

Leadership

Air Vice-Marshal Ron Dick

In considering the concept of leadership, the first thing to ask ourselves is whether we know what we are talking about. What is “leadership”? How is it defined? To some degree, that depends on circumstances. The leadership needed to head a department in the Pentagon in peacetime is probably different from that required to command an infantry platoon under fire; and the sort of person who is good at managing a bank may not be so adept at running a maintenance unit in the Air Force. They are all leaders of one sort or another, but they are different. However, before we get around to thinking about particular problems, there are a few general aspects of leadership which are worth considering. Let us look at the historical background first.

If civilized human society is left aside, leadership is not too difficult to define. The grouping of social animals, including primitive human hunter/gatherers, produces leaders. They arise because, in any male social animal, there is a natural desire for access to food and females, and for security. In the competition for these things, one male in a group inevitably proves stronger or craftier than the others and becomes dominant. He holds his position until deposed by another male who has grown even more strong or crafty. Usually, in both nonhuman animals and in simple human societies, the change in leadership was and is achieved without undue blood being spilled. Threat, challenge, and display usually get the job done. (Even societies which we regard as civilized still retain forms of threat, challenge and display—political candidates in an election year, for instance.)

Once civilization started to grow, and human groups got to be larger and more complex, leadership began to be more complicated, too, and not everyone saw it in the same light.

Air Vice-Marshal Ron Dick began his Royal Air Force (RAF) career as a cadet at the RAF College in January 1950, and was commissioned in July 1952. He joined No. 64 Squadron, flying Meteor 8 day fighters at RAF Duxford, near Cambridge, in February 1953. During this tour of duty, he became a member of the aerobatic display team which represented the RAF for the 1953–54 seasons. On leaving 64 Squadron, he converted first to the Provost and then to the Vampire, and, in 1955–56, he won both the Clarkson and Wright Jubilee individual aerobatic trophies while flying these aircraft. During the latter part of his career, Air Marshal Dick was air attaché and then defense attaché at the British embassy in Washington, D.C. Retired from the RAF in 1988, he is living in Virginia and is writing and lecturing on military and aviation history.

It is interesting to see what various people have said about the business of being in authority over the years:

- Pope Leo XIII thought that man’s highest duty was to respect authority; Oscar Wilde believed that all authority was degrading. Plato said that the wisest have the most authority, but Thomas Jefferson was adamant that authority belonged to the people.
- Lord Byron felt that “when we think we lead, we are most led,” and the British Prime Minister Bonar Law seemed to agree with him, when he said, “I must follow them; I am their leader.”
- Hitler, as you might expect, took a rather narrow, satanic view: “The art of leadership consists of consolidating the attention of the people against a single adversary and taking care that nothing will divert that attention.”
- The Bible’s admonition on the subject is very forthright. The Book of Matthew reminds us that “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”
- More to our modern taste, probably, is Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower’s definition: “Leadership is the art of getting someone to do something *you* want done because *he* wants to do it.”

Eisenhower’s summing up of the problem is more likely to appeal to us because it implies that the people being led should understand and accept what the leader wants to do. It suggests that the leader commands sufficient respect from his followers for them to trust his judgment and that they are content to do what he wants done. In a democracy, certainly, all that is important, even in the military—at any rate, it is now. It was not always quite like that.

It is important to bear in mind that a democracy is (or should be) a society which gives all its members an equal opportunity to strive for inequality. An aristocracy, on the other hand, establishes inequality at birth. These days, civilized people might agree that the concept of being born to lead is not an acceptable idea. The capacity for leadership can be inborn, and it can be developed—but it is not often thought of as being part of someone’s birthright. Not so long ago, it was the other way around in most places, and it was not always a success.

The aristocratic tradition evolved from the simple system of group dominance that the human race was born with. It has been with us for most of human history, and, in many countries, it has a long way to go yet. The idea that those fortunate enough to be born into one of the great families had a God-given right to lead went almost universally unchallenged for centuries, both on and off the battlefield. The social gap between the leaders and the led was unbridgeable,

and it was unthinkable for a peasant to even dream about leading anything.

The British Army is a useful model for studying this phenomenon. It is by no means alone in having aristocratic traditions, but its copious recorded history makes it an easy target. These days the British Army is as “democratic” as any other, but a few of the landed gentry survive within its officer corps. Born to privilege, there is sometimes a touch of arrogance about them. They can be maddeningly self-assured, often brave to the point of being foolhardy, and usually deeply concerned for the welfare of their soldiers—and their horses. (That is to say that soldiers—and horses—must be kept well-fed and watered, and warm and dry if possible; they should be patted and told they are good chaps when they do well, and suitably chastised when they misbehave; in other words, their simple lives must be kept well-structured and happy.)

These people often produced excellent middle-rank officers and, occasionally, superb generals. Wellington, a man who never lost a battle, could hardly have been better. He had all the attributes of the ideal military leader—an imposing appearance, a commanding presence, and the charming graces and self-confidence of the aristocrat. He had a marvelous eye for detail and a thorough knowledge of the profession of arms, he was fearless and inexhaustible, especially in battle, and he was an inspirational general. In his conduct of campaigns in India, Spain, and, of course, at Waterloo, he was the consummate professional. With all that, it is hardly surprising that he was idolized both by his men and by the British people.

However, the British Army also included men who presided over some of the greatest disasters in military history, and it is useful to examine a few of these to illustrate some important aspects of leadership. It is not too difficult to find disasters in British military history, but I will restrict myself to just three—the retreat from Kabul during the First Afghan War in 1842; the siege of Kut in what is now Iraq in 1915; and the fall of Singapore in 1942.

The Retreat from Kabul

In 1842, a British Army of 4,500, together with 12,000 dependents and camp followers, was stationed in Kabul, primarily as an insurance against Afghanistan being lost to the Russians, who could then threaten India. It was not a desirable posting. The temperature ranged from 120 degrees in summer to -40 degrees in winter. Some of the worst country in the world, crisscrossed by mountain ranges and deep ravines, lay across the army’s lines of communication with India—and the natives were not friendly.

The commander of the army was Maj Gen Mountstuart Elphinstone. His qualifications for the appointment were that he was “of good repute, gentlemanly manners and aristocratic connections.” He was courteous and kind, and affectionately regarded by his followers. Unfortunately for them, he was also hopelessly indecisive, lacking in moral courage,

and suggestible, although he could be remarkably pigheaded when he chose. He also lacked compassion in the face of suffering, preferring to ignore it and hope it would go away.

In January 1842, there was an Afghan uprising strong enough to threaten the British position. An irresolute response by Elphinstone made things worse, and he was driven to come to terms with the Afghan leader, who demanded a complete withdrawal of the British force to India, safe passage assured. Following a chaotic series of orders and counterorders, the army and its dependents set off in the dead of winter. The march was disorganized and a long, straggling column was the result, moving slowly and without adequate military precautions.

Elphinstone did not press the march and would not move by night; no fires were lit in camp for fear of attracting tribesmen even though the guards were freezing to death; the soldiers could not wrap blankets round their legs on the march because it looked unsoldierly; hundreds of people fell out of the column to lie in the snow and be stripped and left to die by Afghans, but Elphinstone seemed not to notice, preferring to repeat a pathetic belief in the promise of safe passage. Mocking that promise, the tribesmen harried the column to such effect that, by the fifth day, losses had risen to over 12,000. At no point did the general make the slightest attempt to lead the once-disciplined force under his command in an attack on his tormentors.

On 13 January, one week after the army left Kabul, a single officer, the regimental doctor, reached the British fort at Jalalabad. He and a few Indian soldiers proved to be the only survivors of the withdrawal. Perhaps the most honest of the subsequent comments on the disaster said: “Our army perished, sacrificed to the incompetence, feebleness, and want of skill and resolution of their military leaders.”

The Siege of Kut

In 1915, the commander of the British 6th Division, near Basra in Mesopotamia, was Maj Gen Sir Charles Townshend. He was both intelligent and professionally able, and a brave man. He was charming company, and he had a light touch with his troops, with whom he was popular. What they may not have appreciated was that beneath his splendid exterior, he was vain, dishonest, and lacking compassion. Worse yet, he was an egotist driven by ambition and ravenous for popular acclaim. He craved honor, rank, and the admiration of others to such an extent that his professional judgment could be overridden in their pursuit.

Townshend’s division was tasked with protecting the oil pipelines around Basra from the Turkish Army. While adequate for that, it was not strong enough to undertake expeditions in the direction of Baghdad, yet that is what it soon set out to do. Townshend knew that his division was incapable of getting the job done. He wrote in some detail to a friend of his in England spelling out the problems—the need for three times as many troops and more guns, the strategic

insignificance of Baghdad, the poor lines of communication, the logistic problems, and so on.

Nevertheless, when the order came for him to move, Townshend accepted the commitment enthusiastically. Initially, he was tasked to take Amarah, 100 miles north of Basra. He did that, and then pressed on to Kut, 90 miles further. The Turkish Army's resistance was now quite strong, and Townshend's force suffered 12 percent casualties, but he was winning and his appetite for glory had been whetted. Knowing the limitations of his force, it was *he* who proposed going further. He could already see himself as Gen Sir Charles Townshend, Lord of Baghdad.

As he advanced on Baghdad, Townshend was faced by a Turkish Army of 13,000, backed by another of nearly 30,000. His weakened division fought well and repulsed the Turks, but half became casualties in the process. He fell back on Kut, and could have kept going to get closer to Basra and reinforcements. He knew that was the thing to do, but dreams of glory still filled his head, and he imagined he could make a fortress of Kut's mud huts. He would withstand a siege and emerge a hero.

For the next 147 days, Townshend's division huddled in its trenches at Kut and its commander sent heroic messages to the outside world. The suffering of the troops was appalling; food was inadequate and medical supplies nonexistent. A series of relief forces failed to break through and accumulated 23,000 casualties. Townshend was unmoved. While the soldiers died of disease and malnutrition, he sent messages to his superiors recommending his own promotion. He said it would be possible for him to escape from Kut to take up a more important post. Abandoning his troops was apparently not a problem for him.

On 19 April 1916, Townshend accepted the assurances of the Turkish commander that he would be treated generously, and handed his men over to the Turks. He was taken in the greatest comfort to Constantinople, where he became the guest of honor of the Turkish commander in chief (CINC). He was entertained at Constantinople's best restaurant and established in a splendid villa with his servants. His men, meanwhile, began a 1,200-mile march across deserts and mountains, and they died by the thousand, of disease, starvation, cold, and at the hands of their Turkish guards or Arab marauders. Nearly 70 percent died in captivity.

When Townshend was repatriated, he expressed no sorrow for the fate of his soldiers, nor did he feel guilty. Indeed, he seemed surprised that his homecoming speech on being "an honored guest of the Turks" was not well received, and he could not understand the icy blast of disapproval which met his renewed attempts to gain promotion in recognition of his achievements.

The Fall of Singapore

The fall of Singapore in 1942 may have been the greatest single disaster ever inflicted on the British military. This "impregnable" fortress, with its huge naval dockyard and

strategically important airfields, fell into the hands of the Japanese almost intact, after they had conducted a campaign remarkable for its ease and swiftness. With Singapore fell the myth of European supremacy over Asiatics, and the British suffered irreparable damage to their military prestige. More significantly, the defeat rocked the foundations of the Victorian British Empire and marked the beginning of the end for Britain as a world power.

The man who presided over this debacle was Lt Gen A. E. Percival. He was highly intelligent and had built his reputation by being a superb staff officer. He could not be described as a warrior. Indeed, he was known for being a gentle soul. Sadly for Singapore, he also found it difficult to be decisive, and he sought his escape from decision making in obstinacy and rigidity.

When the Japanese opened their Pacific campaign by landing an army in Malaya a few hours before attacking Pearl Harbor, the British forces available to Percival outnumbered the Japanese by three to one. However, the British commanders had been seduced by the legend of their Imperial power. They belittled Japanese capability, they concluded that the Malayan jungles were impassable to an invading army in any case, and they made up their minds to defend Singapore only from attack by sea. No defenses were prepared for the north coast of the island, which is only a few hundred yards from the end of the Malayan peninsula—nor were there any at any point in Malaya itself.

Even when the Japanese were established ashore in northern Malaya and had begun to move south, Percival refused to take them seriously. Pressed to do something about constructing defenses on Singapore's north coast, he refused on the grounds that such activity would be bad for civilian morale. He authorized a series of withdrawals for the army in Malaya which gave the impression that the Japanese were irresistible and encouraged wholesale retreat. When the Japanese reached his doorstep and could be seen just across the straits, he still shied away from reality. For instance, he supported the view that a machine-gun crew should not be allowed to dig a strongpoint on the golf course or knock over a tree which was obscuring their field of fire without these matters being placed before the Golf Club committee.

At no point in the campaign could Percival bring himself to believe that offensive action was warranted against the Japanese. He sat in his headquarters like a rabbit in the headlights waiting for the Japanese army to run into him—and it did. Besides the loss of a vital strategic base and an immense amount of material, Percival's conduct resulted in death or captivity for 140,000 British, Indian, and Australian troops.

It might be said that this historical material is interesting but that it has nothing to do with the practice of leadership at the end of the twentieth century, and that it is particularly inappropriate when considering problems of leadership at unit level. However, leadership in any circumstances has always involved issues of character and judgment, and that has not changed. At the roots of the failures of the leaders concerned in the examples given were a number of weak-

nesses which are common enough and are worth looking out for, both in ourselves and in others.

Elphinstone, Townshend, and Percival were all apparently charming and capable men. Yet, when confronted with some real tests of command, one or other of them proved to be in some degree incompetent, indecisive, irresolute, inconsistent, suggestible, lacking in moral courage or compassion, vain, obstinate, dishonest, unbending, egotistical, overambitious, or arrogant. Obviously, none of them had been able to examine his own character dispassionately enough for him to think how its weaknesses and strengths might affect the issue when the test came; nor had their superiors seen the problems coming.

That suggests a wider failure of leadership, in which friendship and influence came to count for more than honest assessment in the appointment of leaders. There is also a hint that the men involved had been adequate as long as they were not seriously challenged; their flaws became obvious only when exposed to the stress of war. However, their failings were still there, and many of them would have been noticeable even in quiet times. Probably nothing was done about them because, in peacetime, there were no life and death consequences.

That, of course, is the point for most military people for the greater part of their careers. Military units must be made to work effectively when, for most of the time, they are not being employed in their primary function. Nations may hire armed forces but they would prefer them *never* to be used in anger. It is, then, necessary for officers to exercise the skills of leadership to the best of their ability in organizations which are most of the time merely getting themselves ready in case they have to do their job. There are still life and death decisions to make for some—aircraft, for instance, can be very unforgiving if not properly treated and looked after—but, in peacetime the task of a military leader can seem to be not very different from that of a civilian.

The comparison is soon seen to be superficial, however, once it is considered that, for instance, civilian leaders are often driven by such things as corporate profits, and do not operate a system of military discipline. Nevertheless, it is probably true to say that, because most of the world now spends so much time in economic rather than military confrontation, the charismatic military leader has been largely replaced by the good manager.

Which brings us, at last, to the problem of being a leader, at any level, in today's armed forces. Gen John Chain, ex-commander in chief, Strategic Air Command, tells a story about one of his predecessors who used to keep a special paperweight in a prominent place on his desk. It was multifaceted. He said that it was there to remind him that, whatever problem he was faced with, he needed to look at it from every angle in reaching a decision. That seems to be an excellent foundation on which to build any form of leadership. Leaders (or managers) exercise much of their function in making decisions, and it is well to remember that there is more than one side to every question.

That is true, but it is not always easy to decide which facet is more important than the others. For instance, the interests of the service often come into collision with those of the individual, and the person in charge has to disentangle the wreck. On the face of it, the service must come first every time, but, especially in peacetime, that which helps the individual most often helps the service, too. It is clear, however, that there is a difference between the military and civilian communities.

Military people are responsible to their nations for providing combat capability. They cannot do that effectively without maintaining a well-structured organization in which order prevails, and that in turn requires that the leadership should be decisive. Elphinstone at Kabul is an example of those who have conspicuously failed in that regard. Firmness of that kind is not necessarily required in the business world, nor is it likely that many commercial enterprises feel that they are in business principally to serve the community at large.

When an individual takes up the reins of any supervisory post, it is as well for that person to remember that the military serves the nation—not personal ambition such as that of Townshend at Kut. Leaders should be dedicated to serving their country as well as they can, and should let the rewards of advancement follow as and when deserved. It is one of the responsibilities of leadership to ensure that the role of the military in society is well understood both by the leaders themselves and by all those under their command. There are, of course, many other responsibilities. A leader must know as much about the jobs of subordinate units and people as possible. Elphinstone at Kabul was a commander in chief who appeared to know very little about what was going on around him, but examples can be found at all levels in any service.

Of course, there are probably going to be many things a leader does not know at first, so there is no need to try to impress people with comprehensive knowledge immediately after taking command, nor should there be any rush to make wholesale changes. The rule is, or should be: See - Absorb - Evaluate - *then* Judge and Decide. Changes may be necessary (everyone has preferences about the way things are done) but it should be remembered that previous commanders had their reasons for setting units up the way they are, and it might be sensible to find out what those are before rushing in to change things.

In becoming as knowledgeable about the unit as possible, it is not necessarily the case that commanders should be able to do the job of any member of their teams—although it would be marvelous if they could—but they should know enough to understand the problems which arise, and to come to a sensible conclusion about solutions. That implies a capacity to understand and trust people when they explain their difficulties, and that in turn suggests that the trust should be mutual. General Percival at Singapore failed to establish any trust between himself and his subordinates, and the resultant debacle was almost inevitable. There must, then, be communication in both directions between leaders and subordinates. If a leader gives directions about something which needs doing, the instructions must be clear.

There should never be any doubt as to intentions. At Singapore, the troops were never clear about how they were supposed to defend the base, unlike their Japanese opponents, who knew exactly what their objective was.

At the same time, not everything needs to be in the form of an order. Leadership involves much more than the issuing of orders. It is surely more sensible to explain why something should be done and to motivate people to do it. A leader should make the object clear and should try to radiate enthusiasm and confidence—they are contagious. After a while, the fact that a project is being proposed by the leader should be sufficient to point the followers in the right direction from the outset. Again, the Singapore catastrophe is a classic example of a military organization destroyed as an effective fighting force by the absence of enthusiasm and confidence in the commander.

Once something has been set in motion, a leader should have the confidence to delegate responsibility to those who are capable. If they can do the job, they should be left to get on with it. At the same time, instructions must *always* be followed up. People should be asked how they are getting on and they should be made aware that their superior has an interest in what they are doing and is determined to see the job finished. If the boss keeps in touch, most of the time there will not be a problem. Just occasionally, it may be necessary to insist and perhaps be tough. Senior officers like Elphinstone and Percival were renowned for their remoteness, and such “toughness” as they showed was mostly in the form of stubbornness founded on ignorance.

It is a mistake, however, for a commander to rush to judgment when things go awry and indulge in volcanic rages. That may make the boss feel better, but it will probably not help in the long run. Deciding that someone is “no damned good” and should be got rid of may prove to be correct, but it is better in the first place to ask why he or she is useless and try to induce a change. Constructive counseling can work wonders. It is not easy to do, but it must be done for the benefit of all subordinates, strong or weak. People like to know where they stand and they generally appreciate guidance, particularly from someone more experienced than themselves. Counseling is a tricky business, however, and it is all too easy to run round the problem of talking things over either by hiding behind the mask of an unapproachable martinet or by shying away from criticizing anybody—anything for a quiet life. Either of these courses is evading the issue. Leaders, their people, and their units are much better off if the nettle is grasped and individuals are told about their strengths and weaknesses.

In some cases where someone has a problem, it could be useful, also, to ask if it lies with the individual or with the person’s training, or even with the unit in which he or she works. Notice that the need might be for a leader to be tough, not harsh. Each of the British Army leaders discussed could be faulted for lack of compassion. Being overbearing may gain a commander a hard-nosed reputation, but it is no substitute for being rational and using intelligence. Criticism

should be constructive, and, if a job has been well done, praise is important, too.

There was a time in the middle of my career when I was not happy with the way things were going and I started to kick over the traces a bit. I turned a blind eye to a number of flying regulations and flew aircraft too far beyond the limits of sensible behavior. At length it caught up with me and I was the subject of a Board of Inquiry for breaking the rules. The air officer commanding at headquarters wanted to make an example of me, but my wing commander apparently thought I was worth saving and he insisted on being allowed to handle the matter himself.

On an appointed day, I was wheeled in to the commanding officer’s (CO) office and brought to attention in front of his desk. He put on his hat and read out a formal reprimand in a very severe voice. When it was over, I was marched out, and then promptly called back in again. He had his hat off and a couple of glasses on the table. He sat me down, handed me a drink, and said he assumed that I had taken the reprimand to heart. He then went out of his way to find out what my concerns were and to reassure me that I was out of the doghouse. He added that he knew I had many good qualities which he hoped I would now put to full use.

My behavior improved sharply and immediately. Not only had my boss protected me, he had let me know where I had gone wrong while making it clear that he valued me as a member of his unit. My commander on that occasion was a man who had established a reputation throughout the service for leadership on the basis of justice, fairness, and integrity. People were glad to work for him and his units were efficient and happy. Everyone knew that he was concerned for their welfare and that he would not let them down. At the same time, no one was allowed to get away with unreasonable behavior. He kept his principal responsibilities in mind.

On another occasion under his command, I was on quick reaction alert (QRA)—nuclear alert duty. The aircraft I had been allocated was not healthy. After running a full systems check on it at 2 A.M. on a freezing cold night, I stormed into operations and told them that the aircraft was unserviceable and had to be taken off the line. That did not seem to me to be unreasonable—none of the navigation equipment was working. Unfortunately, the base had more than its share of aircraft problems at that time, and there was no possibility of a replacement. The senior engineer asked me to stick with the aircraft I had for a few hours. His crews were working through the night and would have another ready during the late morning. He pointed out that my squadron was filling a national alert slot, that the Cuban missile crisis was in full swing, and that my allocated target would have to remain uncovered if I withdrew. I was adamant.

A few minutes later, the wing commander strolled into operations as if he was always around in the middle of the night. I tensed and got ready to defend myself. He wandered about looking at the boards, then smiled at me and asked quietly if I was having a problem. I gave him both barrels about my aircraft. He nodded understandingly and thought for a

while. Then he asked if the engines would run and give full power. They would. He wanted to know if the bomb could be armed and dropped. It could. Finally, from in front of a map showing the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, he asked if the standby compass was working and if I could fly roughly east for about three hours. It was and I could. Still smiling, he said it sounded as if I was still on alert, and then he went back to bed, having given me a lesson in facing a problem calmly and sorting out what was really important.

I had also been impressed by the fact that he had reacted in person to my rumpus, and that he had done so without losing his temper in spite of having been dragged out of bed. I found later that, after he left me, he visited the engineers and reinforced my views on the state of the QRA aircraft.

That story highlights the hazards of overreacting, and is not meant to suggest that no trust should be placed in personal experience. As each individual faces the countless problems of daily life, it is inevitable that the experience built up induces a gut reaction to each of them—and great store should be set by that. On many occasions there is not time to take a pace back and think it over. The unexpected arises and decisions must be made—generally the reaction which arises from experience can be trusted. If the time is available, however, leaders need not be afraid to consult others and get the benefit of their experience, too. A good rule for a leader might be: “Be a good listener and, whenever you can, think problems through; make the effort to look ahead and consider the consequences of your decisions.”

If possible, of course, it is a good idea for leaders to anticipate problems by planning ahead and being so organized that they are never taken by surprise. Certainly it is a good idea, and it is sensible to develop the habit of planning ahead as far as possible—but surprises are an inevitable part of life. Nevertheless, planning well ahead eases the tension and allows priorities to be thought through. A hundred things may need doing, but some will be more important than others, and they need to be clearly identified.

Part of trusting your own judgment is being brutally honest with yourself. Nothing weakens self-confidence like the thought hovering at the back of your mind that you are doing something you do not believe in. Even if you are unwise enough to try fooling others, it is disastrous ever to try fooling yourself. Personal integrity is vital and it should never be compromised. It follows that leaders need to have the courage of their convictions. Subordinates will not respect their superiors if they think they are being swayed by the temptations of taking an easy way out or of giving in to people who have their minds made up, no matter what the facts.

As must be obvious from the thousands of books on the subject, the crystal ball of leadership has a million facets. Mostly, it boils down to using common sense and getting involved with the job and the people doing it. Leaders should get to know their people—and their wives and families, too, if that is possible. What makes them tick and what are their needs? Are there signs of strain and tiredness? They should be invited to talk about their problems, and be kept healthy, both physically and mentally. Leave is important. Many military people seem almost to brag about having had no leave for months. It makes them feel indispensable or something. It is a shortsighted policy, either not to take leave or to deny it—and that goes for the boss, too. Units need their chiefs to take leave. Worry, fatigue, and illness are the enemies of efficiency. Worse still, they are prime causes of accidents; they can kill people and must not be ignored.

All these things are relevant to the development of leadership potential, but three cardinal points need emphasis:

- Leaders should remember that they are not infallible; they must recognize, acknowledge and learn from their mistakes.
- They should be receptive to the ideas of others, taking note of the efforts of their colleagues and benefiting from the example of their successes and failures.
- In seeking inspiration from the exploits of great leaders of the past, it is a mistake to try becoming their clone. Leaders should make every effort to develop, but should be themselves. Not everyone can be Gregory Peck in *Twelve O'Clock High*.