



Sense of duty

Command exercise

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Valeurs de l'Armée de Terre

A SENSE OF DUTY... WHAT?

More than a quality, a sense of duty is a spring that drives the leader to fulfil the obligations attached to his or her state and status, especially in unusual or difficult circumstances. Sense of duty can be defined as a conscientious imperative that drives the leader to command and act to fulfill the mission or achieve the objective. It is not a function of the degree of authority or level of responsibility exercised, but is linked to the leader's commitment to serve and act in accordance with a code, regulations and a command ethic.

In a society marked by a strong tendency to relativism and a disruption of benchmarks, a sense of duty helps to establish the authority of the leader.

SENSE OF DUTY... WHY?

- It gives a sacred meaning to the mission, no matter how difficult it may be.
- It is indispensable in order to encourage young people to adhere to authority and to develop their confidence in their leaders.
- It contributes directly to the consolidation of esprit de corps around the leader, a guarantee of operational value.

• NO SENSE OF DUTY ... WITHOUT :

- Moral conscience: to serve in the permanent concern of the collective interest, fidelity and constancy in the long term and to act on a daily basis;
- availability, discipline and disinterestedness: doing "what one must, not what one wants", without seeking honours.

THE SENSE OF DUTY ... IN THE TEXTS :

"The chief is most often the head of a community, as well as a member of a larger community. Head or member, he is linked to these communities by a bond of belonging. He cannot shirk this bond. He does not have the right to do so, it is a fact. And this fact creates duties for him. »

Marshal Hubert Lyautey

"Military duty is to fight. Free France is combat, honour and victory. »

General de Gaulle - Mémoires de Guerre (1954).

"The leader is above all the one who takes charge of others. »

Emmanuel Mounier (philosopher) - Trait de caractère (1974).

"Often in life, and particularly in serious times, doubt or hesitation creeps into people's minds. There is only one way to see clearly and to remain irreproachable: to think and act as honour dictates. »

Ensign Honoré d'Estienne d'Orves (Resistance fighter shot in 1941).

THE SENSE OF DUTY ... "IN CONTACT":

Testimony of a lieutenant platoon leader during the GUEPARD alert - operation SERVAL - 2013:

"On Friday, January 11, 2013, operation SERVAL was launched in Mali. I am a section chief in an equipment regiment and some of my subordinates are on GUEPARD alert, ready to be projected if necessary. The alert is triggered, given the urgency, I understand from this announcement that I will carry out the preparation mission without interruption until their departure, 24 hours a day. This perspective is self-evident and I have no questions, even though I am not personally concerned by this departure. I have been preparing my men on a daily basis for several months now, and at this point, all these efforts are making sense: in 48 hours, they will be deployed in Mali. So I have to check their administrative files one last time and organise the final preparations for packing. I understand what is at stake in this mission and I want to give my men who are going to leave without me the means to meet the objectives set by the chiefs. »

Testimony of a Captain Unit Commander - Operation SANGARIS - CAR - 2014: CAR, BAMBARI in the east of the country.

"I join the section that holds the western entrance of the bridge. The situation is calm. The landed elements are deployed in close security but their medium and long range support capability is limited by lush vegetation. The support fire sector is limited to the road I will have to take to go and talk with the enemy. In order not to lighten the platoon's on-site arrangements too much, I am taking a reduced escort to provide my close protection. We cross a no-man's-land of about two hundred metres before establishing contact with the

local chiefs of the enemy. During the move, we identify a possible route of exfiltration under fire and monitor the roadside. We find ourselves facing more than two hundred men who, on our arrival, display their weapons in an attempt to impress us. The discussion, however, is calm and hard. All the language of the ERTF commander is conveyed and I warn the adversary of the consequences of his action. As we leave the scene, I read on my escort's faces a relief punctuated by complicit smiles. It is at this very moment that I realize that none of us had the slightest hesitation at the start of the action. Everyone even seemed happy to be there, absorbed in the mission. Each soldier took his or her share of responsibility for the action at his or her own level. In such circumstances, I believe that it is the sense of duty that carries us and guides us. Sense of duty does not prevent us from thinking about our tactical action, but at the time, it puts the personal consequences of the action to be taken into the background.

Early in the afternoon, with the opposing elements not having left the area, the platoon provided an outlet line to the ASRWMO, which seized the western area of the bridge, neutralizing the opposing combatants who opposed its action. On that day, the mission of the SANGARIS force was carried out with determination and a true sense of duty. »

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