



Scenario: What Happens in Theatre, Stays in Theatre

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 \(EAP\)](#).

"If you have some time, Chief, I need to speak with you in private," says Warrant Officer (WO) Markham.

"Sure WO Markham," responds the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Roselli. "Pull up a chair."

They are serving on an overseas operation in an infantry battalion: CWO Roselli is currently serving with their own infantry unit while WO Markham is attached-posted from a different infantry battalion in Canada.

"Thanks, Chief," says WO Markham. "I've been dealing with the same issue since I arrived last month and can't get it sorted out. First, one of my corporals shows up one morning with a broken nose. When I questioned them about what happened, they finally admitted that the beer call the night before got out of hand. So, I asked a few other sergeants and warrant officers that pretty much said that the alcohol policy is not respected here. Then I talked to my platoon commander, Captain (Capt) Javier, who confirmed that two drinks per day is not really enforced and junior officers often participate with the troops at the unit parties. Chief, we've got to get a grip on this before it gets really out of hand."

"I know this isn't really your unit, but with what the troops are doing here in theatre, they need to loosen up occasionally, you know?" says the CWO. "Don't make a big deal out of this. Besides, the CO's fine with it. It's like they said—the job's still getting done".

For the next week, WO Markham, surprised and frustrated, thought about their conversation with the RSM. Then, one morning, they heard about another fight at a unit beer call. WO Markham talked to the RSM again, who assured them that they would "look into it further." The RSM then issued an Initial Counselling (IC) to the members involved in the fight, but they also advised WO Markham that the administrative action would only be valid while on tour and the ICs would be destroyed before they return to their units in Canada. When WO Markham pressed them on their intention to pull the ICs from their files (knowing that the RSM is not permitted to do this), the RSM justified it with the rationale that, "what happens in theatre, stays in theatre."

WO Markham found themselves completely unsatisfied with the lack of discipline and excessive drinking at this unit. They knew they should do something, but they didn't like the options given to them.

Categories

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| Principles: | Serve Canada Before Self, Obey and Support Lawful Authority |
| Values: | Integrity, Courage, Loyalty, Stewardship |
| Cultural Themes: | Service, Leadership |
| Misconduct Types: | General Misconduct |
| GBA Plus Themes: | Not Specific |
| Audience: | Canadian Armed Forces |

Facilitator's Guide

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the ethical principles of Serve Canada before self and Obey and Support lawful authority in this operational setting.
- Discuss the ethical values of integrity, courage, loyalty and stewardship in this scenario.

Facilitation Questions:

1. What is the ethical dilemma or problem in this scenario?
 - Allow for open group discussion.
 - The ethical dilemma is on maintaining discipline, professional conduct, and adhering to policy while representing Canada on mission. It also highlights the importance of protecting the well-being of troops during a deployment. WO Markham is conflicted in how to handle a situation where they believe their superior's actions condone troops openly violating policy.
2. What considerations are at play with respect to Defence Ethics and the military ethos?
 - Allow for open group discussion.
 - Discuss the ethical obligations of Serve Canada before self and Obey and support lawful authority in this operational setting.
 - Discuss the values of integrity, courage, loyalty and stewardship in this scenario and how those values are being demonstrated by the individuals in this scenario.
 - WO Markham is facing an ethical dilemma as they believe the actions and decisions of the unit, including the destruction of ICs, does not align with lawful authority or ethical standards. They are demonstrating a commitment to Serving Canada before self by addressing issues of discipline (excessive drinking), as it will directly impact mission success.
3. Is it ethical for the RSM, CWO Roselli, to dismiss the alcohol policy violations because "the job's still getting done"? Two points of view to consider:
 - Allowing the unit to violate policy and covering up those violations is unethical and a failure to maintain discipline.
 - The RSM may believe that allowing for the relaxation of rules is necessary to maintain morale among troops. Their rationale might be that relaxing this policy boosts the unit's effectiveness on the mission. Ignoring or selectively enforcing policies can be viewed as a compromise to maintain unit cohesion and morale.
4. What possible actions could WO Markham take in this scenario?
 - Allow for open group discussion.
 - Option 1: Continue discussions with the RSM. WO Markham can continue discussing the issues with the RSM and express their concerns more explicitly, emphasizing the importance of maintaining discipline and ethical standards.
 - Option 2: Report the issue up the Chain of Command. If discussions with the RSM do not lead to a resolution and if WO Markham believes that the issue compromises the mission or discipline, they can consider escalating the issue up the chain of command within the unit or seeking guidance from higher authorities.
 - Option 3: Let it go and join the group. Note: Not a recommended approach but unethical decisions are made due to group mentality.