



Ethics and morals – in conclusion

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Le GCA (2S) Martial de BRAQUILANGES

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Valeurs de l'Armée de Terre

Much has already been written on ethics or morals, to the point where one might think that the subject has been completely dealt with, that it is definitively closed, and that there is no point in returning to it. However, it is a subject that must be constantly put back on the drawing board because people are evolving, scientific discoveries are accelerating and fundamentally changing the situation; social and philosophical references are changing and individual rights could increasingly prevail over the notion of the common good.

Attempting to align our behaviour with what we believe in, with what we value for ourselves and for the community, this seems to be what the ethics of a responsible man are all about. However, this regular questioning seems indispensable at a time when the field of the possible no longer seems to have any limits for mankind. How far should we go? Obviously, this questioning concerns all of us, whatever our professional activity, but it is particularly acute for military personnel who are responsible for the use of force. It must be approached with caution and humility because the subject is complex and there is no ready-made solution.

At its core, ethics requires an individual adherence to values that are considered to be right and capable of guiding our actions and decisions. Adherence can only be effective in an area of freedom that respects our conscience. These values must naturally be shared and identified as collective values specific to a community. Thus, the soldiers of the Army have the Soldier's Code, which must be known and applied by all, leaders as well as performers, in operation as in everyday life. This is both a collective and individual commitment.

This dossier has highlighted the questions raised by the irruption of artificial intelligence in our weapons systems and the potential risks of removing man from the decision-making process, particularly when the response time to a hostile action is very short. This subject will obviously have to be studied in greater depth, while being aware, as history has shown, that moral considerations have rarely prevented the use of artificial intelligence. It deals, not surprisingly, with the problem of the "Legal" and the "Legality" of a scientific discovery. It also highlights the efforts made to train military personnel in national and international legal rules aimed at regulating the use of force in operations.

While "Legal" can of course be taught in a masterly manner, "Legal" can also be taught in a more general way. "Justice", or quite simply ethics, must be treated with delicacy because it touches on the intimate. In my opinion, one can only stimulate reflection in this field by reading specialized works, knowing historical facts, debate or testimonies. It does not claim to impose the right regulatory solution on a specific case, which is by definition more difficult to deal with than the major principles on which many agree.

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