

**TO CEASE FIRE, TO CEASE HOSTILITIES?
SINCE MODERN TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY
CALL FOR PAPERS**

The Defense Historical Service and the Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr, the Institute of War and Peace Studies (IHMC-UMR 8066, Paris 1-Sorbonne) are organizing on **the 27th and 28th November 2018** an international symposium entitled “To cease fire, to cease hostilities? Since modern times to the present day.”

Over the last few years, the historiography of military history has benefited from a profound renewal of ideas, objects and methods in the wake of John Keegan's works. Despite a growing interest in the surrender phenomenon (P. Vo-Ha) or in the experience of war captivity (F. Théofilakis, F. Cochet) and more generally in the fate of the vanquished (C. Defrance, C. Horel and F.-X. Nérard), the analysis of the end of hostilities still remains a blind spot. However, the organizers of the current conference are convinced that this problem is a particularly fertile prism through which the war object should be examined: The way we stop fighting says much about how the war is thought and waged.

For a long time, historiography privileged the reading of modern and contemporary times in accordance to the belief that, since 1650 a controlled and regulated war appeared (J.-U. Nef, J. Meyer), replacing the paroxysmal and absolute violence that dominated wars of religion (D. Crouzet), before the wars of the Revolution initiated the process of totalisation (J.-Y. Guiomar, D. Bell), fully realized and completed during the two World Wars (J. Horne). However, the researches on the cessation of fighting allow us today to rethink this scheme, based on the hypothesis that war often leaves room for negotiations, even localized, punctual and limited (T. Ashworth), also when the violence seems paroxysmal and unlimited (T. Snyder, Ch. Ingrao), motivated by ideological, cultural, anthropological reasons. The organizers of this conference put a question mark on whether the transactional and evolutionary model of war exists and would it provide a continuum of modalities allowing to cease hostilities - and therefore the violence - from the truce arranged for several hours to many days at the level of one army unit, to the surrender of entire armies. In other words, the purpose of this conference is to question the traditional categories of conflict - regulated war, war of annihilation, "total" war, by the yardstick of the economy of ceasing the hostilities, thought as close to the battlefield as possible.

Ceasefire, a rational calculation?

The end of hostilities is both military and political matter. First, we seek to question the process leading to the end of fighting, whether it is decided at the highest level of the politico-military sphere or that it seems dictated by the evolution of the military situation, on multiple length scales. The decision to cease fire rather than continue the fight results from a streamlined form of calculation, depending on how one judges his own strength and the enemy's power. It also depends on the structure of the battlefield: fighting on land, sea, in the air, European or colonial territories, weapons used, structure of engaged armies, etc. Finally, it also concerns meeting the specific belligerents' expectations; they seek profits or assess risks in the short and medium term. Isn't it just a simple and temporary suspension of weapons intended for the management of wounded bodies on the battlefield, or for the evacuation of civilians? The decision to end fighting is undeniably the result of political and / or military power struggles on multiple length scales whose contours must be traced. The moment when the warring parties decide to stop the fire/are forced to stop fighting, will be tracked. We will also examine the practicalities such as: contact and negotiations with the enemy and the way

to proceed it. We will be particularly attentive to the figure of the mediator: diplomats, interpreters, civil and spiritual authorities, etc.

Actors, obedience/disobedience

One of the conference's aims is to follow different sides involved in the decision to ceasing the fighting, or on the contrary, to follow those who refuse it. These issues will be considered at all scales, from ministerial offices and central staffs, commanding theaters to the soldiers themselves, to local communities near the front. What are their margins of maneuver? The multiplicity of actors with divergent interests is not without consequence on the form of the ceasefire. This can be imposed from above, but the pressure for negotiation can also emerge from the battlefield itself, when the contact executives decide to spare their men or when the soldiers cannot/want to fight more. It is thus a question of using the motivations of fighters who wish to cease fire against the orders, or on the contrary refuse the ceasefire in spite of these. The analysis of the cessation of fighting allows us also to question the authority relationship as well as obedience/disobedience in armed forces. We will also discuss the way the one that decides to surrender is perceived basing our observations on military culture.

Violations and negotiations

It is our goal to take a closer look at the way the cessation of fighting is executed. It will be necessary to understand finely the process of ending the fights through the prism of deployed rituals. We will trace the implementation temporality of this process, possible local resistance, and the respect of the engagements taken, or, on the contrary, violations committed. Finally, planning the fate of vanquishing/wounded/prisoners' is an important aspect of this analysis focused primarily on the cessation of fighting, it says a lot about the nature of the war itself. Far from being solely and always the result of deployment of unlimited violence, or of the savagery, violations committed against the vanquished sides may also be a matter of transactional violence, based on the logic of reciprocity and reprisals.

Shared rules and code of honor

This conference aims to question in a diachronic and comparative perspective, norms and practices - legal, social and cultural - regulating a possible ceasefire. This choice - or this non-choice - embraces a broad repertoire of actions, evolving since the Ancien Régime and in the memory of the past. What other options are legally, militarily, culturally possible, and how? It will be an opportunity to look again at the nature of relevant wars in the light of cessation of fighting. Do we understand the fundamental differences between civil war, "total" war, colonial conquest war? The end of fighting depends certainly on an economy of means, but also on the way one represents itself and qualifies the enemy. How do these dimensions articulate?

In summary, the information is presented under the following headings:

- Process of taking the decision and the concrete terms on the implementation of the cessation of fighting
- Civilian and military actors and their room for maneuver
- Cessation of fighting, transgressions and violence

Papers can be submitted in **French** or **English**.

Languages for the symposium will be **French** and **English**.

Please send us a **500-word abstract** and a **short bio** by **July 1st, 2018**.

Accepted speakers will be notified by **July 15th, 2018**.

The organizers of the symposium will bear the costs of:

- Travelling tickets, accommodations and catering for non-Parisians speakers
- Midday lunches
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Please direct questions and submissions to: colloque.ceasefire@gmail.com

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