



□ The operational reserve on national territory

Land Forces Doctrine Review

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Engagement opérationnel

The resurgence of the terrorist threat in 2015 has given rise to important reflections in the armed forces, highlighting the privileged link between operational reserves and the protection of national territory.

The launch of Operation SENTINELLE was the immediate response to this strategic rupture. Naturally, the reserve was called upon to respond to the operational contract, first on defence-protection missions, to replace the active forces deployed, then very quickly as a complement to the latter, deployed within the PROTERRE units. A systematic and more massive use of the reserve was then decided in 2016, in a total break with the capabilities generated by the budgets at the time. In a few months, we thus moved from an individual reserve of individual supplements to a regular and massive reserve of employment. Its contribution to operations on the national territory is now a necessity.

Rapidly, the Delegate for the Army Reserves (DRAT), received a mandate from the EMAT to build a new organisation, adapted to this threat. Without changing the model (reservists remain integrated into active formations), the ambition is to increase the number of reservists from 15 000 (end 2015) to more than 24 000 (target end 2019). A general order to the reserves was signed by the CEMAT in March 2016, describing the ramp-up to be conducted until 2019. This voluntarism will naturally be part of the interministerial dynamic affirmed by the creation of the National Guard in October 2016.

Today, a considerable effort has been made to increase the reserves: more than 18,000 new contracts signed since the beginning of 2015 and a 500% increase in the employment rate of reservists on the TN (122 reservists deployed every day at the end of 2015, compared with 632 in August 2018). This represents on average 10% of the French Army's NL commitment (up to 20% in the summer). All these changes have taken place without

any reduction in operational requirements, as reservists designated for TN missions meet the same operational prerequisites as their active comrades.

After three years of ramp-up, the challenge now is to preserve the momentum that has largely enabled these excellent results. The usefulness of the reserve has become obvious, and its use is now a long-term one, given a security context characterised by a hardened, multifaceted and unpredictable threat. It is now a question of going beyond a simple increase in numbers and building a modern and agile reserve force, capable of massive operational engagement at short notice. This is why several ambitious reforms have been studied and even implemented since the beginning of the surge:

- the digitalisation of the reserve, using the ROC information system⁶⁴ which represents an unprecedented modernization contributing to the simplification of the administration of the reserve;
- a more flexible post-2019 model to meet these new challenges, making it possible to maintain a high level of ambition for the protection of the NR in the event of a resurgence of the threat, but also to increase the collective operational know-how of the reserve units and individual supplements.

The Army reserve is today an indispensable component within the land forces, fully integrated into the active units and capable of carrying out, with a high level of competence and a large number of personnel, the missions specific to the defence of the national territory. This result is, above all, to the credit of the reservists themselves. Doubly invested - in their civilian life as well as in their military commitment - these soldiers are the architects of national cohesion. They are the actors of the reinforcement of the Nation's resilience: during the attacks, it was the influx of applications for the reserve that illustrated in an emblematic way the will of French youth to react and face up to the threat.

64 Connected Operational Reservists: the new information system for the reserve, developed by the Reserves 2019 joint project management.

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