



The training challenges of the SCORPION 1/2 combat

Land Forces Doctrine Review

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During the Second World War, the 2nd Armored Division of the General Leclerc was organized into "three main groupings and, from time to time, a fourth grouping available to the General to force the final decision."²⁸ ». This is one of the reasons why it has earned a reputation as a highly manoeuvrable unit.

Continuous adaptation to requirements and tactical situations, in short, agility, should be the first quality of any force system. to outwit his enemy. Anteroom of the initiative, it applies at two levels: the articulation and the functioning of the system.

Thus, among the main expectations of the SCORPION system are greater force agility, thanks to shared knowledge, faster transmission of orders and increased dynamic reconfiguration capabilities. However, and even if this may seem paradoxical, it will always be necessary to build on the fundamentals in order to make the most of a tactical innovation: general tactics, moral forces, degraded operating capabilities, etc. SCORPION will not escape this rule.

The purpose of this article is to study the likely changes in combat modes identified by feedback and foresight, as well as the response that land forces intend to bring to them through the SCORPION transformation, with particular emphasis on the training induced in the field of tactics and command.

A new "tactical link"?

Every major innovation, whether friendly or enemy, leads to changes in the way troops are organised, commanded or manoeuvred. At the centre of these three fields of action of the military leader is the "tactical link". Proceeding at once from the authority of the leader, doctrine, esprit de corps, etc., the tactical link is a key element of the military leader's role. or information and communication systems, this link is anything but mono-causal and corresponds to what Ardant du Picq called "solidarity".²⁹ ». General Guy Hubin

devotes an entire chapter of his stimulating prospective work *Perspectives Tactiques* to this notion, which he defines as the "[...] conviction in the conformity of the reactions of the other", guaranteeing the "cohesion of one's own system".³⁰ system" of forces. He also explains that failure to know how to change it can be a cause of defeat. The challenge is therefore to clearly identify tactical changes in order to adapt our mode of combat accordingly, an approach that requires above all pragmatism.

A bit of history

On July 9, 1755, during the battles for the defence of New France, General Braddock's British column was curtailed on the banks of the Monongahela River by a Franco-Amerindian force that was more than four times smaller in number. After a confrontation to their disadvantage, the Franco-Amerindian forces took advantage of the cover and threw themselves onto the British flanks. Confronted with a new enemy and a new mode of action, the British held their position as they have always learned and done it; they finally deplore nearly a thousand men out of action at the end of the day. Also, among the various The main reason for this defeat was the British inability to change the way their force system worked, their "Tactical link," then. Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, among others, has often written on the harmful consequences of "an erroneous conception of military honour"³¹ "He identified that there was sometimes a kind of romanticism in the reflections on combat.

To an empty battlefield

It is possible to present the history of the war in terms of the notion of distance: we'd have gone from a shoulder-to-shoulder fight to a battle decentralized, or even "beyond direct view" in recent terminology. The main reason for this fragmentation is the increased firepower, which makes the concentrations dangerous. This trend, still illustrated during the Donbass conflict, is set to continue, especially since even asymmetric enemies now have means of acquisition, thanks to the use of civilian UAVs.

These elongations and this combat in islands can generate a feeling of isolation, which should not be minimised. Let's remember the episodes of night-time tactical ambience collection! Could a coloured icon on a screen, representing a non-visible friend, have the same reassuring effect as a direct view of that friend, despite the somewhat irrational nature of this direct reassurance? Likewise, how will a battle group surrounded by land robots or swarms of drones feel, certainly friendly, but above all without human presence? This will be one of the challenges of collaborative protection, with the trust mentioned above at the centre of concerns.

Easy reconfigurations

The operations of the last few decades have seen a gradual descent from joint integration to level 5 with the Joint Battle Groups and then the Joint Battle Groups sub-groups. The section-level joint task forces have also developed³² and these different combinations have shown their relevance, particularly in urban areas. The tactical agility of our enemies relies heavily on their use.

This is why the SCORPION "system of systems" is designed to increase our agility, a key factor of operational superiority, and thus our ability to focus and shift our efforts quickly.

With this new generation of battlefield digitalization (BDU), re-articulation during action will be much easier and, above all, faster, thanks to a "plug and play" principle. This responsiveness will undoubtedly help to seize opportunities. It is easy to imagine the added value that the engineers, for example, will be able to derive from this flexibility by detaching their units only when necessary, which will enable them to remain on orders for longer for a more efficient overall action. In many cases, units were detached from the outset of the action for fear of the delays that would be caused by a re-articulation in the course of the action, delays due to the problem of network switchover and to taking into account the situation of the reinforced unit.

Let there be no mistake, the exploratory SCORPION doctrine does not in any way advocate permanent reconfiguration. It recalls that command systems, in this case the Combat Information System (CIS), are not the only ones to be reconfigured. SCORPION (SICS), should facilitate reconfigurations as much as possible when they are made necessary by the tactical situation. To use an economic image, boursicotage (i.e. the rapid succession of investments and disinvestments) does not in itself create value: only the right investment at the right time makes sense. It is therefore necessary to promote it.

28 Website of the Leclerc Foundation, page "Composition of the 2nd DB", consulted on 12/12/2018. <https://www.fondation-leclerc.fr/l-association/la-2-d-b/la-composition-de-la-2-d-b/>

29 ARDANT du PICQ Charles, *Études sur le combat*, Paris, Économica, 2004, "Éléments moraux du combat," p. 98-102.

30 HUBIN Guy, *Perspectives Tactiques*, Paris, Économica, 2000, 115 pages, p. 67-68.

31 COUTAU-BEGARIE Hervé, *Traité de stratégie*, Paris, Économica, 1999, 1,200 pages, p. 767.

32 For the record, several were used as early as 1978 in Chad during Operation Tacaud, long before the term appeared. Testimony of ADC Philippe MAIRE, collected by the author on 5 April 2011.

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