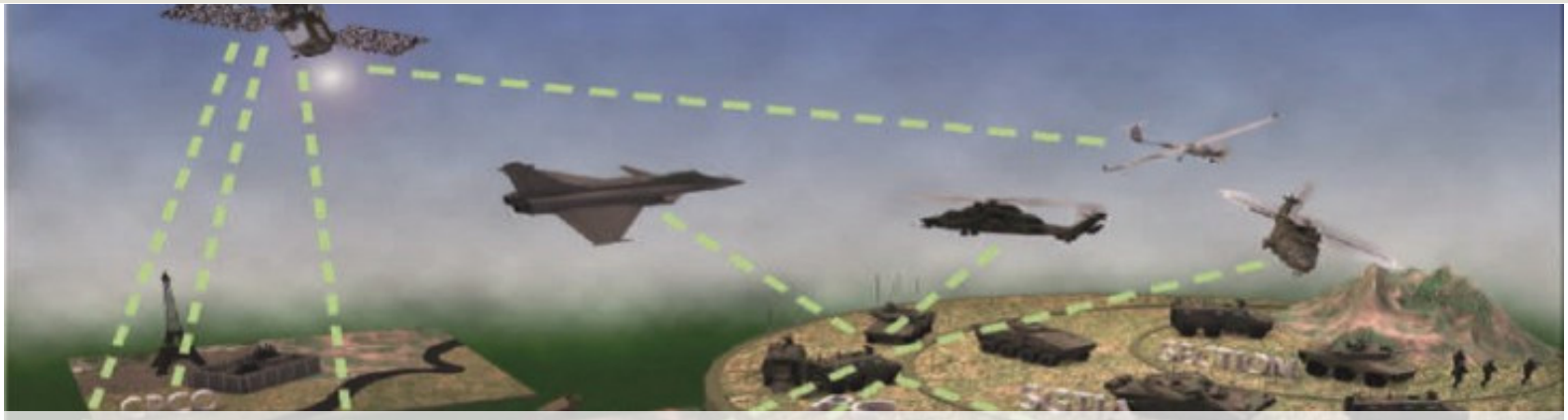

Can we innovate in terms of doctrine?

Land Forces Doctrine Review

Le Colonel Sébastien de Peyret

Published on 20/04/2020

Tactique générale

"If I asked people what they wanted, they'd say, 'Better cars.'" this reflection by Henry Ford effectively illustrates the problem facing representatives of the doctrinal community when they meet in 2013 to develop a first draft of the exploratory Scorpio doctrine. Although doctrine follows a process of regular adaptation, it is often based on an observation, relying on tried and tested operating methods to translate them into standards applicable by all forces and allowing interoperability between several players, among other things.

Defining new standards for future situations is part of innovation. At a time when innovation is cited in all fields, for the Army it only makes sense if it has an operational application and allows the force to maintain its advantage in a world where competition sets no limits. However, it raises many questions: is it possible to innovate? Should we innovate? Is it a question of questioning the model according to which we develop doctrine - innovation in doctrine - or is it a question of creating a break in the content of doctrine, i.e. our operational modes of action - innovation in doctrine? Is the innovation necessarily a break? Is adaptation to circumstances sufficient? Does innovation imply a revolution or is it simply a series of evolutions in the face of circumstances?

Changing the art of warfare is presumptuous, and involves many risks. For this reason, it can be recalled that innovation is an attitude and not an end in itself. Innovating does not mean adding instability to uncertainty. To innovate is to surprise the adversary without destabilizing the force. To innovate is above all to accept to consider our current models not as an end but as a stage, as a state corresponding to the needs of the moment, without omitting to define and respect certain invariants.

Never concede the initiative

The recent history of our armies does not lack appointments where equipment and doctrine are put in coherence, to prevail against the enemy of the present time or against the most probable threat. The great offensives of 1918 with tank accompaniment gave victory to France. The project of the Light Mechanical Division of 1935, with a combination of self-propelled discovery machine guns (AMD Panhard) and the recent Somua S35 tanks, suggests a fight ofa new kind of combat, which will suffer from a too weak integration of the third dimension and insufficient information systems in front of a maneuvering enemy. Javelin studies in the late 1940s exploited the full potential of the armoured reconnaissance vehicles (EBR) and AMX13 light tanks. The Masséna studies integrated the AMX 30 into manoeuvres in the 1960. Set up in 1954, the Rapid Mechanics Division was perfectly adapted to the war against the Warsaw Pact, but lost its meaning and relevance during its engagement in Algeria in a context of stabilisation.

The commissioning of various digitized capacities over the last few decades (regimental information system, etc.) has led to the development of a number of new digital capacities.[2]LECLERC tank, armoured infantry fighting vehicle[3] or information system for disembarked combatant[4]) have enabled progress in the knowledge of the possibilities offered by digitisation, without being accompanied by the doctrinal transformation initiated by Scorpio, a system of systems that needs to be approached in a global manner. No doubt it was necessary to draw all the fruit of the first experiences of variable happiness in order to succeed in this new stage.

Voluntary or not, this Scorpio transformation will take place with the rising generations, natively at ease with the social network or collaborative mode of operation. These future soldiers will also be aware, through the Internet, of the efficiency of the combination of recent technologies. For example, video-based mortar fire guidance, carried out by a general public UAV pilot, can be extremely effective and can inspire the doctrines of integration of effects, even if it does not yet meet information systems security standards.

One can decide not to innovate

In some fields of activity a company dies as soon as it stops innovating. An organization such as armies, which devote considerable energy to continuous reform, must be able to rely on a system of thought and operation that is stable enough to remain robust in the face of adversity. Doctrine contributes directly to this system and, being a set of principles that allows for adaptation to contingencies, its strength lies in its ability to pass generations without the need for constant modernization. Doctrine also naturally balances innovation and sustainability, because those who develop it know the time required for a community as large as the land task force to adopt new standards.

Doctrine does not require revision as long as it responds to the circumstances and, when mastered and applied, it allows for victory. In an armed engagement between two forces, each relies on a good match between its capabilities, its doctrine and the human factor of the training and talent of its leaders, the moral forces or the quality of training of its troops. As long as the doctrine of force can prevail over the opposing system, it is neither necessary nor wise to revolutionize it.

In an organization where feedback (RETEX) is well documented, synthesized and then widely and rapidly disseminated, "good practices" are naturally propagated to the entire force. In this way, the doctrine is systematically perfected and adapted to the circumstances, which guarantees its relevance. This improvement requires close coordination between doctrine and RETEX, examples of which are rare outside the periods of rapid adaptation that history sometimes witnesses.

However, the operational environment is constantly evolving, and whoever can surprise or outperform his adversary most often takes the upper hand. Our Western forces have known for several years that the greatest emerging threats are the overwhelming overwhelming of some of our weapon systems by foreign defence industries.Our Western forces have known for several years that the strongest emerging threats are the overtaking of some of our weapons systems by the often proliferating foreign defence industries, as well as the democratisation of the use of information systems or civilian connected objects, used in a logic of aggression against our forces. The surprise also comes from the modus operandi chosen by our asymmetrical adversaries, who sometimes employ methods considered obsolete, and sometimes use new modes of action, and where the laws of war are bypassed to ensure radical effectiveness. A perennial, predictable doctrine, guaranteeing first and foremost the stability of our organizations and modes of operation, does not allow an army to prevail in the face of such enemies.

Any system must therefore agree to question its doctrine, lest it be forced to evolve under duress. It took many years for the coalition armies to analyze the operative system designed and employed by the emperor, and then to hijack it to the detriment of the imperial armies. In June 1815 Waterloo resounded as a relief to the victors. Wellington recognized the uncertainty that was his throughout the battle: the level of risk involved in revising a mode of operation, adopting an unusual mode of operation or defining a new doctrine.

No innovation without risk

In an innovation process, benchmarks are often missing. The definition of a new approach in terms of doctrine is more often based on a series of hypotheses than on a consolidated RETEX, which makes it fragile to adhere to these new ideas until they have passed the test of fire.

In addition, there is often a strong need for communication to justify the investment in innovation to those who finance it and the effort in transformation to those who will experience it. This need for communication sometimes outweighs the ability to discern what needs to be innovated and what can be sustained. Moreover, the discourse that accompanies and encourages the appropriation of doctrinal innovation sometimes tends to force the line, announcing the break before it can happen, often reinforcing the disbelief of future users. If an innovative approach can indeed create conditions favourable to a rupture, the "rupture" or "revolution" in terms of doctrine cannot be decreed, but it can be observed after the fact.

Among the pitfalls that lie in wait for the teams responsible for proposing an innovative doctrine, the first is to miss its target. One way to miss the target is to adopt an essentially

technological or theoretical approach, ignoring Ardant du Picq's views on the essentially human nature of combat and the need to avoid adopting a doctrine that cannot be implemented by a mediocre leader. Such a theoretical approach can generate serious frustration when the first capabilities put into service in units do not bring the breakthroughs announced without caution. Another way to miss the target is to break the ambition of a doctrinal innovation at the outset, by reducing it to a few evolutions that accompany the introduction of new capabilities. The last one, recalled by historians interested in the evolution of capabilities in history, consists in defining a doctrine that is unsuited to the threat that arises. The France of 1940 was ready to confront the Germany of 1918, apart from a few changes. The Airland Battle doctrine, issued by the US Army in the 1980s, was only put into service against the Iraqi army. As experienced as it was, Saddam Hussein's forces probably did not justify the massive actions in the third dimension provided for in a doctrine that had been conceived in opposition to the Warsaw Pact.

To limit the risks, a rigorous method is needed.

No innovation without method

The world of innovation requires ambition, imagination and often heterodox ways of thinking. In the end, it must produce a reliable body of doctrine that can be applied in the field by forces resulting from the training and operational preparation process we are building. From genesis to commissioning, lead times can be long and, because of the generation cycle of military equipment, very often a doctrine is imagined by one generation and commissioned by another. Defining and applying a method is therefore essential.

In a world often schematized by the acronym VUCA[5] Exploratory studies are becoming more widespread and recognized. Situated between current realities and what emerges from foresight, exploration in the field of doctrine is defined by the Scorpio Combat Laboratory (LCS) as a "process aimed at researching and then examining the various possibilities for doctrine development resulting from possible changes in terms of threat, organisation, technology or capabilities". While there is no shortage of examples of redesigning doctrine models in history, there is little RETEX that can be used for doctrinal innovation in the Scorpio field, as models comparable to Scorpio are rare. The American Stryker Brigades and the British Strike concept only address the middle segment, and the integrated capability of the RETEX system is limited to the middle segment.The integrated capacity of the Scorpion system, based on a common and unifying information system, has no equivalent.

Far from any temptation to predict, the exploratory approach cannot be understood without a recurring passage to control and factual testing. The main stages enabling its validation are the initial exploration, the drafting of an exploratory project, the experimentation of this project on simulation or on war games (by the LCS or by the research and prospective departments of the different operational functions), the development of a new project, and the testing of the results.functions), experimentation in the field (by the Scorpion combat expertise force) and then the testing of initial projections in external theatres of operations for doctrine approval after the fire test. At each stage, the doctrine project is verified, controlled and amended. One way to amend it is to observe how units appropriate the equipment and the possibilities offered by a

doctrine adapted to the command and communication modes offered by Scorpio. A significant portion of the innovations that will benefit users when Scorpio reaches full maturity will inevitably come from suggestions made by the fighters themselves.

Control and critical thinking are the two counter-fires needed to imagine and set new standards. They will make it possible to systematically check whether the draft doctrine is tenable and whether it is applicable when the transformation of units has been completed. They will also allow us to discern whether the process has resulted in a model adapted to future operational realities, or whether it has been limited to a few improvements that do not challenge current standards, in the face of an enemy that we have always been able to dominate.

The method of developing a doctrine for the future finally requires starting from a broad and ambitious vision, even if this ambition needs to be reviewed after experimentation. This vision has made it possible within the framework of Scorpion to propose, for the first time, a doctrine upstream of the arrival of equipment. In the DORESE capability process[6]Although the doctrine does not have a pre-eminent role, the description of employment scenarios is seen by all as a support for reflection that sheds light on all the capability pillars.

CONCLUSION

Can or should we innovate in terms of doctrine? The experience of developing a doctrine prior to the commissioning of Scorpion equipment shows that, without seeking to predict future commitments, the definition of use scenarios is an essential guide to the appropriation of Scorpion by its future users.

To put it another way, it is hard to imagine gaining the upper hand over our future enemies if we do not agree, on a regular basis, to question our current model when faced with an enemy that puts us in trouble. Who would imagine a coach of the French team, preparing his players for the World Cup in 2022, assuming that the upcoming tournament will closely resemble that of 2018?

2 SIR.

3 VBCI.

4 Foot-soldier with integrated equipment and links (FELIN).

5 Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity. Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity.

6 Doctrine, Organization, Human Resources and Training, Training, Support and Equipment.

Title :	Le Colonel Sébastien de Peyret
Author (s) :	Le Colonel Sébastien de Peyret
Release date	07/02/2019