



Foch's principles put to the test in the Great War

military-Earth thinking notebook

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Histoire & stratégie

Marshal Foch, commander-in-chief of the Allied armies in 1918, is remembered as the undisputed winner of the Great War, a title that appears to be the consecration of the brilliant military thought of the author of the "Principles of War".

In fact, the 1918 victory was the result of the judicious application of the principles attributed to Foch and retained by the Army: a well-conducted economy of forces, which provided the freedom of action necessary for an efficient concentration of efforts, with a constantly varying point of application, thus depriving the enemy of his freedom of action while increasing that of the Allies, and thus forcing him into the armistice. On the other hand, it was for failing to respect these principles that the French armies failed at the frontiers, then became bogged down in such futile attacks and costand disjointed until the choice was made, shortly after mid-May 1917, to abandon the decisive offensive as long as the necessary means were lacking. General Foch had just been promoted to Chief of General Staff³ and General Pétain to ^{Commander-in-Chief} ~~to~~.

The manner in which operations were conducted during the difficult period from late 1914 to late 1916 was, however, largely attributable to the offensive inclination of Foch⁴, who exercised important commands during this period. As for his contribution to victory in 1917-1918, as chief of the general staff and then commander-in-chief of the allied armies,⁵ paradoxically, it did not prevent him from rejecting, for months on end, the strategy of the French army. Pétain's strategy of waiting and partial offensives prior to the decisive offensive⁶, before making an indisputable turnaround in the summer of 1918.

The way Foch thought about the action was therefore not without trial and error; but it is important to remember that his attraction to "the battle: decisive attack" ⁷ was still shared

by many at the beginning of 1918, and that he had not been in direct contact with the operations since December 1916.

From the foregoing, however, it emerges that there is not necessarily equivalence between the principles usually attributed to Foch and those he had actually identified. Moreover, his principles do not always seem to have been applicable and have evolved during the conflict. Moreover, their formulation is not insignificant: It differs from the principles adopted by the Army and denotes a certain conceptual vagueness with the "economy of forces; [...] freedom of action; [...] free disposition of forces; [...] safety" and the famous "etc."⁸, as well as a concentration of efforts that Foch does not describe as a principle, despite the great importance accorded to it.

It is therefore important to ask how Foch conceived the principles of war and how he implemented them, wondering how they evolved and what place they occupied in the conduct of operations in 1914-1918. In other words, did Foch's "fixed principles, drawn from history" ⁹ respond to the "special case" of the Great War, with the blocking of the tactics that characterised it? or was their universality not insufficient for them to be successfully tested, with a successful passage from theory to practice?

To answer this question, we shall first ask ourselves about the part played by Foch and his principles in the difficulties that arose from 1914 to 1916, and then about their actual role in the progress made in 1917-1918, which led to victory.

Foch's share of responsibility in the faulty application of the principles from 1914 to 1916

The way Foch understood and applied the principles of warfare had its part in the failures of 1914-1916. Throughout this period, he persisted in the idea that victory necessarily required a decisive offensive, the only way, in his opinion, to gain the upper hand over the enemy and impose his will on him. By thus placing the solution to an operational problem in tactics, he struggled to grasp the principles of concentration of effort and freedom of action, and to apply the principle of economy of forces.

Thus, in spite of the errors he found in the way Joffre's HQG designed and conducted operations, he did not at first do much better than they did. Later, at the end of 1915, after becoming aware of the importance of the material factor, which he had hitherto neglected, he was unable to draw all the consequences.

Foch's more apparent than real opposition to the initiative, which had been set up as absolute While General Foch commanded the School of War, he was sceptical of the supporters of the over-zealous offensive for whom safety, which was one of the principles he had identified, was of little importance. For these officers, inspired by the theories of Colonel de Grandmaison, it was a question of "jumping at the throat" of the enemy without giving him time to realise what was happening to him. Under such conditions, the vanguards and other security detachments, dear to Foch, were an obstacle to the speed on which surprise depended.

In July 1911, after Joffre's appointment as head of the armies, Foch instructed Captain Gamelin, chief of staff of the future generalissimo, to warn him of the risks that an overly cramped attack device, in accordance with new theories, could entail: "You, whom he listens to, and who will have to deal with the big issues, never forget: The Germans will have 35 corps against us, the right to the sea." 10. 10 And Foch predicted the movement enveloping German armies through the Belgian plain, which did indeed take place.

However, his gait remains without effect. In their desire to take the initiative for operations from the enemy, the designers of Plan XVII pushed the armies forward, thus making it almost impossible to redeploy, even though the risks of a large-scale German overrun were proven. Such an arrangement, with armies with tasks fixed in advance, was in complete contradiction with the economy of forces and freedom of action as conceived by Foch. The distribution of the armies and the organisation of transport must in fact make them "communicate [among themselves] to discharge them in the same direction, that of the result being pursued at the given moment" 11.

11 Foch's 1911 plan, with "four armies in the front line, two south of the Verdun-Paris line, two to the north," was indeed a plan corresponding to this way of seeing things. The landings of the fifth were essentially variable, depending on the situation" 12.

12 For not listening to Foch, as well as other high-ranking leaders, Joffre and his HQG led the French armies into disastrous operations, for which Foch had his share of responsibility 13. Their outcome would have been fatal without the freedom of action regained thanks to the retreat of all the armies¹⁴, the re-establishment of the 2nd army having^{moreover} enabled the liberation of^{important} forces for the battle of the Marne.

Following his participation in this battle, Foch became Joffre's deputy for a year and at the same time took the lead of the Group of Armies of the North (GAN). He thus played a major role in the offensives that took place until the end of 1916. Despite the relevance of his criticism of Plan XVII, however, he did not do much better than his predecessors.

Convinced that "tactical results are everything" 15 and that strategy, which "does not exist by itself [...] is only worthwhile by tactics", he was convinced that "the tactical results are everything" 15 and that the strategy that "does not exist by itself [...] is only worthwhile by tactics" 16.¹⁶, Foch makes an absolute of the decisive battle, as well as of the initiative to be seized and kept at all costs that leads to it. The result is a reductive conception of the principle of freedom of action, which he makes closely dependent on the initiative thus understood and on the principle of concentration of efforts, which he subordinates entirely to the decisive battle.

This way of seeing things leads him to neglect material data, the inclusion of which would make "any attack radically impossible" 17, whether it be the "per cent obtained in the target fire" 18 or the "effects of artillery fire in its polygons" 19: 19 Nor does it concern itself with "improvements in weaponry" which would lead one to believe that "it is to the defensive that one must return" 20. 20 His 1910²¹ commentary on the fledgling air force reflects this disinterest in progress: "All this...is sport, but for the army the plane is zero.

22 It is not surprising, therefore, that Foch underestimated the Germans after the failure of their offensives in Flanders and their shift to the defensive. Their renunciation of the initiative led him to believe that they were finished: "The tiger is in its cage" and "all that remains is to pass the stake through the bars to give it the coup de grâce" 23. Foch is convinced that he will do so by delivering "in Fleurus the decisive battle of the war" 24. 24 But in reality his offensives failed because of the gap between the well-protected fires of a defence that took advantage of the strategic mobility of the railway, and the offensive fires, which were vulnerable because they depended on insufficient tactical mobility²⁵. The situation is all the more critical because the frontal attack, which Foch favoured in order to reach a decision more reliably, requires a variety of capabilities (weapons of all calibres, with straight, curved and diving fire) that he does not possess. Lacking freedom of action, the units had to carry out complex and costly local maneuvers to break down German resistance, as in Artois, north of Arras, in May-June 1915, then in September-October. The increase in resources does not change anything, the defences are strengthened and spread out in increasing depth.

In fact, the very way Foch conceived the concentration of efforts prevented the positive results he could achieve by aiming for more modest objectives. The performance of the initial phase of offensives is indeed satisfactory when it is well prepared, and it could be more so if they were reduced to this phase, as Pétain suggested as early as the summer of 1915. Thus conceived, they would finally allow the application of Foch's principle of economy, with a rapid transition from dispersion to concentration to make an effort on one point and then on another.

But the subordination of the principle of concentration to decisive results deprives armies of freedom of action and makes such a game impossible between different units. The growing volume of resources committed exceeds the capacity of the rail and road networks²⁶, so that preparations require considerable time. The Germans then vent them, all the more easily as artillery preparations soon take several days.

Foch's breaking offensives therefore failed and led to the opposite result of the one sought because of the wear and tear and the loss of freedom of action they caused. "Struck by his failure at Arras" 27, Foch realized that^{the} proper application of principles could not be done without taking into account the material factor.

The effects of the role of initiative tempered by consideration of material realities

Now aware of the impossibility of breaking through with a single momentum offensive, Foch reproaches Joffre and the HQG for continuing to underestimate the difficulties imposed by the material war and, for neglecting its importance, for using friendly forces more than those of the enemy. To overcome them, he advocated equipping the French army with means comparable to those of the Germans. It was only once this programme had been carried out, in the spring of 1916, that the offensive could be resumed. This would take place in the form of a "step-by-step march as in siege warfare" 28. 28 In the course of the action, the infantry would carry out attacks not exceeding the range of the artillery supporting it, and they would be renewed only after the batteries had been pushed forward and new preparations made. No exploitation may therefore be attempted in the meantime, since any advance beyond the range of the supporting artillery may fail

and allow the enemy to regain the initiative.

The result is a methodical battle, with a rigidity comparable to that of single-movement offensives, antinomic with the freedom of action of the executors that Foch nevertheless calls for, and, consequently, with the correct application of the principle of concentration.

It is, however, Foch's persistence in wanting to achieve decisive results with the new method that constitutes the most serious attack on this principle. Successive attacks in the same direction, which restrict freedom of action and exhaust the effect of surprise, cannot lead to the rapid wear and tear of the enemy necessary for a breakthrough. The ravaged terrain, which is becoming more and more extensive and which reinforcements and supplies will have to cover, will inevitably delay the preparation of new attacks in the face of an enemy who is himself rapidly reinforced by the railway. As General de Castelnau remarked, the siege war advocated by Foch would only be of interest against "a stronghold that could not be supplied".²⁹

Applied during the Somme offensive, which began on 1 July 1916 and was interrupted in November, the new method was born. a better performance than the single-move offensives of 1915, despite the high cost of disappointing results. The progress made was, however, largely the result of the shift in the balance of power in favour of the Allies, which was the result of the British Army's massive commitment to the continent and the Russian war effort. Nonetheless, Allied superiority could lead to significant results in an offensive that Ludendorff feared would be launched in February 1917.

However, parliamentary opinion was weary of the slowness of the Somme method. It was opposed to the success of the single-movement attacks from Nivelle and Mangin to Verdun³⁰, so that Foch had to leave his command. The return to an excessive form of offensive, a "grand" application of the Verdun method by the 2nd HQG, led to the ^{resounding} failure of the Chemin des Dames (April-May 1917), which bitterly Pétain at the head of the armies and Foch as Chief of General Staff, with a new way of looking at operations.

Foch's role in the progress made in 1917-1918

The developments that occurred at Foch in 1917-1918 are far from sufficient to explain a victory to which Pétain and the 3rd HQG made ^a major contribution. If he ended up, among other things, by renouncing the decisive offensive, and thus placing the solution to the problem of operations in tactics, Foch n'However, Foch did not abandon the idea that it was necessary to "push constantly to the limit" in order to take the initiative on the enemy and keep it. For him, this remained an absolute. With little respect for the balance of forces and the space-time framework, this way of seeing continues to prevent him from fully grasping the principle of concentration of efforts and applying it well.

Thus, after having supported Pétain during the first months of the 3rd GQG, he opposed ^{from} October to June 1918 the defensive- offensive orientations decided by the latter. Although he finally took over the Commander-in-Chief's method, he did not

manage to use it to his best advantage.

Passing support for Pétain, questioned because of his strategy of waiting

Pétain's turnaround in operations in May 1917 was first approved by Foch, as it was in line with the way he had been working for the company for many years. Foch's approach to the economy of forces and the importance he now attached to equipment.

Considering that the war would last for several more years³¹, Pétain could take the long-term measures that Foch advocated, which the 1st and 2nd HQG, mired in the ^{quest for} victory in the short term, had neglected. Renouncing large-scale offensives, Pétain is concentrating on the preparations that will give him the freedom of action necessary to conduct operations in accordance with the principle of economy of forces. He thus provided the armies with substantial resources and had the front line equipped, which had hitherto been constantly postponed, to enable rapid transfers of units from one sector to another. In order to facilitate them and release the necessary reserves, he staggered the French front in depth, the first line being held by a minimum number of troops.³² It would thus be possible both to face enemy offensives and to launch successive surprise attacks across the whole front. Interrupted as soon as their output ceased to increase, they would allow the enemy to be worn down; and once this wear and tear was sufficient, it would be possible to envisage a decisive operation.

Pétain also took account of the changing circumstances: with the threat of a Russian collapse, he advocated a strategy of waiting to let the Germans attack, in order to wear them down, before going on the counter-offensive³³.

However, this last orientation was contrary to Foch's views regarding the initiative of operations; but even before it was taken, he was irritated by the inaction of the French armies, judging the few limited offensives carried out or in preparation to be insufficient. Resolutely hostile to the "war without a decisive solution, restricted aim" ³⁴, he called for a "large-scale ^{attack on} the widest front permitted by the means available [...], pursued to the limit of its means" with "attacks following one another at close intervals" ³⁵. ³⁵ Pétain's "wear and tear on the surface" was thus contrasted with a battle of "wear and tear in depth" ³⁶ which in fact corresponded to the "Somme ^{formula}" ³⁷, to which he remained. Faced with an enemy whose defensive capacity had been strengthened, such an offensive would squander French reserves. Pétain opposed it and was followed by the political authorities. As the reserves were ^{bring them} intact at the time of the German offensive of 21 March 1918, the 3rd HQG was able to ^{bring them} in successfully. Thus, on 26 March, "when General Pétain came under the command of General Foch [...], he had reussi if not to ensure completely and effectively the intimate liaison between the two English and French armies, at least to stop the German attack" ³⁸. ³⁸ This did not prevent Foch, however, who had become commander-in-chief of the Allied armies, from persevering in his plans for counter-attacks and thus immobilizing the HQG reserves in the north, at a time when serious threats weighed elsewhere.

The situation was all the more critical because Foch neglected the defensive and because his conception of the principles of concentration and freedom of action had not evolved, essentially preventing him from applying them properly in this mode of action. Indeed, Foch thinks the defensive as rigidly as the offensive. Failing to be able to take the initiative and thus increase his freedom of action, he must at all costs prevent the enemy from doing so, fighting without a "spirit of retreat". This way of doing things is justified on "end-of-fight" positions, facing an enemy who is himself badly installed, to whom it is enough to "stick" some "bread[s] to seal" for him to stop³⁹. It is not justified on well-equipped fronts from which the enemy can emerge in force. The defensive tactics advocated by Pétain were precisely designed to counter such a threat: It consists of abandoning the first position without the enemy's knowledge in order to let his effort culminate there before he comes up against the next position, which is solidly held⁴⁰. But Foch considered that it put the defenders at unjustified risk and he supported General Duchêne (6th army) in his refusal to apply it on the Chemin des Dames. As a result, the latter kept the bulk of his units to the north of the Aisne, within range of the German field artillery and the Minenwerfer, while to the south, the second position was almost empty.

A serious defeat ensued on 27 May 1918, so that the Germans soon reached the Marne and threatened Paris for a moment. Foch, who was still repelled by the idea of giving up ground, called for a defence that was uniformly staggered in depth⁴¹. Flowing from the idea that the initiative could not be abandoned, this erroneous way of concentrating defensive efforts prevented the Germans from taking the initiative. The French armies did not have the means to set up such a system.

Pétain therefore had to overcome major difficulties before his defensive tactics were implemented on 15 July 1918, and resulted in a "defeat of the enemy" which "was the culminating moment of the campaign and the source of all our subsequent successes" ⁴².

Foch's difficult acceptance of the limitations to the principle of initiative at all costs

Just as Foch was slow to grasp the merits of the defensive battle, he belatedly understood the value of successive partial attacks, launched across the entire width of the front. Thus, during the victorious counter-offensive of 18 July 1918, he always reasoned in terms of decisive action. Believing that "it does not work fast enough", and that "it is necessary to stuff the enemy, drive him in, etc.", he was not able to take a decisive action.⁴³ when the troops were exhausted, he wrote an instruction in which he specified that "the battle engaged must aim at the destruction of the enemy's forces south of the Aisne and Vesle" ⁴⁴. ⁴⁴ ⁴⁴. As the offensive then began to stall, he became aware of the need to operate differently⁴⁵. Thus, on 24 July, he announced the implementation, throughout the theatre, of the method of partial offensives advocated by Pétain⁴⁶ at the Battle of the Soissonais (18-22 July) was followed by the Battle of Montdidier, conducted simultaneously with the British offensive at Amiens from 8 August onwards. On 18 August, the offensive was relaunched and on 20 August it was extended east of the Oise, in the Noyon region, while the British attacked at Bapaume. A few days later, it was against the Saint-Mihiel salient, with the Americans, that the effort was postponed. Starting on September 26, the Allied armies launched one after the other against the Hindenburg Line, which was broken. None of these battles led to the decisive action of which Foch had made a principle, but all of them caused the enemy, each time surprised, heavy losses, and thus reduced his freedom of action.

However, Foch's resolutely offensive character made it difficult for him to limit the operations in progress and the slowness imposed by the measures of coordination between the different weapons. The complexity of the Allied armies, in the midst of change, is indeed such that they have to stop for disorganised units to regroup and re-articulate before tackling a new obstacle.

However, Foch, who had always disdained details and was fascinated by the German performance⁴⁷, which was the result of meticulous work, was "of the opinion that actions should always be pushed to the limit" ⁴⁸. On 25 September, he therefore questioned the lines of objectives set by Pétain for the American armies as they prepared to attack in the Argonne. In his view, "there can be no question of fixing for these two armies fronts which must not be exceeded without further order, such a restrictive indication being likely to prevent them from exploiting to the full the favourable circumstances and to break the momentum which must be maintained above all" ⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ The initially rapid advance of the Americans seemed to prove him right, but an immense disorder soon broke out and caused the offensive to be halted, giving German reinforcements time to arrive.

Losing interest in the Argonne, Foch then decided to entrust the main effort to the British in Picardy and to have it supported by a frontal offensive by the Army Group Central (GAC) in Champagne. This last measure deprived the French GQG of the forces it needed to "come and strike in Lorraine on the pivot around which the Kraut front was currently turning - or trying to turn -" ⁵⁰. ⁵⁰ Since the end of August, Pétain had in fact been planning an attack in this region where he knew that the Germans, worn out, would soon be particularly badly connected to their rear, from where supplies and reinforcements were only just beginning to drip. To ensure that this operation was not postponed, General Buat, Major General of the HQG, proposed in vain to Foch's 3rd office wing actions ^{that would not mortgage} the necessary forces. But he met with a refusal. As a result, the Lorraine offensive was postponed until 14th November. The armistice being concluded on the 11th, the operations ended without the French armies delivering the decisive battle that Foch had long dreamed of.

Conclusion

Different from the current principles of warfare, Foch's principles actually evolved throughout the conflict. After having contributed to the difficulties of the early years, they finally contributed to the victory. However, this evolution was not without its difficulties and it stopped along the way, so that the "revised and corrected" principles are far from sufficient to explain the victory.

Foch's emphasis on taking and maintaining the ascendancy over the enemy was thus for a long time an obstacle to any evolution. After having recognized the role of the material factor, it was indeed very difficult for Foch to admit that one could renounce, even for a moment, the "material factor".operations, and that one abandons the enemy from the field in order to better counter-attack him, in spite of the interest presented by such a process

to regain the initiative. It was equally difficult for him to abandon the decisive offensive, whether in a single burst or in successive attacks, and to accept that the application of principles could be achieved by partial offensives across the entire width of the front and subject to an overall strategic maneuver.

However, he never gave up the idea of pushing the action to the limit in these offensives, with the idea that this was the only way to keep the initiative once it had been seized. As a result, for Foch, who Fayolle complained that "attack, attack, that's his whole doctrine" 51, the^{concentration of} efforts has always been a rush, an outpouring of forces accumulated through economy of means. Finally closer to Blücher than to Moltke or Napoleon,⁵² attracted by "the disorder of the attack, [...] thirsty of action, of movement" 53 and^{disdaining} the maneuver, "on the flank or on the enemy's rear" 54, Foch n'54, Foch never really understood that concentration was a convergence of effects requiring careful consideration of the balance of forces and the space-time framework in order to culminate at the right moment, that is to say before or after the enemy has done it himself.⁵⁵ The concentration of the enemy's forces is the result of a convergence of effects that can only be achieved through a careful consideration of the balance of forces and the space-time framework. 55 This is probably why he saw this principle as nothing more than a "development of the economy of forces". The manner, often not very much in line with the principles on which Foch operated, is finally due to the fact that he asked for "our models and the facts on which we will base a teaorie" to "certain pages of history; at this time of the Revolution when the whole nation is arming itself for the defence of its most cherished interests" 57. 57 He did so by setting aside other eras, such as that of "this war without a decisive solution, a war of limited purpose, a war of manoeuvre....⁵⁸,^{where} the application of principles was not self-evident and was therefore worthy of consideration.

1. The Cahiers publish here the reaction of Lieutenant-Colonel Gué to the dossier devoted to Marshal Foch in their n° 50 of the 1st quarter 2018.
2. The author would like to thank Colonel Coste and Squadron Leader Boulic for their contribution to the elaboration of this article through the numerous and fruitful exchanges that took place.
3. Technical Advisor to the Government.
4. Moreover moderate compared to that of the partisans of the excessive attack.
5. Charged with coordinating the action of the allied armies on 26 March 1918, he became their commander-in-chief on 14 April.
6. Foch was in fact initially in favour of an immediate decisive offensive, the consequences of which would have been disastrous if it had taken place.
7. To quote the title of chapter X of his book "DesPrincipes de la Guerre", Paris and Nancy, Berger-Levrault, 1903.
8. Foch, cit, p. 9.
9. Foch, , p 11.
10. General Gamelin, "Manœuvre etvictoire de la Marne", Paris, Grasset, 1954, p. 42.
11. Foch, cit, p. 282.
12. Gamelin, op. cit. p. 47.
13. This is notably the case on 20 August in Morhange, where^{Foch's} XXth army corps, which attacked despite orders to the contrary, suffered a defeat that placed the 2nd army in a critical situation.
14. Made possible thanks to the initiatives of Generals Lanrezac and Castelnau.
15. Foch, cit, p. 41.
16. Ibid.

17. Ibid, p. 30.
18. Ibid, p. 30.
19. Ibid, p. 27.
20. Ibid . at 30.
21. Carried out at the conclusion of the 1910 Eastern Circuit .
22. Basil H. Liddel Hart, "Reputations", Paris, Payot, 1931, p. 136.
23. Commandant de Bary, Mémoires, p. 13, SHD GR-1 K 795
24. Ibid, p. 546.
25. Fighters progress on foot, with support and backing relying primarily on horse-drawn traction.
26. That little attention is paid to improvement because of the hopes of victory placed in the next decisive offensive.
27. Colonel Jacquand, Notes of War, day of 12/08/1915, SHD, GR 1 K 795.
28. Ibid.
29. Jacquand, , 12/08/1915.
30. Who achieved easy successes because of the exhaustion of the German forces.
31. No. 1, Commander-in-Chief, 19/05/1917.
32. These provisions also aim to limit the wear and tear on troops and to promote their training as well as their rest. Cf. dir. n°3 of 04/07/1917.
33. No. 4 of 22/12/1917.
34. Foch, cit. p. 25.
35. Maréchal Joffre, Journal de marche (1916-1919), presented by Guy Pedroncini, Vincennes, SHAT-FEDN, 1990, p. 229.
36. Guy Pedroncini, "Pétaingénéral en chef", Paris PUF, 1973, p. 239.
37. Joffre, , p. 229.
38. General Mordacq, "Le ministère Clémenceau, diary of a witness, t. 1", p. 235.
39. Foch à Loucheur, 24/03/1918, according to E. Mayer, cit. p. 65.
40. n° 4.
41. GQGA, EM, n° 1466, 16/06/1918, AFGG, 62, n° 1583.
42. General Buat, "Journal, 1914-1923", Paris, Min. Défense-Perrin, 2016, p. 688.
43. General Buat, cit. p. 627 .
44. IPS pour cdt des armées du NNE, n° 2206, 15/07/1918, AFGG 71, n°157.
45. He was also helped there by the failure of the great German offensives.
46. memory read at the meeting of the commanders of armies, n°2375, 24/07/1918, AFGG 71, n° 276
47. Which are the work of an army that is different in its means and organization.
48. Commander Laure, "Au3ème ^{bureau du} 3ème GQG", ^{Paris}, Plon, 1921, p. 205.
49. , 206.
50. Buat, cit, p. 669.
51. Marshal Fayolle, "Carnets secrets de la Grande Guerre", Paris, Plon, 1964, p. 185. See also p. 189.
52. Mayer, cit. pp. 76-85.
53. Ibid. p. 76.
54. Foch, op. cit. p. 32.
55. Thus, Foch "does not want to subordinate our line of conduct to what the enemy will or will not do" at a time when the armies are preparing to face the German offensive of mid-July 1918. Laure, cit, p. 165.
56. Foch, cit., p. 282.
57. 24.
58. Foch, cit., p. 25.
59. Foch attributes the limited wars of the 18th ^{century} to the choices made by contemporaries, forgetting that they also resulted from a tactical blockage, linked to technical problems, which presents analogies with that of 1914-1918.

Pensées mili-terre

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