

Speaking Notes
Chief V. Bevan to OPS Recruits at their Graduation
Ontario Police College
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Your OPS Badge and Integrity

I would like to speak to you for a moment about the badge you now wear on your breast and how it is a symbol of your integrity and ours as an organization.

I want to take you back to the time of the Roman Legions. When Rome dominated much of the world, her armies were the key to her success. Each morning, centurions inspected their troops and as the inspecting centurion would pass in front of each legionnaire, the soldier would strike with his right fist the armour breast plate that covered his heart. The armour had to be strongest there in order to protect the heart from the sword thrusts and from arrow strikes. As the soldier struck his armour, he would shout "integritas", which in Latin means material wholeness and completeness.

The inspecting centurion would listen closely for this affirmation and also for the ring that well-kept armour would give off. Satisfied that the armour was sound and that the soldier beneath it was protected, he would then move on to the next legionnaire.

As the years passed, the praetorians or imperial bodyguards ascended into power and influence. Handpicked from amongst the soldiers of the Legions, their purpose was to serve the cause of a single man. As they struck their breastplate, they would shout, "Hail Caesar," to signify that their heart belonged to the imperial personage—not to their unit—not to an institution—not to a code of ideals.

A century passed and the rift between the Legions and the Imperial Bodyguard grew. To signify the difference between the two organizations, the legionnaire, upon striking his armour, would no longer shout "integritas." Instead, he would shout "integer". Integer means undiminished – complete – perfect. It not only indicated that the armour was sound, it also indicated that the soldier wearing the armour was of sound character. He was complete in his integrity ...His heart was in the right place . . . His standards and morals were high. He was not associated with the immoral conduct that was rapidly becoming the signature of the imperial bodyguard.

The armour of integrity served the Legions well. For over four centuries they held the line against the marauding Goths and Vandals; but by 383 AD, the decline that infected the Republic and the Imperial Bodyguard had its effects upon the Legions as well. The armour that had once protected Legionnaires was cast aside. Soldiers fought their enemies without protection for the heart and were often beaten.

When the armour came off, so, too, went their "integrity." It was only a matter of a few years until the Legions rotted from within and were unable to hold the frontiers . . . the Barbarians were at the gates.

The word "Integrity" is a combination of the words "integritas" and "integer." It refers to the putting on of armour, of building a completeness . . . a wholeness . . . a wholeness in character. How appropriate that the word integrity is a derivative of two words describing the characteristics of a soldier. Policing too has a tradition of producing officers that possess the highest ethical standards and integrity. It produces men and women of character . . . character that allows them to deal ethically with the challenges of today and to make conscious decisions about how they will approach tomorrow.

However, this is not accomplished in an instant. It requires that integrity becomes a way of life. It must be woven into the very fabric of our souls. Just as was true in the days of Imperial Rome, you either walk in your integrity daily, or you take off your armour and leave your heart and soul exposed and open to attack.

The badges you now wear upon your breast are meant to be a daily reminder of the traditions of "integritas" and "integer." My challenge to you is simple but not easy . . . Let your badge be your armour. Let it remind you that you must discern between what is right and wrong. Your Integrity demands that you act on what you have discerned to be right, even at personal cost; and influence others to do the right thing.

Each day as you walk past the mirrors in the various Parade rooms at OPS, look at yourself and take note of the badge displayed so prominently on your uniform. Be reminded by the words stenciled on the mirrors 'Pride - Professionalism – Respect / Fierté - Professionnalisme'. Be proud of who and what you are. Be proud of the organization you represent. Be as the Legionnaires of Roman times who attested daily to the fact that they were complete in their integrity. Ensure your heart is in the right place. Ensure your standards and morals are high so as not to be associated with the immoral conduct that occurs elsewhere everyday.

And always, always, remember that no one can take your integrity from you . . . you and only you can give it away.

Adapted from:

Remarks of General Charles C. Krulak

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