



What avenues should be considered for future operational preparation?

Thoughts for the Army of Tomorrow

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Engagement opérationnel

These soldiers, we'll have to keep training them. Lt-Gen (2S) Arnaud SAINTE-CLAIRE DEVILLE suggested that we think about what could become of this training for combat.

"War is a chameleon whose face surprises us every time", this quote from CLAUSEWITZ is to be compared with his many attempts to define the very essence of war. This human activity is therefore at once eminently contingent, while at the same time having perennial characteristics, insensitive to fashions. The soldier remains and will remain an essential actor in the act of war. Keeping the French Army at the forefront of European armies requires French soldiers capable of controlling its invariants and adapting to its changes.

It would be futile and above all presumptuous to sweep the entire subject in this short article. Also in addition to the other articles approaching them from near or far, I would like to highlight three essential qualities that must be cultivated in the soldier 4.0. Strengthening, versatility and family balance will have to irrigate his operational preparation in order to put him in the best conditions to face these challenges.

As technological as it may be, tomorrow's war will always be an act marked by the unleashing of violence in an environment marked by the abnormality of situations. Trained in rusticity, Soldier 4.0 will also have to be psychologically prepared. After having instituted specific training in physiological combat first aid, the army, in close cooperation with the health service, will also set up training courses adapted to psychological combat first aid, for managers, but also for soldiers. Last but not least, in an increasingly blurred world, where the notion of good and evil is deliberately blurred, where yesterday's enemy is today's partner....Today, before being tomorrow's friend, and vice versa, the soldier must

be morally ready, so as not to doubt the legitimacy of his commitment. More than ever, the periods of final conditioning before projection should focus more than ever on making the leaders, but also the soldiers, perceive the complexity of its future framework of engagement. WARNING 4.0 will therefore have to go well beyond the simple, but still indispensable, learning of rusticity by opening up new areas in the psychological and moral fields.

Operational readiness will also have to continue to cultivate what is our strength today: the reasonable versatility of our units. However, this does not mean denying and erasing the specificities of operating in particular environments (extreme cold, third dimension, amphibious, etc.). This reasonable versatility, which is the basis of the ability of our soldiers and units to be engaged in a wide variety of modes of action, is based on the differentiated ability to master the know-how common to all soldiers in the armed forces. This is based on the differentiated ability to master the skills common to all soldiers in the French Army, then those related to the shared base of its operational function and finally, in a targeted manner, those intrinsic to its speciality, often dictated by the perfect knowledge and use of specific, increasingly complex equipment. Thus, the LECLERC tank gunner must master the MICATs⁹ and then the common know-how of a PRI¹⁰ engaged in standardization and low-spectrum stabilization missions, to focus on the control of its main weapon system, the LECLERC tank. Only this balance makes it possible to benefit from adaptable forces capable of coping with an operational contract that is large in terms of deployed volume. It also makes an essential contribution to the capitalisation of operational experience within our units. The discipline of fire, so prevalent in Sentinel-type missions, is built through experience of demanding commitments in operations conducted outside our borders. Specialization, which is characteristic of an army of "rich" or "rerolling" soldiers.¹¹ The two pitfalls that must continue to be avoided are the two "pitfalls" on all types of structures and materials. Acquired after more than twenty years of professionalization, the professional maturity of our Army is a very precious nugget to preserve!

Operation SENTINELLE, which resulted in a very high rate of absenteeism from the garrisons, showed in all units and among all populations, how sensitive soldiers are to preserving the balance of their family ecosystem. Training, both individual and collective training and, to some extent, joint training, are areas that will offer important opportunities in the future to reduce the amount of time a soldier spends outside his garrison. In terms of training, the maturity of the NEF¹² will make it possible to dematerialize many courses. Access to MOOCs¹³ This, combined with the deployment of immersive virtual simulation systems, will allow a degree of internalization of training within units. However, this will not mean the end of face-to-face sequences in schools or specialized centers, which are essential to maintain the homogeneity of know-how, but the prerequisites for following these training courses will be achievable and controlled in the garrisons. The simulation natively embarked in Scorpion vehicles, the multiplication of virtual simulation tools as constructive, as well as their networking by distributed simulation, within the regiment, but also with regiments of other functions located in the garrison will save travel and absences.

Operational readiness will remain the life insurance of our soldiers and the essential prerequisite for the operational success of our units. They will remain versatile at the right level, armed with soldiers who are physically, psychologically and morally seasoned. Their family balance will be better preserved by reducing periods of absence from the garrison related to training, instruction and education, thanks to the increased and optimized use of simulation and digitization.

9 MICAT = Missions Communes de l'Armée de Terre.

10 PRI = Reconnaissance and Intervention Platoon.

11 Rerolling = process that consists of transforming a unit serving on one type of equipment into another type : if the "rerolling" of a high technical level equipment to a lower technical level equipment is possible (example : VBCI to VAB), the opposite is to be avoided in view of the very large investment to be made (example: 10 RC to LECLERC).

12 NEF = Digitisation of the Training Space.

13 MOOC = in English "Massive Open Online Course" or online training open to all (FLOT), also called Massive Open Online Course (CLOM), is an open type of distance training capable of welcoming a large number of participants.

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