

ICMH Newsletter, Issue 30

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With this Newsletter we want to keep you informed about the activities of the ICMH community. Last September, we had our 44th International Congress on Military History in Jerusalem, Israel, which was a very interesting experience. In this issue you can read the reports about the academic presentations, the cultural program and the pre-Congress tour. Besides that, we also want to keep you informed about our current and future activities.

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The XLIV ICMH Congress in Israel

Prof. Massimo de Leonardis – President ICMH

After 34 years, the ICMH annual Congress was staged again in Israel from 2nd to 7th September. In 1984 the location had been Tel Aviv on the general theme: *Warfare throughout the Ages between Small States and Big Powers*. At least 4-5 veterans of that Congress were present this year in Jerusalem, including our senior President of Honour, Dr. Cornelis (Kees) Schulten, at that time ICMH Secretary General, and our distinguished colleague Prof. Matitiahu Mayzel. We should be proud of this example of continuity and loyalty to our organization.

The location of the 2019 Congress was particularly fascinating. Jerusalem and the entire surrounding territory evoke powerful memories which for three religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are sacred. There are few regions in the world with such a rich historical heritage like the Middle East. During the centuries, this region belonged to various empires, either formally or informally; therefore, it was the ideal place to host a Congress on a very original and challenging general theme: *The Creation of New States and Collapse of Old Empires in the XX Century*.

Actually, without considering previous periods, Palestine was a part of the Roman Empire named *Roman Judea*. The rule of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire lasted until the VII Century, when started a long period of Islamic potentates, interrupted for about 100 years by the Kingdom of Jerusalem and for a longer period by other minor Crusader states. Since 1516 Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. From 1923 to 1948, as a Class A mandate of the League of Nations, Palestine was included in the British imperial system.

ICMH Congresses have a very peculiar and valuable pattern which is not very frequent in other scholarly societies. Besides scientific sessions, we have cultural tours, visits to military bases, attendance to military exercises, and social events. Sometimes these activities take place in locations opened just for us. All this offers many opportunities to acquire new insights, establish and develop contacts, exchange ideas, launch projects. During the Congress, the General Assembly provides to National Commissions a unique occasion to express their voice as a corporate body; scholars not affiliated to ICMH have the best opportunity to approach it. Actually, the Congress was attended by scholars from two countries not yet affiliated to ICMH: Angola and Lithuania. After China in 2015, Bulgaria in 2016 and Cameroon last year, we went to Israel. A tour which demonstrates that ICMH has a wide geopolitical outreach.

The XX century witnessed the fall of many empires in different waves: after the two world wars, during and after the Cold War. Empires were replaced by national States, even in regions where national sentiments mean little and other forms of aggregation prevail: ethnicities, tribes, clans.

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All the three phases I mentioned were dealt by the papers presented. Some papers fell across different periods or considered conceptual issues. Understandably, the independence of the State of Israel involved many nations and various papers will present new insights on this. The preparation of the Acta is already in progress, under the editorship of Brigadier General Dr. Dany Asher.



The meeting of the ExBoard with the representative of the Korean Commission



Inaugural speech



Laying flowers at the monument to Fallen Soldiers



The ExBoard at the General Assembly



Group photo at Latrun

The pre-Congress tour in Israel

Hans W. Pawlisch – Vice-President ICMH

From 28th August through 2nd September 2018, thirty-five conference participants who registered for the pre-conference tour organized by our Israeli hosts were treated to an escorted visit that combined multiple sites revealing both the ancient and modern history of Israel and its inhabitants. Throughout we travelled by air conditioned bus staffed by English speaking guides with extensive historical and archaeological knowledge of all sites visited. Our initial journey took us from the Cinema Hotel in modern Tel Aviv, to the ancient site of Tel Megiddo known to many as the biblical Armageddon. There a hilltop fortress, replete with deeply mined water shaft constructed during the 9th century b.C., served as a battle ground pitting its inhabitants against the forces of ancient Egypt. Participants climbed and explored the ancient hilltop ruins and later descended a hundred or more steps into the hand carved shaft leading to the fortress' hidden water source. Modern steps led to an exit outside the city walls. As they ascended participants paused to reflect how this site could lie so grand in the imagination of later theologians. (Revelation 16:14 and 16:16)

Thereafter our hosts drove us to the Ramat Yochanan Kibbutz for a briefing on the theory and practice of Kibbutz living but the question as to annual budget and expenditure remained unanswered. Thereafter a very fine luncheon fortified us for the journey to Haifa to view the beautiful Baha'i Gardens and to visit the Clandestine Immigration and Naval Museum. Covering the maritime history of Israel, the facility encompassed 5,000 years of maritime history. But the museum's singular attraction was a converted Royal Navy Mark 2 Tank Landing Craft, renamed the Af-Al-Pi-Chen,

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this *Exodus*-like craft later transported 434 Holocaust survivors from Europe to Palestine during the last days of the British Mandate in 1947. From Haifa, our hosts transported us to Nazareth, hometown to Jesus, Simon-Peter and other of their followers.

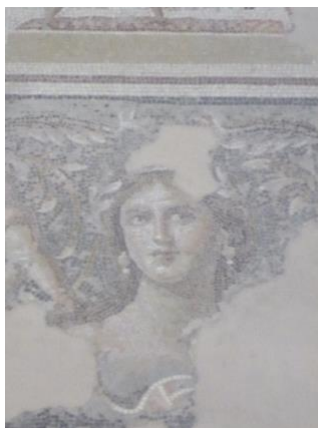
Our Nazareth Hotel Rimonim proved a hospitable base to launch the next portion of our tour through Southern Galilee to visit some of the most famous shrines associated with Christianity and Judaism. The Church of the Annunciation, a modernistic structure completed in 1969, was our first stop. Built on the remnants of churches constructed in the IV century by the Byzantines and rebuilt again by the Latin Kingdom of the Crusades in the XII century over what was believed to be the home of Mary. A short drive later we toured Kafarnaum, the main focus of Jesus' Galilean ministry. The site is also home to a famous synagogue built in the IV century known as the 'White Synagogue' because of its white limestone construction atop the black basalt foundation of an earlier synagogue. This structure also covers St. Peter's House where Jesus is alleged to have stayed. Nearby we enjoyed lunch in the town of Tiberias noted for its hot springs resorts. Tiberias is also famous for its burial sites of many ancient Jewish theologians one of the most famous being Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, or Maimonides author of the Mishneh Torah and the first codification of Jewish law – *Guide to the Perplexed*.

Our next stop took us north toward the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes and then to the Mount of the Beatitudes. Along the way we visited the Yigal Alon Center famous for a 2,000 years old wooden fishing vessel discovered by a local fisherman. The 30 foote long wooden boat has been completely restored and is displayed daily with short films detailing its discovery and restoration. A short distance away we toured the Mount of the Beatitudes and the XX century church built over the site of what was believed to be where Jesus preached his Sermon on the Mount. Inside the octagonal church, currently administered by Benedictine nuns, the Beatitudes are highlighted in stained glass just below the dome. Another stop along the lakeshore included the Yardenit site on the Jordan, the river when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. This location continues to draw large crowds gathering to baptize themselves or renew their baptismal promises into the river Jordan. From there our itinerary turned north toward the Golan Heights, captured from the Syrians during the 1967 Six-Day War and bitterly fought over a second time during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The Israeli government formally annexed the territory in 1981. There we visited the headquarters of the Northern Territorial Command and were given the opportunity to examine the Merkava tank and other vehicles. We also received an excellent situation report on the Syrian and Lebanon border regions. Evening took us to the Degania B. Kibbutz located on the Eastern shore of Lake Galilee. Founded in 1909, Degania was the first Kibbutz in Israel and served as a model for further settlements. By the main gate sits a Syrian tank, knocked out by kibbutz defenders who successfully repulsed an entire Syrian armoured column during the 1948 war.

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The next morning our journey continued toward the Golan Heights with a stop *en route* to visit the Gamla archaeological site and nature reserve. Described by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, Gamla is a camel back-shaped ridge that takes its name from the Hebrew word “Gamal”. Like the later and more famous siege of Masada in AD 73, Gamla was attacked by a large Roman force during the Jewish Revolt (66-70 a. C.). After a seven-month siege by Vespasian’s legions and a final battle, the defenders and their families numbering in the thousands, like the Masada Zealots, committed mass suicide rather than surrender. Gamla is also famous for its large Griffon vultures soaring over fields dotted with prehistoric dolmans or Neolithic basalt grave markers along a path providing a panoramic view of the ancient city. Our next visit took us near the top secret Israeli Defense Force (IDF) communications station atop Mount Avital overlooking the Syrian town of Quneitra. Here we received a situation brief on the current Syrian civil war followed by a description by our own Colonel (reserve) Benny Michelson recounting the 1973 battle in which he participated. We then descended the high ground and returned to Dgania Kibbutz.

The next day, we began our return to Tel Aviv stopping at the Druze village of Hurfeish located in the Northern District of Israel two miles from the Lebanese border. Our Druze hosts delivered an informative account of their history. Establishing themselves in Southern Lebanon 1,000 years ago they practice a monotheistic religion separate from Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Abiding by a principle of reincarnation, their religious texts are kept secret and known only to the community’s wise men and women. The Druze forbid conversion in or out of their religion, and tradition dictates that followers be loyal to country of residence. Druze men have been conscripted and served with distinction in the IDF as career soldiers and officers in elite units. Our Druze hosts provided lunch followed by a return to Tel Aviv that included a visit to the Zippori National Park and its beautiful Roman mosaics. According to tradition, the parents of the Virgin Mary, Anne and Joachim, were from Zippori, in Latin *Diocaesarea* Visitors will long remember the Northern Galilee and the panoramic views of the Golan and the Sea of Galilee.



The “Mona Lisa” of Zippori



A view of the river Jordan

The Plovdiv Acta

Jan Hoffenaar – Treasurer ICMH

Jordan Baev and Gostadin Grozev, eds., *Local Wars. Global Impacts* (Acta of the 42nd International Congress of Military History, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 4-9 September 2016, Publishers Izdatelstvo Veles, Sofia 2018).

These Acta contain a wide variety of interesting final papers of the 2016 annual ICMH congress, which was organized (on very short notice, because of exceptional political circumstances) by the Bulgarian National Commission of Military History. The theme of the congress was very wide, which resulted in great variety of paper topics. Different viewpoints and interpretations concerning the influence of regional conflicts on global relations as well as the impact of world wars on regional theatres, from ancient history till contemporary times, all found their place. It is impossible to give a complete overview of the richness of this volume. Just to give an impression, the topics vary from the defence of Goa in the XVII and XVIII century in the context of Portugal's attempts to maintain its global empire to the influence of the Balkan Wars on the Hellenic stance during the First World War, from French responses to Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish War of Independence to the 'Weather War' in Greenland and other parts of the Arctic, from Dutch MCM Operations in the Persian Gulf, 1987-1988, to anti-Japanese war preparations by Chinese government in the 1930s, from the Six Day War of 1967 to South Africa, colonial Portugal and the liberation struggles in the South African Region, and from the local, regional and global (systemic) impact of the Falkland War to the participation of the Russian Navy in collective anti-piracy activities in the North-Western part of Indian Ocean. Fortunately, this Acta can also be consulted via the website site of the ICMH <http://www.icmh-cihm.org/en/what-we-do/publications/acta>.

Acta of the XLIII International Congress of Military History 2017

Jan Hoffenaar – Treasurer ICMH

At the general assembly held in Israel, Commander Blaise Mbue Ngappe, Secretary General of the Cameroon Commission of Military History, presented to the ICMH President Massimo de Leonardis, the Acta of the XLIII ICMH Congress in Douala, Cameroon. Held from 2-8 September 2017, the Congress' general theme was "World Wars and Colonies in History". Attended by delegations of 28 countries conference papers were delivered in 16 sessions, with four additional Ph.D. student sessions. Forty-seven papers addressed the conference theme in a variety of historical settings to include the periods before and after The First and Second World Wars, and the Cold War. While presentations vary in scope, length and style, readers will be rewarded by contributions that cover events in Northern and Western Europe, the Caribbean, the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Our hearty congratulations are due to

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Commander Ngappe and the Scientific Committee/ Editorial Board for this thorough and timely production of 655 pages, enriched by many pictures. A copy of the Acta, with minor rectifications and additions, will soon be published on the ICMH website.

The 2019 Congress in Sofia

The XLV Congress of the International Commission of Military History will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 18th to 23rd August, 2019. The Congress' topic will be *Unsettled problems after the 1919 Peace Conference: military conflicts and diplomatic negotiations*. Further details are published on the official website of the Congress www.bcmh145.com.

Future Congresses

Close consultations are going on with the Polish Commission of Military History for the organization of the XLVI Congress in Poznań in 2020; a Power Point presentation with preliminary information was shown in Israel.

The final steps are being taken to organize two joint panels (ICMH and Commission of History of International Relations) at the Congress of the International Commission of Historical Sciences in Poznań in August 2020 on the topic Disarmaments and Rearmaments after the two world wars.

The Full Board has decided that the XLVII International Congress of Military History will be held in Athens from 22nd to 27th August 2021. The General Theme will be *Independence Wars since the XVIII century*.

In Israel, representatives of the Commission of South Korea presented a proposal to host the Congress in 2023. The General Theme Military Conflicts during the Cold War (1945-1989) was suggested and general outlines of the programme given. The Full Board expressed full appreciation for the proposal, while postponing a formal decision. After the Congress in Israel had finished, the ICMH President received another proposal from the Turkish Commission, also willing to host the Congress in 2023. Consultations are in progress to explore a solution agreed by both Commission; in any case, the Full Board will take a formal decision on the location as soon as feasible.

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Various news

Hellenic Army General Staff, 2nd Land Forces Conference

Efpraxia Paschalidou – Vice-President ICMH

The Hellenic Army General Staff (HAGS) organized the 2nd Land Forces Conference in Athens, Greece, on 27th and 28th September 2018. The topic of the conference was “The Multi-Domain Battle and the Role of Land Forces” and it was organized in partnership by the Institute of International Relations, in the installations of the Hellenic Army Academy in Vari, Attica.

Following the welcome address by the Chief of HAGS, Lieutenant General Alkiviadis Stefanis, the key-note speech was delivered by the President of the International Commission of Military History Professor Dr. Massimo de Leonardis, under the title “The Role of Land Forces: Lessons from the Past and a Look to the Future”. During the four sessions of the Conference, the numerous attendees had the opportunity to listen about the last trends and developments and to participate in Q & A sessions in topics such as the “International and Regional Security: The Challenges Posed and how to Address them”, “Multi-Domain Battle: Land Forces’ Capabilities and Manoeuvre for Conducting Combat Operations Beyond 2025”, “Implementing the Multi-Domain Battle Concept in the Land Operations Environment of Greece and Cyprus” and “Commanding and Leading Land Forces in the Multi-Domain Operational Environment”.

Amongst the distinguished speakers were Lieutenant General Ilias Leontaris, Chief of the National Guard/Cyprus, Major General (res.) Amos Gilead, Executive Director of the Institute for Policy and Strategy at Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (Israel), General (ret.) David Perkins, Former Commanding General of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Dr Ariel Levite from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Washington D.C., U.S.A), Professor Andrew Novo from the National Defence University (Washington D.C., USA), Lieutenant General (ret.) Ton Van Loon, Former Commander of the 1st German/Netherlands Corps, Brigadier General (ret.) Ben Barry from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London U.K.), Professor Ilias Kouskouvelis from the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece), Professor Athanasios Platias from the University of Piraeus (Greece), Dr Efpraxia Paschalidou, Director of the Historic Archives Service/Hellenic Army History Directorate and other active/retired army officers, academics, and defence researchers.

The event was completed by a cultural program for the foreign guests that included a guided tour in the archeological site of Acropolis, the Acropolis Museum and the traditional area of Plaka, in Athens. The Conference volume will be published by the Hellenic Army General Staff.

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The Congress' speakers



Lt. Gen. Stefanis and Prof. de Leonardis

The Annual Congress in Rome of the Italian Commission of Military History

As every year, the Historical Office of the Defence Staff/Italian Commission of Military History organized an international Conference, which this time concluded a five-years series on the First World War. This year's general theme was *1918. Victory and Sacrifice*. The conference was sponsored by two important Italian universities (the *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* of Milan and "*La Sapienza*" *Università di Roma*) and had the ICMH patronage. Some 30 scholars from three countries examined various aspects of the Great War's last year: the military fronts, the political and diplomatic strategies, and propaganda. A special section was devoted to military chaplains. Acta will be published in Spring 2019.



A session chaired by Prof. de Leonardis



The inaugural session

Links to interesting websites

The *International Committee of Historical Sciences* (to which ICMH is affiliated) has launched the website of its XXIII Congress in Poznań in 2020 (<https://ichs2020Poznań.pl/en/>). ICHS has also published a very fine November 2018 issue of its Newsletter (editor@cish.org).

We also would like to inform about the website of the *International Intelligence History Association* (<http://intelligence-history.org/>).

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At the following address the December 2018 issue of the Revista Aerohistoria published by the Instituto de Investigaciones Histórico Aeronauticas de Chile is available: https://mailchi.mp/c922e8d2ad88/httpdocshistoriaaeronauticadechileclaerohistoriarevista_aerohistoria_2018_n12pdf-ee94b3cb93-2852281?e=fb1a2d94db.

News from the National Commissions

New President of the Brazilian Commission of Military History

Brigadier General Marcio Tadeu Bettega Bergo is the new President of the Instituto de Geografia e História Militar do Brasil, which is affiliated to ICMH as Brazilian Commission of Military History. Col. Claudio Skora Rosty is the Vice-President and Secretary in charge of contacts with ICMH.

New President of the Italian Commission of Military History

On 7th October 2018, Captain (Navy) Michele Spezzano replaced Colonel Massimo Bettini as Head of the Historical Office of the Defence Staff/Italian Commission of Military History. Col. Bettini had been appointed in 2015 and has taken now another appointment. Capt. Spezzano among his previous appointments was Director of Studies of the School of Non-Commissioned Officers of the Italian Navy and Defence *attache* in Madrid. He already attended the Congress in Israel.

Mongolia

The President received in November an enquiry from the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, informing that the Mongolian Military Museum is considering to join the International Commission of Military History and asking information. The Secretary General is following the issue.