Risk management in extreme situations
Military perspective...
Introduction

How would we react under fire?

Effectiveness of their action

The « Power-law » of War

The mountains VS Combat:

« Death as a possible work situation »

To recreate combat conditions to learn how to make difficult decision under pressure
1/ The mountains to recreate combat conditions: 4 fundamental combat features which are found in mountain training.

2/ Tools to improve decision making ability and structure one’s thinking:

«There are 3 types of people, the living, the dead, and those who commit themselves to the mountains.»

Alain Ghersen

3/ GMHM: breaking stereotypes, to experiment, and to communicate these knowledges
Uncertainty of the environment which requires to adapt continuously

- Accept hazards even if it’s counter-intuitive
- Accept we can not control everything.
- Accept there is no single best decision
The idea pushing your boundaries.

- Mountain will always be stronger.

- Training and drill necessary to fulfil the memory: Intuition is strengthened by your own experience.

« Mountain is the ally of audacious leaders who undersand it and the mortal ennemy of shy people who ignore it. »

Gal Dosse 1929
Facing alone the decision-making process: "On scene commander"

- To experience the leader’s loneliness.
- French mountain troops: Full responsibility of the leaders
- Mountain VS Combat: Obligation of means VS obligation of result.

No training is worth a soldier’s death.
Fear as life insurance for mountaineers and soldiers?

Fear and stress VS Decision making ability

Focus on the brain operation and the « cognitive ambushes »
Focus on the brain operation and the «cognitive ambushes»

2 × 2 = ?

System 1 - intuitive and automatic

VS

System 2 - rational and statistic

13 × 37 = ?
Focus on the brain operation and the « cognitive ambushes »

A two-speed Brain system:

14 \times 52 = ?

Systeme 1 and 2 complementary but:

- Time frame of decision-making process sets the pace

- System 2 is tiring. Brain is quite lazy and tend to take the easy option

- Bad emotional regulation tend to damage reflexion process

- We are always influenced by our own deep beliefs.

2 \times 3 = ?
Focus on the brain operation and the « cognitive ambushes »

A two-speed Brain system:

- Perception and interpretation
- Perception and illusion

Ability to look for clues = to look for situations which lead to mistakes
Focus on the brain operation and the « cognitive ambushes »

Our decision making process is polluted by traps of the unconscious mind.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE  
MIND SATURATION  
DENIAL OF THE REALITY  
TOO MUCH SELF-CONFIDENCE  
BLIND FOCUS  
ROUTINE  
HALO EFFECT

AND FEAR and TIREDNESS -> STRESS
Fear as life insurance for mountaineers and soldiers?

Fear and stress VS Decision making ability

Necessary but not too much...

Being used to risk-taking, to dangers and hazards -> but never get to breaking point.
2/ Tools to improve decision making ability and structure one’s thinking

The « Methods Of Vigilance »

Decision-making: 3X3
The « Methods Of Vigilance »

To adapt... to never get surprised.

- Relaxed mode
- Vigilant mode
- Alerted mode
- Hazardous mode

Which mode, for which level, for which objective?
2/ Tools to improve decision making ability and structure one’s thinking

The « Methods Of Vigilance » —> **Relaxed mode**

No sign of danger.

**Relaxed mode = No real risk management...**

Requires Normal Vigilance.
2/ Tools to improve decision making ability and structure one’s thinking

The « Methods Of Vigilance » —> VIGILANT mode

Sign of danger identified over there (not on my location)

The idea is to avoid the danger.

VIGILANT mode = no idea of risk lowering within the action.

It’s a first step towards risk management.
The « Methods Of Vigilance » —> **Hazardous**

Sign of danger identified on my location. And it’s impossible to lower the risk.

This mode could correspond to a foreign operation in Russia!!!

But: This mode could make sense for the GMHM.

HAZARDOUS mode = Responsible leader, DO NO ENTER!

It requires a valuable and meaningful objective
2/ Tools to improve decision making ability and structure one’s thinking

**Decision-making: 3X3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premier Filtre</th>
<th>Critère 1</th>
<th>Critère 2</th>
<th>Critère 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Le facteur humain</strong></td>
<td><strong>Le facteur environnemental</strong></td>
<td><strong>Le terrain</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pour le guide et les clients:</td>
<td>Pour le guide et les clients:</td>
<td>Pour le guide et les clients:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Niveau technique, état physique et psychique.</td>
<td>- Conditions météorologiques et de la montagne.</td>
<td>- États de terrain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Niveau d'expérience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Liste des équipements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attentes exactes des clients.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**DÉCISION**

- Maintenance du projet?
- Solution alternative? Annulation?

**Second Filtre au début de l'activité**
- Le projet est-il bien compris, bien accepté par les clients?
- Quel est l'état physique et psychique des clients et le mien?
- À quelle vitesse et à quelle dureté de difficulté le groupe est-il capable de suivre le guide et de continuer de l'éviter?
- Are we ready to go?

**DÉCISION**

- Maintenance du projet?
- Plus de précautions?

**Troisième Filtre**
- Réglage des clients.
- L'âge, l'état physique et psychique des clients et du guide.
- États de terrain et de la pluie.
- États de terrain et de la neige.
- États de terrain et des grottes.

**DÉCISION**

- Maintenance de l'engagement dans l'itinéraire?
- Plus de précautions? Renoncement?

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*To adapt the decision continuously.*

« No plan survives as soon as the first canon is shot »

*Identify key moment.*

*To Decide.*

- To make the least worst decision... and to take the consequences*
2/ Tools to improve decision making ability and structure one’s thinking...

Tools are:

Everything but a magic bullet… Because at the end: we find human being!

Focus on « Perspective Theory »

AVERSION TO RISK
VS
ATTRACTION TO RISK

Yet:

RISK = Probability x Damage
To experiment adaptation conditions in the decision making process.

In line of command

In the team

In Innovation

... and transmit this knowledge.
In line of command: horizontal command

- to rely on human being and create a trust atmosphere.

- leader at the service of his subordinates

- A moving decision making process

- To take back command only in case of crisis.

3/ GMHM: breaking stereotypes, to experiment, and to communicate these knowledge
In the team in order to achieve a common goal.

The concept of group or team in alpinism: contradiction?
- To accept to give power to one’s subordinates.
  - To accept mistake in the decision.

Communication and listening ability
- To set up a contradictory debate
  - To identify a devil’s advocate

At the end, in any case, make a joint decision and follow it, even if you don’t agree this solution.
3/ GMHM: breaking stereotypes, to experiment, and to communicate these knowledge

In Innovation:

- Being at best performant at least skilled in any discipline.

- There is no creativity and innovation without any risk-taking.

Risk-taking to improve the ability of oneself, of the whole team, of the Army.
To reinforce crucial individual and collective decision making ability within an extreme and isolated environment: as in combat operation.

Communicate technical expertise to adapt to extreme conditions.

Pushed out the Commandos of their comfort zone.

GMHM at the service of French combat operations everywhere in the world.

...and transmit this knowledge.

3/ GMHM: breaking stereotypes, to experiment, and to communicate these knowledge.
« For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack »

R. KIPLING
Questions?