



## Marshal Fayolle

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Emile Fayolle was a polytechnician and an intellectual whose thinking helped to develop the management of support during the First World War. As a general, he militated for a meticulous preparation of the battle by using artillery resources in particular. He was known throughout the conflict for his tenacity.

### **Marshal Fayolle, an intelligence in the service of France**

Professor at the École de Guerre before the first world conflict (1914-1918), Émile Fayolle developed the doctrine of artillery use. His tactical thinking and innovative ideas were validated at the heart of the battle in 1914.

Like Foch (1851-1929) and Pétain (1856-1951), Émile Fayolle (1852-1928) was convinced that "fire kills". His reflections concern the articulation of the infantry and the artillery. The latter prepared for attacks and did not simply support them, as recommended in the regulation of December 3, 1913. "The entire artillery must march at the heels of the infantry (...) of all the obstacles to the infantry's march, the most formidable is the barrage of enemy shells because it is more difficult to suppress. General Fayolle always studied in detail the organization of the battlefield: the difficulties of the terrain, the location of the regiments, the infantry assault formations, the artillery barrages, the use of counter-batteries, the role of the air force... For this hard worker, the sense of service and duty is superior to the search for glory and honors.

### Studious and pragmatic

In 1873, Émile Fayolle passed the Polytechnique entrance exam. He joined the École d'Application de l'artillerie et du génie in 1875. He served successively as a lieutenant and then captain in the 16th,<sup>3rd</sup> and 36th artillery regiments. In 1891, he obtained his staff certificate with honors. Promoted to squadron leader in 1895, he was a professor of applied artillery tactics at the École supérieure de Guerre between 1901 and 1908. At that time, he commanded the 36th artillery regiment. Two years later, he received his brigadier general's stars and was in charge of the artillery of the XIIth army corps. In 1912, he was in charge of the XIXth artillery brigade in Vincennes. Placed in reserve on May 14, 1914, he was recalled to command the 70th infantry division on August 13. During the battle of Morhange, on 20 August, he concealed - thanks to the fire of all his guns - a breach that had occurred between his right and the 39th division of the 20th army corps. On 24 August, at the Grand Couronne in Nancy, he saved one of his brigades, which had been pushed aside by German troops, by firing all his batteries at the enemy, who had to retreat. The next day, the Germans, emerging en masse on a ridge, were stopped dead in their tracks by the fire from his guns.

### The path to glory

In October, General Fayolle participated in the "race to the sea" between Lens and Arras. His remarkable maneuvers and constant liaison with friendly troops located nearby prevented the front from breaking up. In May 1915, in the battle of Artois, he methodically seized the opposing positions. Generalissimo Joffre appointed him Major General and entrusted him with the XXXIIIrd Army Corps, with which he distinguished himself in the third battle of Artois (September 1915-February 1916). He became a corps general to command the VIth and then the I<sup>st</sup> army in the Somme in 1916. He acted with tenacity and brilliance. Any attack is not "just a rush through the enemy lines, but must be meticulously prepared and organized in order to be carried out from objective to objective, with very rigorous preparation of the artillery, whose fire must be as effective as possible. Promoted to General of the Army, he led the Army Group of the Center in May 1917 and cleared Verdun in August.

Sent to help the Italians after the terrible defeat at Caporetto (October-November 1917), he managed to restore the situation against the Austro-Hungarians. Recalled to France in February 1918, General Fayolle was a major player in the battles of the Aisne (May-June), the Marne (June-August), Picardy (August-September), the Oise and the Serre (October). At the head of the reserve army group, he contained, repulsed and pursued the enemy from the beginning of 1918 until the armistice on November 11. He was made Marshal of France on February 19, 1921.

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