INTRODUCTION

5.1. This chapter confirms command as legal authority which superiors exercise over subordinates by virtue of rank, seniority and appointment. Leaders bring moral insight and awareness to formal positions of command.

5.2. Command is defined by ADDP 00.1 as authority that a commander exercises lawfully over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes authority and responsibility for using resources effectively and for organising, directing, coordinating and controlling military forces in the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale and discipline of assigned personnel.\(^1\)

5.3. DI(N) ADMIN 30-1 acknowledges that all Navy personnel exercise command by virtue of rank or position, notwithstanding that command at sea is vested only in Seaman officers, without regard for the rank and seniority of other specialisations borne. Hence, all Navy people should understand the nature of command and the relationship between command and leadership.

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\(^1\) ADDP 00.1 paragraphs 1.4, 1.8
ADDP 00.6 para 2.6
5.4. **As a military concept, command places primacy on mission accomplishment.** Definitions of command do not include ‘leading’. Nor do definitions of command mention the *influencing* of others, which is a vital component of leadership. In this sense, **the essence of command is legal authority to order subordinates to pursue assigned tasks.** Command requires organisational structure and *obedience* from subordinates. Command is a war-fighting enabler, which must be unambiguous, flexible and efficient. Yet, command is not repressive, and it recognises – besides the moral obligations which people owe to Defence – the moral obligation which individuals owe to themselves.

5.5. The nature and scope of command authority varies from appointment to appointment and increases with rank. Authority derived from an appointment is specific and related to the responsibilities of a particular posting.

5.6. Leadership, defined as ‘the process of influencing others in order to gain their willing consent in the ethical pursuit of missions,’ includes humility, integrity and moral courage. **Leaders have an ethical claim to the authority of command only by unflagging integrity.** People who are not leaders will, on occasion, be appointed to positions of command. The consequences are usually regrettable.

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2 ADDP 00.1 paragraphs 1.2, 1.7
3 ADDP 00.1 paragraph 1.7
ADDP 00.6 para 2.7, 3.18 citing AMD 1 “the Captain is the ship…no bullet is fired, no missile launched without specific command direction”.
4 The argument that command requires obedience but *not compliance* is at variance to ADDP 00.6 para 2.10 which argues that command requires ‘compliance and obedience’ (emphasis added) The present publication suggests a slightly softer line based upon principles of ethically strong followership which are explained in this publication, and which reflect the argument of ADDP 00.6 para 1.20 that ‘followership is not a passive activity for the meek and submissive,’ and that ‘responsible followers must exercise judgement and not just blindly follow a leader “come what may”.’ Additionally, at paragraph 2.17, ADDP 00.6 argues that ‘all leadership, including leadership in the military, offers a choice to followers – even to the extent that this choice allows for dissent. When constructive dissent is not appropriate…the leader rightfully moves from leadership to command’. This perspective is acknowledged to apply even on the battlefield. The point is that an *insistence upon compliance is unnecessarily rigid* – the door, even the door of command, should be left open for the responsible consent which characterises obedience because this is morally correct.
5 ADDP 00.6 para 3.7: ‘ADF leaders are less likely to revert to “command” (organising, directing, controlling) and more likely to use supportive influence…(which) gives a degree of latitude’. Later, at para: 5.15, ADDP 00.6 identifies the dysfunction overuse of autocratic styles of behaviour which operate to suppress the moral development of subordinates.
6 ADDP 00.6 para 3.25
7 ADDP 00.6 para 5.11 identifies, for example, the importance of integrity – a value which points to the obligation individuals owe to themselves to do what’s best and what’s right.
8 ADDP 00.6 paragraph 1.8
COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP

5.7. Command is a term of cultural significance in the Navy. There is unquestionable dignity, honour and responsibility attached to the command of Australian officers and sailors. **Yet, a commander may display no leadership behaviour.**

5.8. In theory, a commander may ignore leadership principles and rely on command power to achieve military objectives. In reality this is foolish, because leadership inspires commitment and perseverance in the ethical accomplishment of missions.

5.9. **Leadership is exercised even in the absence of command authority.** Leadership requires conscience and moral courage. Leadership is not related to positions or appointments, and should not be confused with status, power or formal command authority.

5.10. **Leadership amplifies command authority.** Leaders acknowledge the moral equality of all who serve, and build a climate of mutual respect. In a command position, a leader will not treat people carelessly or off-handedly. Leaders demonstrate consideration and respect for others, which moderates command formality without compromising military effectiveness.

5.11. Leaders should ‘keep a strong grip and a loose rein’ in the command environment. The requirement is for a balance of firmness, humour, and the ability to ensure people understand what is expected of them.

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9 ADDP 00.1 para 1.8
ADDP 00.6 para 2.12, 3.19
10 ADDP 00.1 para 1.8
ADDP 00.6 para 2.12, 2.13
11 ADDP 00.6 para. 1.13, 1.14; ‘It stands to reason that if leadership is about inspiring willing commitment, then coercive and legitimate power are less useful than (the power of a good character). . . the use of legitimate authority is not an example of leadership but rather an example of “command”….Confusion between leadership and official authority has a deadly effect on organisations’. (slightly abridged, original emphasis).
12 LWD 0.0 p. 2-4
LEADERSHIP AND COMMAND
HMAS NEWCASTLE

The terms command and leadership mean different things to different people. I understand command to be a legal principle pertaining to the authority which a commander in the military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. While command may be exercised by all personnel by virtue of rank or assignment under certain circumstances, in my case (as commanding officer) I can never devolve command nor its associated responsibilities and accountabilities. The buck stops with me.

Leadership is most often associated with the ability to inspire motivate and stimulate others to achieve goals. Communication, empowerment and team building are core principles of leadership. My experiences have led me to believe that leadership can and does exist at all levels in a ship from Seaman to Commander. That is, leadership is not rank dependent. I challenge all members of ship’s company to display leadership excellence.

J.G. Jones
Commander, RAN
CO Newcastle, Dec. 2008

Command Papers: An ADF Command Philosophy Primer, Centre for Defence Leadership and Ethics.

COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHIES

5.12. A command philosophy sets out expectations and objectives, explaining the commander’s aspirations and preferred methods of ‘doing business’. A command philosophy is crucial to the shared understanding, which underpins effective working relationships.

5.13. A command philosophy derives broad strategic vision from a sense of stewardship, which defines the intent and method by which things will be left in better shape than that in which they were found. Stewardship should inform command at every level.

5.14. A command philosophy will be complemented by a leadership philosophy.

5.15. A leadership philosophy, underlining the moral obligations of leadership in the profession of arms, will acknowledge leadership as a matter of conscience and ethical example. A leadership philosophy may clarify what ‘action in good conscience’ or ‘action in accord with the Navy values’ might look like in practice.
5.16. A leadership philosophy contributes to the framework within which responsible followers exercise their judgment to interpret rules, and to find their moral compass in the absence of rules or when circumstances are ambiguous or confused.

MISSION COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP

5.17. The ADF command philosophy, known as mission command, expects subordinate commanders to be given a clear sense of superior command intent – a clear articulation of desired result, tasks to be undertaken and constraints. Mission command doctrine expects flexibility, initiative, and resourcefulness in pursuit of the commander’s intent. Mission command emphasises the importance of individual judgement, and confident delegation. Understanding the concept is crucial as the Navy participates invariably in joint and combined operations.

5.18. The doctrine of mission command requires leaders who acknowledge no rigid doctrinal way to lead. For mission command to succeed, superior and subordinate commanders must operate within a shared ethical framework - each confident that the other will pursue missions in good conscience, and in accord with the ideals of the military profession. Without an ethical foundation mission command will fail.

5.19. Mission command demands confidence and responsible freedom of action. Mission command will be inspired by leadership which applies doctrine intelligently and flexibly but not dogmatically. Leaders cultivate mission command by:

a. accurate operational evaluation,

b. candid capture of lessons learned,

c. open-minded discussion of honest mistakes as opportunity for learning and professional development, and

d. open-minded consideration of unorthodox ideas.

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12 ADDP 00.6 para 2.41
14 Admiralty, 1943, pp. 19-23.
COMMAND, LEADERSHIP AND RISK

5.20. Legislative and regulatory requirements can promote conservatism, indecisiveness, risk avoidance and micro-management. Leaders should resist these pressures. Positive control should be sufficient to ensure tasks are safely and professionally carried out. Positive control should never be excessive, and always respectful.

COMMAND, THE ADF MISSION, RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.21. The ADF mission is ‘to defend Australia and its national interests’. The Navy mission is ‘to fight and win in the maritime environment’.

5.22. These missions are the *raison d’etre* of all command authority. Subordinate missions assigned to any commander must contribute to the achievement of the ADF and Navy missions.

5.23. These missions frame command responsibility for the successful achievement of missions, and for the safe and efficient employment of people and resources. A commander is accountable for success or failure in the discharge of these responsibilities, the fulfilment of which will be aligned with the Navy’s vision to be renowned for excellence in service to the nation.

5.24. While a commander may delegate authority in whole or in part, neither the ethical responsibility of leadership nor the formal accountability of command can be delegated at any time.

THE DIVISIONAL SYSTEM

5.25. The divisional system is all about leadership, and the welfare of people. The divisional system - crucial to success in any command - demands trust and discretion. Trust and personal confidence does not follow from the application of authority, but from the personal example of leadership.

CONCLUSION

5.26. Command is defined as authority that a commander exercises lawfully over subordinates. In the Navy, command is characteristically associated with the command of ships, establishments, headquarters and the whole Navy. However, command is not the sole preserve of senior officers or any particular specialisation.
5.27. **Leadership is the core of command success.** In positions of command, leaders should personify the ideals of the profession of arms and impress themselves in the consciousness of others as ethical people. Loyalty, trust and dedication are inspired by leadership, not by impersonal command authority.

5.28. The qualities of leadership are crucial to the application of mission command principles. In practice, mission command gives specialists and subject matter experts freedom of manoeuvre to exercise judgement and initiative. Command is largely ‘by veto’. Yet, enriched by the qualities of leadership, command is not ethically careless.

5.29. In positions of command and making decisions from a command perspective, leaders trust their judgement, and do the right thing in the right way as they see it. By doing this, leaders meet command responsibilities in good conscience.
In this vignette, Cunningham illustrates leadership in a position of senior command. Cunningham energised the mission command idea: he interpreted and applied doctrine intelligently and he did not expect morally docile compliance from junior commanders. In a subordinate position, Collins exemplifies leadership by his independent judgement, initiative and by his determination to the right thing.

John Collins, the commanding officer of HMAS Sydney (II) left the Egyptian harbour of Alexandria, in company with HMS Havock, on the morning of 18 July 1940 with verbal orders to support four British destroyers (under Commander Hugh Nicholson, RN) that were to conduct an anti-submarine sweep north of Crete. Once past Kaso Strait, to the east of Crete, Collins was directed to proceed with Sydney and Havock northwards towards Piraeus, the harbour of Athens, to search for enemy shipping. Collins, not being bound by written operational orders, decided to remain in support of the destroyers, keeping about 20 miles to their north. As wireless silence was obligatory, unless in touch with the enemy, Collins did not inform Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, RN, the Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, nor Nicholson’s destroyers of his change in plan. At dawn on 19 July Sydney was only 20 miles north of Nicholson’s destroyers rather than some 150 miles away as it would have been under the original orders.

That morning at 0730 two Italian light cruisers with 6-inch main guns, the Giovanni delle Bande Nere and the Bartolomeo Colleoni, caught Nicholson’s destroyers off Cape Spada. The destroyers, who were outgunned and inferior in speed, reported the enemy contact and their position before rapidly turning north with the Italian cruisers in hot pursuit. Upon receiving the enemy report Collins immediately turned Sydney southward and increased to full speed. Although he did not know whether the two Italian cruisers were armed with 6-inch or 8-inch guns or indeed, whether they were supported by a larger Italian force, Collins did know that Sydney and Havock was heading at high speed towards a superior enemy force. He decided that prompt aggressive action was the best means available to deter the enemy cruisers and to rescue the British destroyers. By maintaining radio silence Sydney would surprise the enemy and Collins knew that his well-trained and combat experienced crew, including extraordinarily accurate gunners and dogged technical staff, would not let him down when it came to a stiff seafight. The Italians first knew of Sydney’s arrival off Cape Spada at 0830 when 6-inch shells rained down upon them. Collins flashed an enemy report to inform the anxious Admiral Cunningham and the relieved Nicholson of his contact. That day the action off Cape Spada was a resounding victory for Collins and the British light naval forces; not only did the Italians lose the cruiser Bartolomeo
Colleoni but it confirmed the moral superiority of the British Mediterranean fleet. After this action Italian surface forces did not again venture into or near the Aegean.

Admiral Cunningham came alongside Sydney when Sydney returned to Alexandria, his first words to Collins were, ‘Well done. I was very relieved when your enemy report showed you were on the spot, but how did you get there?’ Collins, not wishing to go into too much detail, replied, ‘Providence guided me, Sir.’ With a smile Sir Andrew replied, ‘Well, in future you can continue to take your orders from Providence.’

Cunningham reported to the Admiralty, ‘The credit for this successful and gallant action belongs mainly to Captain J. A. Collins, C.B., R.A.N., who by his quick appreciation of the situation, offensive spirit and resolute handling of H.M.A.S. Sydney, achieved a victory over a superior force which has had important strategical effects.’

Prepared by Dr. G. P Gilbert, SPCA