

Ms. Lowe

English 11

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### **Strong Leadership of Lieutenant-Commander Oram**

In Michael Bruce's short story, "Gentlemen, Your Verdict," Lieutenant-Commander Oram faces many challenges as a leader, including the moral dilemma of selecting who will survive and wait for rescuers after the submarine is hit by a mine. Although not everyone may agree with his choice, the Lieutenant-Commander does prove to be a strong leader due to his quick thinking, his ability to think of the greater good, and his responsibility for his actions. First, when the ship contacts the mine, Oram immediately takes charge: "Almost instantly, it seemed Lieutenant-Commander Oram's voice rang over the uproar: 'Stop engines. Blow one and two. Blow four and six'" (Bruce 1). This quick response to an emergency situation demonstrates his capacity to be a leader. In addition, Oram makes the difficult decision to take the lives of 15 of his crew members, allowing the four men married men and Lieutenant Paull enough oxygen to survive until the rescue team arrives. His choice to let the men with families live illustrates how he thinks of the greater good, as these are the men who have financial, social, and emotional responsibilities to their dependents back home. Lastly, Lieutenant-Commander Oram is able to accept the consequences of his actions, as a good leader should. In his final call to the shore station, he admits, "The entire responsibility is mine...I could condemn my whole crew to death or sacrifice fifteen and save five, and I am going to join the others" (2). Oram acknowledges that it would be unfair if he survived the matter and he must accept death as punishment for taking the lives of his crew. Thus, due to his ability to think quickly, act selflessly, and accept responsibility for his actions, Lieutenant-Commander Oram proves to be an admirable leader.

Works Cited

Bruce, Michael. 1947. "Gentlemen, Your Verdict."