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International Commission of Military History Newsletter

Issue 9, 2007

Welcome to the ICMH Newsletter

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Message from The Hague

‘The International Commission of Military History (ICMH) is an important forum and the history of the African continent must have a permanent place on its agenda from this point forward.’ With those words, Major General Solly Mollo, Chairman of the South African Commission for Military History, closed the XXXIIIrd ICMH Congress in Cape Town, South Africa on 17 August 2007.

The ICMH can look back on an exceptionally successful congress. Although a number of familiar faces were unable to join us, their absence was more than compensated by the enthusiasm of representatives of African states who were very successful in bringing the African dimension of military history to centre stage. Their contribution was stimulating and often an eye-opener for those educated and trained in a Euro-centric tradition. The subjects they presented were rich and diverse. They ranged from the relationship between the oral tradition of stories passed down through generations and the primacy in Europe of written sources to the current issues of failed states and the interventions of the international community in Sub-Saharan Africa. I look forward with great interest to the *Acta* from that very stimulating congress.

For most participants, the Congress was their first introduction to South Africa. My impression is that many of them were impressed by the warm embrace in which our South African colleagues welcomed us, the spectacular natural beauty of the landscape and the fascinating pallet of different peoples, each with its own history, who are working together on a common future. For the South African Commission, the organisation was a major challenge. From my perspective, they more than met the expectations. To them we say: “*Baie dankie en tot speedig siens!*”

Several decisions were taken in Cape Town that engender confidence in the future. The representatives of the Slovenian Commission for Military History gave an enthusiastic presentation and that commission was admitted to the ICMH by acclamation. Our membership continues to grow steadily, and we expect that at least one membership application will be submitted from the African continent quite soon.

Prof. Dr Rudie Jaun was given the green light for his proposal to set up an education committee that will concentrate on military-historical education. We are working towards achieving approval in Trieste (2008) for the statutes of this specialised body and the Executive Board is pleased with Prof. Jaun's offer to serve as its first chairman. The Education Committee brings to three the pillars supporting the ICMH, along with the Bibliographic Committee and the Military Archives Committee.

The Executive Board and the General Board have spoken at length about the first recommendations of the Special Task Force that was set up in 2006 with the mission of investigating how the quality of the work of the ICMH, and therefore the importance of it, can be increased, primarily towards younger colleagues. One of the first recommendations of the Task Force, which has been renamed Task Force Excellence, has already been adopted. During the Trieste Congress, a workshop will take place involving several young Ph.D candidates who will be supervised intensely by four professors in the lead-up to the Congress and who will present us with their research results and experiences during the congress. In respect of improving the quality of the congresses, the following provisional concepts have already been formulated: authoritative keynote speakers, peer review, round tables, and workshops. In addition, we are working to find less expensive accommodation for younger participants, perhaps, but not necessarily, in combination with a discount on the cost of participation. All of that costs money, of course.

Task Force Excellence is therefore studying the external fundraising possibilities and is investigating the tools that could assist us in that endeavour. In addition, the proposal to develop a military-history portal will be worked out in more detail. In short, we expect that it will be possible in Trieste to take an important step forward in that regard based on the follow-up report of Task Force Excellence.

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The agenda also saw the return of some familiar agenda points. The German Commission, for example, presented the *Acta* of the 2006 ICMH Congress in Potsdam. Major Dr D. Queloz, who runs the Bibliography Committee with the precision of a Swiss timepiece, presented a new edition of the International Bibliography of Military History, while the publication by the Turkish Commission of an edition of the International Review of Military History was noted. The continuity of that series of publications is a point of attention and concern for me. The French Commission is alone is having an edition in preparation at this moment. I would therefore like to call on all national commissions to produce an edition of the *Revue*. Colonel Dr Hans Harder made it clear that the Military Archives Committee is alive and kicking, and continues to make an important contribution to accomplishing the ICMH mission.

With an impressive presentation, Colonel Matteo Paesano invited those in attendance to the XXXIV ICMH Congress, which will be held in Trieste, Italy from 31 August to 5 September 2008. The fate of civilians during armed conflicts will be the unifying theme of the congress: 'Military conflicts and civil population: limited wars, total wars, asymmetric wars'. You will find more information on that subject elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The delegate of the Portuguese Commission, Colonel D. Martelo, made clear that all preparations are being made in beautiful Porto to receive us in 2009.

For up-to-date information about the ICMH, I refer you to our updated website: www.cidhm.org. You can also reach the website through the website of the Netherlands Institute of Military History (www.nimh.nl) and clicking on 'internationale samenwerking'. Pleasant reading.

Piet Kamphuis
Secretary-General, ICMH

33rd ICMH Congress, Cape Town, South Africa, 12-17 August 2007: A Brief Report

Pat Harahan, United States

This year South African Commission on Military History hosted the 33rd International Military History Congress in Cape Town from 12-17 August. Under the leadership of president, Maj. Gen. Solly Mollo and Secretary-general, Commander dr. Thean Potgieter organized the event. Military historians from 44 nations followed the organizing commission's invitation to present papers on different aspects on the theme of "Regions, Regional Organizations and Military Power." The Congress opened with an address by its patron Mosiuoa G.P. Lekota, Minister of Defense.

Cape Town is a beautiful city and the congress was held in the Bank of England Nedbank conference center, located in the Victorian and Alfred Waterfront area. Since many of the hotels and restaurants were located within the central harbor area, delegates could walk to the meeting and the accompanying persons could meet the buses in the same area. All in all, it was an ideal and beautiful setting for an international congress.

The congress had 17 sessions, each offering the opportunity for historians to present their research or interpretative papers on an aspect of the conference theme, "Regions, Regional Organizations and Military Power." This year, there were many papers and discussions that centered on Africa, its military past and contemporary security issues. Historians from many African nations participated on the panels and entered into the dialogue and discussions following the sessions.

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To give one but one example, an African historian, Frankie Monama, lectures at the Military History Department at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. At the book roundtable session, he presented an interesting paper on teaching the military history of Africa. Since the continent is so vast, its colonial and nation experiences so different, and its recent history so controversial, few scholars teach courses on the military history of Africa. After the congress, Mr. Monama wrote that he was surprised that the book roundtable resulted in "a lively discussion which carried on for the whole week." He continued, "I am now beginning to send out copies of my paper to those (historians) who gave me cards and could not carry the paper away. I am now being considered to give lectures about African Military History in various African countries."

Dr. Luc de Vos, President of the International Commission on Military History chaired the general meeting of the ICMH. He praised General Mollo and the organizers of the 2007 Cape Town ICMH Congress. General Mollo, President of the South African Military History Commission, replied with a "Message from the African Nations," in which he expressed the sentiments of all historians from African nations attending the conference. Speaking to the delegates, Mollo declared that the congress was very relevant to African historians and officers teaching strategy and military history. In the future, he said African historians plan to meet and discuss further the topic of military history in Africa. Finally, Mollo urged that Africa should become a part of the future agenda of the international commission of military history.

President de Vos explained that the international commission has several new initiatives underway. Vice President Ioannis Loucas reported that a special committee had been examining new ways to improve the scholarship at the annual congress and to find ways to attract younger scholars to the meetings. Specifically, professors teaching military history in five nations agreed that they would develop an international workshop featuring graduate students presenting research on the 2008 ICMH congress theme. For the ICMH congress in Trieste, the student workshop will concentrate on the topic, "Military Conflicts and Civilian Populations", with research papers focused on the military occupation of foreign countries in the twentieth century. Then at the congress, the students will be invited to present their present the research in a special panel.

As the general meeting concluded, President de Vos announced that the board had approved the membership for a new national commission: the Military History Commission of Slovenia. Then, he announced that the next three congresses would be held in Trieste, Italy (2008), Oporto, Portugal (2009), and Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2010).

In keeping with tradition established by many ICMH Congresses, the South African Commission had arranged a rich program of visits to cultural, military, and political sites in the city and the surrounding area. The organizers chose a Cape Town landmark, the venerable Castle of Good Hope, built by the Dutch in the 17th century, to welcome all participants to the city. One afternoon, the Congress participants went on an excellent private tour of the South African Parliament. The old and new wings of the building stand as symbols for the country's painful past under a racist regime of 'Apartheid' and its rebirth as a democracy for all peoples living with in its borders. The Parliament's Deputy Speaker hosted a reception for the ICMH delegates.

Mid-week, the entire congress traveled on an all-day bus excursion to the very tip of the African continent, known as Cape Point, where the Atlantic meets the Indian Ocean. The views were simply breathtaking. From there the tour continued along the east cost of the Cape Peninsular to South Africa's principal naval base at Simon's Town. Greeted by Vice Admiral Johannes Modimu, Chief of the South African Navy, the delegates enjoyed the Navy's hospitality at a luncheon in the officer's club. In the afternoon, the Congress participants had the chance to explore the interesting town and university of Stellenbosch in the heart of the Cape Winelands. The day ended with a wine tasting and dinner at the Neetlingshof Wine Estate.

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On the last day of the Congress, following the final scholarly session, all participants visited Robben Island Museum. During the 'Apartheid' years, the island was a maximum security prison for political dissidents such as former South African President Nelson Mandela and Defense Minister Lekota. Infamous for its institutional brutality, the island's name became synonymous with the fight for freedom against the racist regime.

In the evening, the South African Commission hosted a banquet at the Bay Hotel, Camps Bay. After enjoying the sunset over the Atlantic on the hotel's terrace, Congress participants were treated to a feast of local delicacies and delectable wines. For those historians and accompanying delegates from South America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, and North America who made the long, long journey, the 33rd International Military History Congress in Cape Town was memorable.

Post-congress Tour South Africa

One of the perks of attending an ICMH Congress is the possibility of taking part in a post-congress tour organised by or under the auspices of the host nation. The South African Commission opted for the former and appointed Colonel Dr J. Jacobs, Commander Dr Th. Potgieter and Commander Dr J. Bezuidenhout as guides. In the week of 18-24 August, they organised an outstanding introduction to the stimulating military history of South Africa for the 28 foreign participants, with the guests also gaining an unrivalled introduction into South Africa's natural beauty.

The first day was filled with a short domestic flight to Bloemfontein, an introduction to the Boer War at the War Museum of the Boer Republics, and a visit to 'Onze Rust', the estate of M.T. Steyn, the last president of the Orange Free State Republic, which is still owned by the family. The visitors were able to fire weapons from the Boer War, the Mauser and the Martini Henry, and to view a blockhouse.

The next day began with an exceptionally informative briefing on the history of South Africa from the time of the first inhabitants up to today, an introduction that served as an excellent kick-off for the rest of the tour. Every day began with an exceptionally well prepared presentation by Colonel Jacobs, augmented and deepened later on location – battlefield or museum – with reflections on the course of the battle or peculiarities of the battlefield under discussion.

The post-congress tour was organised around four themes. First, the history of the Boer Voortrekkers, including a visit to the battlefield of Blood River. Second, the history of the Zulu Kingdom and the Anglo-Zulu wars, with a visit to Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift, with a stop at the Basotho Cultural Village. And, of course, the visitors visited several well-known Boer War battlefields: Magersfontein, Paardenberg, Colenso and Spioenkop, with additional visits to Ladysmith and the location where Winston Churchill was taken prisoner. The professional guides made it possible for the visitors to place all of the events in context quite quickly, and for their insight into the progress of the conflict to grow apace. The highlights of the last day were a visit to the South African Military Museum in Pretoria, where some unique artefacts are on display, and a visit to the impressive Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg.

The South African Commission received high praise from the participants of the post-congress tour. They had learned a lot and enjoyed themselves immensely!

Trieste, Italy 2008

Information on the 2008 ICMH Congress, Trieste, Italy
Massimo De Leonardis, Secretary-general
Commission of Military History of Italy

The XXXIVth International Congress of Military History will be held in Trieste from 31st August through 5th September 2008. The theme will be: "Military conflicts and civilians: total wars, limited wars and

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asymmetric wars." It will take place at the Centro Congressi della Stazione Marittima, located on the waterfront in the city centre. Working languages will be English, French and Italian with simultaneous translation.

Beginning on Saturday 30th August, delegates and accompanying persons will be met at the airports of Trieste (Ronchi dei Legionari) and Venice (Marco Polo) and at the Trieste railway Central Station, and accompanied to their hotels. On Saturday September 6th and Sunday 7th, Congress participants will be accompanied to the same airports and the railway station. Hotel accommodations will include a range of five (10%), four (50%) and three star (40%) hotels at reduced prices. The hotels are located at walking distance from the Congress Centre.

By the end of November, through the web site indicated below, participants will be able to register for the Congress and make hotel reservations. The deadline for Congress registrations, hotel reservations, and proposals for papers from the National Commissions will be the 31st March 2008. Please announce these deadlines to your delegates and national commissions. The text of the accepted papers should be sent to the Italian Commission by 31st May 2008. The registration fees will be € 300 for each participant and may be paid on arrival cash, by credit card or automatic debit card.

During the Congress, all Congress participants will visit on Wednesday the town of Palmanova, one of the most remarkable town fortresses in the world, and to Aquileia, a famous archaeological and historical site. On Friday, there could be an air show of the Frece Tricolori of the Italian Air Force. The post-congress tours will include a trip to see Padua and the villas of the Brenta Riviera, and then to Venice, Florence and Rome.

For more information on the provisional scientific and social programmes please visit the web site: <http://www.difesa.it/SMD/Staff/Reparti/Vreparto/CISM/CIHM/>.

For enquiries about the Congress please contact the e-mail addresses quinto.custorico@smd.difesa.it or quinto.segrestorico@smd.difesa.it . To contact the Italian Commission by telephone, call +39/06/46913770, +39/06/46913769 +39/06/46913398, or the fax number +39/06/46912159.

The address of the Italian Commission is: Commissione Italiana di Storia Militare, Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore Difesa - Palazzo Moroni - Salita San Nicola da Tolentino 1b - 00187 Roma.

New Publication: ***Nation State, Nationalism and the Military, 2006 ICMH ACTA***, German Commission of Military History, Potsdam, Germany, 2007

The papers, roundtables, and speeches presented at the 2006 ICMH Congress in Potsdam, Germany have been published. The volume, edited by Hans Ehlert and Winfried Heinemann, is entitled ***Nation State, Nationalism and the Military, 2006 ICMH ACTA***, German Commission of Military History, Potsdam, Germany, 2007, includes tables, maps, charts, illustrations, and notes, 566 pages. Like the published volumes of all recent congresses, this volume contains the papers and articles presented at the congress by the international military historians. The articles are published in the language in which they were presented. Consequently, the published compendium contains articles in French (7), English (16), and German (20). All national commissions were sent copies of this ACTA. For information about the distribution of this volume, please contact the Secretary-general of the German Commission on Military History, Colonel Winfried Heinemann, at winfriedheinemann@bundeswehr.org

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Report from the International Archives Committee (CAM)
Meeting at ICMH Congress, Cape Town, South Africa, 11 August, 2007
Dr. Hans-Joachim Harder
President of CAM

As usual, the International Committee of Archives (CAM) meeting took place on the Sunday preceding the CIHM conference in Cape Town. Owing to the costs of transportation, there were only 11 military archivist present from six different countries: Belgium, Canada, Germany, Greece, Romania, South Africa. Nevertheless the discussions were lively and the exchange of ideas fruitful.

The topic of the meeting was "The Public and Military Archives", which gave room for five presentations, and one, read by the president, from Austria. There was a great variance in how the topic was tackled. The South Africa archive is still struggling with the new situation after the end of apartheid and the long worldwide isolation that went along with it. The archives director, Louise Jooste, is keen to establish relations with other military archives. Her e-mail address is sandfdoc@mweb.co.za

The minutes of the presentations will be published in the fall edition of our regular newsletter Mars & Janus. Anybody wanting to have an electronic copy of this newsletter, please contact the CAM Secretary, the Dr. Christoph Tepperberg, director of the Austrian War Archive in Vienna, at: christoph.tepperberg@oesta.gv.at

Bibliography Commission

As happens every year, the *Bibliographie internationale d'histoire militaire* was published in July and distributed in September. With 284 entries, volume 28 contains a good average number. It also includes a themed report by Prof. Rudolf Jaun of the Military Academy and the University of Zurich. That text resumes the theme of the Potsdam congress and thereby serves as a very good complement to the forthcoming *Actes*.

We would like to take advantage of these few lines to once again sincerely thank all those individuals and institutions who cooperated in producing this volume and supported us financially.

Volume 29 is in the process of being produced now. We have already received a large number of entries and we would like to thank all of our correspondents for their submissions. The themed report will be from the hand of the Italian Commission of Military History, which is hosting the next congress. It is our hope that we will be able to present that volume to you next September in Trieste.

Conference on "Security in the Alpine Region. Past and Future," organized and co-hosted by the Austrian National Defence Academy and the German Military History Research Institute
Reported by Dr. Bianka J. Adams, United States

In the last week of September 2007, the Austrian National Defence Academy (LVak) and its co-host, the German Military History Research Institute (MGFA), convened military historians from the two nations, their Eastern and Western European neighbors, and Russia and the United States in Reichenau and Vienna, Austria, to explore the past and the future of security in the Alpine Region. Recently opened archives in former Warsaw Treaty states and international developments since the end of the Cold War made a re-examination of security problems of the region timely and necessary.

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The conference organizers grouped presentations for the most part by geographic perspectives. Introductory papers focused on military, strategic, and diplomatic implications of Austria's geo-strategic position. Brigadier General Dr. Reinhard Mang, Director, Institut für Geowesen, Austrian Ministry of Defense, opened the conference with a comprehensive look at Austria's topographical, geographical, and geological make up. Dr. Claudia Reichl-Ham, Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna, retraced Austrian involvement in armed conflicts through the centuries, and Colonel Dr. Bruno Koppensteiner of Austria described the country's defensive installations, unique to its mountainous terrain. General Alfred Schätz (AU, ret.) rounded out the introductory panel with an analytical assessment of Austria's defense policy and preparations during the Cold War.

A second group of presentations concentrated on characteristics of Switzerland's armed neutrality. Colonel Dr. Hansrudolf Fuhrer of Switzerland explained that Swiss military planners based their defensive strategy on three attack scenarios during the Cold War. Of the three, the worst case was a Soviet led "blitz" attack on Western Europe that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces would try to halt at the Rhine River line. In such an assault Switzerland expected to become a theater of operations because any attempts to circumvent the defensive line would be fought out on its territory. Major Dr. Peter Braun, Planungsstab der Armee, Switzerland, discussed integrated versus autonomous Swiss defense concepts. His main point in and the theme of Dr. Stefanie Frey's (Switzerland and United Kingdom) presentation on the Western European and American assessment of the Swiss defense concept was the "inter-operability" of Swiss and NATO's weapons systems and defense planning.

The third session focused on Eastern European and Russian perspectives on the military significance of the Alpine region during the Cold War and into the era Gorbachev. In his contribution, Dr. Vladimir Prebelic of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, offered a view from Ljubljana on military operations in the Alpine Region. His presentation centered on Slovenia's geo-strategic importance from Roman times onward as the gateway to the East and the Adriatic Sea. Colonel Dr. Mikhail Lyoshin of the Institute of Military History, Moscow, Russia, explained how relations between the Soviet Union and the states in the Alpine region evolved during the Cold War. Over the years, Soviet leaders interpreted thinly veiled hostility as support for the Western Alliance – official declarations of neutrality, notwithstanding. This interpretation gave way in later years to conciliatory policies designed to foster collective security and permanent peace. Sviatlana Stsiaposhyna of the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, picked up the thread by examining the Soviet perspective of the Alpine region during the era of Gorbachev. By the time Gorbachev assumed office, Soviet foreign and security policy concepts envisioned the neutral Alpine republics as "buffer" states, and they assigned Austria the role of intermediary in the process of negotiating the two blocks out of existence. Colonel Dr. György Markó, Hungary, returned to the early years of the Cold War with his presentation on the Hungarian defense concepts before and after the uprising in 1956. Dr. László Ritter, Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary, focused on Yugoslavia's prominent part in Hungary's threat perception and the vicious struggle that nation's secret service waged against its Yugoslav counterpart in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

After a day-long "staff ride" in the middle of week in the Semmering mountains near Reichenau, the conference resumed in Vienna for a final day. Panelists examined Western European and American views on security in the Alpine region and the special historical issue of the "Trieste" question. Lt. Col. Dr. Helmut Hammerich, Military History Research Institute, Germany, kicked off the day with his paper on the changes in the battle plans of the German II Korps for the defense of the Bavarian Alps. Dr. Maurizio Cremasco, Italy, followed with an analysis of the role of the Alpine region in Italian defense planning. In his presentation, Dr. Robert Rush from the Center of Military History, United States, examined three aspects of the U.S. occupation of Austria and then compared them to contemporary U.S. efforts in the occupation of Iraq. While his vignettes – civil administration, economic recovery, and denazification/de-Baathification - did not explicitly concentrate on security in the Alpine Region, they

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illustrated how occupation policies, adjusted to and capitalizing on special conditions in occupied territories, can produce the necessary preconditions for lasting security.

The conference's last three presentations dealt with the prickly Trieste Question from an American and a Yugoslav view point. U.S. historian, Dr. Bianka Adams, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, explained the role that the Trieste United States Troops (TRUST) played in guaranteeing the city's freedom in front of the Soviet Union's "Iron Curtain." Then, Captain Miljan Milkić, Serbia, described the Yugoslav Military Administration on the other side of the Morgan Line in the Free Territory of Trieste. Finally, Dr. Nemanja Milosevic of Serbia explored the Trieste Question in light of its repercussions for Yugoslav relations with West during the Cold War.

All in all, participants left the conference with a much better appreciation for the complex security issues of the Alpine Region, a region often overlooked in scholarly treatments of the Cold War and beyond. The organizers plan to publish the conference papers, rewritten as fully referenced articles, in book form in 2008.

United Arab Emirates history

A history of the United Arab Emirate entitled, ***The UAE Armed Forces History and Missions*** has been published by the U.A.E. Department of Museum and Military History. This interesting book explains the campaigns and operations of the nation's armed forces. It is illustrated. The book was researched and written by Colonel Abdullah Ahmed Al-Ali, Major Ibrahim Yuosef Hassan Bani Hammad, Lieutenant Yelia Shaheen Al-Ali, and Anna Murbarak Al-Zaabi. The UAE Commission of Military History joined the ICMH in 2005. Since then, Colonel Colonel Abdualsalam Harib Al Romaaithi and the officers of the UAE military History Commission have participated in international congresses in Potsdam and Cape Town. To communicate with Colonel Al Romaaithi concerning this volume and the military history of the United Arab Emirates, send the e-mail to Military@uaemuseum.ae

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