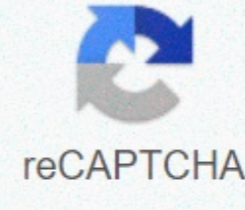




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How to report fraternization in the army

BY SHANNON CORBEIL — WEARETHEMIGHTY.COM So, you've got a fever and the only cure is a consensual adult relationship that violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice? It happens. And by the way, it can happen among friends, but for this article, we're going to talk about sexual or romantic relationships. Paraphrasing here from the Manual for Courts Martial: Fraternization in the military is a personal relationship between an officer and an enlisted member that violates the customary bounds of acceptable behavior and jeopardizes good order and discipline. You poor fool... (Image via Meme Generator) That's a mouthful, but it boils down to the intent of guidelines for any relationship among professionals: The appearance of favoritism hurts the group, and, with the military in particular, could actually get someone killed. But we're only human, right? It's natural to fall for someone you work with, so here are a couple of tips that can help keep you out of Leavenworth: 1. Don't do it I'm your friend. I'm trying to help you. (Image via Make a Meme) Seriously. Cut it off when you first start to feel the butterflies-slash-burning-in-your-loins. Flirting is a rush and it's fun and NO. Hit the gym. Take a break. Swipe right on Tinder. Do whatever you have to do to nip it in the bud before it gets out of control. 2. Be discreet Let's just be honest: everyone knows. (Image via Meme Generator) Okay, fine, you're going for it anyway. We've all been there (nervous laughter...). People are more intuitive than you think. Don't give them any reason to suspect you and your illicit goings-on. Be completely professional at work. Don't flirt in the office. Don't send sweet nothings over government e-mail (yes, it is being monitored). 3. Keep it off-base But, like, far away... (Image via Meme Maker) Don't be stupid, okay? Get away from the watchful eyes all the people around you who live and breathe military regulations. 4. Square away Nab one of these, if you can. (Image via LDS Church History Library) The thing about military punishment is that you are usually judged by your commander first. If you do get caught, you want people to really regret the idea of punishing you. Be amazing at your job — better yet, be the best at your job. Be irreplaceable. Be a leader and a team player and a bad ass. Set the example with your physical fitness and your marksmanship and your ability to destroy terrorism. Be beloved by all and you just might get away with a slap on the wrist... 5. Plausible deniability Yes, but you can't PROVE anything... (Image via imgflip) I would never tell you to lie because integrity and honor are all totes important and stuff, but... If lawyers can't prove beyond reasonable doubt that you were actually engaged in criminal activity, you could be spared from a conviction. Maybe it was just a coincidence that you both happened to be volunteering at the same time. It was for the orphans... How could you have known that you both like to spend Christmas in Hawaii? It's not your fault Sgt. Hottie wanted to attend a concert in the same town where your parents live, right? 6. Talk it out Hell hath no fury... (Image via Meme Generator) If you can't have a mature conversation with this person about how to conduct yourselves in the workplace or how you'd each face the consequences of being discovered, you really shouldn't be getting it on. You are both risking your careers and livelihoods because of this relationship — don't take it lightly. And whatever you do, treat each other with honesty and respect — you're all you have right now. 7. Don't go to the danger zone Save it for CONUS. (Image via Meme Generator) I know you know this, but here's the thing: REALLY DON'T DO IT (PUN INTENDED) WHILE IN A COMBAT ZONE. This is life and death. Remind yourself why you chose to serve your country. Pay attention to the men and women around you who trust you and rely on you to protect them. LOCK IT UP. You're a warrior and you have discipline. Did we leave anything out? Leave a comment and let us know. MORE POSTS FROM WE ARE THE MIGHTY: 13 Hilarious Meme Replies To Our Article About Dating On Navy Ships 13 tips for dating on a US Navy ship 10 tips for dating on a forward operating base We Are The Mighty (WATM) celebrates service with stories that inspire. WATM is made in Hollywood by veterans. It's military life presented like never before. Check it out at We Are the Mighty. Show Full Article The military controls relationships between servicemen and servicewomen. Sometimes, this means putting a foot down on friendships between officers and enlisted members; other times, it means criminalizing adultery. While friendships and extramarital sexual relationships are not criminal outside of the military, you may face nonjudicial punishment (NJP) or court martial proceedings for your alleged actions. Military fraternization defense lawyer Patrick J. McLain has more than 20 years of legal experience, which he uses to aggressively defend Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines against military offense charges such as fraternization and adultery. He is a former Marine, former federal prosecutor, former USMC defense attorney, and retired court martial trial judge. Each of these experiences contributes to his commitment to the comprehensive defense of servicemen and women around the world. FRATERNIZATION The military places special importance on preserving rank and chain of command and preventing any appearance of favoritism. Under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), commissioned and warrant officers of the military can be charged with fraternization if they: Fraternized on terms of military equality with one or more subordinates; Violated military custom that officers shall not fraternize with subordinates; and Prejudiced good order and discipline in the armed forces or brought discredit to the armed forces. Noncommissioned officers and petty officers are governed by separate rules, but they are generally bound to the same elements as those listed above. ADULTERY Members of the armed forces can be charged with adultery if they: Wrongfully had sexual intercourse with another person; That person was married or the military member was married; and The conduct prejudiced good order and discipline in the armed forces or discredited the armed forces. PROTECTING YOUR REPUTATION Do not let unsubstantiated fraternization and adultery accusations ruin your future. Discuss your legal rights and options with experienced military defense lawyer Patrick McLain. Our law firm will thoroughly investigate your case and aggressively negotiate with the military to drop your charges or reduce the potential consequences you face. Contact us by calling (214) 416-9100 to discuss your case today. As many Military Service Members know, relationships with your teammates are a key measure of performance. Close relationships defined by loyalty and shared values (often called "cohesion") help teams communicate, stay motivated, and perform well. But relationships that are "too close"—including any that are prioritized over the mission—can hurt morale and overall performance. Any relationship that risks readiness or safety can be a problem. While "too close" relationships can occur anywhere, you might be at even greater risk if you're deployed, especially if you're living in close quarters or isolated areas. So how close is too close? The answer might depend on your branch's policy. Take a look at some different scenarios that help explore the issue. Fraternization As it's described in the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) under Article 134 of the Manual for Courts-Martial (MCM), "fraternization" is a relationship that either compromises the chain of command, results in favoritism, reduces impartiality or undermines order and morale. Typically, it applies to unprofessional relationships between officers and enlisted personnel, but it can extend beyond rank too. Fraternization is often considered in the context of romantic relationships across the officer-enlisted spread, but the policy includes much more than that. Fraternization can apply to close friendships, business relationships, or even certain financial exchanges between Military Service Members of different ranks, regardless of gender. Since the context of the relationship is so important, it can be hard to know sometimes if fraternization is occurring. It's important to remember fraternization isn't about whether there's a personal relationship between 2 people or between an officer and someone who's enlisted. It's ultimately about maintaining order and whether or not your relationship disrupts the standards for military functioning. Dating Even if you're the same rank and not violating DoD regulations, romantic relationships with fellow Military Service Members can be tricky. Working with someone you're romantically involved with can distract you from your duties. You could end up spending less time developing your relationships with other teammates as you focus on your love life, which can hurt team unity. Your relationship also can negatively affect the morale of those around you, especially those who are likely separated from their loved ones during deployment. And there's always a risk that your relationship might end on bad terms, which could impact your ability to effectively work together afterwards. Sexual relationships Another consideration is the effect of having a sexual relationship with someone in your unit or even at your installation. While consensual sex in theater isn't prohibited, it can lead to potentially negative effects on readiness or morale. Extramarital sexual conduct and sexual misconduct are all potentially serious offenses outlined in Article 134 of the MCM as well. In some cases, these types of relationships among unit members have the potential to "sexualize" the work environment, making it difficult to stay mission-focused. It's also important to consider the effect of pregnancy on readiness. The rate of unintended pregnancy among active-duty women is almost 50% greater than their civilian counterparts. And once a woman becomes pregnant, she must be evacuated from theater immediately and remain non-deployed for the rest of her pregnancy plus a minimum of 6 months after pregnancy ends. A teammate's absence can affect unit readiness and morale. Bottom line A close bond with your unit members can build cohesion, make your team stronger, and optimize your performance. It's natural that people working together closely might develop personal or even romantic connections. But if a connection (or its consequence) starts to affect order and readiness, you might need to reevaluate the relationship. Learn more about the different branch policies: Published on: November 10, 2020 Ahronson, A., & Cameron, J. E. (2007). The nature and consequences of group cohesion in a military sample. *Military Psychology, 19*(1), 9–25. doi:10.1080/08995600701323277 Castro, C. A., Kintzle, S., Schuyler, A. C., Lucas, C. L., & Warner, C. H. (2015). Sexual assault in the military. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 17*(7). doi:10.1007/s11920-015-0596-7 Cox III, W. T. (2007). Consensual sex crimes in the armed forces: A primer for the unformed. *Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy, 14*(2), 791–813. Retrieved 29 September 2020 from Harrell, M. C., & Miller, L. L. (1997). New opportunities for military women: Effects upon readiness, cohesion, and morale. Retrieved 29 September 2020 from Santa Monica, CA: Manual for Courts-Martial, 2019. Joint Service Committee on Military Justice. 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