



IAMG Biennial General Meeting Minutes 2024

Chairman: Hennie Smit (HS), Former Association President, on behalf of Eric McDonald (EM), Association President who was unable to join via virtual means.

Secretary: Drew Craig (DC), Association Secretary was not present due to overseas commitments. These minutes were compiled from the recorded BGM video.

Details: 1300hrs - 1342hrs, Friday, 14 June 2024; hosted by the Faculty of Military Sciences at Stellenbosch University, and held at the Lord Charles Hotel and Conference Centre, Somerset West, Western Cape, South Africa.

Present: 38 members and attendees of the 15th International Conference on Military Geosciences (ICMG); including 5 virtual attendees.

Apologies: Drew Craig, Eric McDonald

1. **Welcome and Opening Statement from the President:** HS chaired the BGM due to EM not being able to attend via virtual means.

HS passed on some pre-meeting notes from DC. Where appropriate these notes have been incorporated into the minutes below, but his core message was as follows:

“The world remains a challenging and dynamic environment. The needs of the military geosciences, from tactical to operation and strategic levels remains extant, albeit perhaps not adequately understood or appreciate by respective Chains of Command and/or their political masters.

Therefore, it’s all the more pertinent that this Association and this conference series endures, and that we do all we can to increase visibility and membership.”

HS took the opportunity to take the attendees through the 2022 BGM minutes.

HS extended his thanks, on behalf of the attendees for Ivan Henrico (IH) and his team for organising the conference.

2. **Agreement and acceptance of minutes from the 2022 BGM in Charlston.** Proposed by HS and seconded by IH.
3. **Proceedings:**
 - a. **2022 Charleston:** HS has had correspondence with EM on two publications: 1) a Springer book volume, and 2) a special edition of a journal . The USA team are busy with both of these.



Francis Galgano (FG) noted frustration at the pace of the development of proceedings, and that he would email EM on this matter. His frustration was on the time it was taking relative to the currency of the paper content/data.

Action: EM to provide an update to authors on progress as soon as possible.

- b. **2024 Stellenbosh:** IH has confirmed that there will be two ICMG24 publications: 1) a Springer book volume, and 2) a volume with SUNMedia (Stellenbosch University publication). Guidance on drafting, submissions, and editing will follow shortly.

4. **Future ICMG:**

- a. **2026 U.S. Military Academy, West Point, USA:** Mark Read (MR) delivered a presentation and proposed USMA for ICMG26, June 2026.

Action: DC to coordinate with the Council to confirm USMA's nomination for ICMG26.

- b. **2028 Rome, Italy:** Aldino Bondesan (AB) flagged Rome as a potential venue for ICMG28. No further details at this time but highlighted several proven routes (ICMG19) through which to publish proceedings.
- c. **United Kingdom:** DC has offered to see whether he can get the Association involved with some UK Mil Eng events, even if they are only virtual events.

- 7. **Constitution:** no changes to the constitution were proposed.

8. **Council**

- a. ICMG 2022 Charleston Representative - Brad Sion
- b. ICMG 2024 Stellenbosch, South Africa - Ivan Henrico
- c. ICMG 2026 USMA, USA - provisionally, Chris Fuhriman
- d. Past President - Hennie Smit

9. **Election of Officers**

- a. **President** – EM remains as President of the IAMG for the 2022 – 2026 term.
- b. **Secretary** – DC re-elected unopposed for a further two years. Proposed by HS; seconded by IH.
- c. **Additional officers** – no additional officers elected.

- 10. **Membership.** The need for new and young members was once again emphasized by numerous attendees. HS noted the encouraging number of young members who have attended ICMG24.

IH commented on how far and wide ICMG24 was publicised and that overall attendance numbers were disappointing, especially the low numbers of virtual participants. The Association needs to look at how to increase membership and conference attendance.



FG commented on the reduced participation of UK delegates over the 2022 and 2024 conferences, noting that this is a great loss to the international community. He requested that Ted Rose (TR) and Peter Doyle (PD), as UK principal participants, see what could be done with DC to regenerate interest from UK academic/serving military geoscientist. MR reiterated this issue as a concern, but also hopes that he might be able to attract more Canadian participation for a USMA hosted ICMG26.

AB emphasised the benefits of increasing the Association and Conference's international footprint, e.g. France, Asia, South America. He recommended that the best methodology for this would be harvest email contact details from published papers on this subject, and then proactively market in advance on future ICMGs. This may also help to attract younger members.

Judy Ehlen recommended that we source potential members via those who edit or peer review papers on our subjects of interest.

HS highlighted that significant effort has been made to attract new participants and that all members should attempt to use their own networks.

11. **Communication:** HS reiterated comments from the last BGM that an annual or bi-annual virtual meeting of Council may help to improve communication. This point was supported by AB.

Action: DC to liaise with the Council to set dates for such meetings.

AB noted the benefits of increasing the number of newsletters through the year, 3 or 4 times per year. [DC comment – notices are posted onto the IAMG website¹ and also social media, namely LinkedIn² and X³. In order to sustain 3 or 4 newsletters per annum, there's a need for proactive engagement from across the membership to provide content].

Action: DC will review a means to better build a portfolio of content for periodical release to the membership list.

12. **Funding.** There remains no need for formalized funding within the Association. Current costs for the website are covered '*pro-bono*' by DC⁴. HS requested that the organisers for ICMG26 and future iterations seek a means of funding this to relieve DC of the burden.

13. **Any Other Business:**

TR commended the conference team and their technical support for pulling the conference together. On the matter of UK participation and younger members, TR noted that he and many others in the UK have been attempting to do so. He highlighted factors such as the decline

¹ <http://militarygeoscience.org/newsletters/>

² <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8333511/>

³ <https://x.com/MilGeoscience>

⁴ DC notes the cost per annum, for website hosting and email, is GBP 143.86, inc VAT.



across UK universities of geological departments, and ever higher pressures on the UK military forces and their resources. Nevertheless, TR highlighted the limited UK military geologists over history who have carried the flag – we will continue to do our best! TR emphasised the need to get conference publications out quickly.

PD highlighted the need to look at the broadest range of subjects, not to focus too heavily on 'geology'. Noted huge public interest in military geosciences, e.g. D-Day geology. PD edits "Geology Today" (Wiley) and suggested an article to build interest and momentum. Will liaise with TR and others to see what might be done. Echoes TR's view that the virtual participation has worked well – a very positive evolution of the conference format. [DC comment – would suggest that we also look to provide something for the "Geoscientist" and "Geographical" magazines].

Peter Imanuel (PI) commended the conference team for such an exceptional and perfect event. Recommended broader integration of undergraduate students when possible. Also, broader and more timely notice of news on these subjects.

Peter Guth (PG) enjoyed the conference, despite the time zone difference. Understands the challenges around getting the publications out in a timely fashion. Joining the conference virtually, regrets the inability of joining the field trips but looks forward to a hopeful return to the USA in 2026.

14. **Closing Comments.** HS reiterated his thanks to IH and his team for the organization of the conference and closed the meeting.
15. **Next Meeting.** Details to be confirmed but will be held as part of the 16th ICMG in June 2026 (ICMG26), likely to be at USMA in the USA.