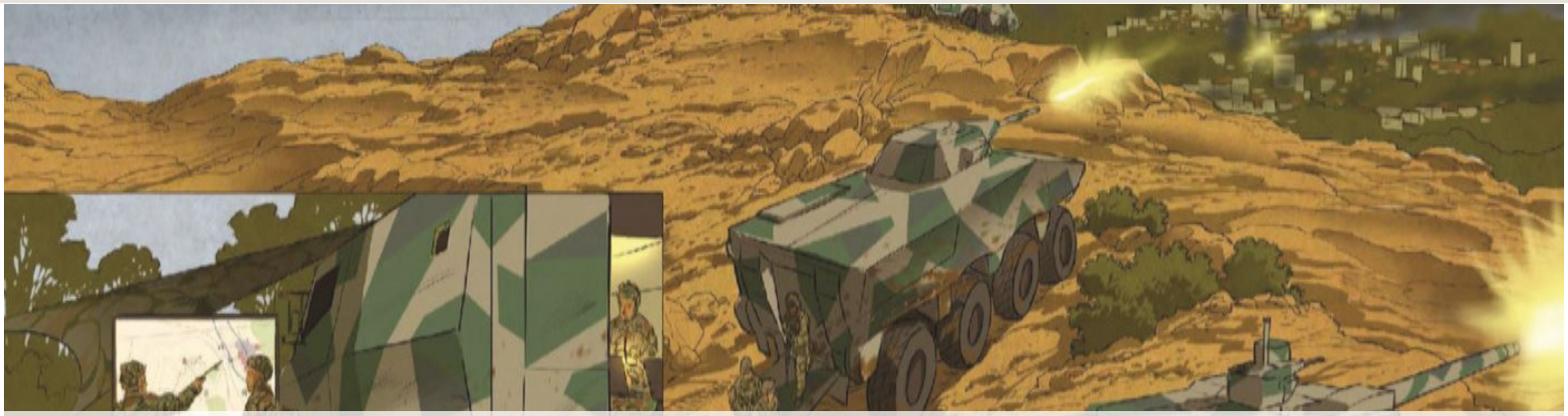

The SCORPION fight

Planning and conducting the maneuver - part 3 / 4 -

Lieutenant-colonel Sébastien de PEYRET

Published on 31/03/2018

Tactique générale

Understanding at the heart of Scorpio doctrine

At a time when big companies are mainly concerned with big data management and when part of the work of command posts consists in feeding "reporting", information management is at the heart of concerns. The conduct of the manoeuvre at Fontenoy in 1744 seems quite simple: Maurice de Saxe looked across the entire battlefield and, based on his observations and experience, quickly decided where and when to launch his fatal counter-attacks.

The equipment currently deployed in theatres of operation rarely guarantees a decisive advantage over the adversary. The winner is usually the one who, having a clearer idea of the situation more quickly, anticipates its movements, concentrates its effects and approaches its means of support in order to accelerate reconfiguration before the next phase. An expected break in infovalorisation is to give access to a shared understanding of the situation, where the leader and his subordinates have the same clear idea of the situation and its evolution over time.

The massive use of digital tools, for more than a generation now, makes it possible to see more clearly about possible job abuse: owning a smartphone connected to the Internet gives access to an incalculable volume of information. However, unless they are idle, users will only look for information that is directly useful to them.

Useful knowledge is the formula that best defines the role of knowledge in the Scorpio doctrine. It preserves from two temptations: wanting to know everything, right away, or waiting to know everything before deciding. We can also define some precepts for the use of the tools that allow this shared understanding, such as "seeing all does not mean knowing everything" or this quote from General McChrystal "Eyes on, hands off".

Rethinking information sharing raises many questions and objections. Micromanagement is certainly a temptation for the leader who has the technical ability to see everything. Education in the exercise of subsidiarity, right from initial training, must guard against it. Moreover, if this risk is proven, it disappears in the event of a major commitment, as the volume of data coming from the field increases.

Another risk arises in this case: cognitive overload. This overload can lead the poorly trained leader to fail to distinguish the essential or to evacuate what slows down his decision. It is also true that this mode of command depends on the quality of the means of communication.

For information to be shared effectively, it must be disseminated without distortion and without delay. Copying from one information system to another is often the source of these distortions and delays. However, it is necessary to implement an element - human or technical - that synthesizes the information.

The cartographic support, judiciously informed, is most certainly the most capable of giving the overall vision that facilitates decision-making. Technological evolutions allow us to hope, on the horizon of Scorpion stage 2, for "digital sandboxes" that can be used by remote interlocutors.

Conducting a mission brief or a rehearsal in distributed mode, without the risks and delays caused by a grouping of authorities, could be a real opportunity to share the vision of the situation and the intention of the leader. Other technical solutions should be explored to manage information and lighten the load on the command post.

We are thinking of setting up a reach-back system, where masses of information that are not directly useful are transmitted to a distant entity that has the means to exploit them.

Without waiting for these developments, the observations made by all the participants in the experiments carried out by the Scorpion Combat Laboratory since 2014 underline that the shared vision of tactical synthesis, in near real time, lightens the load of the control cells thanks to blue force tracking.

It pushes SGTIA commanders to make proposals that fully respect the intention of the corps commander. It relieves the head of the operational centre of part of the situation monitoring, allowing him to devote himself more efficiently both to the control of fires and to the study of the time afterwards.

This new type of access to information generates behaviours that must be identified and corrected. In the experiments conducted by the DGA's collaborative land combat laboratory, it is not uncommon to see all the turrets converging towards the first threat disseminated by infovalorisation. Fire control reflexes must be maintained, technology only comes in support. The same applies to tactical fundamentals, which cannot be called into question once a subordinate has access to the overall vision of his environment.

In the end, technological developments may give hope for a shared vision of manoeuvre, the consequences of which will certainly be important for the preparation of orders at the tactical level. Like the Internet, the use of tools requires specific education, which must be thought about now, for the population that will use them. The generation that will use (exploit) Scorpio's Stage 2 is 10 years old in 2017, and no one can predict what opportunities it will be able to take advantage of the innovations that the Army is striving

to acquire now.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sébastien de PEYRET

Title :	Lieutenant-colonel Sébastien de PEYRET
Author (s) :	Lieutenant-colonel Sébastien de PEYRET
Release date	29/03/2018

DOWNLOAD DOCUMENT


Laboratoire
du Combat
SCORPION
Scorpion Battle Lab