

“ Synergy between education and doctrine”, a wide-ranging program, somebody could have said ! However, what could be more natural than teaching what we have thought about and tested in order to have that knowledge applied and criticized ? Which better reference too when opening this Doctrine issue than Lieutenant-Colonel Ferdinand Foch, a future “maréchal de France”, the author of the first edition of *“Principles of the War”* in 1903 - exactly a century ago, the director of the French War College in 1908, the supreme commander and commander-in-chief of the allied forces during WW I, a teacher, a thinker, a tactician ? In his book, he wrote : *“a soldier can neither get rid of the origins, nor the goal, neither of the kind of means that war puts at his disposal, because the way he operates these means - his tactics as well as the value of the expected results”*¹ has to come out from the study of each one. This thought passed the century.

Doctrine or stating principles that have been thought and validated by experience, impose neither a dogma nor standardized solutions. Its purpose is not to freeze military thought, as *“like any human activity, war is subject to changes : it is not an exception to the law of evolution”*². On the contrary, it calls for permanent critical thinking. On the other hand, it represents the choices made during a specific period, especially regarding courses of action and C2 organization that will have to be adjusted or even adapted to circumstances. In this new millennium and because of more and more frequent conflicts requiring the commitment of our forces, military thinking needs to continue its revitalization undertaken as early as 1996 with the new forces commitment’s concept. Doctrine establishes the rules and regulations

that any officer must know to well exercise his responsibilities, either by observing or transgressing them but always by considering correctly the consequences and if possible mastering them. It is up to him to adapt this knowledge to the field of immediate or future reality, in particular with his intelligence, his curiosity, and even his self-criticism.

Doctrine’s purpose also consists in *“being popularized”*, disseminated, explained in order to develop a common understanding of the action philosophy and of operating modes. Through education, it contributes to the development of a military thought and common language, setting up the base for any evolution about reflection. As Lieutenant-Colonel Foch also wrote, *“the purpose of military education is to improve the student’s stock of general knowledge”*³. Thus, the link between teacher and trainee is essential. What better teacher than the one who think about doctrine and confront it with the sagacious and readily critical spirit of a war college student ? Doctrine drafters, who work out the Army’s military thought, have the responsibility to pass on their knowledge and their thoughts to that important population of future staff officers and tomorrow’s military commanders.

Indeed, these ones will have to use them with their sound judgment to support and improve their general knowledge, as *“fresh ideas are the result of the interaction between knowledge and new ideas”* as pointed out by General Arnaud de Foïard, one of our famous old soldiers.

Finally, synergy between education and doctrine also takes advantage of the location of both doctrine and higher military study centers on the same place, in this prestigious environment of the *“Ecole Militaire”*, which gathers a large part of the doctrinal community and of the French armed forces’ higher military teaching organizations. Within this historical environment, the War Colleges from each Service, now turned into *“colleges or teaching centers”*, the military research centers, tomorrow the Joint Concept and Doctrine Center, do contribute to this synergy. In the heart of this action, the Lessons learned Army Center (CEREX) synthesizes the lessons learnt from recent operations or exercises. The Documentation and Research Center (CRD) launches studies related to future and provides access to an important present or historical documentation. The Army Doctrine Center (CREDAT) coordinates the drafting works for doctrinal documents. The historical study centers provide access to the teaching of military history, which has an important place too, in line with the writings of Clausewitz : *“military history with all the facts it reports, is a source of teaching for criticism itself”*⁴.

The doctrinal cycle, which governs the rhythm of studies about land forces commitment, permanently contributes to this synergy between doctrine and education within the Army.

The appropriation of the land forces’ commitment doctrine by our units and headquarters goes through its teaching to students and trainees in our schools and centers. Those students and trainees must become the most enthusiastic propagators of the principles and rules being learned, assimilated and accepted, in order to, some day, improve or even thoroughly modify them according to changes.

¹ Ferdinand Foch, *“Principles of the war”*, Berger-Levrault, 1903, 341 p, p. 338.

² *ibidem*, p 24.

³ *ibidem*, p13.

⁴ Clausewitz von, Carl, *“About War”*, 10/18 Set, 1965, 490 p., p. 214.