



APPLY AND COMBINE SIX PRINCIPLES OF COMMAND

Command in Operations Exercise for Tactical Leaders

RFT 3.2 Tome 2 (FT-05)

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The six principles described below and embodied in the use of the intent of the head and its "major effect" all contribute to :

- **enhancing coherence in the design, conduct and control of mission execution received from each level of command;**
- **strengthen each subordinate level, which generally reports to a single leader;**
- **preserve the freedom of action of the leader by having him or her focus on his or her sole level of responsibility.**

SIMPLICITY

In addition to the simplicity of the orders mentioned above, this principle also applies to the process of their elaboration, which must take the form of a permanent fight against wasted time. Such a rationalisation of deadlines is achieved by informing subordinates in real time of intermediate decisions that have been definitively adopted: In this way, without being forced to wait for the complete order to be disseminated, the subordinate is aware of the major effect decided upon, the mode of action chosen and the mission he or she has to perform as the decisions are drawn up.

The organization of command must thus allow for the right balance between structures that are too narrow, which multiply the number of intermediaries between the leader and the executor, and those "rake" structures that overburden the leader in charge.

The question of the "reasonable" number of units that can actually be commanded in an operational situation must be asked. "Napoleon, for his part, advocated five," this estimate has hardly changed since then.

This recourse to simplicity must also be observed in the command structures themselves, which must banish excessive numbers of personnel and redundancy of functions, and sometimes also the temptation to give in to passing fads.

UNICITY

Unicity of command can be observed in three aspects:

1. a. There is only one level of command at each level of responsibility ;
2. b. each defined space-time framework of a manoeuvre has a single level of command;
3. c. the principle of intent developed above guarantees the consistency of command by a single reference: the intent of the higher level and ultimately "the desired end state".

PERMANENCE AND CONTINUITY

The principle of unity of command based on the clearly expressed intention of the commander, described above, would lose its relevance if it were not based on a complementary principle: continuity and permanence.

In concrete terms, continuity and permanence of command are expressed as follows:

- every authority must have an *ad latus*;

Télégramme addressed par General Joffre to Mr. Millerand, Minister of War on September 24, 1914:

"General Galliéni is at present designated as my possible successor. But, among army commanders, Foch asserted an unquestionable superiority in terms of military character and concepts. I request that a letter of service be issued to him, naming him as my possible replacement. Should the government accept this proposal, I will take the general to myself, as *ad latus*, to relieve me of part of the ever-increasing burden of my task, and I will appoint his successor in the command of the 9th Army".

Joffre Memoirs. (Paris 1932. Plon. Tome 1, pages 446 and 447) In fact, Foch never joined the GQG, but the North where, as of October 6, as "Deputy to the General in Chief", he commanded what was to become the Army Group of the North (G.A.N.).

- The retention in their posts for the duration of the authorities with important responsibilities remains a fair compromise between the imperative of mission success and the constraint of wear and tear in the function. Nevertheless, in the event of flagrant failure, whatever the duration of the command of the chief in question, he may be relieved of his command if his direct responsibility is proven;

As Army Group Commander in 1944/45, General Bradley explained that the relief measures he was given to General Bradley explains that the relief measures he was led to take were in fact aimed at consolidating the notion of responsibility of the commanders concerned:

"There were times in Europe when I had to relieve commanders of large units of their duties because they had not been able to advance fast enough. And it is possible that some of them were victims of the circumstances. How indeed, to blame a single man for failure, honestly, when, in reality, so many factors can affect the course of each battle? And yet, every leader must always bear full responsibility for each of the individuals making up his unit. If his subordinates make mistakes in the attack, he must either relieve them or be relieved himself. Many division commanders have failed, not because they lacked leadership qualities, but because they refused to be too hard on their subordinates."

General BRADLEY. Soldier's story. (Paris 1952. Gallimard. Page 74)

- command is exercised with the same rigour whatever the phase of the manoeuvre considered or its duration.

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