

# Civilian Soldier

It was probably Empress Maria-Theresia of Austria-Hungary herself who in 1763 ordered a survey of the Czech lands of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. It took her imperial surveyors, stemming from the military, four years to map the provinces. In 1780, under the reign of Maria-Theresia's son Joseph, maps were rectified and improved. During the reign of Emperor Franz II new surveys were embarked upon because of the poor quality of the first. These new surveys took from 1819 till 1858.

In their project "Georeferencing and Cartographic Analysis of Historical Military Mappings", Ružena Zimová, Jaroslav Peříněk and Bohuslav Veverka of the Czech Technical University in Prague investigated the positional accuracy of the old maps produced during these two military mapping exercises. You can read about the outcome of their research project in this issue of GIM International. Back to the empress, or more to her motives and those of her descendant Franz in calling for these surveys. It's surely no wild bet that the emperor and empress meant to strengthen their position of power by outlining their empire in maps as proof of their rightful ownership. Herewith generals could wave farewell to anybody, foreign army or native people, who might claim rights denied them by the imperial powers.

What a long a way we've come! What a long way the surveyor has come. Also in this month's issue of GIM International is an interview by editor Chrit Lemmen with the president of FIG, Professor dr Holger Magel. He wants surveyors and geodesists to play an active role in those places where spatial planning, development decisions and land-related conflict situations arise and have to be solved. According to Magel, surveyors can contribute to conflict resolution and politicians need to be aware of this potential. UN agencies and national institutions faced with instances of threatening conflict are already calling in and consulting FIG experts; and this particular role of the organisation and its individual members needs to grow in future. This is no new idea. Back in 2004 FIG General Assembly accepted the vision and definition that surveyors cover responsibility from "the single parcel up to the planet Mars".

Magel in his final year as FIG president is hosting the FIG XXIII Congress "Shaping the Change" in his hometown of Munich, Germany. He expresses the wish that all visitors to Munich for the days of the FIG Congress and Intergeo will be motivated to take responsibility for building a better and more peaceful world. Surveyors as civilian soldiers for the cause of peace. I think that's a good thought and one that I would like to subscribe to! Idealistic, maybe, but still...a good thought.

p.s. The crew of GIM International will be at the Intergeo and FIG Congress. Look for us in the halls or on stand C3.3046. See you there!