

Case Study: RDML Misuse of Government Property

Description:	RDML in command uses assigned staff and barge to entertain family. Event is captured on iPhone by barge crewmember and posted on his Facebook page. Facebook entry is discovered by fleet staff. RDML is given oral and written reprimand at NJP.
Background:	The admiral's barge and staff are powerful resources when used to enhance the image of the command, the Navy, and/or to entertain official guests. The barge carries a tradition unique to the Navy and is a visible sign of its most senior officers. However, since these resources are such outwardly visible signs of rank and status, they can be temptations for misuse. Following this incident, the type commander directed an informal investigation into the behavioral failures that led to its occurrence.

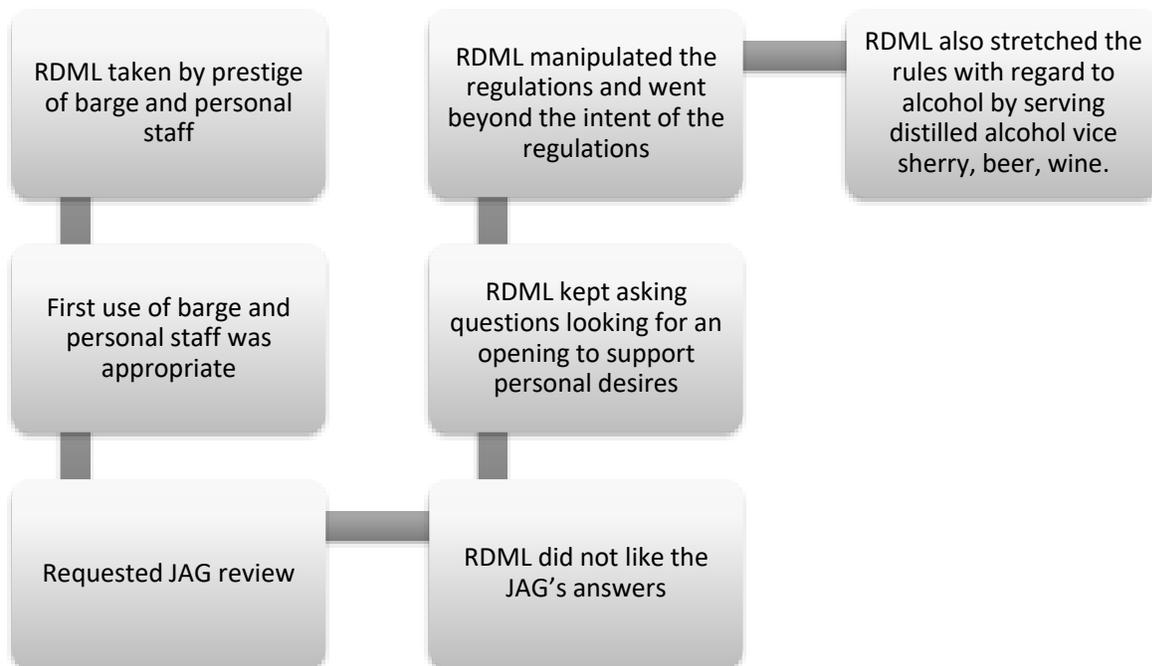
Findings:

1. RDML was new to this at-sea command. He had risen through the ranks as a CAG and had never been assigned a gig or other personal watercraft.
2. RDML stated that the barge meant a lot to him and he had thought about using it from the day of his selection to flag rank.
3. RDML took the staff for a barge trip the weekend following taking command. He re-enlisted a staff Sailor and they cruised around the harbor and enjoyed some wine and snacks.
4. Three members of RDML's family from out of town planned to visit for a delayed celebration of his change-of-command. RDML asked the JAG about using the barge to entertain his family. The JAG said that the staff and barge could NOT be used for such an event.
5. RDML asked how he could have his family on the barge and still be within guidelines.
6. The JAG recalled the conversation and said he told the RDML, "Use of the barge has to be for an official event. You cannot use it to take your family for an outing on the bay."

7. The JAG said the RDML then asked, "What must I do to make a barge trip, with my family official?"
8. The JAG said he replied that if you have an official event on the barge, and that is the express intent of the trip, then your family could come along."
9. The RDML then asked, "If I invite official guests and they cannot make it, do I have to cancel?" The JAG replied, "All of them don't have to make it, I suppose."
10. RDML thanked the JAG and instructed his protocol officer to send official invitations to a barge sunset social to a list of six people. Three of the invitees were members of the Navy League in Cannes, France, and the other two were Navy relief staff members located in Washington, D.C. One invitee was from the city mayor's office. All invitees declined due to the short notice (one week) and scheduling conflicts except for the invitee from the mayor's office.
11. RDML took his family members and the one official guest for the sunset cruise. He used his flag aide and enlisted aide to serve tequila sunset cocktails and snacks.
12. Crewmember iPhone photos of the RDML's family were posted on various Facebook pages to include the page for the region command. Within days, the RDML was summoned to the type commander's office. He received an oral and written reprimand for "gaming the OPNAV instructions and not following the intent of the instructions."

Facilitation Questions:

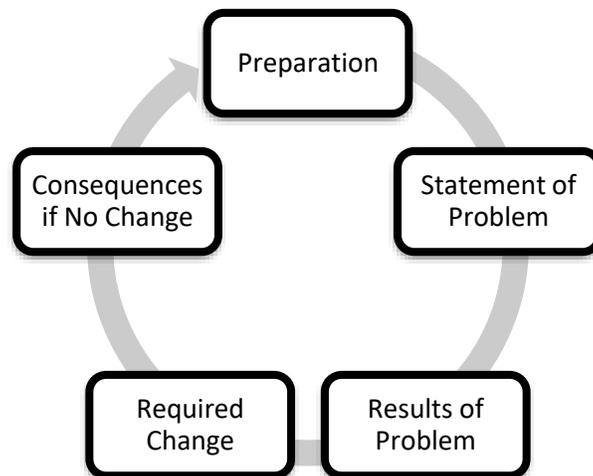
1. Describe the thought-to-action chain for the RDML.
 - a. Taken by prestige of barge and personal staff
 - b. First assignment of a barge and personal staff
 - c. Used the barge and personal staff appropriately
 - d. Requested JAG review
 - e. Invited official guests unlikely to be able to make event
 - f. Used barge and staff despite lack of official guests
 - g. Served liquor on a naval vessel
 - h. Used personal staff



2. What was the critical incident? When did the RDML cross over into misbehavior?
3. Are barge and personal staff rules so restrictive that YOU are reluctant to use them? Discuss.
4. Have you ever witnessed a similar event?
5. Have you ever been tempted to use the barge and personal staff for non-official events?

Social Constructive Confrontation Discussion:

1. The first opportunity for constructive confrontation is internal. In this case, the O-7 would benefit from a constructive confrontation with himself. He is having issues with his ego that he is failing to address. In addition, the JAG could afford some self-analysis in his forcefulness and clarity in regards to legal issues. Have you ever been in this type of situation or one whereby you took some time to ask yourself just what you were thinking?
2. A next opportunity for confrontation might come from a friend or colleague. These “on-lookers” often know about or strongly suspect instances of misbehavior. Have you ever been in such a situation? Approaching a friend or co-worker, and especially a senior, in such a situation would be very difficult; and you would have to be sure that real, negative consequences were likely. Using the case study, your own observations, or a hypothetical example, how would you realistically handle such a confrontation? Look at the wheel below for a template.



Preparation:

1. Put yourself in the position of the chief of staff for the RDML. You are observing him begin to misbehave. How would you confront the RDML? How would you prepare for it in terms of facts, etc.? Would you confront alone or with the JAG, etc.?

Statement of Problem:

1. How would you state the problem (or likely result) of the misbehavior?
What problem is it for you? What problem is it for the unit, etc.?
2. How would you state this if you were a flag colleague?
3. What would you be listening for and how might you refute?

Results of Problem:

1. Using the example, how would you state the likely results or negative outcomes from the problem?
2. What would you be listening for and how might you refute?

Required Change:

1. What change in behavior do you want to see?
2. What would you be listening for and how might you refute?

Consequences if No Change:

1. Hopefully, by this point in the confrontation, you are having a discussion and not a shouting match. The understanding of consequences would be something that both of you agree to, vice you listing them

Case Conclusions:

1. What main points did you take from this case study?
2. What are your concerns as a facilitator with this case study?