

Ethical Module Facilitator Leader's Guide

(Facilitation Plan: Recommend that the facilitator first review the scenario with his or her class and understand the situation. Watching the video twice often ensures that the participants are prepared to discuss the issues. Remember that SFC Switalski has volunteered to share this story and that he has served admirably and heroically in combat. The questions and layout below is a guide to help prompt and encourage discussion. It is important to first understand the moral position that SFC Switalski encountered in this situation and the ramifications of his decision.)

Module

Title: False Positive



SFC Switalski finds himself in every Platoon Sergeant's nightmare: he is consolidating his platoon on the objective and finds that he has two men missing. Do to the Platoon operating in two sections (controlled separately by the PL and PSG,) SFC Switalski's Platoon Leader calls in a "100%" report on his men that appears to be for the entire Platoon. After counting his section, SFC Switalski realizes he is missing two men. He makes the decision to immediately correct the false report to higher and not try and cover up the false report or find the guys quickly on his own.

Situational Framework:

1. Does SFC Switalski recognize the presence of a *moral decision* as he faces this situation?
 - [No, because accurate reporting is so engrained into SFC Switalski's ethos, that he doesn't even recognize that there is more than one choice.]
 - What has occurred in Ski's ethical development to make this an "automatic" decision?
 - i. He realizes there is no room for dishonesty on the battlefield and understands the ramifications of a false report.
 - ii. He is confident that his chain of command will support him in solving the problem rather than punishing him for having it.
2. Does SFC Switalski make a *judgment based decision*? How does he analyze this situation?
 - What are the competing interests in this decision? [Not looking bad" to higher versus doing everything within his power to find his Soldiers]

- How would you qualify his judgment?
3. Does SFC Switalski make a *clear decision* and communicate it to his platoon?
 - How do you make decisions clear in ambiguous situations?
 4. Does SFC Switalski *follow through* with his decision?
 - What actions demonstrate follow through?
 5. What level of courage did SFC Switalski have to display to make this decision?

Analysis:

1. Does it “look bad” to call up a report that is drastically different from your initially report? Why or why not?
 - a. Do frictions on the battlefield (fog of war) cause some reports to initially be inaccurate? Do higher headquarters understand this when receiving reports?
 - b. Does bad news get better with time?
2. What is the benefit of letting higher HQ know that you have a severe problem? Can they bring more assets to assist you in your fight/effort?
3. Could the missing Soldiers have received further harm if higher HQ’s was not informed that they were missing? How? How does this relate to sectors of fire, areas of operation, and unit boundaries?
4. What positive things could a unit do when they think they might be missing someone? Can they shut down civilian traffic at entry control points and checkpoints? How important would that make the timeliness of the report?
5. Should SFC Switalski’s actions have been any different if a set of NVG’s was missing? A round of 5.56 ammunition? How so?
 - a. Is the timeline any different in calling up equipment or ammunition instead of a Soldier? (For instance, should the platoon take time to find the NVG’s before calling it up? ? How so?
 - b. How does a leader weigh the importance of a report? (Is there a difference among losing a single round of 5.56, losing a set of NVG’s, and losing a Soldier?) Is there a slippery slope in determining what to report and what not to?
 - c. Are there regulations or rules governing different types of reporting?

- d. What is a Commander or leader's responsibility in communicating what is reportable and what is not? (SOP's that classify explosives as sensitive items, that dictate how much time a unit has for reporting a lost sensitive item.)
6. What values do you think motivated SFC Switalski in making this decision? Welfare of his men? Loyalty to higher? His own values?
7. Did this decision require moral courage on the part of SFC Switalski?
8. What would a person of character do in this situation?
9. What level of supervision is he under in making this decision? Does that play a role?
10. What threat of punishment is there with this decision? Did that affect his decision?
11. What was the driving force in making this decision?
 - a. Completing the mission? Saving more Soldiers? His Values?
12. To whom is he obligated in making this decision?
13. What factors could have changed SFC Switalski's mind in making this decision?

Supporting Questions:

1. Themes
 - a. What new insights emerge after watching the video(s)? Is there a theme(s) that emerges?
 - b. What other title would fit this vignette and why?
 - c. What is this leader challenge about?
2. Stretch the Learning
 - a. What is the one key insight that you are taking away from this experience and will put into practice in your leadership?
 - b. What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of other leaders?
 - c. What did you learn most from the conclusion or from hearing the rest of the story?
 - d. Considering the reaction of another leader in this situation, do you think that his analysis of SFC Switalski's actions were consistent with other experienced leaders?
3. The Situation
 - a. What is at stake here with this decision? What might happen if you did not make the report?
 - b. How many different negative impacts can you think of if you did NOT correct the report? (Fratricide in another unit's sector, etc.) How many negative impacts can you think of if you DID correct the report? (Yelled at by boss.)

- c. As a leader, how do you ensure that your subordinates make the right decision in this type of situation?

- 4. Leadership Style / Future Applications
 - a. What are the future implications of this decision and experience?
 - b. What is a universal value or principle that informs this decision?
 - c. How could you prepare for this situation now, should you face it in the future?