



International Society of Military Sciences - a hub and platform for mutual improvement through collaboration

Introduction to the International Society of Military Sciences (ISMS)

Presentation for BGen Mumba Mahela and faculty of the
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Outline

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“The purpose of the Society is to build a network for the creation, development, exchange and diffusion of research and knowledge about war, conflict management and peace support efforts.”

A hub and platform for mutual improvement through collaboration



Founding the Society

- Driven by knowledge-intensive environment and increasing emphasis on military education (Bon and Feichtinger, 2010)
- Amsterdam May 2008, meeting attended by the Netherlands Defence Academy, Baltic Defence College, Finnish National Defence University, Austrian National Defence Academy, Norwegian Military Academy, Swedish Defence University, Royal Military College of Canada
- Incorporated under Netherlands law as a professional society
- Letter of intent signed as Memorandum of Agreement by Rectors or Commandants of Member Organizations in Copenhagen, October 2008

<https://www.isofms.org/resource/dm/155894630113151610.pdf?n=2010+ABon-WFeichtinger.pdf&inline=yes>



Letter of Intent, 2008

- *The undersigned institutions of Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, and the Baltic Defence College (later referred to as the institutions) agree to establish a society intended to further research and academic education in military arts and sciences in the broadest sense. This association is titled International Society of Military Sciences (hereafter referred to as the Society).*
- *The purpose of the Society is to build a network for the creation, development, exchange and diffusion of research and knowledge about war, conflict management and peace support efforts.*
- *The Society will establish an annual conference, and one or more workshops per year. Activities include communications and publications to support a research network within topics such as: war studies; military history; military technology; command and control, leadership and basic competence; law and ethics; security and defence policy and strategy; armed forces and society; and defence economics and management.*





Intent, Charter, Expansion

2008 Letter of Intent

- Signed at Copenhagen, October 2008
- Establish the society as a network to create, develop, exchange research knowledge about war, conflict management and peace support efforts
- Hold an annual conference and one or more workshops
- Representatives constitute the Council as the highest governing body
- Institution hosting the conference provides the secretariat
- Initially for four years
- Annual consideration of applications for new membership

2011 Charter

- Adopted at Stockholm, 2011
- 8 articles: Purpose, membership, presidency, council, annual conference, accession, dissolution, revision

2017 Amendments

- Position of secretary established, three-year term renewable
- Elaborated article 2: "small" and "democratic" defined

2018 Expansion

- Category of Partner Institution established



Members and Partners

- Article 2, Membership, of the 2018 Charter explains the difference between member and partner institutions.
- Member institutions must be in small, democratic countries, sit on the Council, and accept responsibility for hosting the annual conference in rotation.
- Partner institutions are not restricted by these conditions. “Any institution participating regularly in the conferences and events of the society and sharing information about their practice of military arts and sciences through the ISMS web site may be designated a Partner Institution by decision of the Council. Partner Institutions are not represented on Council, but are free to communicate with Council through the President and secretariat.”



Working Groups

1. War Studies
 2. Military History
 3. Military Technology
 4. Leadership, Command and Control
 5. Military Law and Ethics
 6. Security and Defence Policy
 7. Armed Forces and Society
 8. Defence Economics and Management
 9. Military Education (added 2012)
 10. Strategy (added 2019)
- Chairs approved by Council
 - Solicit and organize submissions to the annual conference
 - Varying degrees of continuing activity between conferences
 - Develop projects of common interest, e.g. book projects, special issues in military journals
 - Framework for mentoring and supporting scholars in the field
 - Network for answering questions, finding experts



Communiqué Adopted At the Commandants' Meeting, Warsaw 2018

- Note the decade of progress with satisfaction
- Diverse and well-timed activities
- Contribute to society of practitioners and scholars defining and pursuing military sciences
- Development of web site
- Endorse the progress in ambition and outreach
- Closer contact with organizations and societies with similar aims is timely and positive development



Commemorative coin issued by Poland's War Studies University for the tenth anniversary of ISMS



Future Direction of the ISMS

Endorsed by Commandants and Rectors 2018

- Increase the number of member institutions based on active contact with relevant and eligible potential members
- Fine-tune the mechanisms of cooperation
- Organized conferences of increasing scholarly quality and relevance for military education and military affairs
- Diversify the activities of ISMS, including more ad hoc activities under the ISMS banner
- Continue and complete the present work on the Handbook of Military Sciences



Summary of Activities and Contributions

- Annual ISMS Conference
- Publication of Abstracts and Proceedings
- Staff College Enrichment via conferences and seminars
- Periodic Workshops, e.g. PhD
- Development of Scholars, young scholars
- ISMS web site - resources
- Networking and exchanges
- Curriculum sharing
- Handbook of Military Sciences
<https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-030-02866-4>
- Link to the International Association of Military Academies (IAMA) and biennial conference
<http://www.iama-aiam.org>
- Expanding membership: Partner institutions
- Support to external evaluations and reviews
- International grant applications, e.g. Portugal-Norway-Iceland



Conferences

- Annual flagship event, normally in October or November
- Rotating president, conference committee, now scientific commission in addition
- Opportunity for Staff College students to participate and present (requires calendar coordination)
- Conference theme – loose umbrella with contemporary relevance
- Accommodate WG objectives, projects, e.g. WG1 book on nature of war
- Panels: a group of 3-5 scholarly abstracts reflecting new research (similar to academic conferences)
- Roundtables: structured discussion of new ideas, rapporteurs and curated notes
- Business meetings: benchmarking and collaboration by specialists supporting defence education
- Awards: recognition of support and service

2009 Amsterdam, NL
2010 Tartu, Estonia
2011 Stockholm, Sweden
2012 Kingston, Canada
2013 Copenhagen, Denmark
2014 Vienna, Austria
2015 Helsinki, Finland
2016 Warsaw, Poland
2017 Oslo, Norway
2018 Warsaw, Poland (10th)
2019 Vienna, Austria
2020 Helsinki, Finland (virtual)
2021 Kingston, Canada (virtual)
2022 Lisbon, Portugal
2023 Copenhagen, Denmark
2024 Stockholm, Sweden



Ongoing Projects

- Springer Handbook of Military Sciences – a major open-access online reference book, edited by Anders Sookermy, Norwegian Defence University College
- Future of War – an edited book project, led by Marzena Zakowska, Polish War Studies University, intended for staff college audiences in “majority countries”
- International Conference – North Atlantic Security and Defense Strategy (NASDS 2022), Portugal, Norway, Iceland
- IAMA Collaboration: knowledge sharing, facilitating exchanges, event organization and hosting, network of military academies, develop thematic working groups



Business Meetings

- **Military Research Centres**
 - Seminars, publications, external funding, coordinate dates and invitations
- **Military Librarians**
 - Teaching, information literacy, sharing best practices and points of access
- **Military Journal Editors**
 - Peer review, internationalizing boards, getting indexed, sharing best practices
- **Initiated in Vienna in 2019**
- **Led by practitioners**
- **National connections with civilian counterparts**
- **National connections with Defence networks**
- **International connections with military counterparts**



Examples of Mutual Assistance

- External examiners or second readers for theses
- Support for external evaluations or quality assurance processes
- Locations for sabbaticals or exchanges
- International expert input for seminars or workshops
- Peer review for journal articles
- International military presence on editorial boards or managing boards
- A welcoming international environment for new military scholars



Even before Covid, ISMS was welcoming free online participation at in-person events. Here, a panel from Azerbaijan attends the Military Education Working Group of the 2018 conference in Warsaw



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Questions, Discussion

What special knowledge can you share with the military science community?

Do you have a research centre or links to a defence research agency?

Would your librarian like to join the international network of military science librarians?

Do you have a military journal?

Would you like to discuss curriculum (content, context, pedagogy)?

Do you support a staff college or graduate degree programs?

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