



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 82D AIRBORNE DIVISION
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA 28310

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

January 11, 2013

Office of the Chief of Staff

Marguerite Morris
23665 Halford Lane
Hollywood, MD 20636

Dear Mrs. Morris,

Thank you for your letter dated December 5, 2012. Let me begin by expressing my sincere and heartfelt condolences on the loss of your daughter. She was obviously a young woman of great potential and character, and I sincerely hope that your happy memories of her will one day replace the grief of so profound a loss.

I have reviewed the subject investigation thoroughly and the information you have submitted in all of your correspondence, and I will attempt to answer each of the questions raised in your most recent letter in the order in which they appear.

The first issue you raise is that Specialist Goodwin entered into a scam marriage as a means of defrauding the government. While I do not condone Specialist Goodwin's infidelity, the chain of command believed there was sufficient evidence to find that, at the time they entered into the marriage, it was valid. There is evidence that SPC Goodwin and your daughter had in fact dated for several months and that both of them took steps to travel to Virginia from their residences in other states to execute a valid marriage under Virginia law. There is also evidence that they maintained regular communication after the marriage.

While there is evidence that Specialist Goodwin was experiencing financial difficulties, it does not overcome the evidence of the overall relationship and the fact that they took all the necessary, legal steps to get married. Similarly, the fact that Specialist Goodwin might have discussed marriage with other women during this time frame does not undermine the otherwise valid execution of a marriage under Virginia law with your daughter.

Regarding your conversation with Brigadier General Charlie Flynn, I would clarify that the official punishment imposed on SPC Goodwin under Article 15 was reduction in rank to Specialist, 45 days of extra duty (suspended), and forfeiture of one-half of one month's pay for two months (suspended). Regarding the third paragraph of your letter, you reference a conversation with "another representative from Fort Bragg" who told you a slightly different punishment that included a claim that Specialist Goodwin was being dishonorably discharged. I have no information about this conversation, or with whom you had it. I can state that the only way Specialist Goodwin could receive a dishonorable discharge is if it were imposed through a court-martial, which I am led to understand the chain of command decided against.

Regarding the first two enumerated questions on page two of your letter, you ask why corroborating evidence of SPC Goodwin's intent was not taken into consideration when evaluating the conduct of SPC Goodwin. I assure you that the chain of command considered every piece of evidence uncovered in the investigation, to include evidence submitted by you to the investigating officer as well as in your subsequent correspondence. As stated previously, the chain of command did not believe there was sufficient evidence to find a "sham marriage" and therefore there was not an intent to defraud the Government.

Regarding the third enumerated question on page two of your letter, while Ms. Mayle's statement was not part of the original 15-6 investigation, it was considered by the chain of command when you submitted it during one of your previous pieces of correspondence. While it did provide some new evidence and perspective, the chain of command did not find it to be persuasive toward a course of action other than the one they chose.

Regarding the fourth enumerated question on page two of your letter, the chain of command has discretion to charge Specialist Goodwin with any or all of the crimes with which you believe he should have been charged. However, because proceedings under Article 15 still require proof beyond a reasonable doubt, the chain of command exercised its discretion by charging only those things which it believed were supported by evidence beyond a reasonable doubt.

Regarding the fifth enumerated question on page two of your letter, I apologize for any dilatory failure by members of the Army to respond to your previous correspondence. I assure you that every level in the chain of command involved in this matter have been committed to addressing your questions and concerns, and that every inquiry we received prompted some sort of appropriate and timely response.

Regarding the sixth enumerated question on page three of your letter, it is my understanding that an officer from the 82d Airborne Division Inspector General's office has been in regular telephonic contact with you since November, 2012.

Regarding the seventh enumerated question on page three of your letter, Brigadier General Flynn specifically addressed your concerns regarding these statements in his letter to you, dated October 31, 2012. I do not agree with you that the referenced Soldiers committed perjury or any other violation of the UCMJ. While I do agree that it was inappropriate for them to speculate and make comments about you and your relationship with your daughter, in the context of the investigation and their statements as a whole, I think it is clear that they were merely providing their opinions about certain facts that they thought were relevant.

Finally, I disagree that the opinions expressed by these Soldiers in their statements necessitates the initiation of a new investigation. I am satisfied that the investigation adequately examined the issues relevant to assessing Specialist Goodwin's conduct. That said, if you have or discover additional evidence that you believe is relevant to the issue of SPC Goodwin's behavior, please forward it to the Staff Judge Advocate, 82d Airborne Division, and he will make sure it is appropriately forwarded to the chain of command for their consideration.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my condolences on the loss of your daughter. Although we have discussed this matter before, I want to ensure you have my telephone number in case you have further question; (910) 432-3006.



Richard G. Kaiser
Colonel, US Army
Chief of Staff, 82d Airborne Division