



The sense of fairness

Command exercise

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Histoire & stratégie

FAIRNESS... WHAT?

Fairness is one of the foundations of the legitimacy of the leader. As a primary requirement for the exercise of command, it can be defined as the virtue of regulating one's conduct impartially, with a natural and permanent concern for justice. However, in a world marked by a strong tendency to make demands, fairness should not be confused with egalitarianism. Based on fair assessment, it goes far beyond the strict application of rules: it is therefore the leader who guarantees fairness and not the settlement, it being understood that there is no absolute fairness.

In practice, fairness requires a great deal of attention to others and a precise knowledge of one's subordinates' environment, their constraints and their abilities. It leads the person in charge to make decisions, to make a personal commitment and to take responsibility for his or her choices.

FAIRNESS... WHY?

Fairness applies to multiple areas such as: the distribution of missions, rewards and punishments.

- It guarantees order and loyalty.
- It is an issue of cohesion.
- It preserves the credibility of the leader and motivation within the group.
- It is a pledge of confidence in the relationship of authority.

NO FAIRNESS ... WITHOUT :

- uprightness and impartiality;
- moral courage;
- knowledge of one's subordinates;
- personal commitment of the leader to recognize merit and punish wrongdoing;
- individualization of the command relationship;
- decision and finesse of analysis of situations, to assess with accuracy what is due to each one.

FAIRNESS ... IN THE TEXTS :

"A good leader is fair not only in law but also in equity".

Daniel Hervouët - Leading men to success (2014).

EQUITY ... "IN CONTACT":

Testimony of a lieutenant platoon leader in the daily exercise of command:

"As a young platoon leader, I have to present to the unit commander two legionnaires who have returned from a qualifying course; unfortunately they both failed. In the exercise of proposing a sanction, the search for fairness is often difficult. I make the choice to request that one be sanctioned with days off and not the other. At first glance, this position may seem difficult to justify. However, I am familiar with the case of each of these two legionnaires. One is a volunteer and hard-working man, who prepared seriously but, despite his efforts, failed because he did not possess the qualities and aptitudes required. On the other hand, the other, nonchalant, underwent his training and took part in the course without any desire to succeed. This request for sanction seemed fair and above all equitable to the unit commander who heard my arguments. This rather unoriginal situation, however, highlights the importance of the knowledge of the men and their profile that is necessary to command fairly. »

Testimony of a Captain Unit Commander - Operation LICORNE - RCI - 2004:

"Engaged urgently with my sub-group in an armoured raid mission to Abidjan, the higher level informs us that we are going to encounter resistance that we will have to circumvent or reduce.

I distributed the position of the platoons in the armoured raid column according to the qualities of their leaders or the means they have. To the young lieutenant, enthusiastic, I entrust the head. He will be able to maintain the pace of progression at a high level, compatible with the tight schedules we have been set. In second position, I place the platoon under the command of an experienced NCO. In fact, if the leading squad comes up against any resistance, it's the second tier that will be in charge of manoeuvring and I know I can count on the experience of its leader to carry out what is bound to be a tricky mission. In third position, a LAV platoon, in charge of escorting the CP and logistical means. Given its lack of heavy weaponry, this is the best job possible for him.

I know that every platoon leader would like to lead the reconnaissance. However, the mission requires that everyone be positioned according to their own qualities or the effects they are able to apply on the ground and the adversary. It is not a question of seeking equality in the distribution of tasks, but rather of giving each one the mission he

or she is best able to carry out. Fairness thus appears to be a factor of success. »

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