



## Civili auxilium: Military Service in the 21st Century

military service

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**Since the end of the Second World War, France has been experiencing a period of peace which suggests that any risk of a major conflict on our territory has been ruled out forever.**

Civili auxilium

### **Civil reinforcement**

The death in 2008 of Mr. Lazare Ponticelli, the last veteran of the First World War, helps to reinforce this feeling that the great wars are now a thing of the past. Based on Mr. Ponticelli's life expectancy, the last veteran of World War II will probably have passed away around 2034. Once this theoretical chronological milestone has been reached, the last French witness to have experienced a conflict on a global scale and his procession of suffering will have disappeared forever from the collective memory. But a situation of peace can never be taken for granted *ad vitam aeternam*. It has to be won and then consolidated day after day before an unforeseen event turns everything upside down. The acts of terrorism, which have bruised France and the countries of the European Union, are there to remind us of this tragically. These inhumane acts made the French people aware that the development of conflicts in faraway and exotic countries had a direct impact on peace in Europe. It is clear that the targets hit by the terrorists were not military objectives but the civilian population and the Western-style philosophy of life that accompanied it. These acts of war were compounded by the unleashing of the natural elements in recent decades that have blown, flooded and ravaged our cities and countryside. These latest cataclysmic events, like the attacks, have disempowered and dazed the services of the French State and its population in the face of the extent of the physical and psychological damage. A general mobilization order for the dormant forces of our country is to be promulgated *de facto* to oppose and react to these new threats.

## From the French Revolution

**In their time, the peers of the French Revolution had identified that the army of the Republic had to be strengthened by its people to form a united and inseparable block to oppose the adversaries that threatened France. The people had to be united with their army in the effort to defend this very young republican nation, the bearer of liberty, equality and fraternity. This is how the National Service was created in 1798. It was in its time a forced but necessary voluntarism if the French people wanted to preserve all that they believed in and for which they had fought and suffered. Thus, the National Service continued to evolve in step with history and society until it was suspended on 30 November 2001.**

In the light of recent alarmist events, both sociological and environmental, the French people must once again be called upon to contribute to society in the same way as the valiant conscripts forced to serve in the past (all eras combined). The spirit of citizen defence must be rethought in an innovative way and in line with the needs and expectations that are beneficial to the common good. However, the National Service involving citizens in the functioning of their army is not conceivable nowadays because of the complex equipment used by the professionalized forces, the long time needed to Finally, because of the new strategic situation, which requires a nuclear deterrent and a projectable component of professional soldiers to defend our interests abroad. It would be futile, costly and pointless to revive such a National Military Conscript Service in view of the new face of France in the 21st century in the era of megacities and the responses to be made to national and European challenges.

It is Talleyrand's famous "what's it all about" that needs to be addressed. The behavioural shortcomings of citizens in everyday or extraordinary situations, as well as attitudes to unleashing natural elements, are regularly highlighted by the media. The most emblematic of these are the attacks, particularly those on the Bataclan in Paris and the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, which demonstrated that the unprepared population was incapable of reacting to the assailants and the types of aggression they faced. As for the victims that littered the ground, how many could have been saved if the appropriate gestures had been known to the population?

In the area of rescue, the Departmental Fire and Rescue Services (SDIS) are regularly in a situation of reduced manpower. Indeed, the lack of fire brigade volunteers to reinforce the professional guards or white zones jeopardizes the imperatives set by the departmental risk analysis and coverage scheme (SDACR), all of which is aggravated by the constant increase in the number of interventions. Consequently, it is in the field of civil security that our young people (i.e. 18-25 year olds) must be involved by strengthening the SDISs through a national organisation called "Force de Réaction Citoyenne" (Citizen Reaction Force). In this way, our new conscripts of the 21st century will make themselves as useful as necessary, following the example of their conscripted forebears from the French Revolution and even further back to the era of the *Senatus populusque romanus*, the cradle of our civilisation.

## The missions

The Citizen Response Force (CRF) is to be created from scratch because it is totally innovative in terms of the modules that will be taught. First of all, it is necessary to evaluate the young people who will present themselves on the first day and then to direct them, depending on the case, to the appropriate courses and infrastructures (4 hours devaluation on psychological balance and the fundamental bases of reading and writing). Then a medical examination of aptitude will be carried out by the SDIS doctors.

The first citizenship learning module will focus on the rules of life and behaviour in society (24 hours).

The second module will be taught by security professionals, in particular those specialized in urban survival techniques (i.e. control of forcible persons), over a 48-hour course.

The third module, the core of the FRC, will be based on the courses given for young firefighters (i.e. rescue of persons, accidents on the public highway, fire attack, clearing, organization of rescue in case of large scale crisis such as NBC risks) over a 92 hour period.

The total number of hours to be taught amounts to 168 hours spread over 42 weeks in a calendar year and given on Saturday afternoons. This breakdown and positioning of courses is chosen so as to disrupt as little as possible the life of the student or young employee throughout the year of service at the FRC. At the end of this year, the young citizen will be placed for 5 years in the position of a recall quota fraction whose files will be managed by the departmental SDISs (i.e. a permanent citizen reaction force of approximately 3,000,000 French citizens spread over the territory).

NB: Young citizens of the FRC will have to inform the SDISs of their new deposits in the event of relocation.

## **Women and men**

The supervisory staff and trainers appointed and volunteered will come from State institutions, associative or private organizations. The main institutions involved will be the national education system, town halls and communities of communes (bus pick-up), the DMDs, the SDIS, the Police/Gendarmerie (OPJ), the military reserve, veterans, pensioners, sports clubs and certain private companies specializing in security.

It is clear that not all young women and men mobilized to serve in the FRC will be suitable. The vast majority (about 80%) of the young men and women who will be oriented by the evaluation will follow the normal curriculum of FRC service. For those citizens who do not have the necessary basic knowledge but who have good will (about 15%), they will be oriented according to the results towards learning structures for young adults in difficulty. (illiteracy/illiteracy), social action structures or public health institutions and, if they wish, they will be able to return to the FRC curriculum at the end of the course.

For the category of citizens able to take the FRC but far removed from Republican values (about 5%), they will either be placed in geriatric and hospice services for one year in support of health care workers or, for the most vulnerable, in a hospital for one year, or, for the most difficult cases, placed in a "young people in work teams" (JET) type centre for one month in a row, supervised by soldiers from RPIMA or foreign legion regiments, to complete their classes (unarmed it goes without saying).

In desperate cases, the Ministry of Justice and its repressive arsenal will take the necessary measures under ordinary law. The contingents mobilized in the FRC will be 12 incorporations of 65,000 young conscripts per month (780,000 young people per year, INED sources) spread over French territory. Their compulsory presentation to the flag will take place on the occasion of the ceremonies on 8 May, 14 July or 11 November in firefighter's outfit.

## **Means**

The transport of recruits to the FRC to the high schools will be carried out by the school busses. For the evaluation modules, education to the rules of life in society as well as for the defence module, high school classes and gymnasiums spread all over our territory will be the basis of the FRC organization. The military establishments left fallow since 2001 are inappropriate for the vast majority and must be set aside for security reasons.

For the civil security module, it will be the local fire and rescue centres (CIS) that will welcome the citizens of the FRC. They will be given a light firefighter's package [(F2 helmet plus glasses, parka, mesh, sweater, F1 shirt, belt, boots, etc.)]. leggings, gloves, water bottle and backpack for about 600€) all of which will be returned to the SDIS at the end of the FRC service. Managerial responsibilities will be entrusted jointly to the DMDs and SDIS. Indemnities for supervisory and training staff will be according to the specialities handled by the DMD and the SDIS (civil security module). Our young citizens of the FRC service will receive a fixed hourly allowance of 10 € (tax-exempt) on their bank account, of which the State funds will be paid proportionally to the DMD and SDIS. For young citizens who do not have a bank account, the DMDs will take care of the opening procedures. The FRC service will thus be perceived as a symbol of financial emancipation and an initiation rite to responsible adult life for the greatest number of young citizens. All the modules will be the subject of a global restitution at the end of the course by a simulated situation at the initiative of the Regional Prefect.

## Praemium

At the end of their training, citizens will receive a service certificate from the "Force de Réaction Citoyenne" (Citizen Reaction Force) which will enable them to be taken care of free of charge by the centres for learning to drive a light vehicle class driving licence (approximately €1,500 including tax). For citizens who already hold a light vehicle driving licence, they will follow a driving course on a technical platform for driving in degraded conditions (centaur type), also paid for by the French State. These driving courses will therefore be a complement to the maximum sum of 1680 € including tax credited to their bank account. The totality of the gratuities will reward attendance at the course.

NB: Young people doing the FCR service will have to have attended 85% of the courses to obtain the certificate and the bonuses/gratifications, i.e. 908 €.

## Conclusion

**To live in the recklessness of ignorance and the denial of threats will lead inexorably to the loss of our civilization if no national action is taken. The service of the Citizen Response Force (CRF), which is compulsory and without distinction of gender or origin, will undoubtedly be a significant step forward in many ways in the evolution of 21st century civic attitudes. The values of discipline, sharing, a taste for effort and surpassing oneself will be taught during FRC service and will counteract the disintegration of society and communitarianism. A form of citizen esprit de corps will emerge from this organization and moral values will be recovered and shared. The sense of belonging to the nation resulting from the bringing together of all citizens in a common effort to protect and rescue victims will be the cement that will consolidate the basis on which our French Republic was built with its values, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity .**

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