

International Commission of Military History Newsletter
Issue 8, Spring 2007



Welcome to the ICMH Newsletter

Message from The Hague

Our International Commission of Military History (ICMH), founded in 1938, is an affiliated organisation with the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS). The Secretary-General of the ICHS, the Canadian professor Jean-Claude Robert has asked me recently to identify the ICMH's most important results. He was also interested in our challenges for the future.

His request inspired some soul-searching. I need only look around my study to see the heritage of the past. The Acta of the Congresses, which took place every five years until 1980, and yearly after that, the 87 editions of the *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, which have appeared since 1939, the 27 volumes of the International Bibliography of Military History that have been published since 1978 and the editions of *Mars et Janus*, the newsletter issued by our Comité des Archives Militaires, all bear witness to the lasting riches of our activities. What I deem more important still, however, is the fact that the ICMH has developed into a network of military historians who, thanks to their collective activities and annual congresses, have succeeded in keeping each other up-to-date with regard to their respective research subjects, principal research questions and current projects, in a cost-effective manner. The ICMH has therefore effectively addressed itself to its original objective, i.e. the promotion of military historical research across national borders. We can look back on the work of our predecessors in gratitude. That is not to say, however, that we can allow ourselves to rest on our laurels. Quite the contrary, for also the current Board holds the view that stagnation means decline.

In Hamburg, on 25 February 2007, the Executive Board reflected more closely on, among other subjects, the road to the future. Although extension of the membership of the ICMH and the resulting diminution of its Eurocentric profile will continue to be a point of attention, the Board, under the presidency of Prof. L. de Vos, would prefer to devote its energy to enhancing the academic level of the annual congresses and to increasing the appeal of the ICMH to younger scholars. The themes to be addressed in future congresses will increasingly have to fulfill the requirement of being 'academically interesting and innovative, and at the same time relevant for present operational deployments'. Moreover, the proposal of Prof. Jaun for the establishment of an 'educational committee' was met with enthusiasm by the Executive Board. With a view to enhancing the academic profile, the Executive Board is considering the publication, in coordination with the Belgian publisher De Lannooy, of a book about the end of the First World War and the plans for the post-war settlement.

These, as well as a number of other plans will be discussed during the next General Assembly to be held in Capetown (South Africa). Further on in this newsletter you will find a contribution about this 33rd International Congress. The Executive Board is impressed by the efforts of the fledgling South African Commission. I recommend that you express your solidarity and friendship with our South African colleagues by registering your attendance of the Congress in a timely fashion. It certainly looks like we are going to have an interesting week in Capetown!

The Italian Commission will host the 2008 Congress, and, to set the mood, this newsletter contains a first introduction to that event. Finally, I am pleased that the Portuguese Commission put itself up as a candidate for the organisation of our world congress in 2009.

With the Congress agenda filled, all the attention can be directed to working out the 2005 - 2010 policy programme. Also in that respect, Capetown promises to become the backdrop to a fascinating exchange of ideas. Please be sure you are there to be part of that.

See you soon in South Africa!

Drs. P.H. Kamphuis
Secretary-General, ICMH

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Welcome to Cape Town, South Africa and the 33rd International Congress of Military History

Thean Potgieter
Secretary-general
South African Military History Commission

“THE BALL IS NOW IN OUR COURT!” This year, from 12 - 17 August, it will be South Africa's turn to host the prestigious congress of the *International Commission of Military History* (ICMH) in Cape Town. We expect delegates from more than 35 countries will participate in the congress. Among the delegates will be military officers, distinguished military historians, professors of military science, and military archivists. Participants will come from the armed forces, universities and military academies, research institutes, non-governmental international organizations, and the international diplomatic community.

Highly regarded as “corporate knowledge,” armed forces and governments place a premium on the study of military history. The examination of conflict and war and its interaction with society are crucial for understanding and managing the security environment. The Congress theme is “Regions, Regional Organizations and Military Power.” Academic sessions will include presentations on regional organizations, military power and military intervention, regional security and peace operations, regional alliances, regional and multi-national forces, threats to regional security as well as regional conflicts and international coalitions. In addition three special panels will explore the themes of international support for liberation struggles, the international reaction to the crisis in Rwanda, and recent literature pertaining to the study of war and conflict.

The theme for this year's Congress - Regions, Regional Organizations and Military Power - is as relevant as it is topical in today's world. It is befitting that scholars, military officers, and participants should discuss it in Africa. We expect substantial South African and African participation in the 2007 Congress. The African voice should be heard on podiums such as these, and Africa must take its rightful position in the international community.

For all ICMH Congress participants a number of receptions, tours, and visits to national historical sites will complement the academic programme. Congress delegates and their accompanying persons will, amongst other visits, go to Robben Island, Castle of Good Hope, Cape Point, Simon's Town, Stellenbosch and a wine estate. A full programme has been organized for the ICMH delegate's accompanying persons and it includes visits to Cape Town museums, the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, a Cape Township, the West Coast Fossil Park, and the beautiful West Coast National Park. Cape Town is one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

The three previous ICMH Congresses took place in Morocco (Rabat), Spain (Madrid) and Germany (Potsdam). In 2008 the ICMH Congress will be held in Trieste, Italy. The 2007 ICMH Congress in Cape Town is the first time that the international meeting of military historians will be held in sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore an honour for South Africa to host the congress.

The *South African Military History Commission* (SAMHC), the ICMH's regional chapter, was established in 2004 by the Chief of the South African National Defense Forces. Major General L.S. Mollo serves as president. The 2007 congress is organized by the South African Military History Commission and the Faculty of Military Science, Military Academy, University of Stellenbosch. As such it represents cooperation between Stellenbosch University and the Department of Defense.

The congress will take place at the BOE-Nedbank Conference Facility at the Cape Town Waterfront. The congress hotels are the Table Bay, Commodore and Victoria and Alfred. Luxury self-catering apartments, as well as more basic accommodation, are also available.

The 2007 ICMH Congress in Cape Town is seen as part of the build-up for South Africa hosting the 2010 Soccer World Cup. In the light of the great interest in the international world cup matches that will be staged across South Africa, much emphasis has been placed on the capability of the nation and the city to host this international congress of military history in 2007. When the 2006 ICMH Congress in Potsdam concluded, the German National Commission presented Major General Mollo with a genuine World Cup football as a symbolic gesture. **“THE BALL IS NOW IN OUR COURT!”**

All national commission members and accompanying persons who are interested in participating in the 2007 Cape Town ICMH Congress can gain more information from the website, www.cihm.ac.za or e-mail specific questions to the staff at: cihm2007@ma2.sun.ac.za, cihm@ma2.sun.ac.za, or thean@ma2.sun.ac.za
Fax: (+27) 22 702 3060 Tel: (+27) 22 702 3103

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Announcement of the 34th ICMH Congress in 2008 in Trieste, Italy

Massimo de Leonardis
Italian Commission of Military History

The XXXIV International Congress of Military History will be held in Trieste from 31 August – 5 September 2008. The theme will be **“Military conflicts and civilians: total wars, limited wars and asymmetric wars.”** Subjects discussed will include:

- the relationship among political regimes,
- international systems and types of wars;
- the involvement of civilian populations in civil wars, guerrilla wars, wars of national liberation,
- counterinsurgency and terrorism;
- the limits to war in defence of civilian populations from the Church's *ius in bello* to the contemporary international law;
- war and mobilization/militarization of civilian populations;
- civilian populations and the nightmare of nuclear war;
- military forces and the administration of conquered territories.

Colonel Matteo Paesano serves as the President of the Italian Commission of Military History. The scientific programme has been entrusted to a committee of scholars, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Piero Del Negro, Academic of the University of Padua, and member of the International Board of the ICMH, and Prof. Dr. Massimo de Leonardis, Academic of the Catholic University of Milan, Secretary General of the Italian Commission of Military History.

Trieste, originally known as the Roman city *Tergeste* was founded in the second century BC. At the end of the fourteenth century, the citizens of Trieste asked the Duke of Austria for protection from Venice. For the next five hundred years, Trieste was part of the Habsburg Empire. Then in 1918, the city and its territory were united with Italy. After the Second World War, it was administered by Anglo-American military forces and governments until 1954, when the city returned to Italy. At the beginning of the Cold War Winston Churchill, described Trieste as the southern terminal of the “iron curtain.” Today Trieste is a town of 212,000 inhabitants, with a middle European outlook. It is the capital of the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Located on the northern end of the Adriatic Sea, the city lies close to the border with Slovenia. Trieste has its own airport at Ronchi dei Legionari.

For the 2008 ICMH Congress in Trieste, the cultural programme will include visits, to battlefields and museums of the First World War and the town-fortress of Palmanova. Post-congress tours will offer visits to some of the most famous artistic cities of Italy, beginning in Venice, less two hours journey from Trieste. Colonel Paesano and the delegation of the Italian Commission of Military History will present the detailed programme to the international delegates at the ICMH Congress in Cape Town.

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Announcement of 2007 Bibliography of International Military History

Dimitry Queloz
BIHM Editor

Edition 28 of the Bibliography of International Military History, containing 284 publications, is to be published in July this year. All being well, we will therefore have the pleasure of presenting the bibliography in August, during the congress in Cape Town, South Africa. The thematic summary in this edition has been realised by Professor Rudolf Jaun, of Zurich University and the Military Academy of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ). This is an excellent complement to last year's congress, as it addresses the same theme: Nation State, Nationalism and the Military.

It is the sad duty of the Bibliography Commission to inform you of the death of Colonel Pariseau and of Professor Pearsall. Colonel Pariseau was one of the founding members of the bibliography. Professor Pearsall was a member of our commission, and acted as correspondent for Great Britain until last year. The Bibliography Commission is grateful for their efforts and involvement, and will cherish their memory.

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Volume 87 of the International Review

The Turkish Commission of Military History, presided by Lt. Gen Eyüp Kaptan, published the 87th issue of the International Review of Military History (ISBN: 978-975-409-431-2; NSN: 7610270347402). This volume contains 19 articles (379 pages) and gives an interesting overview of the Turkish Military History and, more in particular, the historical dimension of the relationship between armed forces and society in Turkey. One cannot understand the latter without being acquainted with the philosophy and the role of Atatürk. Two articles are therefore dedicated to this soldier, statesman and thinker!

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ICMH Military Archives Committee

Comité des Archives Militaires - Annual Meeting in Cape Town
Dr. Hans-Joachim Harder
President, Comité des Archives Militaires

International archivists are cordially invited to attend the Comité des Archives Militaires annual meeting during the 2007 Congress in Cape Town of the International Conference of Military History. As usual, the committee and guests will meet at a venue in Cape Town arranged by the South African organizers. The meeting will be held on Sunday, 12 August 2007, and will begin at 10.30 hours.

The topic for discussion will be "Military Archives and the Public". CAM will treat diverse aspects, including public relations, commemorative culture, and public access to military archives. Commemorative culture is definitely changing as the generation having fought the last World War has faded away. Most of the authoritative history books are written and it will take some time - one generation perhaps - until a revisionist historiography will roll over again every stone and pebble and find new answers. But the new generation of scholars will be using the sources in the military archives, and they must be kept ready. For the time being local and family historians have taken over. These historians are not researching grand strategy, but they are trying to find the red thread of their forebears in the chaos of that war.

It will be interesting to compare aspects of the topic as experienced by military archivists in the different member countries. Papers will be presented by delegates from Portugal, Canada, Belgium, Austria, Germany, and -tentatively - France.

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News of the ICMH National Commissions

British Commission For Military History

Michael Orr,
Secretary-general

The British Commission for Military History was founded in 1968 as an affiliate of the International Commission for Military History, largely through the efforts of David Chandler and Christopher Duffy. Beginning with a membership drawn from the Department of Military History at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the BCMH has expanded to a current strength of nearly 200 under the successive leadership of David Chandler, Professor Brian Bond and Professor Richard Holmes. Members include those who work professionally in the field of military history, for example as university teachers or museum staff, and others who contribute actively to the development of military history in the UK, by writing and publishing or by playing a role in the organization of relevant societies.

The Commission's main activity is the organization of a number of conferences each year, usually one weekend and two one-day conferences. Conference themes sometimes relate to particular campaigns or military historical anniversaries, but more generally pursue a topic across several periods and types of warfare, encouraging the interchange of ideas between specialists. In addition the Commission organizes an annual battlefield tour.

All these activities are open to members and their guests. A newsletter, *Mars & Clio*, is sent to members 3 times a year in which conference papers are published, together with book reviews, conference announcements, short articles and commission news. The Commission has been responsible for three commercial publications in the last decade. These books were collections of essays dealing with the First and Second World Wars. In May 2007 a BCMH website will be launched, primarily for communication among the membership but also offering a selection of the commission's conference papers, news of forthcoming conferences, courses, publications & news of interest to the general public. Once the website has been tested, it is our intention to develop it as the commission's public face as a service to the members of the British public who have an interest in military history without pursuing it at the professional or semi-professional level expected of Commission members. ICMH members are cordially invited to visit the website www.bcmh.org.uk/ after 5 May.

ICMH members are also welcome to attend the Commission's conferences. The dates and themes of the 2007 Summer and Autumn Conferences are:
Summer Conference: "Powering War - Logistics and Operations", 20-22 July, 2007, Queens' College, Cambridge.

Autumn Conference: "The Commemoration of War in the 21st Century" 17 November, 2007, The Gurkha Museum, Winchester

For details, please contact the British Commission for Military History, Secretary General, Mr Michael Orr, at secgen.bcmh@ntlworld.com

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Netherlands Institute of Military History and the MGFA conference on "Warfare in the Central Sector, 1948-1968"

The plans of the Warsaw Pact and NATO discussed

On 22 and 23 March of this year, military historians from Russia, the United States and Eastern and Western Europe convened to discuss the operation plans during the Cold War. Now that the archives are being opened, we are gaining ever more knowledge of how East and West were at loggerheads with one another during that period.

The conference was an initiative by the Netherlands Institute of Military History (NIMH) and was organised in cooperation with its German counterpart, the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA) in Potsdam. The conference took place in Münster and was supported by the *Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien* the 1 (GE/NL) Corps Headquarters, which is located there.

The conference centered on the plans for the Central Sector in Europe in the fifties and sixties. The choice for this period is logical as the archives for this time-period are easily accessible. It was, at the same time, the period when both sides were armed to the hilt and facing each other along the Iron Curtain.

Prof. Lawrence S. Kaplan, the American 'Grand Old Man' of historical research into the Cold War, opened the conference with the opening lecture. In his lecture, Prof. Kaplan provided an overview of the most important international developments during the period, in which it was very noticeable how strong the distrust between the two major powers (the United States and the Soviet Union) had been from the start. Each action was seen as yet more evidence of the other's bad intentions, instigating a costly conventional and nuclear arms race.

It does not appear that the Soviet Union had offensive intentions. It did, however, have plans to attack immediately (strategic offensive) in the event of war breaking out and, from 1960, to use nuclear weapons, in the context of the Warsaw Pact! This became clear from, among other things, the presentations by Colonel Dr Victor A. Gavrillov (Chief, Division of Foreign Military History, Institute of Military History, Ministry of Defence, Moscow) and Dr Matthias Uhl (Deutsches Historisches Institut, Moscow). When it became clear that the Americans were not going to leave Europe, the Soviet Union concentrated on retaining its spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. Past events (for example, the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941) had made its political leadership very distrusting. If, according to Moscow, a war in the short-term became inevitable, then an offensive with all available resources was the best defence.

The most important military archives in Moscow are, incidentally, still kept tightly sealed. What we do know of the operational plans stems from analyses of various military exercises, which were dug up here and there from the archives of former member states of the Warsaw Pact. A prime example of this is the 'Troika' war game of the Nationale Volksarmee of the German Democratic Republic from 1967, which was subjected to analysis by Dr Torsten Diedrich of the MGFA.

The NIMH historian Prof. Jan Hoffenaar showed in his contribution concerning intelligence gathering in the Warsaw Pact that the leaders in the Kremlin and in East Berlin knew full well that NATO had no offensive intentions. They did, however, uphold the image of an offensive adversary. An aggressive NATO suited the Marxist-Leninist world view. And, as already mentioned, historical experiences also gave reason to maintain such an image of the enemy. In

addition, the Federal Republic of Germany's accession to NATO in 1955 was less than reassuring to the Eastern bloc. Last but not least, the Kremlin needed this negative view of the enemy in order to keep the Warsaw Pact intact.

Various contributions from historians from different NATO countries focused on the preparations for a potential military confrontation. Dr Bruno Thoß (MGFA) provided a clear overview of the development of NATO's strategic and operational planning. Lieutenant Colonel Dr Helmut Hammerich (MGFA), Dr Simon Marsh (Army Historical Branch, Ministry of Defence, London), Lieutenant Colonel Dr Jean-Michel Sterkendries (Royal Military School, Brussels) and Jan Hoffenaar discussed the operational preparations of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Netherlands respectively. Each member state had its own specific interests, problems and solutions. The well-known British intelligence specialist Prof. Richard J. Aldrich of the University of Nottingham gave the audience a glimpse of the operational intelligence work on NATO's side.

The contribution of Dr Donald C. Carter of the U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington was also interesting. He explained how differently the military commanders of the fifties (veterans of the Second World War) and those of the sixties viewed nuclear weapons. The former found the use of these weapons, especially on the battlefield, to be self-explanatory while the latter, the generals of the sixties, saw the weapons first and foremost as a political deterrent.

The enormous increase in the number of tactical nuclear weapons among the armed forces of both sides led to far-reaching reorganisations within those same armed forces. Mobility, mechanisation, armouring and smaller independent units were key terms. The NIMH historian Herman Roozenbeek illustrated clearly in his presentation how logistic development on the NATO side lagged behind this development in armament. The phased advance of the allied line of defence – from the Rhine-IJssel line via the Weser-Fulda line to the Elbe river - was, incidentally, at least as important a reason for the logistic arrears. Prof. Dimitrij Filippovyck (Head, Department of Military History, Academy of Military Science, Ministry of Defence, Moscow) held an interesting presentation on the question of how operational logistics adapted to nuclear warfare over the years.

In closing the conference, Dr Gregory Pedlow (Chief Historical Office, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Mons, Belgium) gave a well-balanced summary lecture. All in all, the conference was very informative and contributed to enhancing our knowledge of the military aspects of the Cold War. The contributions will be rewritten as articles and will be published collectively in book form next year.

Jan Hoffenaar

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Bulgarian Commission of Military History

Commemorating the 95th anniversary of the Balkan War of 1912-1913, the Bulgarian Commission of Military History, in coordination with the Military History Research Section, G. S. Rakovski Defense and Staff College, will organize in October 2007 in Sofia, Bulgaria, an international conference. The theme will be "Military Alliances and Coalitions in the 20th Century." Working languages for the international conference are English and Bulgarian. Participation fee for participants and for accompanying persons will be 50 Euros

Foreign participants are kindly invited to present papers and communications, as well as to participate in the discussions. Three main topics will be a matter of discussion:

- The Balkan Wars 1912-1913
- Military Alliances 20th century up to 1990

- Military Coalitions 20th century after 1990.

For information contact Dr. Dimitre Minchev, President, Bulgarian Commission of Military History, drminchev@yahoo.com

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United States Commission on Military History

The annual meeting of the US Commission on Military History was held in Washington at George Washington's home and museum at Mount Vernon. Vice president Hans Pawlisch led the meeting which featured a talk and discussion by war correspondent, Tom Ricks. Ricks has been a military journalist for nearly twenty-five years, reporting on wars and conflicts in Somalia, Haiti, Korea, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He is the author of a new book, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (2006). Like the war, the author and book are controversial.

Ricks ended the interesting talk and discussion with a series of somber predictions. Referring to the book's final chapter, he declared that a bloody civil war in Iraq appeared to be imminent. Pessimistic about the future, he saw the war in Iraq as an American strategic failure and an international tragedy. Sadly, he said that he had come to the conclusion that the war would grind on for another three or four years, assuming for the Iraqi and American leaders and people the dimensions of a Shakespearean tragedy. There was lively discussion, with challenges from the members as to the analysis and conclusions. The war is and remains controversial in the United States.

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National Commissions

For address changes please find attached the vademecum of the ICMH. Please forward changes to the assistant of Drs. P.H. Kamphuis, Elisabeth Cuperus (ec.cuperus@mindef.nl)

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Scope and Purpose of the ICMH Newsletter

Joseph P. Harahan,
ICMH Newsletter Editor

The objective of this ICMH electronic newsletter is to provide a forum for scholars to read, learn, and communicate their activities in the field of international military history and to provide them with information about the activities of the International Commission of Military History. Please disseminate this entire newsletter, or any of the articles, to the members of the national commissions. We intend to publish it two times a year, once in the spring, and then in the fall.

In future issues, you may submit articles or announcements for publication in this newsletter. Periodically, officers of the national commissions may wish to communicate with the larger international community of military historians, military archivists, and museum specialists. If there are announcements of bilateral or regional conferences, sponsored by the national commissions, these conferences and themes can be published in this newsletter. Please send announcements to the Secretary-General electronically (ph.kamphuis@mindef.nl).

The previous edition of the ICMH Newsletter can be found on the commission's website.