

## CISM Contribution to sport

Colonel Arthur ZECHNER

I should like to start my presentation with a few general remarks on the mutual relationship between the military and sport. To facilitate a better understanding of my deliberations, we must approach the subject at hand via the medium of the "military", since CISM was founded in 1948 by the armed forces of 5 countries, and presently is supported by the armed forces of as many as 91 member countries.

Sport has been influenced in a decisive way by the military and, conversely, has in many ways influenced the military, especially with regard to training. This interaction has reached hitherto unknown proportions.

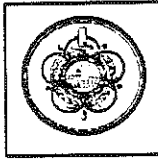
Naturally, this general statement and those to follow have a wide application, both with respect to place and time, and, together with those to follow, refer to "sport" as a common word in everyday language as a general sub-category of the term "physical exercise", and not to the limiting meaning of a technical definition.

Physical exercises have been performed during the earliest phases of human development. They result from bodily movements required for utility, work, and fight outdoors, leading to basic activities like running, jumping, throwing, lifting, carrying, wrestling, and others that are now trained in delineated areas to facilitate the struggle for existence. The overwhelming number of all modern disciplines thus trace their roots back to those early times, and many of them are directly linked with military applications. All culture groups in all periods of history bear witness to this fact. Let me give you two examples : during antiquity the Olympic Games marked the first heydays of sport and included boxing, wrestling, racing and the like, all of which are disciplines with an undoubtedly military character. Medieval tournaments are, in essence, ritualized forms of contemporary combat. One always finds that sport and the military have common roots, and, as another generalizing statement, one can say that both are aimed at forming the body.

Therefore, it is a logical consequence that the military has made and still makes important contributions towards the methodology of physical education. This can be demonstrated by a large number of examples like the manuals in the fields of fencing, riding, swimming, and skiing, just to mention a few examples from Central Europe.

The mutual influence between sport and the military at this day and age can be exemplified by the following aspects :

- the way sport influences military training,
- competitive sport in the armed forces, and
- institutions that deal with sport in the armed forces.



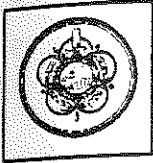
First, let me say a word about the nomenclature with respect to the improvement of the individual's bodily abilities. This varies from army to army and covers the terms of "physical education", "physical exercises", "physical training", "fitness training" up to and including "sport". The semantic differences give a rough indication of how the different armies view the purpose of this part of the whole training regime.

There can, however, be no doubt about its function as an educational factor. This results from the fact that personal achievements in the field of sport can, apart from their intrinsic value, be contributing factors towards achievements in other areas, and thus lead to a higher level of education and social status. Whenever the term "education" is used in this respect, this includes socialization in general and also specific training. Whereas one school of thought tends to emphasize the mediatorship of physical education (sport), representatives of a more teaching oriented approach of sport want to see it as a field of education in its own right which mainly is a goal in itself and which leads to better bodily fitness in combat training as a spin-off.

Apart from that, the practical application is always based on the same means : Games and exercises from the big repertoire of sport, combined with specific findings of any kind that have proved their general validity in many ways in the field of sport.

Developments in this century can be grouped in three important periods.

- Before the first world war physical training in the armed forces consisted mainly of gymnastics, fencing, horsemanship and marksmanship. As a result of the trench war (1914-1918), unit commanders discovered the value of the sport-game as a means to build up moral strength and to maintain physical balance. The military competition which took place in PARIS on the grounds created for it through the inspiration of General PERSHING marked the first devoted effort toward sport in the military.
- With the second world war (1939-1945), combat techniques came into play, based on human and land factors; soldier-athletes, parachutists and combat swimmers appeared, as well as fighter pilots whose physical and sport training had to be intensive and multifarious. Sports practised by the military began to get organized.
- The third period is already closely connected with CISM. Its foundation in 1948, following the short experience of the Allied Forces Sports Council, provided military sport with the impetus and the appeal that its promoters had envisioned. Sports units began to take root all over. The CISM clinic organized in 1968 by General G. LEBORGNE at the Interarmy School for Sports in FONTAINEBLEAU discussed the current state of military sports and noted that the methods used in physical training of the military are taking more and more inspiration from the methods practised by athletes in competition. The present situation can best be characterized by the following slogan : "No military without sport - No sport without the military".



Based on my hitherto very sketchy deliberations, permit me now to present CISM's contribution to sport.

Article 1 of the CISM statutes which deals with CISM's aims and principles states that, in order to put its goals into practice, namely

- to encourage military physical training and sports activities in every appropriate way,
- to develop friendly relations between the armed forces of the member nations,
- to develop mutual technical assistance between the member nations,
- to contribute towards a progressive, balanced development of youth and
- to contribute towards the world-wide effort for universal peace,

#### CISM

- entrusts its member nations with the staging of the different military sports events organized under its leadership,
- undertakes the organization of certain events or secures their financing,
- establishes permanent relationship between the armed forces for the purpose of exchanging ideas and encourages research in the field of physical training and sport,
- encourages and supports all measures designed to establish and strengthen the bonds of friendship between military sportsmen, thereby helping to build better international understanding, based on love of one's country and respect for that of others and
- cooperates, whenever possible, with other international sports organizations.

Therefore, CISM activities in both their content and procedures cover the whole spectrum of sport activities. This includes both inventive and reproductive activities, giving and receiving, learning and teaching, as well as submission and partnership on an equal footing.

As a matter of principle, any discipline can be cultivated and championships organized.

Military world championships are organized in 24 disciplines on a regular basis.

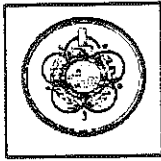
CISM's calendar includes more than 100 championships per year and thus is a valuable addition to competitive activities on an international basis.

The results achieved in most of these championships are equivalent to those of a civilian event of the same rank. Some world records have been established in CISM events.

Three new disciplines (its pentathlons) were started by CISM. Without its massive support, a number of disciplines could not have reached their present standard or would not be able to maintain it on its present level.

Competitive sport in the disciplines concerned receives valuable impulses from the "study days" held for competitors, trainers, and coaches during individual military championships.

In addition to that, CISM indirectly supports competitive sport via the national military sport schools operated by CISM members.



Clinics and symposia serve to help those member countries that have not yet reached a proper standard or that have just started with the relevant disciplines. In most cases, meaningful help of this kind is only possible through CISM with its appropriate structures.

Finally, clinics and symposia serve to update and develop knowledge and experience with the purpose of supporting general body training in the armed forces, an activity that more often than not has repercussions well beyond its immediate sphere of influence.

The subject of "Olympism" and the problem of "education", too, will be dealt with sufficiently in two other presentations. The swiftly progressing overcommercialization of parts of competitive sport is a fact that is inherent in sport as such, as is the world-wide search for a new identity and new goals in the military, and both give rise to profound changes that will be reflected in the sport policy of CISM in the not too distant future.

Whatever the consequences will be, there is justified hope that their sum total will increasingly point in the direction of the "anthroposophic principles" that have been laid down a century ago by Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN and which are a permanent challenge in the form of "olympism" for all of us who deal with the youth of the world.

The CISM Charter, as being studied by the CISM academy at present, and which I will read to you to conclude my presentation, certainly is an appropriate step in this direction.

"Physical and sports activities constitute important factors of stability, health and development of an individual; they are basic elements of education, culture and social life. The daily practice of physical and sports activities of an acceptable quality is an undeniable right for each individual belonging to the armed forces of the world regardless of rank, sex, age, capabilities or social condition."