



The use of royal troops in the face of the Camisards' revolt (1702-1710):

Earth Thought Notebooks

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Histoire & stratégie

lessons for army employment on the national territory

The Camisard revolt has seen a resurgence of interest due to the resurgence of asymmetrical conflicts and counter-insurgency operations. The Royal Army's engagement against an unconventional adversary promised to provide valuable lessons for today's wars.

Often presented as an indisputable example of the superiority of the "gentle way" over the use of force, Squadron Leader Xavier COMBET, Squadron Leader Étienne THEBAULT and Battalion Commander Jean-Maël VUITTON show that the Camisards' war is, on the contrary, a perfect illustration of the fact that, faced with an armed insurrection, only military domination can effectively deploy all the components of the global approach.

For a long time confined to the circles of historians and a few passionate regionalists, the memory of the Camisards' revolt has experienced a revival of interest in recent years. This is due to the reappearance of asymmetrical conflicts and the consequent need for Western armies to resume counter-insurgency operations. The engagement of a regular army against a group of rebels using unconventional methods promises to deliver many valuable lessons for today's wars.

While there are many relevant lessons to be drawn from this comparison, which we will return to later, it is important to remain cautious, and to guard against certain parallels that are, to say the least, risky. Thus, one cannot make the Camisards the prototype of the Taliban and seek through one the means to fight the other.

It is therefore important to bear in mind the very real limits of the comparison between a popular revolt in the France of Louis XIV and the threat that the army is likely to face today. Based on a single religious subject, the Camisards' revolt appeared in a state that was culturally profoundly homogeneous. Claiming exclusively "freedom of conscience", the Camisards also considered themselves loyal subjects of the King of France, accepted

the laws of the kingdom and had no intention of detaching themselves from the rest of the nation. The cultural, ideological and societal gulf that separates the two eras, and the two threats, is obvious. We have therefore endeavoured to compare only what is comparable, trying to identify constants that are not subject to context or environment.

Moreover, most of the thinking carried out up to now on the use of royal troops in the face of the Camisards' revolt has been done through the prism of engagement in external operations. The study of the lessons to be drawn from this in the context of a commitment on national territory, a question that is so important today, remained to be done. It is this study that we propose to initiate in the following pages.

At the end of this analysis, it appears that the main lesson of the Camisards' war is that military ascendancy is the indispensable and decisive condition for the success of the global approach in the framework of a counter-insurgency.

Villars' much-vaunted "gentle vision" can only be effective once the enemy's military apparatus is out of action, as the virtuous circle of counterinsurgency is to fully understand the threat before breaking its military means and finally achieving a political outcome. The royal victory over the Camisard revolt is a particularly telling example of this, both in terms of good practice and mistakes not to be made. It shows all the value of the triptych "understand, fight, compromise".

We shall therefore first see why a precise understanding of the threat and its roots is essential for the development of appropriate and effective modes of action, before moving on to the next stage. We will then examine how the use of force in counter-insurgency combat is subject to specific constraints which must not, however, overshadow its inevitably decisive nature. Finally, we will examine the "comprehensive approach" applied to these events, and how it was only truly effective once military victory had been achieved.

The indispensable understanding of the threat

The extent and depth of the Camisards' revolt was not immediately perceived by the royal power. The initial underestimation of the threat, combined with the ideological intransigence of the highest level of the State, led to the pre-emptive implementation of an inappropriate and poorly directed repression, the counter-productive effects of which transformed an initially controllable revolt into a violent insurrection.

- Understanding the sources of the insurgency

The revolt of the Camisards finds its sources in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Many Protestants in the Cévennes, refusing to convert to Catholicism, continued to observe their cult despite the prohibition against it.

Guided by their pastors, whose persecution, as we shall see, will be one of the primary causes of the conflagration of the region, their only claim was to be the right of the Cévennes. Their only claim was therefore "freedom of conscience", that is to say the freedom to keep the Reformed religion and not to go to Catholic Mass. This small

Protestant people considered themselves perfectly faithful to King Louis XIV, whom they considered ill-advised. The future Camisards nicknamed themselves "Lous Raious" (royalty in Occitan), thus clearly showing that their demands were not intended to partition the kingdom or even to challenge the power in place.

The royal authorities were doubly wrong in their analysis of the threat. First of all, this movement was for a long time considered as a revolt underpinned by fiscal motivations, which was absolutely not the case. Then, once the religious basis of the protest had been identified, the authorities reacted in the same way as they would have done in the face of a seditious or revolutionary movement, and therefore with disproportionate and poorly directed brutality.

- A movement of protest or insurrection must be dealt with from its very beginnings, before it gains momentum and becomes irremediable. Early intervention not only facilitates the resolution of the crisis, but also helps to keep the level of violence at a low level.
 - It is essential to fully understand the demands of the rebels and their origins. A poor analysis of these factors, leading to an inappropriate response to the problem, can have dramatic consequences.
 - It is up to the political authorities to identify the adversary or the enemy: the military can only act in accordance with an objective given to it by the political authorities.
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- Beware of inappropriate actions and targeting (**targeting**) misguided

Thus, misunderstanding the genesis and nature of the unrest, the authorities immediately turned to a policy of violent repression, inappropriate both in its brutality and its point of application.

The first measure of the royal power was to persecute the pastors, considered to be the inspirers of the protest and the leaders of the revolt, when in reality they were playing the role of moderators. Stolen of their property, imprisoned, executed under various pretexts, or even simply murdered, the traditional shepherds gradually disappeared from the Cévennes landscape, the survivors fleeing to other regions or countries.

The Protestant people, deprived of their traditional guides and support, then saw the emergence of a new type of leader, known as "inspired". These were fanatical prophets, generally without education or religious training, who, thanks to their charisma and alleged miracles, led the faithful into violent and total revolt. Among these "inspired", we find the future great Camisard chefs: Abraham Mazel, the first and last of the Camisards, Pierre Laporte dit Rolland, and especially Jean Cavalier, an apprentice baker who would become the soul and the sword of the revolt.

Thus, it is indeed the disappearance of the pastors caused by the royal power, which will allow the advent of these self-proclaimed leaders, guided by mystical visions, who will transform a limited popular discontent into a total war led by fanatical fighters.

- While the targeting and destruction of "high-value targets" remains a very valid process, it can nevertheless backfire on those who employ it. There is always the risk of provoking the emergence of new leaders who are more radical and more difficult to control. The recent example of the replacement of Al Zarkaoui by Al

Bagdadi is an excellent illustration of this.

Measuring the pressure on the population: mass repression

In a context such as that of the Camisards' war, it is often difficult to attribute to one camp in particular the origin of the exactions and cruelties that never fail to occur in large numbers. The fanaticism of the Camisards and the desire for revenge on the part of the Catholic militias are no doubt not in vain in maintaining this climate of violence and devastation of which the civilian population is always the first victim.

Nevertheless, the brutality of the policy of repression applied by the Marshal of Montrevel from 1703 onwards, in a very official and well-considered manner, also had totally counter-productive effects.

In 1703, it was the "burning of the Cévennes": 466 villages were destroyed between October and December. In April, twenty women and children were burned alive at the Agau mill. In the same year, 13,000 people were deported, their homes destroyed as well as the mills and wheat stocks to prevent them from being used by the Camisards. The following year, this policy continued, and 150 peasants were massacred at Branoux. In addition to this, there were numerous exactions committed by militias and irregular troops, both Protestant and Catholic.

The aim of this repression, in addition to deterrence, was to cut the Camisards off from the population and to remove the sources of supply for the revolt. The results obtained will be the exact opposite: the population, initially indifferent or even hostile to the insurgents, will, by dint of exactions and direct or indirect victims, gradually come closer to the Camisards, who will also be able to maintain constant pressure on them. The rebels will thus benefit, throughout the region, from a network of informers, sources of supplies and logistical support, caches and, of course, new recruits.

- The strategy of depopulation and terror is no longer conceivable on national territory today. Nevertheless, without reaching this intensity in repression, it must be borne in mind that any action that penalizes the population risks radicalizing it and pushing it from neutrality to insurrection.

The elimination of their pastors had brought the Camisards into an all-out war. The conflagration of the Cévennes, the level of violence reached, as well as certain military defeats of the royal troops, led the authorities to reconsider the threat posed and to put in place a robust mechanism, initially put in difficulty by the unconventional war waged by the "disaffected", but which would eventually deal a fatal blow to the military organisation of the Camisards.

The use of force

The Camisard War was an unconventional war, pitting local irregular gangs against a regular, organized army, which initially had great difficulty adapting to a mode of combat for which it was not designed. First of all, it will be necessary to describe the particular modes of action of the two parties, more or less adapted to this type of combat, before observing how mass, even in an asymmetrical war, remains a major criterion of success.

Finally, it will appear that, in a very classical way, it is indeed the military destruction of their centre of gravity that will sound the death knell of the Camisard revolt.

- Principles of insurrectional and counter-insurrectional combat

The techniques and tactics of the Camisards, which proved to be particularly effective in the early stages of the conflict, unsurprisingly show the great characteristics of guerrilla warfare.

Organised in highly mobile bands, with a perfect knowledge of the terrain, the troops of the rebels favoured "coup de main" type actions, hitting a well determined point before hiding and dispersing in their refuges or among the population. Moving at night, bivouacking during the day on terrain suitable for defence or breaking contact on several axes, the Camisards generally proved elusive to less mobile royal troops and forced to

to act only in reaction. Thus, from the attack on the house of the abbot of Chayla [1] to the terror raids against the "papist" villages¹ to terror raids against "papist" villages, through the numerous ambushes against the royal troops or targeted assassinations, the Camisards always favoured discretion, cunning² and mobility over direct confrontation.

Forced into frontal battle, the Camisards generally found it difficult to face better armed, better trained troops, with a shock capacity that they themselves did not possess. Nevertheless, they did not reject the battle itself, as long as they could choose the time and place, since the Knight was particularly adept at placing his troops in favorable locations and then skillfully coordinating them. The "disgruntled" thus won some crushing victories, which had a significant impact on the morale of the enemy.

Like all guerrillas, the Camisards made excellent use of the terrain, moving by invisible routes, choosing a recognized and favourable terrain for confrontation, and having many bases for withdrawal and regrouping. In addition, the "disgruntled" had set up a particularly efficient logistical organisation, with a veritable network of caches scattered throughout the region. Using the caves to build up reserves of food, ammunition or clothing, the Camisards even had real field hospitals where two permanent surgeons operated, as well as clandestine factories to produce gunpowder and bullets. The Camisards supplied themselves in many ways: obviously by stripping the bodies of enemy soldiers or by looting depots, but also simply by going to buy food in town, or even by buying gunpowder from unwary royal soldiers...

The main source of supply for the Camisards, however, remained the population itself. The Camisards' main source of supply, however, was the population itself, which, more or less willingly, provided the rebels with food, wine and water, and was forced to house the rebel bands according to the principle of the "billet", identical to that of the royal troops. It was also sometimes subjected to a kind of "revolutionary tax". The population was also an inexhaustible source of intelligence, allowing the Camisards to be alerted to the slightest movement of the royal troops. Nevertheless, Cavalier himself acknowledges that public support was based more on intimidation than on affection or adherence, and that this process would reach its limits when the This process will reach its limits when the Camisards army has been bled dry, and the intensification of repression will lead the population to fear the authorities more than the Camisards.

- If there is an irreducible part of the population linked to an insurgency for family,

emotional or ideological reasons, the population's support for the rebels is always based mainly on pressure and fear of reprisals. There are two non-exclusive options for severing the link between the population and the insurgents: destroying the means of pressure available to the rebels, and ensuring that the population has more to lose by supporting the rebels than it has to lose by the rebels themselves.

The royal troops, for their part, initially had the greatest difficulty adapting to a battle for which they were neither organized nor trained. The initiative was almost always on the side of the Camisards, thanks to their perfect knowledge of the terrain, their mobility and their particularly effective intelligence network. On the other hand, it is clear that the insurgents' moral strength and resilience were superior to that of royal troops, who were often poorly motivated.

The Marshal of Montrevel very clearly identified the advantages of his enemies, and tried to implement procedures to counterbalance them.

The first step was to isolate the area of operation. One of the greatest fears of the royal power was the extension of the revolt to the surrounding provinces, particularly to a Vivarais that was quick to catch fire. The communication routes to this province were therefore placed under close surveillance, as well as the roads linking the Cévennes to Savoy and Switzerland, which represented potential supply and retreat routes for the Camisards.

Once the region was isolated, Montrevel tried to control the interior by developing the terrain to encourage mobility of regular troops [3], and by controlling the main roads to prevent access to the mountains and forests, which were favourite refuges for the insurgents. Grid operations were then carried out to comb the areas where the Camisards had been reported, in order to flush them out, then isolate and destroy them. At the same time, intelligence operations were carried out in order to be informed of the movements of the Camisard troops so that an intervention force could be quickly dispatched to meet them. Nevertheless, these intervention columns sent on the spotted enemy bands often arrived too late and struck in the void, or even ambushed themselves. But when these columns did manage to hit the enemy, their impact was usually formidable.

The effectiveness of these 'coordinate and search' and later 'search and destroy' operations was initially limited due to insufficient royal troops to control such a large area of operation. Then, as reinforcements arrived, these modes of action, based on networking and responsiveness, eventually bore fruit and allowed the royal troops to inflict serious setbacks on the Camisards [4] until the arrival of the reinforcements.4] until the battle of Nages et Navacelles where, on 19 April 1704, Brigadier La Lande's column wiped out the Cavalier's band and destroyed its logistical bases, dealing a fatal blow to the Camisards' military power.

- In a counter-insurgency operation, it is important to counter the advantages of the enemy in:
 - ...controlling the area of operation and access to it;
 - ...controlling major routes and access to safe havens.;
 - building up a dense intelligence network capable of producing actionable intelligence;
 - maintaining a strong reaction capability to intervene at very short notice in the area to force a fleeing enemy into combat in which he is at a disadvantage.

While the strategy adopted by Montrevel eventually overcame the Camisard military tool, it must be borne in mind that the volume of forces at its disposal did not allow it to control the entire area of operation, and that a large part of the territory was virtually open ground for the insurgents. Only an increase in the Royal troops eventually gave the military commander the ability to exert real pressure on the enemy and then succeed in cornering and destroying him.

- The indispensable mass of troops adapted

As we have seen, the number of royal troops was for a long time insufficient, both in quantity and quality, to cover the ground with a minimum of efficiency. It was not until Broglie and then Montrevel's men suffered severe setbacks that the authorities became aware of the threat and agreed to send additional troops to the Cévennes.

Thus, until the spring of 1703, the strength of the royal troops amounted to only eight companies of fusiliers, or 240 men! Such a large number of soldiers could not in any way effectively control the terrain, or even ensure the security of the axes, villages or administrations.

It was a constant task for Montrevel, relayed by Intendant Basville, to ask the Court for additional manpower. The extension of the troubles, as well as some serious defeats suffered by the royal troops, finally convinced Versailles to reinforce the system in the Cévennes; thus, from March 1703, Montrevel had about 20,000 men^[5] at its disposal. Among these men were 3,000 "Miquelets", which the marshal had brought from Catalonia. Irregular troops of sinister reputation, as much looters as fighters, these mercenaries were nevertheless an important asset for the royal troops. Indeed, they were mountaineers, used to fighting in a constrained environment and therefore able to play on an equal footing with the mobility of the Camisards; moreover, their exactions maintained a climate of terror among the Protestant population, forcing the Camisards to intervene and thus restricting their freedom of action.

In addition to these 20,000 men, there were also about 3,000 militiamen, mostly Catholic, raised in the region or in the surrounding areas. "Cadets of the Cross", "White Camisards" or other Frankish companies, all these militias distinguished themselves more by their exactions than by their military capabilities. Montrevel himself was indisposed by their depredations, and was forced on many occasions to execute a number of these militiamen, who maintained the problem more than they solved it. However, by their mere presence, these militias maintained a certain insecurity over the Camisards, constrained their movements and distracted them from the royal troops.

Thus, it appears that to be effective, counter-insurgency operations require the commitment of a large number of combatants, which are indispensable for an effective network of the field. Below a threshold strength, the enemy's freedom of movement, which is his main strength, is not compromised.

- It is worth comparing the 20,000 men deployed in the Cévennes alone with the 10,000 men deployed throughout the territory for Operation Sentinel... The counter-insurgency cannot spare a very high density of troops.^[6]
- Engaged units must be adapted to the environment in which they evolve (example of the Miquelets). However, it appears that there are currently no forces

specifically dedicated to combat on national territory. Such specialisation would not fail to create other difficulties; nevertheless, it would be necessary today to intensify combat training in localities for all units, and according to TN constraints.

- Destruction of the centre of gravity

In the case of an insurgency, one would be led to believe, as is so often stated in this field, that the centre of gravity of the Camisards was the population. However, it appears that in this case, it was indeed the military power of the rebels that constituted their centre of gravity.

This military power was proven: Cavalier's brilliant tactical sense and the total devotion of deeply motivated fighters made the Camisard gangs formidable enemies. On March 14, 1704, the royal army was crushed at Martignargues by the 1,100 Camisards of Cavalier. The elite soldiers of the Navy's free companies and the dragons were routed, losing more than three hundred men. This debacle will have a strategic impact, since it will lead to the replacement of Montrevel by the Marshal of Villars.

Disavowed, the Marshal of Montrevel will nevertheless continue the fight and, two days before his departure, it is he who will win the decisive battle that will prepare the ground for Villars. On 19 April 1704, Cavalier's band, surprised, was annihilated at Nages by a column commanded by Montrevel and La Lande. The Camisards lost nearly 600 men, their headquarters was dismantled and, above all, their logistics depots, hospitals and field workshops were discovered and destroyed. The armed revolt was over and, on 30 April, Cavalier began negotiations.

- A battle organized and provoked by the regular troops is generally unfavourable to the insurgents. It is particularly profitable to engage the enemy when he is regrouping.
- It is essential to hit the enemy's logistics and deprive him of his means of supply.
- The destruction of the military tool deprives the enemy of his main means of action and pressure on the population. It also causes a moral shock and a loss of credit to the enemy leader.

A source of credibility for the revolt, a source of exaltation and therefore a vector of recruitment, the ability to win victories over the royal troops and to "punish" the persecutors of Protestants was therefore in reality the main strength of the Camisards. If the population was certainly a major stake in this conflict, it was essentially fear and threat that led it to support the insurrection. Once the tool of pressure had been destroyed, the population gradually switched to neutrality, or even hostility to the rebels. Moreover, the defeat of Nages did not fail to cause tension and dissension among the Camisard chiefs. Deprived of military power, and consequently of popular support, the insurrection was both bled and asphyxiated. Thus, it was indeed the destruction of the military tool and its rear base that initiated the phase of political settlement.

The comprehensive approach

Capitalizing on the decisive military setback suffered by the Camisards at Nages, Marshal

de Villars will be able to continue the global action initiated by Montrevel from a position of strength, combining influence, manipulation and repression.

- Judicialisation and administrative coherence

From the very beginning of the insurrection, the government took care to criminalize the insurgents, designating them above all as "outlaws". This categorization not only allowed all state bodies, and not only the army, to participate in the repression, but it also allowed them to participate in the "war on terror". It also undermined the legitimacy of the Camisards, as popular affection was less likely to be for common bandits than for heroic rebels.

Moreover, throughout the Camisard revolt, there was a high degree of judicial and administrative consistency, with all branches of the State able to take part in the fight against the insurgents. The Camisards captured alive by the royal troops were handed over to the justice system, which pronounced sentences (usually death or galleys). The fluidity of the process was enhanced by the officers' ability to record and characterize crimes and offences. By royal order of 25 February 1703, Basville and Montrevel were given all the powers, particularly in judicial terms, to crush the revolt. This ordinance would further facilitate the coordination of the various services by shortening the chain of decision and unifying procedures in a perfectly coherent continuum.

Thus, this coherence and interpenetration between the administrative, military and judicial fields made it possible to fluidify the implementation of the policy of repression, which, thanks to this organisation, was able to prove extremely reactive and flexible.

- The discrediting of the adversary, by challenging his legitimacy or ridiculing him, can be particularly effective in reducing the population's support for the insurgents. Such a policy can also have a strong impact on the
- Coherence and coordination among different government departments is essential for effective counter-insurgency action. Granting administrative - or even judicial - powers to the military thus seems to be imperative to guarantee the effectiveness of the system. This raises the question of the relevance of the "state of siege" today.

- Taking the population into account

Although he was not the bloodthirsty executioner often described by Protestant history, Montrevel nevertheless mainly used violence and repression to try to cut off the insurgent population. This policy was all the more severely judged to have been generally ineffective, as the people feared the Camisards more than the royal troops, and even counterproductive, as certain particularly brutal exactions created strong resentment towards the central power.

When Marshal de Villars arrived in the Cévennes in 1704, the population was longing for the return of order and peace. Tired of war and destruction, they also felt freer now that the military tool of the Camisards had been destroyed and that the rebels were therefore less likely to retaliate.

It is in this favourable context that Villars will be able to borrow the "vision of gentleness" by putting the population at the heart of its action. It promises ruthless repression in case of support for the insurgents, but total amnesty in case of repentance or submission. At the same time, he takes a series of concrete and visible measures to put an end to the violence, by bringing the militias firmly to heel and ordering the clergy to relax their behaviour.

Little by little, the change in the authorities' stance will, if not bring the population closer to the central government, at least distance it from the insurgents, thus cutting them off from their main source of supplies and intelligence.

- The population always ends up getting tired of violence and aspiring to peace. You have to be the one who can bring it to them.
- Taking the people into account means ensuring that they have more to lose by being against us than with us; sometimes this means relaxing repression and limiting the use of the "war on terror".
- Neutralization of leaders

Defeated at Nages, his army defeated and his logistics destroyed, Jean Cavalier was forced to negotiate with Villars. The marshal, a skilful and devious diplomat, manipulated this excellent military leader as he would have done with a child. After having flattered him by promising him rank and title, he insinuated that it was conceivable that the Protestants of the Cévennes could be granted the "freedom of conscience" they had so longed for, provided they made their submission. In doing so, Villars went far beyond the prerogatives granted to him by the king, but this manoeuvre was probably intended to end up breaking the cohesion of the Camisards, which is what happened. An immense hope seized the Protestants; Cavalier was acclaimed by his men, convinced that they had finally obtained what they had all been fighting for since the beginning of the revolt. But subsequent interviews, especially with King Louis XIV, were less enthusiastic. The clauses of the first agreement were slow to be applied, and even violated by the royal authorities, probably in order to blow hot and cold on the Protestant population and to discredit Cavalier. It was finally affirmed that there had never been any question of freedom of conscience, and that Cavalier must already have been happy to be able to benefit from a safe-conduct to leave the Cévennes with a few men. The king even granted him a pension of 1,500 pounds and made it known... Back at his camp, Cavalier was severely tormented by his troops, deeply disappointed and disappointed in his own country, and he had to leave the Cévennes with a few men and convinced that he had been deceived and betrayed by their leader, and he was very nearly torn to pieces.

Rejected by his own people, Cavalier ended up leaving the Cévennes with a few men. Meanwhile, Villars continued Montrevel's action, and Rolland, an irreconcilable Camisards chief, who was at odds with Cavalier, whom he blamed for his lukewarmness in the negotiations, was assassinated at the castle of Castelnaud-Valence in August 1704. His death finished disorganising the insurrection, leading to the submission of the last leaders in the autumn of 1704.

Demoralized, without leaders, the insurgent troops eventually dispersed. The Camisards' revolt was over.

- Without charismatic and competent leaders, an insurrection is hardly effective. Their neutralization must therefore be one of the priorities, bearing in mind the limitations already mentioned.
- It is often more productive to discredit an enemy leader than to kill him. The military leader must not refrain from doing so. Ideally, he or she should have political powers and a certain margin of manoeuvre.

Conclusion

Often presented as an indisputable example of the superiority of the "soft view" over the use of force, the Camisard War is, on the contrary, a perfect illustration of the fact that, in the face of armed insurrection, only military domination can effectively deploy all the components of the global approach. As a good opportunist and a brilliant maneuverer, Villars was thus able to take full advantage - and all the glory - of a balance of power prepared by his predecessor.

This may come as a surprise, given the widespread belief that only the reputedly 'soft' method of the Villars Marshal finally made it possible to extinguish the revolt, thus establishing "the gain of hearts and minds" as a panacea for the counterinsurgency war. It is first of all to forget a little quickly that coercion and the application of force are an integral part of the global approach. It also means forgetting that, even during the negotiations between Villars and Cavalier, military operations never ceased. Villars may well claim to have triumphed through diplomacy and intelligence, in line with the image he wanted to give of his action in the Cévennes; the reality is that it was indeed the stinging defeat inflicted on the Camisards at Nages in 1704 by Montrevel's army that definitively swung the victory to the royal side, and that it was this single military victory that enabled Villars to negotiate from a position of strength and put an end to the Camisards' revolt.

In the end, 2,000 Camisards were killed in battle, a thousand of them summarily executed, 200 tried and executed, 2,000 imprisoned, 200 sent to the galleys. In 1704, about 1,200 surrendered and were allowed to go into exile in Switzerland.

This war, as we have seen, is rich in lessons for the employment of the army on the national territory, provided that one keeps in mind the limits and reservations recalled at the beginning of our remarks. Today more than ever, it is more important than ever to analyse the threat thoroughly and to provide a firm and definitive military response, integrated into a comprehensive approach aimed at controlling the population.

It is interesting to note that the overall strategy adopted by the royal troops in the face of the Camisard revolt corresponds almost perfectly to the current French counter-insurgency doctrine (COIN):

- to rally the "reconcilables";
- isolate the insurgents;
- divide;
- destroy the irreconcilable.

The French army thus seems, on the surface, to possess a tool and a doctrine adapted to the fight against an insurrection. This is in fact not exactly the case, because there is an important restriction to be considered: the doctrine of the COIN is not intended to be

applied on national territory, but only in the context of external crisis management. On the other hand, this doctrine does not in any way aim at a return to the ante state, which should be the objective on national territory, but at the implementation of a renewed project of a social contract. In this context, the legislator will not be able to avoid a new, pragmatic and uninhibited reflection on the content and methods of implementation of the state of emergency and the state of siege.

In addition, as we have seen, the decisive factor was the destruction of the enemy 's centre of gravity, the capabilities that ultimately enabled the royal troops to overcome the Camisards' revolt are therefore the mass, reinforced administrative and judicial prerogatives, as well as the ability to take major decisions in complete autonomy.

All capacities that are today cruelly absent from the arsenal of armies.

1) The murder of Abbé du Chayla, murdered by a gang led by Abraham Mazel who had come to demand the release of Protestant prisoners, is generally considered to be the starting point of the Camisards' revolt.

2) In particular, the Camisards made great use of disguise, using uniforms taken from the corpses of royal troops to enter fortified places without being disturbed and to seize the interior.

3) For example, the terracing of the "corniche des Cévennes", linking Florac to Saint-Jean-du-Gard.

4) 1703: defeat of Rolland at Pompignan, first dispersion of the Cavalier band, failure of Cavalier at the Tour du Billot...

5) Fusiliers, grenadiers, dragons belonging to many regular regiments...

6) In security operations, FT-02 recommends a ration of one soldier for every fifty inhabitants.

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"Saint-Cyrien de la promotion "Général Vanbremeersch" (2001-2004), Squadron Leader Etienne THÉBAULT served in the Train weapon, more particularly in the fields of support-mobility and support-movement. Having been notably engaged in Lebanon, Guyana and several times in Afghanistan, he is currently a trainee at the War School ".

A graduate of the École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr, Battalion Commander VUITTON has mainly served at the Combat Training Centre in Mailly-le-Camp and the Land Forces Command in Lille. He is currently studying at the École de Guerre.

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