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Sydney/Australia, 02 – 06 May 2011

**35<sup>th</sup> COMEDS Plenary Meeting**  
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M. LÜPKE

## Meeting of military dentists in Salvador/Brazil



*Group photo of participants at the SDFDS Congress, 30 August – 2 September 2010.*

Once a year, dentists from around the world come together at the annual FDI World Dental Association Federation congress. A total of 168 national dental associations belong to this international organisation. Its most recent annual congress was held in the city of Salvador in Brazil from 2 to 6 September 2010. As has become customary, the Section of Defence Forces Dental Services (SDFDS), the military wing, as it were, of the FDI, held its annual meeting prior to the congress from 30 August to 1 September 2010. The committee, under the SDFDS Chairman, **Maj-General Zhao Yimin** (China), had again managed to put together an exciting programme of events. The widespread interest in the congress was made apparent by the fact that again military dentists from all five continents would be participating. The Dental Services of the Bundeswehr were also represented by a small delegation led

by the Dental Surgeon General, Rear **Admiral Dr. Wolfgang Barth**.

In keeping with what has now become traditional, all participants met for an informal social get-together in Salvador on the evening prior to the opening of the congress, an event that is generally used by the participants to personally introduce themselves to their colleagues and exchange information.

The congress events programme was officially initiated on 30 August by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman of the SDFDS, **Colonel Arthur C. Scott** (USA). Over the following two days, military dental surgeons from Australia, Brazil, Germany, France, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Japan, Sweden, Turkey and the USA spoke on various aspects of military medicine. It is not



*Five participants representing three continents: colleagues from Brazil, Turkey, USA, South Africa and Canada*



Dental Surgeon General of the Bundeswehr, Rear Admiral Dr. W. Barth in conversation with a Brazilian colleague



The author with a colleague from Canada

possible in the space available here to provide a detailed summary of all the presentations, so that it has been necessary to pick out a selected few. Several of the speakers outlined the dental and oral surgical support provided in the context of humanitarian missions undertaken by the various nations following the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. Among these, **Colonel James Taylor** (Canada) described the work of Canadian military dentists who were sent out as part of the personnel of a 100-bed field hospital to provide initial treatment of earthquake victims with oral injuries. Three teams, to each of which a military dentist was attached, were also dispatched to Haiti by the Canadian government to identify fatalities, primarily those with Canadian citizenship. Sadly, this disaster again demonstrates how important dental records are when it comes to the identification of victims. **Captain Beatrice Venturi Bonelli** (Brazil) reported on the support provided by Brazilian military dentists, who were also involved in helping victims as members of the Brazilian field hospital. Not unexpectedly, efforts during the first weeks were generally aimed at providing primary dental treatment to victims. However, the complete lack of anything like adequate hygiene and the local climate meant that even minor oral injuries developed into serious disorders. As the general population had had little access to dental care even before the earthquake, elective surgery became necessary with increasing frequency as the mission progressed.

**Maj Chad C. Bangarter** (USA) outlined the procedures for emergency intervention in cases of dental fracture and partial and total luxation. Every dentist can be confronted with such complications, so that acquirement of the corresponding treatment skills is a priority concern, and not just for dentists serving in the field. The fact that similar problems can be encountered in different situations was demonstrated by the presentation given

by **Colonel Andrew Gray** (New Zealand). He explained that the dental health care services in New Zealand have had to restrict the treatment of cases that are classified as emergencies in view of the fact that financial resources are becoming ever more limited. An increasingly important factor in this regard is the information that can be gleaned through medical research conducted by the military authorities, and the necessity of promoting such research was also underlined in the talk given by **GPCaptain Greg Mahoney** (Australia).

On behalf of the Bundeswehr Dental Services, **Lieutenant Colonel Michael Lüpke** spoke about the current status of implantology in the Bundeswehr. The guidelines applying to this form of treatment were of particular interest to those attending, and several colleagues used the opportunity during breaks to ask further questions about this aspect.

On completion of the programme, it was the duty of Colonel Arthur C. Scott to deliver the closing address of the congress; to quote from his speech: "We do not know when the next conflict or disaster will again make it necessary for us to work in collaboration. But we do now know each other personally and also know that we can rely on each other." ■

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**Oct 1980** Entry German Armed Forces as Reserve Officers Cadet // **Oct 1983** Re-entry as Medical Officers Cadet // **1983-1988** Study of dental medicine at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen. **1989-1992** Unit Dental Officer // **1992-1995** Specialist training in Paradontology at Wilhelms-University Münster // **1996** Qualified Consultant Paradontologist // **Since 1996** Head of Spezialist Dental Centre Military Hospital Hamburg // **2005 + 2007** Deployment to ISAF, Afghanistan

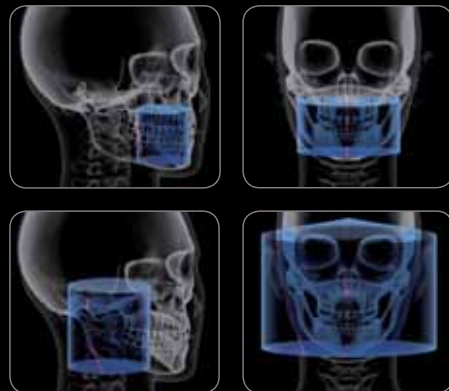


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