

Possible topics for Papers

Annual Conference of the International Committee of Museums and Collections of Arms and Military History (ICOMAM) 6-10 October 2012, Oman.

Inspiration for possible topics for papers might be found in any of the following suggestions but the organization committee encourages everybody to submit other topics of research related to the main themes.

Session 1: Small Arms in Oman and the Arabian Province

- The dominance of the matchlock (in Oman) until the last century
- The Martini rifle, its rivals and its antecedents including the Peabody Martini
- The distribution of the flintlock in the Middle East
- Iconic arms over the centuries (in Oman the abu futilla and somma)
- Edged weapons and firearms carried to reflect rank or status
- The issue and usage of the Martini Henry and its associated arms in India
- The Martini in use from the 1880s to present day
- Arabic edged weapons in their variant forms
- European bolt action rifles: their distribution and adaptation
- ...

Session 2: Fortifications and Ordnance in Oman and the Arabian Peninsula

- The military architecture of the Arabian peninsula
- The adaptation of Omani castles and forts to cannon
- Crusader castles: their origins and influence in the Middle East
- The Palace castle of Al Hazm and its Portugese Cannon
- The dominance of British ordnance in Oman
- The development of the gun carriage from 1550 to 1850
- ...

Session 3: Oman as bridge between East and West

- Oman as a naval power in its struggle against Portugal and later
- Muscat, the *entrepot* for the Middle East and its arm supply, 1880 – 1908
- The British/Oman military and strategic relationship between 1800 and 1960
- The USA's gun trade with the Middle East 1850 -1950
- The manufacture of arms at Liege and their export to the Middle East
- Birmingham as the arms manufacturer to the world. Its makers, arms categories etc
- Franco – Omani relations over the centuries – en route to India or other wise
- Oman the link in the telegraph from England to India, civil and military
- ...

Session 4: Firearms & Museums – legislation and new tendencies

- The deliberate suppression of firearms from display in many museums, can it be justified?
- Harmonization of the firearms legislation in Europe: a beneficial or harmful move?

- The UN Arms Trade Treaty - is it really a threat to the museum and collector of arms?
- Is the deactivation of firearms ever justifiable and if deactivation must be tolerated what standards should govern it?
- Can a definition for the division between historic and modern arms ever be agreed at any level, regional, national or continental?
- Firearms amnesties can offer a superb opportunity for national and regional museums but is in final the balance positive?
- ...

Session 5: Current research related to military heritage and the East

- Investment collecting is the enemy of understanding our arms heritage through research?
- Research into historic small arms may involve recreating their correct firing and usage. Europe seems divided on this point in its approach to the subject.
- The traditional approach to the history of the Middle East, which gives weight to historic Western military figures, is now politically unacceptable to the present governments of these countries. How should this be resolved in museums?
- Countries like Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are consciously exploiting the relics of their colonial past – a factor which has stimulated research and the development of museums: opportunities - dangers?
- Reports ongoing research into military heritage in any middle eastern or far eastern country
- Reports ongoing research into the relationship and the mutual influence on military heritage between the middle eastern and western countries