



Setting an example

Command exercise

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Commandement

EXEMPLARITY... WHAT?

Exemplarity is the quality that leads the leader to adopt the behaviour he expects from his subordinates and which must inspire them in return. Exemplarity is an essential condition for the exercise of authority, and it leads to adherence to and ownership of the values put forward by the leader. It is a particularly demanding notion involving the permanent exposure of the chief to the judgment of his subordinates, in a direct relationship, without make-up or artifice. It is expressed concretely through simple, seemingly obvious things: physical commitment, technical competence, a dignified behaviour in and out of service; but it is also to be sought in an authentic way in moral rigour, a frank and balanced relationship with his subordinates, courage and lucidity in combat.

EXEMPLARITY ... WHY?

In a society marked by a strong tendency to relativism and a disruption of reference points, the search for accessible models is a necessity.

- Setting an example is essential in order to encourage young people to adhere to authority and develop their confidence in their leaders.
- It guarantees coherence in the exercise of leadership by reducing the distance between words and deeds.
- It gives credibility to the leader who becomes a mobilizing element by setting an example to be followed.
- Observation of those in authority must lead those who recognize it to give themselves new points of reference in order to face uncertainty and push back their limits.

NO EXEMPLARITY ... WITHOUT :

- humility: to be exemplary does not mean to be perfect or infallible, it is to assume to embody a

reference, to be the one who sets the limits, while accepting, if necessary, to acknowledge its own mistakes;

- personal discipline and rigour: exemplarity leads the leader to do "what he must, not what he wants", without ever presenting himself as above the laws and regulations;
- Conviction: which allows the leader to embody the values and requirements that he puts forward with a permanent concern for the collective interest;
- Sense of responsibility: the leader is all the more credible when his behaviour reflects his perfect acceptance of his duties;

Authentic and disinterested behaviour: so that exemplarity is not just a simple communication technique intended to produce a one-off effect on subordinates;

- consistency: to be effective, exemplarity cannot be "a one-day performance", it must be applied on a daily basis and be sustained over time.

EXEMPLARITY ... IN THE TEXTS :

"Attend all the services that your regiment will do, always be the first to the appointment you have assigned to him; appear only busy with your duties; otherwise, you will see a sad and cold apathy take over your regiment; any neglectful colonel leads his entire body to forget his duties. »

Marshal de Belle-Isle (1684-1761) - Letter to my son.

"The life of the chief always speaks to men louder than his voice, and if his life is in contradiction with his words, there is an illogicality that scandalizes the weak and revolts the strong. Modern man no longer accepts discipline unless it is reciprocal, and unless the man in charge fulfils the duties of his office as accurately as he demands of his subordinates. »

Gaston Courtois - L'art d'être chef (1958).

"A leader is watched and judged by his subordinates much more than he is aware of (...) Rommel and Leclerc risked their lives in combat without much practical use, but they galvanized their troops in this way. To take a more down-to-earth example, the corps commander who ran the regimental cross-country race did not do so to win, but so that no one would be exempt from it. (...) Our testimony is permanent, even and especially if he is unconscious."

General Dominique Gourlez de La Motte, commander of the Cavalry School of Saumur (1979- 81) - The ethics of the military leader

EXEMPLARITY ... "IN CONTACT":

Testimony of a section chief warrant officer - operation SERVAL - Mali - 2016:

"The GTIA has been engaged for several months in the search and destruction of armed jihadist groups in central-eastern Mali. The reconnaissance of the wadis continues. On that day, the section's mission was to reconnoitre on foot a wadi about six kilometres deep. The heat is overwhelming, the thermometer will show nearly 60° C at the hottest part of the day! Throughout the reconnaissance: no trace of the enemy, no discovery of weapons caches. In the evening, the SGTIA regroups and settles in protection of the TC1 (Combat Train, level 1 logistics team) of the GTIA. The platoon is used to dig battle holes as soon as it arrives on the bivouac area, but not this time... I can read fatigue and a great weariness on all faces. Not seeing anyone moving, I take off my equipment and without a word, I start digging my battle hole, with my radio and the medic. Everyone looks at me; ten minutes later, without further order, all the combat groups are at work and dig their holes. »

Testimony of an ALAT pilot captain in the Special Forces:

"Recently assigned to a Special Forces ALAT unit, I'm starting my training period. It consists of various phases of learning specific procedures and, for the first time, a week-long "combat survival course". This course ends with a day dedicated to resistance to psychological pressure. This difficult part of the course is dreaded and I have to overcome the reticence of the organizers who do not want me to participate. As a pilot like the others, I aspire to be a full member of this special forces unit. I manage to follow the entire survival course, I undergo all the tests like the others, without giving up anything. I have made it my duty to pass all the tests and I think I have gained some credibility in the eyes of my peers and subordinates. »

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