

1ST Women in CISM Week

In 2006 the North American Liaison Office (NALO), introduced the concept of forming a Women in CISM Americas Committee (WICA) to promote women in the Americas to support the efforts of the Women in CISM Commission (WICC). Major Paulette Thomas accepted the position of Chairperson and the United States provided Ms Claudia Berwager, a member of the Women in CISM Commission as Deputy Chairperson. Each nation in the Americas was given the opportunity to appoint a military woman to this committee. Eight nations appointed representatives. The first WICA meeting was held from 17 to 22 June 2007 in Ottawa, Canada.

During this meeting the representatives designed the Women in CISM Week, to be held 15-21 June 2008. It was decided that the activities would consist of a symposium low-level sporting events whereby military women of all ages and athletic abilities from all CISM nations would compete in a stimulating environment.

In December 2007, during the CISM Board of Director in Ottawa, Canada, the Canadian Chief of Delegation, Brigadier- General David Martin, informed the Board that Canada would host the first Women in CISM Week in Kingston, Ontario, 15-21 June 2008. That week of friendship through sport was organized by Canada and the Women in CISM Americas Committee.

That was the first and very important event that provided the women in CISM militaries an opportunity to come together to share ideas, participate in sport activities and to foster the true meaning of CISM motto *Friendship through sport*. It also provided an occasion when military women could examine ways in which they could assist in making CISM a better and more progressive world organization through their involvement.

2nd International Women in CISM Conference

The second international women in CISM event was organized by South African Delegation to CISM, in the city of Durban from 23 to 28 October 2010. In Durban, women involved in military sports could gather to discuss important issues. The President of Women in CISM Commission, Colonel Rinnete Hulme, opened the discussions about women in CISM approaches with the first presentation *“What and who are women in CISM”*. She explained some historical facts related to the evolution of this issue in CISM and about the role of the Women in CISM Commission. Then CISM Sports Director, Lieutenant Colonel Suzana Tkavc, presented *“Involvement of women in CISM”*. She provided a brief overview of women in all different CISM positions in the past, as well as the current situation. The following day she opened the session with the presentation *“Development in CISM - Where CISM stands and where CISM is going”*, focusing on CISM as a worldwide organization.

The military approach of women was presented by three lecturers. Major General Memela-Motumi delivered a very passionate and motivating speech on *“Women claiming their space in the military”*. As she is the only female Major General in the South African National Defense Force, she shared her very interesting experience which gave to all participants a deep insight on the issue of the women in the military, with all obstacles and sometimes difficult situations on the way of a female military career. Lieutenant Colonel Fiina Amupolo shared a very actual perspective with her presentation *“A soldier, sports woman and mother”*. Her focus was on daily life of women in the Armed Forces and how to fulfill and balance all life duties. Lieutenant Colonel Suzana Tkavc delivered a lecture on *“Physical training and its functions in the Armed Forces”*. Besides the basic role of military Physical Fitness Training, she stated that women also meet many other aspects related to this issue.

The sport approach was in the air in every single day of the conference and it could bring all attendees together. Mrs. N Lentsoane discussed the *“Challenges and opportunities for women to participate in the management, administration and development of sport”*. She presented some women`s evolution points in sports not only at national level, but also at world level. She gave an insight of the importance of women in sports, particularly related to the administrative structures of the Olympic movement and gender equity. Sports and recreation was presented by Miss Nonkongozelo Ndiki with the title *“Sports Development in South Africa”*. She presented an overall situation of the sports field in South Africa, focusing on the excellence at all levels of participation in sport & recreation in order to improve social cohesion, nation building and the quality of life of all South Africans. Lieutenant Colonel Gae Lephalo talked about young talents with the presentation *“Soldier`s time, capabilities and expertise can make a difference in the development of young talent”*. Her lecture focused on the different approaches and experiences of a woman who has been a coach of young male footballers.

The last presentation was related to the psychological approach: *“It`s all in you – discover it. Yourself: a psychological perspective”* given by Ms. Modi Marishane. She presented a psychological perspective, which focused on discussions about the role of women in the society and how we can succeed in daily work and life understanding the differences between genders.