



Uncertainty. What does 2016 hold for us?

It has been a few months since the last newsletter and I wanted to keep things ticking along and the Association and its interests fresh in people's minds. In retrospect to 2015:

- Whilst ISAF operations drew down in Afghanistan at the start of the year, we've seen no respite in the struggle against terrorism with numerous affiliated and unaffiliated factions operating in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia and in small operational cells in Europe.
- The world's financial markets remain challenged with global economic and environmental uncertainty. Commodities remain at low prices after the record highs of the last super-cycle.
- The movement of displaced refugees and economic migrants has cast a shadow over Europe and proves to be a divisive concern across European governments and also governments in North America.
- We've seen several major natural disasters and in many cases the response has been inconsistent in delivery and goals, both by the host nation and the responders/donors.
- At the end of year we'll see the COP21 UN Climate Change conference in Paris, a city still reeling from the terrorist activity a fortnight ago. It's hard to see tangible steps forward on environmental and climate matters when eyes seem to be so firmly fixed on the menace of Daesh, Boko Haram, the Taliban and our old favourite al-Qaeda. Of course many would advocate that it has been at least in part the environmental stresses that have led to some of these groups in the first place!
- We've seen significant increases in cyber threats but with notable actions of non-state actors such as the Anonymous group taking it upon themselves to commence vigilante activity in support in anti-Daesh efforts.

My personal views and predictions for the 2016:

- Ongoing strife in the wider Middle East, exacerbated by increased complexity in factions

and their objectives (Russia/Assad, Turkey/NATO, the Kurdish).

- Increased pressure on dwindling or strategically conserved natural resources, e.g. REE.
- An increase in state sponsored and criminal cyber threats.
- A geostrategic stand-off in the South China Sea between China and a range of factions including Vietnam, the Philippines and the US Navy.
- Immigration challenges in Europe leading to the collapse of Europe's borderless Schengen Area
- European Union instability with continued economic pressures and the impacts of potential future GREXIT and/or BREXIT.
- Oil prices to remain low, leading to increased pressure on the Gulf states and other nations who are more reliant on resource revenues.
- Metal prices to remain low, leading to increased stresses on those states who's GDP relies more heavily on mining.
- Widespread and record adverse effects related to the El Niño phenomenon.

The geosciences will have an input in almost all of the above predictions and so I suspect that we'll have another busy year.

All that remains for me to do is to wish you all the very best for the festive season and the New Year.

Best regards, Drew.

2015 PROCEEDINGS UPDATE

Annapolis 2015 and previous conferences

Prof Peter Guth has requested that all of those wishing to submit papers for the next proceedings volume do so as soon as possible. A reminder that this volume will include papers from the 2015 Annapolis event as well as papers that have been unpublished from previous events, e.g. Quebec (2007) or Aviemore (2013) conferences.

Peter can be reached at this email: pguth@usna.edu or through the Association Secretary.

NOTICES

From Association Members

Ty Ferre - University of Arizona - *I will be the Darcy Lecturer for 2016 ([link](#)). Lecture Topic: **Seeing Things Differently: Rethinking the Relationship between Data and Models**. I think that there may be interest in the topic of my talk in the Military Geosciences community. But, I have to admit, I really don't have good contacts there. Who would you suggest contacting to gauge interest? Ideally, the contact would be someone at a school or university with interest in hydrology and links to government and/or professional groups.*

12th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR MILITARY GEOSCIENCES

Stellenbosch, Western Cape, South Africa; 18 - 23 June 2017

Hennie and Jacques continue with planning for the next ICMG. The dates will be 18 to 23 June 2017. This will follow the usual event format of the opening and registration on the Sunday with the conference program starting on the Monday. The post conference field trip will commence on Saturday the 24 June and end somewhere during that week - details are still to be confirmed.

At present, the conference venue will be STIAS conference center, Stellenbosch. This is not cast in stone, but a preliminary booking has been made to keep the venue available. More details in due course. An event has been created on the Facebook and LinkedIn Group pages.

OBITUARY

Terence George Miller, 1918-2015

A member of the Territorial Army Corps of Engineers Geological Group and advisor on terrain trafficability, 'TG' had a long and illustrious career, initially in the army of WW2 and then in academia. His obituary was recently published in the Geoscientist magazine - [LINK](#).

NEWS

A selection of articles and news over the past few months:

BBC News, 20 July 2015 - A hidden network of tunnels built underneath the White Cliffs of Dover during World War Two has opened to the public. The Fan Bay Deep Shelter was carved out of chalk in just 100 days to help guard Britain's coastline (video article) - [LINK](#).

The Telegraph, 15 August 2015 - Coastal erosion along the south coast is exposing stretches of Britain's WWII defences, presenting historians with a unique insight into the physical remains of Britain's wartime past - [LINK](#).

Science Daily, 27 August 2015 - What would a tsunami in the Mediterranean look like? A team of European researchers have developed a model to simulate the impact of tsunamis generated by earthquakes and applied it to the Eastern Mediterranean. The results show how tsunami waves could hit and inundate coastal areas in southern Italy and Greece - [LINK](#).

BBC News, 21 August 2015 - Political disturbance and armed conflict in the Middle East since 2010 have had the unintended consequence of making the air cleaner. Researchers say that in countries like Syria and Iraq, levels of air pollutants have fallen dramatically - [LINK](#).

Science Daily, 26 August 2015 - Mechanism behind 'strange' earthquakes discovered. It's not a huge mystery why Los Angeles experiences earthquakes. The city sits near a boundary between two tectonic plates -- they shift, we shake. But what about places that aren't along tectonic plate boundaries? - [LINK](#).

BBC News, 25 November 2015 - What was discovered in secret IS tunnels in Sinjar, Iraq? Hundreds of metres of underground tunnels used by Islamic State militants under the Iraqi city of Sinjar have been discovered by Kurdish forces. Sinjar was retaken by Kurdish and coalition forces on 12 November. Video footage shows tunnels dug under the houses by IS militants to protect them from regular coalition airstrikes - [LINK](#).

Al Jazeera & The Daily Mail, 8 November 2015 - Serving or former Russian soldiers have been geolocated in Syria, bloggers have said today, suggesting the Kremlin's operation stretches well beyond its air campaign. The Conflict Intelligence Team (CIT), a group of Russian investigative bloggers, used social media to locate serving or ex-soldiers in the country - [LINK1](#), [LINK2](#).

The Geological Society, November 2015 - 1944: When mud was a military matter. As we come to the end of 'The Year of Mud', Dave Greenwood looks back to the Second World War when mud became a matter of life and death. - [LINK](#).

i24 News, 27 September 2015 - Scientists baffled by Middle East dust storm. Most popular theory is that Syrian civil war means that agricultural land has not been tended to - [LINK](#).

BBC News, 11 October 2015 - Japan: Citizens clamour for Tokyo disaster manual. A manual to help people in Tokyo prepare for disasters has proved so popular that local officials have complained that they are being sold on the internet for profit. Article [LINK](#). Manual [LINK](#).

Tech Times, 25 September 2015 - Iceland's Bardarbunga Volcano Releases More Toxic Gas Than All Of Europe's Industry. In 2014, the six-month eruption of Iceland's Bardarbunga volcano disgorged enough lava to cover a Manhattan-sized area. Research proved the volcano emitted three times more toxic gas than all man-made sources in Europe combined. On certain days, the volcanic giant vomited a staggering 120,000 tons of toxic gases - [LINK](#).

Science Alert, 23 September 2015 - The Syrian war has caused the first-ever withdrawal from the doomsday seed vault. The civil war in Syria has prompted the first withdrawal from the Arctic 'doomsday vault' - a seed storage unit built on an island between Norway and the North Pole, to safe-guard the world's food supply in the event of a global catastrophe, such as an outbreak of disease or nuclear war - [LINK](#).

Guardian, 9 September 2015 - Tackle climate change or face resource wars, Lord Ashdown warns. Refugee crisis is a 'rehearsal' for a vast humanitarian disaster that will soon unfold if we fail to act on global warming, former Lib Dem leader tells Climate New Network - [LINK](#).

NEWSLETTER & SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

You have received this newsletter as you have previously attended, or have previously expressed an interest in attending, the **International Conference on Military Geosciences**. Or I might know that you have an interest in the Military Geosciences. In any case, I hope you'll enjoy reading the newsletter but if you do not want to receive this in the future, please use the **Un-subscribe** link in the footer below. Please also feel free to use the **Profile Update** link to keep us informed of your contact details.

The **International Association for Military Geosciences** is a not-for-profit organization, administered by its members and represented by a Coordinating Committee. Membership in the Association is free and open to researchers and practitioners of military geology and geography and associated fields. Membership is open to all with no distinction of religion, nationality, gender or language.

If you have any recommendations or suggestions for the group and this newsletter, please get in touch. Equally, please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone whom you know who might be interested.

In addition to this newsletter there is also a 'private' LinkedIn Group and a 'secret' Facebook Group. I am aware of the reservations of many about using such groups but would encourage their use if at all possible to help build our online community and improve our ability to discuss and share knowledge.

Facebook  LinkedIn 

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