



SHAPE Officers' Association Annual Symposium 2011

On Thursday, 13 October, and Friday, 14 October, the SHAPE Officers' Association held its Annual Symposium at SHAPE. It was the 51st occasion for former and present SHAPE Officers and their civilian equivalent to meet, exchange ideas and be informed about the present engagements of NATO and SHAPE. Of course, this year's meeting was not as grand as last year's 50th symposium, but the Executive Committee had organized an attractive and interesting programme. It was especially important, because the SOA and the ExCom had during the last year attempted to modernise the organisation and adjust its aims and goals to the important developments and changes SHAPE and NATO had undergone during the last years.

The symposium started on Thursday afternoon with a meeting of the Excom and the representatives of the American and German Chapters. Here, last minute adjustments were made to the agenda to be worked during the General Assembly on Friday. After this important meeting, the members who had arrived from many different countries in Europe



and overseas got together during a Happy Hour to refresh old friendships and make new ones. This Happy Hour was held in the Casteau Resort Hotel, where also many of the members stayed.

The main event started on Friday morning in the SHAPE Club with the General Assembly. Some 60 members had found their way to attend this important occasion - important, because decisions vital to the continued existence of the SOA had to be made.



Since General George A. Joulwan, US Army ret, had resigned as President of the SOA, it was necessary to elect a new President. As the constitution of the SOA demanded, the outgoing President proposed as new President General James L. Jones, US Marine Corps ret. The ExCom





nominated General Jones as candidate for President of the SOA to the General Assembly, who in turn elected him to be the new President.

But more important was the approval of the amended constitution of the SOA, which in its new version reflected the changes and developments SHAPE, NATO and the SOA had



undergone. The acting chairman of the ExCom, LtCol Günter Bretschneider, DEU AF ret, presented the constitution to the General Assembly, pointed out the important changes, explained the process, that led to the present version and answered the questions put forward by the members present. The Amended Constitution of the SOA was then accepted by an almost unanimous vote.

Two very important issues to be decided by the General Assembly were the new structures of annual dues and their implementation. Both issues were approved by a large majority.



The last question to be discussed was the creation of an SOA Scholarship fund, proposed by the ExCom member Scott Sunquist. This 1.000 € Scholarship should be effective already in the coming year and be open to graduates of SHAPE schools and direct descendants of SOA members. The scholarship shall provide assistance in the advanced study of Languages, History, Political Sciences and International Affairs. The exact procedures in selecting candidates for the scholarship will be discussed by the ExCom during the first meetings coming year.



After an enjoyable lunch with many of the SOA members in the SHAPE Club, the meeting continued in the afternoon with a briefing by ACO. The update gave



information and explanation about the ongoing NATO missions. This interesting briefing was followed by a presentation from Jack Haas about the development and employment of the new F35 striker airplane. For many of the members present, this gave a lot of insight into the problems of conceiving, developing and building of a system of this magnitude.



This ended the plenary session of the SOA Symposium 2011. The traditional official dinner was to follow in the evening. As already last year, this was held in the Ecole Hôtelière Provinciale in Saint Ghislain. As is to be expected from an institution of this rang, the food was excellent. The wine very good and the general presentation left nothing to be desired. We passed an evening among friends in lively conversation and friendly exchange of thoughts.



This ended the SOA Annual Symposium 2011 and everybody expressed the desire to continue in this matter, to follow the direction in which the General assembly pointed and which the ExCom will execute during the coming months. We are also looking forward to making the SOA again an important factor in the life of former and present SHAPIANS by making the organisation more present in the daily routine of SHAPE and involving more SHAPIANS in the undertakings of the New SOA.



Pictures by LtCol Dariusz Kacperczyk, Pol. Army, and Col Ron Love, US AF ret.