



Strength of character

Command exercise

publication armée de terre

Published on 13/12/2018

Valeurs de l'Armée de Terre

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER... WHAT?

Strength of character is the ability to express and defend one's point of view. It is neither authoritarianism towards subordinates nor insubordination towards leaders. It is a harmonious combination of courage, intelligence and determination that reveals the personality of the leader. It is a harmonious combination of courage, intelligence and determination that reveals the personality of the leader. It must therefore assert itself in a controlled manner, with discernment and without seeking confrontation.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER... WHY?

In a world marked by adversity and complexity, where the leader is often in a physically and morally highly exposed environment, strength of character is one of the keystones of leadership.

- It reassures subordinates of the leader's ability to stay the course and encourages them to give their best.
- It enables them to oppose any enemy, adversary or detractor, in the confrontation of wills that characterizes combat conducted in operations, as well as in the exercise of authority on a daily basis.
- It can allow us to intelligently confront our leaders who are waiting for us to tell them the truth without detour.

NO STRENGTH OF CHARACTER ... WITHOUT :

- A spirit of decision which allows one to get out of ambiguity, out of hesitation;
- conviction: so that the confrontation is not simply the expression of a spirit of contradiction but that of well-considered arguments which make it possible to

- win the decision;
- height of vision and discernment: so that the constraints of the higher level can be properly measured and the relevance of the position defended can be ascertained.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER ... IN THE TEXTS :

"To be disciplined does not mean to be silent, to abstain or to do only what one believes one can undertake by practicing the art of avoiding responsibility, but to act in the sense of the orders received". To be disciplined does not mean keeping silent, abstaining or doing only what one believes one can undertake by practising the art of avoiding responsibility, but acting in accordance with the orders received, and for this purpose finding in one's mind, through research, through reflection, the possibility of carrying out these orders, and in one's character the energy to insure the risks involved in carrying them out. In high places, discipline therefore equals activity of the mind, implementation of character. »

Marshal Foch - Principles of War (1903).

"A leader must be a man of character. To have character is to know how to keep one's mind free and independent, it is to command without seeking immediate satisfaction such as the legitimate satisfaction of being loved. It is, when one has acquired the certainty of a truth, to know how to hold on to it at all costs, whatever happens. It is knowing how to remain alone at the helm, hoping when everything around you is falling apart. It is finally knowing how to be impartial towards oneself and recognize one's mistakes. »

Gaston Courtois - L'art d'être chef (1953).

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER ... "IN CONTACT":

Testimony of a captain commanding unit operation Harmattan - Libya - 2011:

"The air-mobile group is preparing for the mission by adopting a structure that has proved relevant so far, a mixed module of Tiger and Gazelle attack helicopters. But this time, the objective in the depth requires a much longer infiltration than in previous raids. The Gazelles will certainly have to refuel along the way. This means landing at night, in the middle of the desert, where the sand makes landing extremely difficult. I can't help but be concerned. I'd like to avoid adding too many technical risks to the danger. In addition, the experience of some fifteen raids already carried out convinces me of the far superior destructive capacity of the Tigers. I therefore advocate to my leaders for a simplified articulation with two Tigers. They hear my arguments, but maintain the preparation of a training to pose in a desert area. Every day, while applying the orders, I come back to the charge to avoid the risk of losing a Gazelle in the middle of the desert during a technical manoeuvre that I consider very delicate. I can feel as my arguments hit the nail on the head. The decision finally comes down, and we lead the mission with two Tigers. Fifteen combat vehicles and about fifty infantrymen will be neutralised: the objective is fulfilled. I have the feeling that I have managed to convince and win the decision of my leaders through an intelligent confrontation of ideas. »

Testimony of a colonel officer at the Operations Planning and Conduct Center

(OPPC)-2012:

"While strength of character is particularly appreciated in operations and in adversity, it is also an indispensable foundation for the staff officer in a political-military environment. Working at the Operations Planning and Conduct Centre, I am accompanying French diplomats to New York to explain the justification for French intervention in Mali. I have to place myself in the context of the civil authorities I will be dealing with. Quickly identified as "the specialist" of the delegation, I am not spared in a game of questions and answers of which I am aware of the stakes, since the launch of an operation is at stake. Strength of character and discernment are required. It is a question of weighing up the serious objections to be taken into account and the more questionable ones to be resolutely countered. It is indeed a matter of character to defend and maintain a position or an option in the face of United Nations authorities demonstrating a strong capacity for resistance. The temptation to inflect my arguments according to the attitude of the opponents is great, but in the end my resistance wins the decision. I have learned from this experience that strength of character requires, in addition to the indispensable self-control, patience and above all magnanimity in order to develop. It grows stronger or weakens, as the experiences that are so many opportunities for training or renunciation: it is at the same time a gift ("musculature of the soul") and a virtue ("muscular reinforcement").

Title : publication armée de terre

Author (s) : publication armée de terre

Release date 05/12/2018
