inappropriate vulgar video and photographs that BG Howerton allegedly shared with some WHMO employees, which we detail in subsequent sections of this report.

⁶ Vulgar language is defined as lacking sophistication or good taste; unrefined; making explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions; coarse; and rude.

All 26 witnesses told us that BG Howerton used vulgar language in the WHMO offices occasionally to multiple times per day or week, including the terms f**k, mother-f**ker, s**t, and phrases such as answering the telephone with the greeting, “How are you doing mother-f**ker?” or using interjections like, “You don’t f**king get it,” “You f**king figure it out and let me know,” and “Let me know when you’ve f**king figured it out.”

The anonymous complainant alleged that during BG Howerton’s first WHMO staff meeting, BG Howerton told the staff that “he liked to use profanity and if you did not like it, to let him f**king know.” Six witnesses confirmed that they attended the meeting and heard BG Howerton say this or something similar, including the word “f**k.” In response to the assertions about his conduct at his first WHMO staff meeting, BG Howerton told us:

That is absolutely incorrect. I can—I have—I cuss. I use profanity absolutely. What I [said] in the staff meeting was that I use profanity, not that I like to use it. I just said I use it, and if it makes you uncomfortable or you—then please let me know.

Six witnesses who were frequently in the front office told us that the use of vulgar language became common in the WHMO front office. One of the six witnesses stated that employees started to conform to BG Howerton’s behavior, using vulgar language more regularly in the WHMO front office. Another of these six witnesses stated that the use of vulgar language recently had become less frequent, speculating that this change in BG Howerton’s behavior could be due to this investigation.

Of the 26 witnesses who told us that BG Howerton used vulgar language, 17 said that BG Howerton did not direct such language at individuals, instead using it as a part of his normal conversations. Nine witnesses, however, told us that the use of vulgar language was inappropriate in the WHMO office setting. Six of those nine witnesses also stated that BG Howerton directed vulgar language at individuals.

When we asked BG Howerton if he used vulgar language, he said, “I acknowledge that I use it. I don’t cuss at a person. I don’t call a person a name. I don’t call—I sometimes get upset about a situation, or something that is done. I go, ‘Oh, dang.’” BG Howerton told us that he used the terms f**k, s**t, and damn in the WHMO offices.

Vulgar Gesturing with the Middle Finger

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton gave the middle finger to junior personnel on at least two separate occasions.

Of the 26 witness who told us about BG Howerton’s use of vulgar language, 7 told us that BG Howerton gestured with a raised middle finger, and that the gesture could be used in a derogatory or humorous manner. Five of the seven witnesses said that the gesture meant the same as the word “f**k,” or the phrases “f**k you,” “f**k off,” and “go f**k yourself.” However, six of the seven witnesses said that BG Howerton used the gesture in a joking

manner. Mr. Hoagland told us, “I believe I’ve seen everyone in the front office use [the raised middle finger].”⁷ For example, witnesses recalled seeing the middle finger gesture at events, locations, or in photographs, such as:

- a front office group photo, in which those present had their middle fingers raised, taken in the WHMO break room and sent as a response to a similar photo sent by [REDACTED] to BG Howerton;
- a front office Christmas pre-party group photo, in the WHMO front office;
- a team photo at a Camp David team-building event, taken by a junior enlisted public affairs photographer; and
- a farewell event for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations in which BG Howerton raised his middle finger to the group as a farewell gesture.

We successfully recovered approximately 63,000 images, including photographs, and multimedia files from BG Howerton’s two official mobile telephones and an official mobile telephone belonging to another WHMO staff member.⁸ We could not determine from the data if BG Howerton took, saved, received, or sent those photographs, only that they were on the three official mobile telephones. Our review of those images and files produced several photographs in which BG Howerton and others are holding up their middle fingers and two photographs showing unidentified hands holding out middle fingers.

⁷ The WHMO “front office” consists of five offices (Director, Deputy Director, Executive Assistant, Chief of Operations, and Senior Enlisted Advisor) and four open office cubicles (Military Executive Assistant, Protocol Officer, Deputy Protocol Officer, and First Lady’s Communication Liaison).

⁸ According to a White House Communications Agency subject matter expert, as part of a normal mobile phone turn-in process, BG Howerton deleted data from his two official Government mobile telephones.

Figures 1 through 4 were recovered photographs from BG Howerton’s official mobile telephone. Figure 1 shows one WHMO staff member holding up both hands with the middle finger of each hand raised. Figure 2 shows members of the WHMO staff, in which one WHMO staff member, Mr. Hoagland, and the photographer each have a hand held up with the middle finger raised. Figures 3 and 4 show individual hands of unknown people, with the middle finger raised.



Figure 1. WHMO Staff Member
 Figure 2. WHMO Staff at the White House
 Figure 3. Photo of Unknown Hand
 Figure 4. Photo of Unknown Hand
 Source: BG Howerton’s official mobile telephone.

Figure 5 is a recovered photograph from the WHMO staff member’s official mobile telephone. Figure 5 shows BG Howerton with a group of people, including one WHMO staff member, in which BG Howerton displayed his middle finger.

When asked if he used the middle finger in the office, BG Howerton told us, “I can tell you that I have given the middle finger. I don’t know in the workplace or not.” He also told us, “I didn’t say I did it in the office. I said I’ve done it. It was not in the office.” With respect to the Camp David team-building event, BG Howerton stated, “I gave the middle finger to someone on that team-building event. I don’t recall a photo, doing it in a photo.”



Figure 5. BG Howerton and WHMO Staff Member
 Source: WHMO staff member’s official mobile telephone.

Vulgar Gesture with a Spent Artillery Cartridge

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton placed a spent artillery cartridge fitted with a wooden warhead as a replica of an artillery round “to his groin and began thrusting.” The allegation included the names of three subordinates who witnessed the incident. We interviewed those 3 subordinates, plus an additional 20 witnesses, about the allegation. Of the 23 witnesses, including Mr. Hoagland, 7 told us that they were present at the incident.

Of the seven witnesses present during the incident, five recall hearing people refer to the gift as phallic. One of the seven witnesses recalled BG Howerton saying something like “it looks like ... a phallic symbol.” Another one of the seven witnesses told us that a woman who was present did not know what the term “phallic” meant, so to illustrate the word, BG Howerton placed the artillery shell at his groin to simulate a penis. After BG Howerton’s demonstration, the witness privately told BG Howerton he needed to be careful because BG Howerton’s actions were not appropriate for the workplace. The witness said that BG Howerton acknowledged that it was not the right way to explain the term. The witness also told us that BG Howerton’s gesture was awkward and made people feel uncomfortable. However, the other six witnesses who were present told us that they did not see BG Howerton place the artillery shell at his groin.

Mr. Hoagland told us that BG Howerton walked around the front office asking, “Hey, what does everybody think about this gift?” and “Does it have like a phallic look to it?” Mr. Hoagland said that those subordinates BG Howerton asked all agreed it looked phallic and was not an appropriate gift to present to someone in public.

Another witness, who was not present during the incident, said that he heard BG Howerton refer to the gift as “it’s a big penis” the day before the incident.

When asked about the allegation, BG Howerton denied that he ever made an inappropriate gesture with the gift, stating, “That did not happen. It absolutely did not happen.” He went on to explain that the gift looked inappropriate and that he asked six WHMO subordinates what they thought. All six witnesses agreed that it was inappropriate. Five of the six witnesses told us that BG Howerton asked that the unit that made the gift make adjustments to remove any unintentional and inappropriate likeness to a phallic symbol.

Inappropriate Video

We interviewed four witnesses about an allegation that BG Howerton shared an inappropriate video. Only one of the four witnesses stated that BG Howerton played a video called “D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F.” (which stands for Do I Look Like I Give a F**k and is pronounced “dilly-gaf”),

showing it to multiple people in the WHMO front office.⁹ The witness said that BG Howerton ran around the office for 2 weeks saying “D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F., D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F.” The witness told us that after seeing this conduct, he no longer thought of BG Howerton as a general officer.

BG Howerton said that he saw the video on an Executive Office of the President employee’s personal mobile telephone in the WHMO front office. BG Howerton stated he recalled watching the 2½-minute video with two WHMO staff members.¹⁰ When asked about reactions from others who watched it, he said, “[I]t’s a funny video, so I imagine people laughed. I, I laughed. I think people laughed when they saw it ... it’s meant to be funny and people laughed.” BG Howerton told us that he did not walk around the front office saying, “D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F.”

Treatment of Subordinates

We asked 30 witnesses who had frequent interactions with BG Howerton to describe BG Howerton’s leadership style and his interactions with WHMO employees.

Of the 30 witnesses, 18 described BG Howerton in professional terms. In describing BG Howerton, they used phrases such as “one of the best officers I’ve probably ever had the opportunity to serve with,” “a nice person,” “very direct,” “fair and firm,” “a good leader,” “down to earth,” “very level-headed,” “Army-centric,” and “one of the best I’ve ever worked for.”

The other 12 witnesses said that BG Howerton showed a lack of respect towards them or others within the WHMO. They told us of instances of BG Howerton’s behavior towards WHMO personnel during meetings they described as unprofessional and belittling members about perceived performance issues in front of WHMO leadership and their peers. They said that such conduct caused some who were present or those receiving the criticism to feel uncomfortable.

These 12 witnesses told us that BG Howerton’s yelling, use of vulgar language, and outbursts had a negative impact on the staff and their subordinates, affected their own job performance and how they felt about being in the office, created fear of repercussions, or was a factor in leaving the organization. For example, witnesses told us the following.

- BG Howerton had a confrontational and disruptive leadership style that intimidated or marginalized some people. The witness said that several directors talked to each other about concerns for their jobs and their job security. The witness also told us that senior staff were worried that if they met with BG Howerton, he would put them through the “buzz saw.” The witness told us that the senior staff “were all walking on eggshells for a while.”

⁹ “D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F.” from the album, *Let Loose Live in the Outback*, self-identified as X-rated, sung by Australian singer, Kevin Bloody Wilson, released in 2003.

¹⁰ When we questioned the two WHMO staff members BG Howerton identified to us, they denied ever seeing the D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F. video in the WHMO offices.

- BG Howerton was more aggressive with junior directors than he was with senior directors.
- BG Howerton allowed negative and inappropriate behaviors by his key staff members to go unchecked.
- BG Howerton yelled at, talked down to, and belittled a subordinate in front of all the directors at a staff meeting, and it was an uncomfortable experience for many at the briefing.
- One witness said that BG Howerton’s behavior substantially affected him, describing how he always felt that he was “walking on pins and needles.”
- BG Howerton’s treatment of a well-respected director shocked them. One of the witnesses said that BG Howerton “laid into” the director in front of all the other directors. The witness said, “I never knew anyone to be even borderline cross with [the director] or him to them. And then [that director] was on the receiving end of [BG Howerton] somehow. ... If you can yell at [that director], ... you have no filter.”
- The environment had been toxic under BG Howerton, but improved over the following year. One witness also told us that “there was fear, no doubt, amongst ranks.”
- In response to the allegations he yelled at subordinates, BG Howerton stated:

So, I, I don’t yell. I don’t yell. And at those moments, I don’t cuss because it’s not helpful. I get, I maybe get animated. I talk with my hands, would be my guess is what they see [is] me talking and using my hands. And I would, and I would get, I’m very, I guess I would get very short in my answers and response to make sure I understand what is happening. But it was not, I was not yelling. I was definitely not cussing. But I was probably animated with my hands in all honesty.

Impact on the WHMO Organizational Climate

In addition to the information about BG Howerton’s impact on individuals, seven witnesses specifically told us that BG Howerton’s behavior had a negative impact on the organizational climate. These seven witnesses described the climate under BG Howerton as “hostile,” “constant harassment,” “frustration,” “there was fear,” “uncomfortable,” “angst and anxiety,” “[BG Howerton’s language] was just not appropriate,” and “you see egos clash.”

By contrast, 11 witnesses and Mr. Hoagland described to us the climate under BG Howerton as “jovial,” “no drama,” and said that they were “always treated with the utmost respect.” The witnesses further stated that BG Howerton’s team made it “the best year I’ve had at WHMO,” “pretty normal”, “happy to go to work every day,” and “everybody is smiling.”

BG Howerton's Comments

BG Howerton stated that he was an experienced Army officer with 31 years of service, and it was his duty to treat people with dignity and respect. He told us that the job was a fast-paced, no-fail mission requiring zero defects; he pressed his staff hard, trying to understand the inner workings of the WHMO; and he questioned his staff on how and why they did things. BG Howerton said that he was not aware of a perception of favoritism within the WHMO. He recognized, in hindsight, that his approach might have caused some “discomfort” or “dissatisfaction” among his staff who were not familiar with his particular style, and he stated that while Army personnel would be accustomed to his approach, joint Service members or civilians might not. He attributed this to a cultural difference between the Army and other organizations.

Conclusions on the Use of Vulgar Language and Gestures

We determined that, based on the totality of the evidence, BG Howerton pervasively used vulgar language and gestures, as well as showed a lack of respect for a small number of subordinates, resulting in a work environment that witnesses said adversely affected individuals and the overall organizational climate.

In his response to our tentative conclusions, BG Howerton responded that he disagreed with our conclusions that he pervasively used vulgar language and gestures and showed a lack of respect for a small number of subordinates.

BG Howerton responded that the report mischaracterizes his conduct and leadership. BG Howerton stated that he was the first Army officer to serve as the WHMO Director, and he “brought a different culture and leadership style to a zero-fail mission.” He stated that he did not have the benefit of serving as the WHMO Deputy Director for a full tour, as did his predecessors. BG Howerton asserted that he “challenged assumptions and asked deep penetrating questions of commanders and directors” to understand the WHMO’s complex mission, which he stated contains classified and unclassified missions and programs. He further stated that personnel were “neither accustomed to, nor comfortable with,” his penetrating approach to learning. He acknowledged that there “may have been a level of discomfort or dissatisfaction among a small number of staff members” who were not familiar with him as a person or his direct leadership style.

BG Howerton admitted that he used vulgar language and gestures in the workplace, but he disagreed with our conclusion that his conduct was pervasive. He stated that he used the language as his emotional, physiological, and psychological reaction to the “high-speed, high-stress, no-fail” WHMO environment. He asserted that none of his employees told him that his language offended them. BG Howerton admitted that he used the middle finger gesture but said that it was only in jest and never in a derogatory manner. He further asserted that his uttering an expletive “occasionally to multiple times per day or week,”

the lack of mentions regarding expletives in over 800,000 documents, and a limited number of images in evidence depicting middle finger gesture use do not suggest pervasive behavior. We disagree. The complaint explicitly referenced BG Howerton's verbal vulgar language in the workplace, not vulgar language in documents and e-mails.

BG Howerton disagreed with the single witness account of his gesturing with the spent artillery cartridge as having a salacious nature. He stated that six other witnesses refuted this single witness, and therefore, the allegation should not be substantiated. We disagree. The six witnesses he referred to told us that they did not see BG Howerton gesture with the spent artillery cartridge, but they did not refute the single witness's testimony that the gesture happened.

BG Howerton also criticized the single witness account regarding the inappropriate video. He asserted that three other witnesses who were in the room rebutted the single witness. We disagree. We note that BG Howerton admitted to us that he watched the inappropriate video on an Executive Office of the President employee's phone with other WHMO members present.

Additionally, BG Howerton stated that he had the responsibility to ensure the WHMO "can do the things it says it can do, confirm resources are used for intended purposes, and have [sic] the moral courage to hold people accountable." BG Howerton stated that based on specific classified instances, he became aware that his subordinates were oblivious to operational deficiencies, and if not remedied, those deficiencies would compromise the WHMO mission. BG Howerton admitted that in these situations, he was "most certainly animated, direct, and made pellucidly clear" that deficiencies were unacceptable and required the utmost urgency to fix. BG Howerton stated that the interactions were necessary to meet WHMO's critical mission, and "at no time did [he] intentionally seek to berate, intimidate," or show a lack of respect for his subordinates. He argued that our conclusion is based on a relatively small group of witnesses and is not a credible conclusion that his actions adversely affected the overall organizational climate.

After considering BG Howerton's response to our preliminary conclusions and re-examining our evidence, we stand by our conclusion.

BG Howerton's overall course of conduct, vulgar language and gestures, and failure to show respect for a small number of subordinates resulted in a work environment that adversely affected individuals and the overall organizational climate.

B. Allegations Mr. Hoagland Led a Sexually Harassing Environment and Used Vulgar Language and Gestures

The anonymous complainant alleged that Mr. Hoagland led, participated in, and encouraged a sexually harassing environment. The anonymous complainant described events in the WHMO that included, in the words of the anonymous complainant, “derogatory and foul or vulgar language directed toward women.”

We interviewed 26 witnesses who were identified to us as possibly having relevant information regarding potential sexual harassment, including verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. We also examined documentary and electronic evidence regarding potential sexual harassment. However, we found no evidence of sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, deliberate offensive comments of a sexual nature, or a pervasive sexually harassing environment at the WHMO.

The anonymous complainant also alleged that Mr. Hoagland engaged in or supported conduct and behaviors that encouraged a toxic and hostile environment within the WHMO and identified various incidents such as the use of profanity and profane gestures, and degrading, belittling, and ostracizing individuals. First, we examine the allegations regarding Mr. Hoagland’s conduct as a senior executive leader, and then we examine the impact his conduct had on the WHMO organizational climate.

Mr. Hoagland’s Pattern of Conduct

Use of Vulgar Language and Gestures

We interviewed 28 witnesses who were identified to us as having relevant information about Mr. Hoagland’s use of vulgar language in the office. According to Mr. Hoagland and 13 witnesses, he occasionally used vulgar language, although one witness said that Mr. Hoagland used vulgar language daily. Mr. Hoagland and three witnesses told us that Mr. Hoagland used vulgar language, including the terms s**t, f**k, hell, bitch, and damn. These witnesses described Mr. Hoagland’s use of vulgar language as done in anger or frustration and behind closed doors, usually not in public and never directed at subordinates.

We interviewed 26 witnesses who were identified to us as having information about Mr. Hoagland’s use of vulgar gestures in the office. Both Mr. Hoagland and one witness recalled Mr. Hoagland’s infrequent use of a vulgar gesture in the office. Mr. Hoagland told

us of one instance in which he used the middle finger in a WHMO Christmas pre-party photograph, when he and members of the WHMO front office staff, including BG Howerton, raised their middle fingers for the camera.¹¹

Treatment of Subordinates

We interviewed 32 witnesses who had frequent interactions with Mr. Hoagland. We asked those witnesses to describe Mr. Hoagland's leadership style and his interactions with WHMO employees. Of the 32 witnesses, 17 told us that they did not experience, see, or hear about Mr. Hoagland failing to treat subordinates with dignity or respect. These witnesses told us that Mr. Hoagland:

- was super smart and very knowledgeable;
- was very thorough and would always look for ways to help;
- was always mild mannered and never raised his voice, calm and cool under pressure, and professional, and respected and trusted his employees;
- was outgoing and generally very collegial;
- was a good or genuine leader who looks after people and takes care of the mission;
- empowered employees to think outside the box and to think not only about today's project, but where the organization would be tomorrow; and
- was one of the more mature and polished leaders in the front office.

However, 15 of the 32 witnesses made unfavorable comments about Mr. Hoagland's leadership. These witnesses told us that Mr. Hoagland:

- was a snake, untrustworthy, and had no backbone;
- knew of WHMO operations but did not share that information, causing distrust;
- inserted himself in Plans, Policies, and Requirements operations after he became the Deputy Director, circumvented the new Plans, Policies, and Requirements Director, and failed to take responsibility for decisions he made when he was the Plans, Policies, and Requirements Director;
- had ulterior or political motives; it was about him and his promotions vice about the organization; created an environment of distrust with his actions; and
- did not empower subordinates.

¹¹ See Figure 2 in section III.A, BG Howerton's Pattern of Conduct, Vulgar Gesturing with the Middle Finger, for the photograph relating to this allegation.

Impact on the WHMO Organizational Climate

We interviewed 16 witnesses who were identified to us as having information about the impact Mr. Hoagland's actions had on the organizational climate. Of the 16 witnesses, 9 stated that Mr. Hoagland's behavior positively contributed to the organizational climate. These nine witnesses described the climate under Mr. Hoagland as professional, drama-free, and jovial, with equal and respectful treatment of staff and good communication. However, 7 of the 16 witnesses told us that Mr. Hoagland's behavior had a negative impact on the climate. These seven witnesses described the climate negatively and said that Mr. Hoagland was untrustworthy, lacked respect and fairness, treated subordinates poorly, lied, and failed to lead decisively.

Conclusions on Allegations Against Mr. Hoagland

We determined that Mr. Hoagland occasionally used vulgar language and gestures, but that such conduct was infrequent. While his actions had some negative impact on the organizational climate, we concluded that Mr. Hoagland's actions did not constitute misconduct.

C. Allegations of BG Howerton's Failure to Follow Official Travel Regulation

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton directed personnel to disregard DoD travel rules when arranging his official commercial travel because he wanted to travel only on Delta Airlines, regardless of the cost to the Government. We reviewed BG Howerton's official travel documentation from the Defense Travel System (DTS) and interviewed 28 witnesses about BG Howerton's official commercial travel. Of the 28 interviewed, 13 were involved with or aware of BG Howerton's official commercial travel.

In this section, we first present information regarding BG Howerton's official travel on commercial airlines, and we then present information on BG Howerton's use of his Government travel charge card (GTCC).

Travel on Commercial Airlines

The Joint Travel Regulations requires DoD employees to use contract airfares for official travel on commercial airlines and authorizes exceptions with appropriate justification.¹² DoD employees using non-contract airfares for travel destinations covered by the contract must include an appropriate justification in their DTS authorization request for their approving official to consider. Approving officials cannot approve the use of non-contract airfares in a blanket fashion but must consider requests for the use of non-contract airfares on a case-by-case basis.

BG Howerton used commercial airlines for official travel on seven trips from July 2019 to January 2020. On all seven trips, BG Howerton used non-contract airfares instead of the contract airfares but submitted a justification in the DTS for only one of those trips. For one of those remaining six trips, the White House Special Assistant to the President for Operations staff member's e-mail detailed a proposed itinerary that listed American Airlines (contract airfare) and Delta Airlines (non-contract airfare) as travel options for Executive Office of the President staff and indicated the staff were trying to fly on the Delta flight. BG Howerton selected the Delta Airlines non-contract airfare to fly with the White House staff without submitting a justification in the DTS. BG Howerton, contradicting the Special Assistant to the President for Operations staff member's e-mail that provided a contract airfare option, told us that he was restricted to the non-contract flights due to operational security, logistics, and diplomatic reasons.

¹² The General Services Administration City Pair Program is a Government contract with certain airline companies to provide frequently traveled routes for Government business with unrestricted fares. Although the regulations refer to these flights as unrestricted and restricted, we refer to these flights as contract and non-contract flights in this report.

Table 2 lists the six non-contract airfares that BG Howerton used without submitting a justification in the DTS and lists the additional cost the Government incurred from BG Howerton’s actions. In total, BG Howerton’s six non-contract airfares resulted in an extra cost to the Government of \$1,866.

Table 2. BG Howerton’s Travel, July 2019 to January 2020

From	Destination	Contract Airline and Cost*	Non-Contract Airline Used and Cost	Extra Cost
July 14, 2019	Houston, TX (one way)	Southwest Airlines \$338	United Airlines \$579	\$241
Oct. 15, 2019	Santiago, CHILE (round trip)	American Airlines \$336	Delta Airlines \$441	\$105
Nov. 13, 2019	San Antonio, TX (round trip)	Southwest Airlines \$262	Delta Airlines \$920	\$658
Nov. 17, 2019	Palm Beach, FL (round trip)	American Airlines \$394	Delta Airlines \$563	\$169
Nov. 29, 2019	Washington, D.C. (one way)	American Airlines \$197	Delta Airlines \$364	\$167
Dec. 6, 2019	Fort Lauderdale, FL (round trip)	JetBlue \$178	Delta Airlines \$704	\$526
TOTAL ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT COST:				\$1,866

* The contracted flights are through a General Services Administration contract, referred to as the City Pair Program, which can be found at U.S. General Services Administration, “City Pair Program (CPP),” June 13, 2022.

Source: Defense Travel System.

Of the 13 witnesses who were involved with BG Howerton’s travel, 6 told us that BG Howerton or his immediate staff said he preferred flying with Delta Airlines. One of those witnesses said that BG Howerton preferred Delta Airlines to accumulate airline loyalty points.¹³ Of the 13 witnesses, 5 stated that they discussed BG Howerton’s use of non-contract airfares or failure to follow travel regulations with WHMO personnel, including the general counsel, financial management officer, DTS approving official, executive assistant, chief of operations, chief of staff, and BG Howerton. One of those witnesses told us that after speaking to BG Howerton for a third time about the rules concerning non-contract airfare with no change in BG Howerton’s behavior, the witness felt there would be little value in discussing the issue with BG Howerton again.

An official with the Defense Travel Management Office told us of a potential systemic issue in the DTS during 2019, when the DTS may not have raised an audit flag automatically for non-contract airfares. Despite that issue, BG Howerton and those processing his travel arrangements were aware his selected flights were non-contract options that required

¹³ According to *U.S. News and World Report*, “Delta SkyMiles,” (No Date Available), by becoming a Delta SkyMiles member, you earn miles based on the amount you pay for your Delta flights; you can also earn miles for flying with any of Delta’s multiple partner airlines. Those miles can be redeemed for free air travel on any participating airline or cashed in for cabin upgrades, unique experiences, or Delta gift cards. When you fly with Delta, you can also gain access to a variety of benefits through the Delta SkyMiles Medallion elite membership program. You can also earn miles on purchases if you have signed up for a Delta SkyMiles credit card by American Express.

a documented justification. BG Howerton failed to include any comment or add a justification in the DTS for six non-contract flights, despite including a justification of “due to mission” for another non-contract flight taken during the same period.¹⁴

BG Howerton stated that he was aware of the requirement to use contract airfares and the requirement to include a justification for non-contract airfares. BG Howerton stated that he had two reasons for not including justifications in the DTS. First, he said that when he selected a non-contract airfare, the DTS did not flag the flights requiring him to enter a justification, so he did not enter any justification. Second, he stated that White House operational concerns, such as security, logistics, or timing, prevented him from both entering the justification in the DTS and revealing to us his justification for using non-contract airfare.¹⁵

Use of the Government Travel Charge Card

BG Howerton signed the GTCC statement of understanding on April 30, 2019, acknowledging his awareness that the GTCC is mandated to be used by DoD personnel to pay for authorized expenses when on official travel, unless an exemption is granted. BG Howerton also received a GTCC training certificate of completion on May 2, 2019, which reinforced the requirement to use the GTCC.

Our review of BG Howerton’s travel vouchers from July 2019 to January 2020 indicated that he did not use his GTCC for multiple expenses on six different trips. BG Howerton provided comments in the DTS justification section for five trips regarding his use of a personal credit card. These justification comments did not include any of the exemptions the GTCC guidance allows, including security, safety, ongoing operations, and mission requirements. For the one remaining trip, BG Howerton included the comment that his use of a personal credit card was “due to mission.”¹⁶

¹⁴ The Joint Travel Regulation references specific guidance in the Federal Travel Regulation, section 301-10.106 – 107, which outlines the use of contract City-Pair Fares. The guidance stipulates an agency may authorize use of a non-contract airfare under specific circumstances, including when space on a scheduled contract flight is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel.

¹⁵ According to BG Howerton, both the past and present presidential administrations instructed him not to talk about White House operations, which he said fell under the prerogative of the President.

¹⁶ According to BG Howerton, the term “Mission” refers to White House operations.

Table 3 lists six official trips during BG Howerton’s first 7 months at the WHMO, when, on multiple occasions, BG Howerton used his personal credit card instead of the GTCC for travel expenses.

Table 3. BG Howerton’s Use of his Personal Credit Card, July 2019 to January 2020

Dates	Location	Paid on Personal Credit Card	Justification Given by Traveler
July 14 – 17, 2019	Houston, Texas	Parking, lodging taxes, and taxi: \$711.04	“traveler used personal card for expenses”
July 21 – 26, 2019	Poland, Denmark, France	Hotel at each location: \$1,948.75	“[GTCC] was not used due to mission”
Aug. 23 – 26, 2019	Bordeaux, France	Hotel: \$356.92	“personnel used personal [credit card]”
Oct. 15 – 19, 2019	Santiago, Chile	Parking: \$100.00	“see receipts”
Nov. 17 – 19, 2019	Palm Beach, Florida	Taxi to and from the airport: \$47.90	“correct paid out of personal account”
Dec. 6 – 7, 2019	Fort Lauderdale, Florida	Parking: \$34.00	“used personal card”

Source: The DoD OIG.

Of the 13 witnesses we spoke to about BG Howerton’s travel, 1 told us that he spoke with BG Howerton about his failure to use the GTCC on at least two occasions. The witness stated that the first time he spoke to BG Howerton about this issue, BG Howerton responded, “Yeah, yeah, I got it, I got it.” A week later, after another trip in which BG Howerton did not use his GTCC, BG Howerton told the witness, “Damn it, I hate using that thing. Why don’t I just say [the GTCC] doesn’t work [and use a personal card]?” Another 1 of the 13 witnesses told us that she assumed BG Howerton used his personal credit card because he would get airline loyalty points for using that credit card.

BG Howerton admitted to us that he used his personal credit card on official travel when he was required to use his GTCC. Evidence showed that BG Howerton used his personal credit card for 6 months after he arrived at the WHMO. During this period, the WHMO staff brought this issue to his attention on multiple occasions. He stated that his staff talked to him about the issue during the early months of his time at the WHMO and that he immediately stopped using his personal credit card. BG Howerton agreed that he used his personal credit card during the first 6 months of his time at the WHMO. When asked about the use of his personal card, BG Howerton told us, “I don’t want to say [my GTCC] was expired or not, but I think there was some issue with—but it was fixed and changed.” However, the GTCC administrator told us that no one ever reported any problem with BG Howerton’s GTCC.

Conclusions on the Failure to Follow Travel Regulations

As related to the matters discussed in this report, Section 020206.M.1.a of the Joint Travel Regulations requires a traveler to use the City Pair Program contract airfare routes when they are available, unless an authorized exception has been justified.¹⁷ We concluded that BG Howerton's use of non-contract airfare without appropriate justification was inconsistent with the Joint Travel Regulations and resulted in an extra cost of \$1,866 to the Government.¹⁸ Due to BG Howerton's assertion that White House operational concerns prevented him from providing a justification and from answering our questions regarding his flights, we are unable to determine by a preponderance of the evidence whether BG Howerton is personally responsible for the failure to comply with the Joint Travel Regulations.

As related to the matters discussed in this report, Section 040101 of "Government Travel Charge Card Regulations" requires that the GTCC will be used by all DoD personnel (military and civilian) to pay for all authorized costs related to official Government travel, unless otherwise exempt.¹⁹ We concluded that BG Howerton violated travel charge card regulations when he failed to use his GTCC for multiple charges during official travel, totaling \$3,198.61, during five separate trips during a 6-month period.

In his response to our tentative conclusions, BG Howerton disagreed with our conclusion that he violated travel card regulations when he used his personal credit card instead of the GTCC for official travel expenses. He asserted that the use of his personal credit card for the six occasions identified in this report met "exceptions for requiring use of the GTCC." In support of his assertion, BG Howerton provided copies of his six travel authorizations for the occasions identified in this report.

He argued that using his personal credit card for one of his trips was a valid exception because his spouse was on Invitational Travel orders and accompanied him on his official travel. We disagree with BG Howerton's interpretation of the regulation and exemptions for this occasion. The documentation provided by BG Howerton indicates that he was on official temporary duty orders, and his official travel authorization stated that he was not exempt from the mandatory provisions of the Travel and Transportation Reform Act (TTRA) that requires GTCC use for costs incident to official travel.

BG Howerton also asserted that the other five occasions identified in the report were "Mission-Operational" travel and covered by an exemption in the regulation allowing for use of his personal credit card. He asserted that White House operational concerns prevented him

¹⁷ The General Services Administration City Pair Program is a contract between the Government and certain airlines for routes frequently traveled for Government business.

¹⁸ The contracted flights are through a General Services Administration contract, referred to as the City Pair Program, which can be found at U.S. General Services Administration, "City Pair Program (CPP)," June 13, 2022.

¹⁹ "Government Travel Charge Card Regulations: Authorized by DoDI 5154.31, Volume 4," June 2019, defines "official government travel" as travel under official orders to meet mission requirements.

from providing a complete justification to explain his exemption. BG Howerton's response cited "Government Travel Charge Card Regulations: Authorized by DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5154.31, Volume 4," June 2019, Section 0406, "Exemptions," 040602, "DoD Exemptions from Mandatory Use of the Travel Card" (040602 H). He stated that using his GTCC would pose a threat to national security, which exempted his GTCC use for his travel.

We disagree with BG Howerton's assertion that he was exempt from using his GTCC. In all six of the travel authorizations BG Howerton provided to us, the Remarks sections alerted BG Howerton that he was "non-exempt" from the TTRA provisions. The Remarks sections further contained an explicit instruction that he was required to use his GTCC for all official travel-related expenses. See Figure 6 for a sample Remarks section from BG Howerton's travel authorizations. The Remarks section notified BG Howerton that the:

Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 stipulates that the government-sponsored, contractor-issued travel card shall be used by all U.S. Government personnel (civilian and military) to pay for costs incident to official business travel unless specifically exempted by authority of the Administrator of General Services or the head of the agency.

The documents BG Howerton provided to refute our conclusion instead contain clear confirmation in the Remarks sections that his travel was not exempt from mandatory GTCC use.

When we asked BG Howerton about his GTCC use during our interview, BG Howerton told us that he started using the GTCC after his staff brought it to his attention. He did not tell us that White House operational concerns prevented him from providing the required justification for each failure to use his GTCC or that he was exempt from using his GTCC due to operational, logistical, or security concerns.

We also disagree with BG Howerton's interpretation of the term "Mission-Operational" on his travel authorization documents. "Mission-Operational" is a designation indicating there is an official, mission-essential, purpose for the temporary duty travel and does not denote that the travel is national security related or exempt from TTRA provisions. We examined the travel documents he provided and found no evidence that his travel authorization was at any point classified, nor any indication that GTCC Regulations exemption 040602 H applied to his travel.

Figure 6. Block 16 of BG Howerton's Travel Authorization; Identical on All Five Occasions

16. REMARKS (Use this space for special requirements, leave, excess baggage, accommodations, registration fees, etc.)

Traveler is non-exempt from the mandatory provisions of the TTRA.

The 'Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998' stipulates that the government-sponsored, contractor-issued travel card shall be used by all U.S. Government personnel (civilian and military) to pay for costs incident to official business travel unless specifically exempted by authority of the Administrator of General Services or the head of the agency.

Government travel cardholders shall obtain cash, as authorized, through automated teller machines (ATM), rather than obtaining cash advances from a DoD disbursing officer.

Source: BG Howerton's Tentative Conclusion Letter Response.

We also examined the DTS audits for the five trips identified in our report and did not find any comments or justifications BG Howerton provided to the approving official that exemption 40602 H applied to these travel authorizations. Further, we found BG Howerton's claim that national security prevented him from using his GTCC to pay lodging, taxi, and airport parking fees disingenuous because he used his GTCC to pay for one aspect of his official travel: non-contract commercial airline tickets. BG Howerton told us that White House operational concerns also drove his decisions to select non-contract commercial airlines for his official travel, and we confirmed that he purchased the commercial airfare with his GTCC with no national security implications or restrictions.

After considering BG Howerton's response to our preliminary conclusions and re-examining our evidence, we stand by our conclusion.

Overall Conclusions

We did not substantiate the allegation that BG Howerton led, participated in, and encouraged a sexually harassing environment.

We substantiated the allegation that BG Howerton pervasively used vulgar language and gestures, as well as showed a lack of respect for a small number of subordinates.

Due to BG Howerton's assertion that White House operational concerns prevented him from providing a justification and from answering our questions regarding his flights, we are unable to determine by a preponderance of the evidence whether BG Howerton was personally responsible for the failure to comply with the Joint Travel Regulations.

We substantiated the allegation that BG Howerton failed to use his GTCC for official travel expenses.

We did not substantiate the allegation that Mr. Hoagland led, participated in, and encouraged a sexually harassing environment.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take appropriate action regarding BG Howerton, including determining whether the substantiated allegations constitute a failure to exhibit exemplary conduct and leadership.

We make no recommendations regarding Mr. Hoagland.

We recommend that The Executive Secretary, Office of the Secretary of Defense, examine the current process of subordinates reviewing and approving the WHMO Director and Deputy Director travel authorizations and vouchers. We also recommend that The Executive Secretary, Office of the Secretary of Defense, consider an alternate reviewer and approval authority from outside of the WHMO. This would ensure that future official WHMO Director and Deputy Director travel will comply with relevant DoD and other Government standards.

Appendix A – Standards

Standards Related to Exemplary Leadership

Section 7233, title 10, United States Code, “Requirement of Exemplary Conduct”

All commanding officers and others in authority in the Army are required—

1. to show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination;
2. to be vigilant in inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command;
3. to guard against and suppress all dissolute and immoral practices, and to correct, according to the laws and regulations of the Army, all persons who are guilty of them; and
4. to take all necessary and proper measures, under the laws, regulations, and customs of the Army, to promote and safeguard the morale, the physical well-being, and the general welfare of the officers and enlisted persons under their command or charge.

Army Regulation 600-100, “Army Profession and Leadership Policy,” April 5, 2017

1-5.b. This policy states that the American people expect Army professionals to provide exemplary leadership that reflects the Army Ethic and is consistent with national values.

1-5.e. This policy states that Army professionals live by and uphold the Army Ethic in accomplishing the mission, doing their duty, and in all aspects of life. This applies to our day-to-day interactions, at the office, in the field, on deployment, and at home, both in person and across social media. Army professionals, as leaders, must maintain and set the example in all they do.

1-7.a. Strategic leaders shape the Army’s culture while organizational and first-line leaders shape the climate of units and organizations.

1-7.b. In contrast to culture, organizational climate refers to the perception and attitudes of Soldiers and Army Civilians as they interact within the culture with their peers, subordinates, and leaders. Observed policies and practices often drive climate, reflecting the leader’s character. The greatest influence on an organization’s climate is the quality of its leadership. The commander sets the example by establishing high standards and expectations for the organization and its members. The best commanders place a high priority on personally

developing their subordinate leaders, caring for the welfare of Soldiers, Army civilians, and their families, while creating a rewarding climate of shared mutual trust and pride in team contributions to mission accomplishment.

1-11.d. Counterproductive leadership behaviors can span a range of behaviors, including bullying, distorting information, refusing to listen to subordinates, abusing authority, retaliating, blaming others, poor self-control (loses temper), withholding encouragement, dishonesty, unfairness, unjustness, showing little or no respect, talking down to others, behaving erratically, and taking credit for others' work. One such type of counterproductive leadership is toxic leadership, which is defined as a combination of self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance. To be classified as toxic, the counterproductive behaviors must be recurrent and have a deleterious impact on the organization's performance or the welfare of subordinates. An exacerbating factor may be if the behaviors demonstrate selfish reasons such as elevating one's own status, grabbing power, or otherwise obtaining personal gain. Army leaders are required to use self-awareness programs (multi-source assessment and feedback, Commander 360, and others) to ensure they receive feedback indicating whether they exhibit appropriate behaviors for an Army leader.

***DoD 5500.07-R, "Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)," August 30, 1993
(Incorporating Changes 1-7, November 17, 2011)***

Chapter 1, Section 1, 1-100, "Single Source of Guidance." The JER provides a single source of standards of ethical conduct and ethics guidance for DoD employees.

Chapter 2, Section 2, 2-200, "Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Department of Defense," incorporates Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations Part 2635, "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch," in its entirety.

The Code of Federal Regulations Subpart A Section 2635.101, "Basic Obligation of Public Service," states in paragraph (b)(8) that employees "shall act impartially and not give preferential treatment to any private organization or individual."

The JER, Chapter 12, Section 4, "Ethical Values," states that ethics are standards by which one should act based on values. Values are core beliefs such as duty, honor, and integrity that motivate attitudes and actions. Ethical values relates to what is right and wrong and thus take precedence over non-ethical values when making ethical decisions. DoD employees should carefully consider ethical values when making decisions as part of official duties.

Section 4, Paragraph 12-401, "Primary Ethical Values," states the following, in part.

- a. **Honesty.** Being truthful, straightforward and candid are aspects of honesty.
 1. Truthfulness is required. Deceptions are easily uncovered and usually are. Lies erode credibility and undermine public confidence. Untruths told for seemingly altruistic reasons (to prevent hurt feelings, to promote good will, etc.) are nonetheless resented by the recipients.
 2. Straightforwardness adds frankness to truthfulness and is usually necessary to promote public confidence and to ensure effective, efficient conduct of Federal Government operations. Truths that are presented in such a way as to lead recipients to confusion, misinterpretation, or inaccurate conclusions are not productive. Such indirect deceptions can promote ill will and erode openness, especially when there is an expectation of frankness.
 3. Candor is the forthright offering of unrequested information. It is necessary in accordance with the gravity of the situation and the nature of the relationships. Candor is required when a reasonable person would feel betrayed if the information were withheld. In some circumstances, silence is dishonest, yet in other circumstances, disclosing information would be wrong and perhaps unlawful.
- b. **Integrity.** Being faithful to one's convictions is part of integrity. Following principles, acting with honor, maintaining independent judgment, and performing duties with impartiality help to maintain integrity and avoid conflicts of interest and hypocrisy.
- c. **Loyalty.** There are many synonyms for loyalty: fidelity, faithfulness, allegiance, devotion, and fealty. Loyalty is the bond that hold the nation and the Federal Government together and the balm against dissension and conflict. It is not blind obedience or unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. Loyalty requires careful balancing among various interests, values, and institutions in the interest of harmony and cohesion.
- d. **Accountability.** DoD employees are required to accept responsibility for their decisions and the resulting consequences. This includes avoiding even the appearance of impropriety because appearances affect public confidence. Accountability promotes careful, well-thought-out decision-making and limits thoughtless action.
- e. **Fairness.** Open-mindedness and impartiality are important aspects of fairness. DoD employees must be committed to justice in the performance of their official duties. Decisions must not be arbitrary, capricious, or biased. Individuals must be treated equally and with tolerance.

- f. **Caring.** Compassion is an essential element of good government. Courtesy and kindness, both to those we serve and to those we work with, help to ensure that individuals are not treated solely as a means to an end. Caring for others is the counterbalance against the temptation to pursue the mission at any cost.
- g. **Respect.** To treat people with dignity, to honor privacy, and to allow self-determination are critical in a government of diverse people. Lack of respect leads to a breakdown of loyalty and honesty within a government and brings chaos to the international community.

White House Military Office Policy HQ 3-14, “WHMO Fitness for Duty and Off-Duty Activities Policy,” August 29, 2014

WHMO Policy HQ 3-14 states that individual WHMO personnel will be fit for duty and present a positive professional image while in support of WHMO missions.

Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations Section 1604.11, “Sexual Harassment”

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of section 703 of title VII. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment,
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Army Regulation 600-20, “Army Command Policy,” November 6, 2014

Applicability

This regulation applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard/Army National Guard of the United States, and the U.S. Army Reserve, unless otherwise stated. During mobilization, the proponent may modify chapters and policies contained in this regulation provided that the modification is coordinated with and concurred in by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army and that the modification itself is disseminated through the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. Chapters 6 and 7 and appendixes E and F apply to Army National Guard Soldiers when on Active Duty Title 10, for 30 days or more, and in all other cases, Army National Guard Soldiers are governed by NGR 600-21

and NGR 600–22.²⁰ Portions of this regulation that proscribe specific conduct are punitive, and violations of these provisions may subject offenders to non-judicial or judicial action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The equal opportunity terms found in the glossary are applicable only to uniformed personnel. Army Regulation 690–600 contains similar terms that are applicable to Department of Defense civilians.²¹

7-2. Chain of Command Responsibilities

Commanders and supervisors will—

- a. Ensure that assigned personnel (to include RC personnel under their jurisdiction) are familiar with the Army policy on sexual harassment.²²
- b. Publish and post written command policy statements for the POSH. All statements will be consistent with Army policy. They will include the local command’s commitment to the Army’s policy against sexual harassment and will reaffirm that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. The statement will explain how and where to file complaints and will state that all complainants will be protected from acts or threats of reprisal. Each ACOM, ASCC, DRU, installation, separate unit, agency, and activity down to company, troop, or battery level will publish a sexual harassment command policy statement. Units should coordinate these policy statements with the servicing SJA or legal advisor before publishing them.²³
- c. Continually assess and be aware of the climate of command regarding sexual harassment. Identify problems or potential problems. Take prompt, decisive action to investigate all complaints of sexual harassment. Either resolve the problem at the lowest possible level or, if necessary, take formal disciplinary or administrative action. Do not allow Soldiers to be retaliated against for filing complaints. Continually monitor the unit and assess sexual harassment prevention policies and programs at all levels within area of responsibility. Ensure all leaders understand that if they witness or otherwise know of incidents of sexual harassment, they are obligated to act. If they do not, they themselves are also engaging in sexual harassment.
- d. Set the standard.

²⁰ National Guard Regulation (NGR) 600-21, “Equal Opportunity Program in the Army National Guard,” May 22, 2017, and NGR 600-22, “National Guard Military Discrimination Complaint System,” March 30, 2001.

²¹ Army Regulation 690-600, “Equal Employment Opportunity Discrimination Complaints,” February 9, 2004.

²² RC: Reserve Components.

²³ POSH: Prevention of Sexual Harassment.
ACOM: Army Command.
ASCC: Army service component commands.
DRU: direct reporting unit.
SJA: Staff Judge Advocate.

7-3. Policy

- a. The policy of the Army is that sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Army leadership at all levels will be committed to creating and maintaining an environment conducive to maximum productivity and respect for human dignity. Sexual harassment destroys teamwork and negatively affects combat readiness. The Army bases its success on mission accomplishment. Successful mission accomplishment can be achieved only in an environment free of sexual harassment for all personnel.
- b. The POSH is the responsibility of every Soldier and DA civilian. Leaders set the standard for Soldiers and DA civilians to follow.²⁴

7-4. Definition

- a. Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination that involves unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature between the same or opposite genders when—
 1. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career.
 2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person.
 3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- b. Any person in a supervisory or command position who uses or condones implicit or explicit sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, or job of a Soldier or civilian employee is engaging in sexual harassment. Similarly, any Soldier or civilian employee who makes deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature is engaging in sexual harassment.

7-5. Categories of Sexual Harassment

- a. Verbal. Examples of verbal sexual harassment may include telling sexual jokes; using sexually explicit profanity, threats, sexually oriented cadences, or sexual comments; whistling in a sexually suggestive manner; and describing certain attributes of one's physical appearance in a sexual manner. Verbal sexual harassment may also include using terms of endearment such as "honey," "babe," "sweetheart," "dear," "stud," or "hunk" in referring to Soldiers, civilian coworkers, or family members.

²⁴ DA: Department of the Army.

- b. Nonverbal. Examples of nonverbal sexual harassment may include staring at someone (that is, “undressing someone with one’s eyes”), blowing kisses, winking, or licking one’s lips in a suggestive manner. Nonverbal sexual harassment also includes printed material (for example, displaying sexually oriented pictures or cartoons); using sexually oriented screen savers on one’s computer; or sending sexually oriented notes, letters, faxes, or e-mail.
- c. Physical contact. Examples of physical sexual harassment may include touching, patting, pinching, bumping, grabbing, cornering, or blocking a passageway; kissing; and providing unsolicited back or neck rubs. Sexual assault and rape are extreme forms of sexual harassment and serious criminal acts. When these acts occur, report them in accordance with the procedure outlined in chapter 8 and appendix H of this regulation.

7-6. Types of Sexual Harassment

- a. Quid pro quo. “Quid pro quo” is a Latin term meaning “this for that.” This term refers to conditions placed on a person’s career or terms of employment in return for favors. It includes implicit or explicit threats of adverse action if the person does not submit to such conditions and promises of favorable actions if the person does submit to such conditions. Examples include demanding sexual favors in exchange for a promotion, award, or favorable assignment; disciplining or relieving a subordinate who refuses sexual advances; and threats of poor job evaluation for refusing sexual advances. Incidents of “quid pro quo” may also have a harassing effect on third persons. It may result in allegations of sexual favoritism or general discrimination when a person feels unfairly deprived of recognition, advancement, or career opportunities because of favoritism shown to another Soldier or civilian employee on the basis of a sexual relationship. An example would be a Soldier who is not recommended for promotion and who believes that his or her squad leader recommended another Soldier in his or her squad for promotion on the basis of provided or promised sexual favors, not upon merit or ability.
- b. Hostile environment. A hostile environment occurs when Soldiers or civilians are subjected to offensive, unwanted, and unsolicited comments, or behaviors of a sexual nature. If these behaviors unreasonably interfere with their performance, regardless of whether the harasser and the victim are in the same workplace, then the environment is classified as hostile. A hostile environment brings the topic of sex or gender differences into the workplace in any one of a number of forms. It does not necessarily include the more blatant acts of “quid pro quo”; it normally includes nonviolent, gender-biased sexual behaviors (for example, the use of derogatory gender-biased terms, comments about body parts, suggestive pictures, explicit jokes, and unwanted touching).

Standards Related to Travel Allegations

Joint Travel Regulations, “Uniformed Service Members and DoD Civilian Employees,” July 1, 2019, “Chapter 2: Standard Travel and Transportation Allowances”

Section 020206.G. Also, a traveler cannot select specific flights or hotels to earn points if it will cost the Government additional money.

Section 020206.M.1.a. The GSA City Pair Program is a contract between the Government and certain airlines for routes frequently traveled for Government business.²⁵ The program requires a traveler to use these routes when they are available.

Section 020206.M.2. The authorizing or approving official (AO) may authorize or approve restricted airfares when they are offered to the general public and if trip cancellation would not impose significant costs.

Section 020206.M.2.a. When the City Pair Program fare is available, the AO must use the Restricted Airfares Checklist when considering the approval of restricted airfares. Restricted airfares cannot be applied in a blanket fashion, but can be considered for each trip on an individual basis. For City Pair Program routes, if the contract carrier offers a lower fare, the traveler must use that airline’s restricted fare before selecting another airline’s restricted economy or coach airfare.

Section 020206.M.2.c. The AO must consider that if a restricted fare is authorized and then later canceled or changed for official reasons and not for the personal convenience of the traveler, the Government is responsible for any excess costs.

Section 020206.M.3, Table 2-7, 1. If no written policy specifies which airport to use and multiple airports in the same area are available for use, the traveler may select which airport to use. A traveler can only be required to use a specific airport when the command or installation has a written policy that requires using it because it is economical.

Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC), “Restricted Airfares Checklist,” January 1, 2018

1. General

- a. **DoD Travel Policy.** Existing DoD travel policy allows the use of restricted airfares available to the general public.
- b. **City Pair Program Fare is Available.** When a City Pair Program fare is available, the AO must complete the checklist below to determine the feasibility of a traveler using a restricted airfare.

²⁵ GSA: U.S. General Services Administration.

2. **Checklist.** Prior to booking travel arrangements, please review the following questions.
 1. Is the travel firm (in other words, not subject to date, time, or destination changes)?
 2. Is the traveler's mission to a single location?
 3. Is the traveler able to obtain an approved travel authorization to purchase a restricted ticket within the allotted advanced purchase time limit?
 4. Is the cost of the restricted airfare less than the least expensive unrestricted economy or coach airfare by \$200 or more on a U.S. domestic flight or \$300 on an international flight, since these amounts are the change or cancellation fee charges?
3. **Restricted Airfare Determination**
 - a. If the traveler meets the above criteria, they are ready to book a restricted airfare reservation.
 - b. If the answer to any of the questions is no, then the AO must determine if the savings from a reduced fare is worth the risk that the itinerary may change and penalties could be incurred.
 - c. Most restricted airfares have rules and penalties for changes and cancellations after ticketing, which may result in additional costs, making the command liable for any change fee.
 - d. Restricted airfares must be purchased through the Travel Management Company and paid for with a GTCC. Restricted airfares may not be purchased through on-line booking services.

***DoD 5500.07-R, "Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)," August 30, 1993
(Including Changes 1-7, November 17, 2011)***

See the previous section, "Standards Related to Exemplary Leadership," for relevant JER sections.

***"Government Travel Charge Card Regulations: Authorized by
DoDI 5154.31, Volume 4," June 2019***

Section 0401. Policy and Purpose

Section 040101. The DoD policy is that the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) will be used by all DoD personnel (military or civilian) to pay for all costs related to official Government travel. See Section 0406 for exemptions to mandatory use.

Section 040102. Applicability. Travel card policies are applicable to all DoD personnel (military or civilian).

Section 040501. Requirement for Use. Unless otherwise exempt (see section 0406), all DoD personnel (military or civilian) are required to use the travel card for all authorized expenses relating to official Government travel. Official Government travel is defined as travel under official orders to meet mission requirements.

Section 0406. Exemptions

Section 040601. GSA Exemptions from the Mandatory Use of the travel card (IBA).²⁶

- A. DoD personnel (military or civilian) who have an application pending for the travel card.
- B. Individuals traveling on an invitational travel order/authorization.
- C. New appointees/recruits.

Section 040602. DoD Exemptions from Mandatory Use of the Travel Card (IBA). This states, in part, in addition to the Government-wide GSA exemptions (section 040601), the DoD has further exempted the following classes of personnel from mandatory use of the card.

- G. DoD personnel (military or civilian) traveling to or in a foreign country where the political, financial, or communications infrastructure does not support the use of the travel card.
- H. DoD personnel (military or civilian) whose use of the travel card, due to operational, security, or other requirements of a mission, would pose a threat to national security, endanger the life or physical safety of themselves or others, or would compromise a law enforcement activity.

²⁶ IBA: Individually billed account; a type of GTCC used by individual travelers.

Appendix B – Other Allegations

In this appendix, we address other allegations against BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland. Based on our review of witness testimony, e-mails, and documents, we determined that no evidence supported the allegations or that the alleged conduct did not violate a standard. Accordingly, we did not address these allegations in Section III of this report.

Culture of Favoritism and Personnel Actions

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland violated standards related to a hiring action for a Senior Executive Service position at the WHMO. We reviewed the related documentation and interviewed 16 witnesses who were identified as having information relevant to the allegation, BG Howerton, Mr. Hoagland, and subject matter experts involved in the hiring action, and found no evidence to support the allegation.

During the course of our investigation, witnesses identified five other personnel actions as being potentially inappropriate. We examined the documents related to these personnel actions and interviewed witnesses and subject matter experts about these matters. We found no indication of potential misconduct related to these five other personnel actions and determined they did not warrant further investigation.

In addition to those personnel actions, witnesses identified actions taken by BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland that created the perception of preferential treatment. These witnesses told us that leadership brought in favored colleagues and friends to fill roles within the WHMO. For example, witnesses told us the following.

- BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland created a new billet, Director of Integration and Policy (Special Advisor, Schedule C, GS-0301-15), for a retiring active duty member, so that when he retired, he could remain at the WHMO as a civilian.
- BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland eliminated competition and perpetuated the perception of favoritism by hiring people without competition.
- BG Howerton placed an active duty military member temporarily into a civilian position for 1 year so that when he retired, he could better compete for the position. BG Howerton competitively hired the member into the position.
- BG Howerton held two GS-15 billets vacant (one for 1.5 years) for WHMO active duty members who were retiring.
- Mr. Hoagland allowed an active duty colonel to participate on a civilian hiring panel so the colonel would be better prepared when he interviewed for a vacant job.

- Mr. Hoagland wanted to retain an active duty enlisted member on the WHMO staff after he retired, so he pressured the billet sponsor to provide a civilian billet. Mr. Hoagland took measures to have the active duty master sergeant added to the certificate of eligible candidates when he did not originally make the list, and the active duty member was eventually hired.
- Mr. Hoagland adjusted billet grade levels to reach a particular candidate.
- Mr. Hoagland, while Plans, Policies, and Requirements Director and as WHMO Deputy Director, allowed directors to contact detailers, billet sponsors, and potential candidates to start the interview process without going through the appropriate channels, thereby circumventing the hiring process.
- Mr. Hoagland allowed directors to tell select candidates or selectees to ask for incentives.

We examined the evidence relating to these actions, found no indication of potential misconduct, and determined they did not warrant further investigation.

Christmas Party Tickets

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland excluded two WHMO subordinates from receiving tickets to attend the White House Christmas party because BG Howerton and Mr. Hoagland did not like them.

We interviewed 20 witnesses who were identified as having information relevant to this allegation and Mr. Hoagland. Five witnesses told us that BG Howerton increased the number of tickets he reserved for front office staff and distributed tickets to select individuals who supported the WHMO, thereby decreasing the limited number of available tickets for other WHMO personnel.

BG Howerton said that the WHMO received about 375 tickets to distribute among 3,100 WHMO employees and stated that he gave the following guidance: (1) be equitable in distribution, giving each WHMO organization tickets for 10 percent of their personnel; (2) give preference to people who have not yet attended; and (3) commanders and directors distribute the tickets within their organizations. BG Howerton stated that only one person, a director who was the only person in his directorate and had attended the event several times previously, complained about not getting a ticket. BG Howerton provided that person a ticket.

We found no indication of potential misconduct related to these actions and determined they did not warrant further investigation.

Commercial Travel

The anonymous complainant alleged that Mr. Hoagland directed subordinates to arrange commercial airline travel for BG Howerton using non-contract airfares in violation of travel regulations. We determined that no evidence supported the allegation.

Military Travel

The anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton, with the support of his subordinates, arranged a training flight on military aircraft to attend a meeting. We reviewed documents and interviewed witnesses who knew of this flight. The flight in question was a part of the normal scheduled orientation flight and was not scheduled for BG Howerton's personal convenience. Based on our review of information provided by witnesses and the documents associated with this training flight, we determined that the conduct did not violate a standard.

Conduct Unbecoming

An anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton exhibited conduct unbecoming an officer, but provided no information, such as alleged behaviors, dates, or witnesses. We concluded that this allegation would be best reviewed in connection with the specific allegations outlined in the original complaint and did not warrant additional investigation.

Request for Autopsy Report

An anonymous complainant alleged that BG Howerton directed a subordinate military officer to obtain an autopsy report and death certificate of a [REDACTED] Service member's spouse. We determined that the alleged conduct did not violate a standard.

Presidential Support Duty Waiver

A separate complaint alleged that BG Howerton violated security processes and presidential support duty guidelines in approving a military member for an assignment to the White House Communications Agency, an activity with a presidential support mission. Based on our review of information provided by witnesses and the documents associated with this assignment, we determined that the conduct did not violate a standard.²⁷

²⁷ Presidential support duty: A position or activity that has regular or frequent access to the President or Vice President, or to facilities that support the President or Vice President, including communications activities and modes of transportation.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACOM	Army Command
AO	approving official
ASCC	Army service component commands
BG	Brigadier General
DA	Department of the Army
D.I.L.L.I.G.A.F.	Do I Look Like I Give a F**k
DoDI	DoD Instruction
DRU	direct reporting unit
DTS	Defense Travel Service
GSA	U.S. General Services Administration
GTCC	Government travel charge card
IBA	individually billed account
JER	Joint Ethics Regulation
NGR	National Guard Regulation
POSH	Prevention of Sexual Harassment
PDTATAC	Per Diem, Travel, and Transportation Allowance Committee
RC	Reserve Components
TTRA	Travel and Transportation Reform Act
WHMO	White House Military Office

Whistleblower Protection

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Whistleblower Protection safeguards DoD employees against retaliation for protected disclosures that expose possible fraud, waste, and abuse in Government programs. For more information, please visit the Whistleblower webpage at <http://www.dodig.mil/Components/Administrative-Investigations/Whistleblower-Reprisal-Investigations/Whistleblower-Reprisal/> or contact the Whistleblower Protection Coordinator at Whistleblowerprotectioncoordinator@dodig.mil

For more information about DoD OIG reports or activities, please contact us:

Congressional Liaison

703.604.8324

Media Contact

public.affairs@dodig.mil; 703.604.8324

DoD OIG Mailing Lists

www.dodig.mil/Mailing-Lists/

Twitter

www.twitter.com/DoD_IG

DoD Hotline

www.dodig.mil/hotline

CUI

D-CATSe 20200115-062519-CASE-01



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE | OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22350-1500
www.dodig.mil
DoD Hotline 1.800.424.9098

CUI