



Scenario: War Stories

Group Size: 4-15

This scenario may contain explicit language and references to harmful situations which may be emotionally activating for some people. If you need support, services are available through the [CAF Member Assistance Program \(CFMAP\)](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#).

You are a Platoon Commander in an infantry battalion. You have a good group of soldiers and your second in command (2IC) is very experienced and competent. The troops seem to like the 2IC, who is a great storyteller and has a funny anecdote for just about every occasion.

During an exercise, you are assigned to escort a journalist and you decide to take him to your platoon. When you arrive at the platoon lines, the 2IC is in the process of telling “war stories” from his operational tours. As always, he is animated and is making everyone laugh. The presence of the journalist and the laughter seem to encourage him.

He begins to describe stories from one tour early in his career, where he and a few others “played games” at the expense of the local population. It quickly becomes evident that these “games” were abusive and, even criminal in nature. You become uncomfortable, particularly with the reporter present.

Categories

Principles:	Respect the Dignity of all Persons
Values:	Integrity, Loyalty, Courage, Stewardship, Excellence
Cultural Themes:	Service, Identity, Leadership, Teamwork
Misconduct Types:	General Misconduct
GBA Plus Themes:	Not Specific
Audience:	Canadian Armed Forces

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical obligations of “Respect the Dignity of all Persons” in an operational setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, excellence, stewardship, courage, and loyalty as well as duty the professional expectation in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) ethos, in an operational setting.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What would you do in this situation? What are the considerations?
 - Allow open discussion from the group.
 - Ethical concerns: Although the “games” appeared to have been abusive and criminal in nature, when recounted in such a candid and humorous way, the soldiers might think that this is acceptable behaviour. Is there a risk that a civilian population is unsafe around the 2IC or anyone they deployed with in the past? Is there an opportunity to reflect that those stories even made for fun or potential unethical behaviour/actions from his past doesn't reflect our Department of National Defence (DND)/CAF Values and Ethics and CAF ethos.
 - Personal factors: You are a Platoon Commander and the 2IC is popular and experienced. You want to fit in and gain the respect of your troops. You do not want to be perceived as someone who overreacts.
 - Environmental factors: This is an awkward situation. The 2IC is a figure of authority and you do not want to undermine this image by openly commenting on the questionable nature of the stories. By intervening, the 2IC might lose credibility, tension might be created between the two of you and the journalist's attention might be drawn to the stories. The journalist could recount the stories, which would reflect poorly on the CAF.
2. What is the ethical dilemma in this situation?
 - This is a right and wrong situation. Because of the criminal nature of the stories, the 2IC's storytelling is inappropriate and should be stopped.
 - However, it takes courage to intervene because of how this could be perceived. You want to do the right thing with minimal harm and stay loyal to your 2IC. In addition, you must wrestle with what should be done with the information. Furthermore, your non-action might be perceived as an endorsement of these stories.
3. What are some potential courses of action that could be taken in this scenario?
 - Option 1: Stop the 2IC immediately and speak to him in private. Insist that the storytelling must stop. This might be difficult to do because of the embarrassment that could result.
 - Option 2: Talk with the 2IC after and verify whether the stories recounted are factual. Voice your concerns regarding the matter. In addition, explain why the stories are inappropriate. If the events of the stories constitute criminal acts, you will have to file a report. It will be difficult to do and will certainly create tension between you and the 2IC.
 - Option 3: Seek advice by speaking with your supervisor. This could help diffuse the situation and you may receive advice on how to proceed. This may result in an atmosphere of distrust.
 - Option 4: Do nothing. However, the possible criminal acts behind these stories will remain unaddressed. Furthermore, their questionable nature could have an influence on the subordinates' capacity to differentiate right from wrong. If the journalist reports the stories, you could face disciplinary action.