

# ICMH Newsletter, Issue 22, November 2014

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## **ICMH President**

Piet Kamphuis

News from The Hague.

Rain is pouring down from the sky, lightning flashes through dark clouds and the dikes are under vigilant watch. Autumn has come to the Low Countries by the North Sea. Inadvertently my thoughts go back to the sun-kissed seaside resort of Varna, where we convened over two months ago to talk about the First World War. The Bulgarian Commission and its inexhaustible President Dimitre Minchev were once again our host, as they were two years ago in Sofia. Our Bulgarian colleagues are worthy of our praise for the way in which they managed to offer a full-fledged congress programme with only a few months of preparation time at their disposal. The opening speech by Professor Ivan Ilchev, Rector of Sofia University, was impressive indeed. In a stirring discourse, he made a stand against what he perceives as nationalistic tendencies in many Balkan countries' historiographies of the First World War. His words gave cause for reflection – and indeed his comments were discussed among his audience for a considerable time afterwards. In my opinion, his keynote speech alone made the journey to Varna worthwhile.

The number of participants in the ICMH Congress was lower than usual. The fact that the choice for Varna came relatively late and the resulting delay in the provision of information prevented many colleagues from registering their participation. This has been an important lesson for me. The annual congress of our worldwide organisation offers unique opportunities for its members to 'recharge' professionally and to exchange views on the congress theme with peers from all continents, and, last but not least, to build and maintain professional networks. Existing relationships and friendships can be strengthened and new friendships can be made. For the old adage 'A stranger is a friend you have not met yet' holds true for military historians, too. Because most of us have extremely busy agendas, it is of the utmost importance to provide clarity at an early stage with regard to location, date and congress theme.

In Varna, timely and transparent decision-making about future ICMH congresses was therefore high on the Board agenda. The outcome of the consultations with the presidents of the member commissions and the formal decision-making in the General Assembly are satisfactory. The Chinese Commission for Military History gave an excellent presentation on the 41<sup>st</sup> ICMH Congress, which will be held in Beijing from 31 August to 4 September 2015 and which will have "World War II and the evolution of warfare since 1900" as its theme. I am impressed by the professional way in which the Congress is being prepared by our Chinese colleagues and by the hospitality that will be afforded to its participants in the Xishan Hotel.

Furthermore, a decision was made on the 42<sup>nd</sup> ICMH Congress. The Turkish Commission for Military History will act as host of the congress of 2016, which will focus on the theme "Regional wars – Global wars". The Congress will be held in the Turkish Military Museum in Istanbul. This means we will be revisiting the location where the Turkish Commission made its mark in 1993 with a splendidly organised ICMH Congress. And over the past years, our Turkish colleagues have been responsible for the excellent organisation of several military-historical meetings.

In spite of the track record of the Turkish Commission, the decision about 2016 was a long time in the making. Before the Turkish Commission put its candidacy forward, the Cameroonian Commission had done the same, with full backing of its government. It was the first time in the history of the ICMH that a West African country expressed its willingness to host the annual congress. Our colleagues from Cameroon worked very hard to come up with an attractive congress plan and even organised a congress before the summer season to try out their organisation. Sadly, their plans have been thwarted by the terrible Ebola epidemic. In Varna, it turned out that our colleagues were not able to

make the journey to Bulgaria to present their bid and to answer questions. The Board, endorsed by the Presidents' meeting, therefore decided to assign the 2016 Congress to Turkey. For me, this outcome evokes mixed emotions. We had two excellent candidates. I have every confidence that the President of the Turkish Commission and his team will host us with great hospitality and that the Turkish organisation will be as solid as a rock. At the same time, I have enormous respect for our colleagues from Cameroon, to whom I take my hat off. I hope the Ebola epidemic will be soon under control, and as soon as that is the case I think a congress in Cameroon should be placed back on the agenda.

Varna was a historic event in another respect. Following years of formal inactivity and exclusively informal contacts, the Russian Commission for Military History has returned to our ranks as a full-fledged member. Our congratulations go out to Colonel Gavrilov, but also to our treasurer Brigadier Fritz Stoeckli, who has invested a great deal of energy in keeping open the lines of communication with Moscow over the past years.

To summarise, in Bulgaria we have staked out a clear path towards the future. You will find more information further on in this Newsletter. We will continue on the same path in Beijing. In Varna, the national commissions have been extensively informed about the board elections planned to be held in the Chinese capital. All national commissions have been asked to think of suitable candidates for the 2015 – 2020 Board.

I set great store by clarity and transparency. This is why I made it very clear in Varna that I will not be standing for re-election in Beijing. After having been active in our world organisation for 25 years, ten of which I served as Secretary-General and five as President, I will be happy to make room for a successor. To have had the privilege of leading our organisation and enjoy the friendships and contacts coming with that position fills me with gratitude – and you can rest assured that I will serve the ICMH with heart and soul up to the very end of my last year on the Board.

### **ICMH Secretary General's Report**

Erwin Schmidl, Secretary-General ICMH

In addition to internal affairs of the Commission, the main task of the secretary general remained to fill and update our own website, <http://www.icmh.info/> (or [www.histmil.info](http://www.histmil.info) – both URLs lead to the same website), which has become operational about one and a half years ago, and which functions already quite well as a tool of communication. I would like to renew my thanks to all who helped in the establishment and maintenance of this website, especially to Col. Flavio Carbone and Dr. Ciro Paoletti from Italy, Eric Bastin from Belgium, and Col (R) Herminio José Fernández García and Captain (Navy, ret.) José María Blanco Núñez from Spain. Special thanks are also due to our untiring Ilse Bloemsma who, as our President's secretary, remains the pillar of our Commission.

Another point is the upcoming elections in 2015. According to our Statutes, a new Bureau has to be elected at the 2015 Congress in Beijing. Candidatures for the positions of president, secretary general, treasurer and members of the board have to be submitted to me by April (vice-presidents are not elected as such, but chosen by the members of the board amidst themselves). The candidatures will then be forwarded to the Election Committee that has been appointed in Varna, presided by Gen. Dominique Juillard from Switzerland. More details are to follow in due course, but I would urge all national commissions to think about potential candidates already now.

Finally, I would like to remind all commissions that in the week before the 2015 Military History Congress in Beijing, the International Committee for Historical Sciences will meet in Jinan, and include a military history section organized by the ICMH. You are all invited to take part in this congress, organized every five years by our 'mother commission', as well. Again, more detailed

information will be forwarded to the national commissions directly.

All that remains is to wish all a good Holiday Season and Merry Christmas, or whatever the proper equivalent might be in other religions, a good end of the year 2014 and an even better start for 2015!

## **ICMH Congress Activities and Communications**

### **Report on the 2014 ICMH Congress in Varna, Bulgaria**

Pat Harahan, Vice President

The International Commission of Military History held its 40<sup>th</sup> international congress in Varna, Bulgaria, from September 1 -5, 2014. Hosted by the Bulgarian Commission of Military History, led by Dr. Dobromir Totev, Chairman, Professor Dr. Dimitre Minchev, President of the Bulgarian Commission, and Professor Dr. Jordan Baev, Chairman of the Academic Program. The congress's theme was, "World War One 1914-1918". Many military and diplomatic historians, archivists, museum specialists, and graduate students participated in the congress. They represented 33 national commissions of military history and came to Bulgaria from four continents. In addition, there were many accompanying persons at the conference.

At the opening session, Dr. Totev, President of the Bulgarian Military History Commission and Permanent Undersecretary of Defense, recalled the 2012 ICMH Congress in Sofia, and spoke of the long, long military history of Bulgaria. Professor Minchev read a letter from the President of Bulgaria noting the anniversaries of WWI (100 years), WWII (75), and the Cold War (25). Today, the president observed, there were dramatic changes in European security. This congress could give perspective on these changes. Dr. Piet Kamphuis, President of ICMH, spoke on "The Great War." He noted that the war involved more the 65 million combatants and 11 million deaths. Never before had war penetrated European society so greatly. Finally, he observed that the war had multiple battlefields and new technologies.

Professor Dr. Ivan Ilchev, Rector of Sophia University, gave the keynote address, "The Balkans in the First World War". He began by describing differing perceptions concerning the Balkans in the press. Reality, historians have told us more recently, was more complex. Across the Balkans there was a struggle for power and territory, from the new nations and old empires. There was a cauldron of claimants. He called upon Balkan historians to explain these conflicts. He suggested new topics, especially the issues surrounding Serbia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, the geo-strategic position of Turkey, new research on women and children in the region, the economy during wartime, refugees, and prisoners of war. He concluded by stating the research and writing of WWI history must be broader and more modern.

The Congress' scientific sessions began in the afternoon and continued throughout the week. In all, 24 academic sessions were held during the congress. The first session involved historians from Germany, France, and Spain who presented papers on the Theory and Art of War in the context of WWI. A second session presented scholars from Italy, Brazil, and Russia discussing the same topic from different national perspectives. Other sessions focused on WWI in the Balkans, Eastern Front, Naval battles, Northern Europe, Iberian Peninsula, Asia, Africa, and South America. Doctoral candidates from eight nations presented papers in three separate working sessions. At the final session, Professor Dr. Luc de Vos, former president, ICMH, gave remarks summarizing the academic sessions and commenting on public interest in the war across Europe.

Following the opening day's academic sessions, Congress participants went to a reception was held at the Archaeological Museum in Varna. The city has ancient roots; it served as a port city on the Black Sea for millennia. It has been a Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Bulgarian city. Today, Varna is a

beautiful city, serving as a resort, educational, and industrial city. On Wednesday, all of the conference participants went to the city of Nessebar, a United Nations Cultural heritage site. The congress concluded with a dinner at the Melia Hotel, site of the academic sessions, meals and lodging.

The Congress was successful. Varna is one of Bulgaria's largest cities, with beach resorts, historical institutes, museums, naval academy, and cosmopolitan atmosphere. It is a wonderful city.

### **Chinese Commission of Military History will host ICMH Congress, 2015**

At the General Assembly of the 39th ICMH Congress in Turin Italy, it was decided that the Chinese Commission of Military History will host the 41<sup>st</sup> ICMH Congress in Beijing, China. In Varna, the Chinese Commission gave an excellent presentation on the Congress, which will be held in Beijing from 31 August to 4 September 2015. It will have the theme of "World War II and the evolution of warfare since 1900."

The Chinese Military History Commission is a subcommittee of Chinese Academy for Military Science (AMS). In the Chinese Academy of Military Sciences, the Department of Military History and Encyclopedia Studies will organize the ICMH Congress.

A website listing the ICMH Congress, registration, hotel, and program activities will be active in January 2015 (<http://icmh41.ams.ac.cn/>).

### **The Information about 41st Congress in Beijing**

The Chinese Commission of Military History (CCMH) kindly invites the member national commissions of ICMH to participate in the 41<sup>st</sup> Congress of Military History, which will be held from August 31st to September 4th next year in Beijing. All of the preparatory work is systematically going well. The main theme of the Congress will be: **WORLD WAR II AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WARFARE IN THE 20TH CENTURY** and the working languages of the event are English, French and Chinese. The arrangement of academic activities and visiting activities is planning for detail. The opening ceremony will be held in the morning on the first day, the second and fourth day will be conference day, and there is a trip to the Great Wall and military installation for all participants on the third day.

Accompanying persons will visit the Summer Palace, the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, etc. The Congress will be organized in XiangShanYiHe Hotel-a recommendable hotel for accommodation. The 41st Congress website is expected to go online at the end of this year. It has two languages, Chinese and English. Its main architecture includes the information about the Congress, the hotel and participants registration services, etc.

### **ACTA Published for ICMH Congress, Torino, Italy, 2013**

Massimo de Leonardis, Vice President ICMH

The Acta of the XXXIX ICMH Congress of 2013 in Torino on *Joint and Combined Operations in the History of Warfare* have been published: the first printed copies were presented at the meeting of the Executive Board in Milan at the end of May and each National Commission received a copy at the Varna Congress. Presidents of the National Commissions are invited to address to the President of the Italian Commission (Col. Matteo Paesano- SMD-V [quinto.custorico@smd.difesa.it](mailto:quinto.custorico@smd.difesa.it) ), and request additional copies, which will be despatched through the network of Italian Military attaches abroad or through foreign Military attaches in Rome.

The Acta are the largest ever published: two volumes in a bookcase for a total number of 1,288 pages with many pictures. A free Pdf version of the two volumes is available at:

[http://www.difesa.it/Area\\_Storica\\_HTML/editoria/2013/Acta1/Pagine/default.aspx](http://www.difesa.it/Area_Storica_HTML/editoria/2013/Acta1/Pagine/default.aspx) and  
[http://www.difesa.it/Area\\_Storica\\_HTML/editoria/2013/Acta2/Pagine/default.aspx](http://www.difesa.it/Area_Storica_HTML/editoria/2013/Acta2/Pagine/default.aspx).

The Acta include the opening speeches by the official authorities, a general introduction to the theme by Professor Massimo de Leonardis, six papers on the Italian military archives, 79 papers presented at the Congress, 22 papers of the panel of young Italian researchers, 6 papers of the PhD candidates' international panel, 6 interventions in commemoration of Professor Raimondo Luraghi, member of the ICMH Board (1990-2000). The volumes are completed by the list of participants, and by a selection of media reports on the Congress and pictures. The papers are published in the languages in which they were written.

This work was performed under the direction of Col. Matteo Paesano (It. Army), in close collaboration with Prof. Piero Crociani and Dr. Annalisa Bifulchi, and with the supervision of the Congress' Scientific Committee composed by Professors Alessandro Barbero, Antonello Folco Biagini, Massimo de Leonardis, Vincenzo Ferrone, Mariano Gabriele, Nicola Labanca, Matteo Pizzigallo, and Ferdinando Sanfelice di Monteforte.

## **ICMH Committees**

### **ICMH Bibliography Committee**

Mauro Mantovani

President, Bibliographical Committee of the ICMH

Editor-in-Chief, International Bibliography of Military History

The past six months saw the publication of issue 34/1 and the preparations for issue 34/2. *Issue 34/1* appeared in August, just in time for our Annual Congress in Varna, and contains three (peer-reviewed) historiographical articles, one by Prof. Georges-Henri Soutou, "Cold War History between Revision and New Insights, and their Consequences for Military History"; another by Dr. Nicholas J. Schlosser, "Reassessing the Marine Corps' Approach to Strategy in the Vietnam War, 1965-1968"; and thirdly, Dr. Zisis Fotakis' "The Development of the Study of War in Greece Since 1989".

*Issue 34/2*, now in print, features an article by Prof. Bruno Colson, on the Historiography of the Battle of Waterloo, drafted in an English and a French Version, like in the good old days of the Bibliography. Beyond that a number of members of the Bibliographical Committee (BC), along with national correspondents, have contributed to the selection of the review sections of these two issues.

The annual meeting of the BC at Varna on 31 August 2014 brought two changes in its composition: Captain J. M. Blanco Núñez, who had served the BC as the Spanish representative for ten years, was replaced by Col. Herminio Fernandez. Also approved by BC was the candidature of Senior Colonel Zhou Xiaoning, who from now on represents the Chinese Commission.

Also at Varna, the ICMH Full Board approved the earlier decision by the BC to open the Bibliography for original research articles. We expect this opening to provide a broader and more constant flow of submissions and a more solid foundation of the IBMH in the scientific community.

For *issue 35/1*, the deadline for contributions is March 15, 2015. I am looking forward to contributions within the enlarged range of our purview: bibliographical notices, historiographical articles, review articles as well original research (see "authors instructions" online: <http://www.brill.com/international-bibliography-military-history>).

## **ICMH Committee of Military Archives**

Hans Pawlisch, President

Lynn Jones Stewart, Recording Secretary

The Comité des Archives Militaires (CAM) convened its annual meeting in the Spartak Boardroom at the Melia Hotel during the 40th International Congress of Military History hosted in Varna, Bulgaria at 1000 on 31 August 2014. Seven member nations attended the meeting. Those present included the CAM President, Dr. Hans Pawlisch United States, Mr. Michael Steidel of Germany, Captain of Artillery German Segura Garcia of Spain, Dr. Jordan Baev of Bulgaria, Dr. Paolo Formiconi of Italy, Dr. Saif Bedawi of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Tarik Ajja of Morocco, ICMH Vice President Dr. Pat Harahan, United States, and former Archivist of the United States, Dr. Trudy Peterson.

Several items of business were discussed. The minutes of the 2013 meeting in Turin were read and approved. Old and new business led to continued discussion of CAM hyperlinks for the ICMH website and the current status of MARS and JANUS. Dr. Rudi Jaun of Switzerland provided the CAM with a disc of CAM data formerly listed on the Swiss Commission's website. The disc was transferred to the ICMH Secretary General, Dr. Erwin Schmidl in the hope that the older material can be migrated to the new ICMH webpage. It was also noted that more than two years have passed since the last edition of MARS and JANUS. Effective immediately, Mr. Michael Steidel from the German Military Archives agreed to take on responsibility for editing MARS and JANUS for the coming year.

There were two CAM programs scheduled for the conference. The first was held on 31 August and featured presentations by Dr. Jordan Baev entitled "Contribution to NATO History Viewed from Warsaw Pact Records", and an update on the Spanish Military Archives Digital Project. Informal presentations were made by Dr. Paolo Formiconi from the Italian Military Archives and Dr. Trudy Peterson of the United States. Dr. Formiconi presented a new book describing Italian Military Archives and stated that a second volume will be presented in Beijing.

Dr. Trudy Peterson outlined a current project to organize a survey of national military archives that would examine the legal authorities governing access and retention of military records.

A second CAM session was scheduled as part of the general program held in the Melia Hotel's Lizmah Hall, on 1 September from 1600 to 1730. Four presentations were made on a variety of subjects. Mr. Michael Steidel's paper, "Internet Access to Archival Records of the First World War," detailed the current project to digitize German World War I military records. Former Archivist of the United States, Dr. Trudy Peterson's paper expanded her earlier discussion by detailing her ongoing project to organize a multi-national survey of national military archives that would review the legal basis of record collection, data protection and archival legal authorities. This project is sponsored by the Open Society Initiative. Miss Kathleen Van Acker from Belgium, gave an update on Belgian classified military archives, while Svetlin Radev, Bulgaria delivered a presentation entitled "First World War Records at the Bulgarian State Military Archive."

In summary, the CAM once again had a full agenda, both for its annual meeting, and as part of the general conference agenda. The professional quality and range of subjects addressed a variety of subjects and national experience that stimulated great interest and general discussion.

## **ICMH Announcements**

### **Recent Books on World War I History**

Compiled by Pat Harahan, USCMH

In recent years, scholars have researched and published new history books on the origins of World War I. Most of these historians have worked in national and international archives and memoir

collections. At the 2014 ICMH Congress in Varna, Bulgaria, international scholars and archivists discussed their research and these new histories.

- Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers, How Europe Went to War in 1914*.
- Willem Klinkert, *Defending Neutrality, The Netherlands Prepares for War, 1900 – 1925*.
- Willem Klinkert, Samuel Kruizinge, and Paul Moeyes, *Nederland Neutraal, 1914 – 1918*.
- Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace, The Road to 1914*.
- Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*.
- Michael S. Neiberg, *Dance of the Furies, Europe and the Outbreak of World War I*.
- Goffrey Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Hapsburg Empire*.
- Max Hastings, *Catastrophe 1914: Europe Goes to War*.
- John H. Morrow, Jr., *The Great War, An Imperial History*.
- Luc de Vos, Tom Simoons, Dave Warnier, and Franky Bostyn, *1914-1918*.

**ACTA, “Technology and Warfare” 38<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Military History, 25 August to 1 September 2012, Sofia, Bulgaria**  
*Sofia University Press, 631pp, 2013.*

This excellent volume represents the program, speeches, and scholarly papers presented at the 38<sup>th</sup> ICMH Congress, held in Sofia, Bulgaria in 2013. Attended by nearly 250 scholars and guests from 35 nations from Europe, Asia, Middle East, Africa, and North and South America, the program of the Congress included the presentation of 90 scientific papers and reports. This volume represents the publication of the scholarly papers, round table presentations, and a few speeches.

Topics include the development and role of military technology from Ancient times to the Middle Ages and to the Industrial Era, including the Cold War. Special articles were on the development of military technologies in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Separate articles explore the use of technology in the Navies and Air Forces around the world. Other articles examine the role of technology in the construction of military fortifications, development in military communications, and reconnaissance and operations.

To obtain a copy of this volume, consult the ICMH Website at [www.histmil.info](http://www.histmil.info)

### **Final Announcement**

Pat Harahan, Newsletter editor

The objective of the ICMH Newsletter is to communicate information concerning the national commissions and the ICMH’s officers, board, committees, and congresses to all of the commissions. The newsletter is a way of communicating information in three languages, English, French and German, across five continents to the officers and members of 40 national commissions.

We need your help. National presidents and secretary-generals are encouraged to send the newsletter editor information regarding forthcoming international congresses and conferences. If your national commission is sponsoring a military history conference, museum exhibition, or planning a special exhibition of a military archive, please send the editor a brief communiqué. Your announcements and communiqués will be published in the ICMH Newsletter. Please send the information to Pat Harahan, ICMH Newsletter editor at the address, [harahan@verizon.net](mailto:harahan@verizon.net).