

EUROPE



AMCF VP – Revd Cdr (rtd) Mike Terry



AMCF VP – Lt Col (rtd) Timo Vehvilainen



PSO: MMI – Revd Grozdan Stoevski



Europe Religion

Roman Catholic 45%

Orthodox 35%

Protestant 20%

Sunni Islam

Shia Islam

Buddhism

Judaism





Europe North and East

AMCF VP – Lt Col (rtd) Timo Vehvilainen

-  Armenia 
-  Azerbaijan 
-  Belarus 
-  Bulgaria 
-  Cyprus 
-  Denmark 
-  Estonia 
-  Finland 
-  Georgia 
-  Greece 



-  Iceland 
-  Latvia 
-  Lithuania 
-  N Macedonia 
-  Norway 
-  Poland 
-  Russia 
-  Sweden 
-  Turkey 
-  Ukraine 

Key

- Active MCF(s) 
- Contacts only 
- No contacts 

Population: 876,768,170































Military/Reserves/Internal Security Forces: 8,524,860 **ie 1:103**

NB: No or weak MCF does not mean there is no Christian witness in the military of all these nations.



Europe South and Central

AMCF VP – Revd Cdr (rtd) Mike Terry

-  Albania 
-  Austria  
-  Belgium 
-  Bosnia Herze'na 
-  Croatia 
-  Czech Republic 
-  France 
-  Germany  
-  Hungary 
-  Ireland 
-  Italy 
-  Kosovo 
-  Malta 
-  Moldova 
-  Netherlands 



-  Portugal 
-  Romania 
-  Serbia 
-  Slovakia 
-  Slovenia 
-  Spain 
-  Switzerland 
-  United Kingdom  
-  Andorra 
-  San Marino 
-  Liechtenstein 
-  Luxembourg 
-  Vatican City 
-  Monaco 
-  Montenegro 

Key

- Active MCF(s) 
- Contacts only 
- No contacts 

Population:

456,792,166

Military/Reserves/Internal Security Forces: 2,679,095

ie 1:170

NB: No or weak MCF does not mean there is no Christian witness in the military of all these nations.



WAR IN EUROPE

Daily Prayers

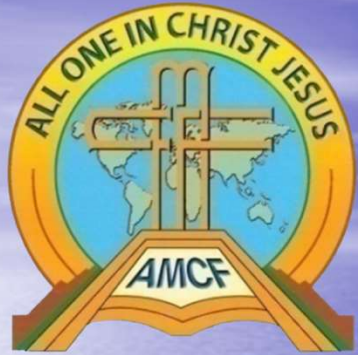
MCF leaders

Members in both nations

Ukraine Aid



On 24 February 2022, Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine in breach of the UN Charter and international law. European nations strongly condemn Russia's military actions in Ukraine and unequivocally support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, self-determination and territorial integrity.



EUROPEAN EVENTS

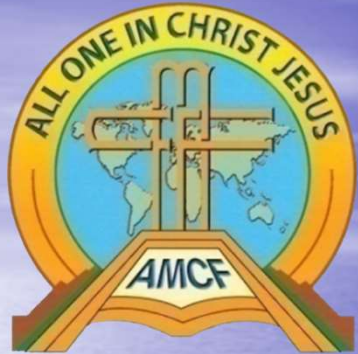
Annual European Military
Christian Meeting, EMCM

Adria Interaction

Expresate



EUROPEAN EVENTS



Annual European Military
Christian Meeting, EMCM



Adria Interaction



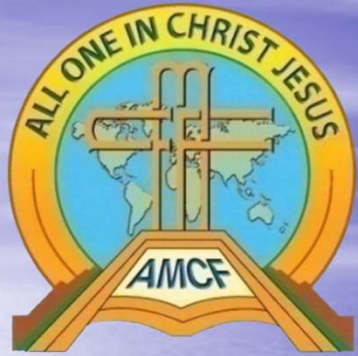
Expresate



Adventure, Skiing

MCF Conferences





OTHER EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES

PTSD, Suicide Prevention
Mentoring Programmes
Christian English Camps
Ecumenical Engagement
AMI – Ethics, contacts
IOC – Alpha for Orthodox



MILITARY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
"Tutti uno in Cristo Gesù" (Galati 3:28)





OTHER EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES BEYOND EUROPE

RIMP

IBERIA

TMTI/MMTI





Region: Europe, Africa and Oceania

Vice Presidents: Timo & Mike



VISION:

A network of mutually-supportive, growing MCFs with dedicated disciples of Jesus reaching out to their militaries in the power of the Holy Spirit with the love of God to transform their nations.

TOP 3 CHALLENGES FOR EACH (PRAYER REQUESTS):

1. Work load vs opportunities
2. Unvisited nations and those with no MCF.
3. MCF members and leaders over busy!
4. 'Joshua' mentoring programmes to grow.
5. Can we have more than 2 VPs please?
6. The fire of the Holy Spirit to fall on Europe afresh!

GOALS/OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT 5-10 YEARS:

1. Re-establish monthly virtual prayer and fellowship support meeting for MCF Leaders.
2. Deepen ecumenical interactions for the practical benefit of the sailor, soldier and aviator on the front line. (AMI, IOC)
3. Spread good practice eg Joshua 'mentoring' programmes, sub-regional meetings
4. Make more of 'strategic hubs' eg SHAPE, Shrivenham, Brussels, NATO HQs.
5. Find ways to encourage military Christians in nations with no or weak MCFs.



EUROPE



Thank you
and
goodbye!

WCON24 PRESENTATION,

MANUSCRIPT

30 min in total

MIKE TERRY AND TIMO VEHVILAINEN AMCF VP EUROPE

1. **Introduction** 2 min
 - SLIDE 1
 - Mike and Timo (JMT) DO WE NEED ALL THIS?

Introduction of Vice Presidents: Commander, RN John Michael Terry and Lieutenant Colonel G.S., FIN A Timo Vehviläinen. Mike married Nicky-Sue after he had spent 31 years as a single man in the Royal Navy as a Marine Engineer. They were ordained together as ministers in the Anglican church and now run a small church on the English south coast.

Timo is married to Heli and they have four boys who have followed Timo's career in the Finnish Army for 25 years. He retired finally two years ago and now helps to run a Christian college as well as sitting on the Synod of the Finnish Lutheran church. We both love our work with the military and enjoy bringing our different skills and experiences together for the sake of God in our amazing continent. We couldn't do our work without the amazing Revd Grozdan Stoevski, the Bulgarian MMI Team Leader for Europe, his lovely Serbian wife, Slavica, and his varied team from around the continent.

Europe, Nations and MCF's in Region 4 min each TPV then JMT

SLIDE 2 – EUROPEAN CONTEXT

- Europe is a multi-religious continent. All three main confessions of the Christian faith exist here in strength: Roman Catholic, Orthodox and many expressions of Protestantism: the slide shows the predominant faith in each nation. Note it also includes pockets of Islam in the Balkans and Turkey, remnants of the Ottoman Empire that only finally collapsed after WW1. There is even a pocket of Buddhism! We believe that each of the Christian confessions has something to teach the others as well as many things to learn. That is why, in Europe, we work with all the Christian confessions for we take 'All One in Christ Jesus' seriously, and are enriched by that. After all, what is the divide between our churches in comparison to the original division between Jew and Gentile that St Paul addressed in our AMCF key verse?

AMCF began in Europe in 1930, when officers from the military Christian fellowships in Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and UK met in a Dutch Baron's castle. They met, from previously warring nations and a neutral one, with the hope of praying to prevent another catastrophe like WW1. Although that hope was frustrated their Association has grown, through God's grace, to the world-wide family we see today. So, following this example of gathering people from across divisions and traditions, we, in Europe, have MCFs that are open to all Christian confessions, and which operate on many different models. Some have formal national membership lists while others operate locally via social media. We also now have two that are led by ladies, and the British AFCU has a triplet of equal Directors with two ladies and one man at the helm. The Czech MCF, is 80% protestant and 20% Catholic – the two denominations worked so closely together under communism and saw no good reason to stop cooperating when the Berlin Wall collapsed! Our Polish MCF is led by a Catholic and in Ukraine we have separate MCFs for Protestants and Orthodox while Austria and Germany have separate Protestant and Catholic fellowships; The UK has an all-denominations MCF, a fellowship purely for Roman Catholics and several other fellowships based on ethnic backgrounds. It also has several civilian-based organisations dedicated to supporting military Christians. Some of our

MCFs are purely military, most include Defence civilians, others include armed police while yet others include 'first-responder services'. We are a very mixed bag but a very happy family all committed both to making the love of God in Jesus Christ and in the power of His Holy Spirit made known in the armed forces of our continent, and to helping current disciples become closer followers of our Lord and Master in their work, family life and play.

Since European history of our 50 nation states is so interwoven across the nations, and with the religious make-up that we have, it's very necessary for the European VPs work closely together, even while we concentrate on our own regions. And we hope that you will see this cooperation in our presentation today. So what about our regions?

SLIDE 3 AMCF Europe NE – Timo

- There are 20 nation states in my region.
- Nations are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine.
- Include the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) as Europe traditionally seen as extending to the Ural Mountains – hence I look after Russia but concentrate on the western end, while VP Asia can oversee eastern Russia better.
- Armenia is commonly seen as the oldest Christian country in the world – Christianity was formally adopted in 310 AD – 3 years before Emperor Constantine gave formal assent to Christianity in the Roman Empire and 70 years before it was declared the official Roman state religion in 380! Ethiopia was 330 AD. Still conflict – Azeri's (Moslem majority!)
- Presentation of nations in alphabetical order. Mentioning nations with MCF, highlighting nations with two MCF's and without MCF's. Mentioning cross border responsibilities: around Baltic Sea: Finland-Estonia, Sweden-Latvia, Norway-Lithuania. In Nordic Countries: Norway-Denmark.
- 2 MCF's in one country
- Nations without a MCF

SLIDE 4 AMCF Europe SC - Mike

- There are 30 nation states in my region. Some are tiny principalities who rely on neighbouring states for national defence but have their own armed police or very small militia but no MCF or contacts: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino. Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro and The Vatican City are also small states with small military/ coast-guard forces but, again no MCFs. Occasional contacts have not proved fruitful – yet! The Irish Republic has its own tri-service military but despite contacts in the past these have not borne the fruit of an MCF. Those are the nations with a red sign.
- Bosnia-Herzegovena, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia are all nations where we have various contacts but there is not enough critical mass or impetus to create a formal MCF.
- Both Hungary and Belgium used to have flourishing MCFs but these died some years ago: our Hungarian contact still remains in loose contact with other military Christians but there is no structured MCF left. We have just regained contact with the last Belgian MCF leader through the Dutch fellowship.
- Belgium is fascinating; this small country houses three major international military HQs: SHAPE, NATO's AFCENT and the HQ of the EU Army. We'd love to create an international network from this Belgian opportunity, where Christians from different nations are stationed in these places. So these nations are all orange. Now the greens!

- Albania has a thriving MCF of around 20 families, despite being a Moslem-majority country with much corruption, and only having emerged from a strongly oppressive Communist regime in the mid-1990s. The MCF is on its second generation of members now!
- Austria's Protestant MCF contains different, largely autonomous sub-groups in seven of the nation's nine regions, holding regional and national events. Until recently they hosted an annual European ski retreat. There is also a larger Catholic military fellowship led by the Catholic bishop to the Forces.
- Croatia's MCF started as a fellowship for preventing veterans of the war with Serbia committing suicide but included active duty personnel from 2013 following an exploratory visit by MMI. Their annual meeting draws delegates from several other European nations. They have produced several films with EU funding showing the power of Christian faith and forgiveness within military contexts, both in war and after war.
- The Czech MCF, AKA, is organised through its Facebook page with no formal membership but plenty of adherents! They have hosted our annual European Military Christian Meeting (EMCM) for three years now.
- France's Protestant MCF, UMCF, has around 250 members who meet regionally and nationally. They are key supporters of the annual international RIMP run by the Protestant military Chaplains which gathers military personnel from Europe and Francophone Africa.
- Germany's CoV Protestant Fellowship celebrated its 125th anniversary last year. With around 375 members and associates, 51 are active duty and, after a period of relative inactivity, numbers are rising and international engagement is increasing: Germans are now actively supporting AMCF military ministry in Africa. There is also an active Catholic fellowship, the GKS, whose leaders I know from interaction with AMI.
- Italy's fellowship, MCFI, formed in 2012 after a visit by me and my predecessor as VP, and now has around 500 members from the military, security and police forces, including wives. About 80% are active duty. Regionally based, with annual meetings, they are strong supporters of other international events.
- Kosovo is my smallest MCF, with only around 6 members. A small nation, it's 90% Moslem: Christians are a tiny minority. There is only tenuous contact and it is very hard to visit due to local tensions.
- Moldova is also a small country, but with a very active MCF who are supporting refugees, widows and orphans from Ukraine as well as running successful English camps for children with a Christian basis. Their leader, Mariana, is widow of their previous president, the energetic Eduard Rosca and (as far as I know) the first female MCF leader, at least in Europe.
- Netherlands MCF, NCOK, has existed since 1929 and has presence in many military bases at home and abroad, with a thriving younger generation. There is no formal membership list, by law, but they have around 500 email contacts with at least 100 active members. They sent help to the Dutch Antilles following recent storms and have a heart to see regenerated MCFs in Belgium and Denmark.
- Portugal has another small but effective MCF supporting a single protestant military chaplain alongside Catholic colleagues. They also have delegates from Lusophone African nations at their annual conferences, have strong connections with other Latin-based Mediterranean MCFs.
- Romania has a strong MCF that is growing and producing younger leaders: again there is only one Protestant military Chaplain but good links exist with the Orthodox chaplaincy and they are a great support for the Moldovans, with whom they share a language.
- Spain's current MCF, Mision 365, started as a Police fellowship but now includes military and emergency services personnel. Large, by European standards, with energetic members from all generations, their annual meeting draws international delegates from around Europe and even further abroad. Their last leader has recently moved to being president of the International Christian Police Fellowship and handed over to another lady, Naira Martin.

- Switzerland has an active combined military and police fellowship, with reservists being a large part of the population.
- UK's AFCU celebrated 175 years last year since the formation of the British Army Prayer Union. With around 3000 members of all ages, there is a strong prayer base and many activities. There is a recently-formed, small but growing Catholic fellowship, the Catholic Military Association, and fellowships based on ethnic lines, eg for Fijians and Nepalese in the UK Armed Forces.
- It's important to say that although there may be no formal MCF in a nation we don't believe there is no Christian witness there – God has his people in all nations of the world! And although the persecution in Europe is nothing like as life-threatening as other parts of the world, there are nations even within Europe where practicing the Christian faith as a military person, or holding Christian meetings in barracks is not permitted. Sometimes this is for religious reasons – eg Turkey – and sometimes for secular reasons, such a political fear of offending atheists or humanists.

International attendance at other major Staff Colleges in the region is another significant opportunity in Europe – in UK, France, Germany etc.

War in Europe

4 min Timo

SLIDE 5

- Ukraine
 - Russia
 - Belarus
 - Daily Prayers, Ukraine Aid
- War in Ukraine – official statement, challenges with members in both warfighting nations (family bonds etc.). Daily Prayers, Ukraine Aid. Major war using modern conventional and asymmetric warfare tactics – relative sizes & agility. War by proxy – major players – influences / input from Iran, China, India (BRICS), N Korea. China – exhausting western armaments – national consciences and war-scale production? Western aid by training and with some (slow!) arms supplies). Ukraine retaliations and strikes within Russia. Global effects eg grain, gas, oil supplies, realigning of political alliances. Christian input? Geneva convention?

European Events

6 min (both) Timo

SLIDE 6

- EMCM, the European Military Christian Meeting is our flagship European AMCF event. An annual, bi-regional long weekend event it's hosted by both European VPs with considerable assistance and involvement from MMI and ACCTS. Started in 2003 as a teaching and fellowship meeting to nurture MCF leaders it has doubled from the original 30 delegates from a dozen nations to almost 60: MCF leaders, national contacts, younger Joshuas and representatives of other military Christian organisations. During Covid it continued on zoom. In all 41 nations have been represented since 2003, receiving biblical teaching on living the Christian life in the military, creating helpful networks and enjoying fun, fellowship and worship.
- We have several sub-regional annual events also. Three are hosted by national MCFs, in Croatia Spain and Romania, while one, the summer Adventure Retreat or SAR, is hosted by MMI.
- ADRIA grew out of the annual Croatian MCF meeting when delegates and pastors from neighbouring nations, with and without MCFs, were invited to share the Croats' fellowship. International and local speakers lead the teaching which is mixed with cultural outings. It has also included an Interaction for potential MCF leaders and future VPs.

- EXPRESATE, at the other end of the Mediterranean, is a high-energy, beach-hotel based celebration of military Christian life on the Spanish Costa Blanca. Because the Spanish MCF started as a police fellowship there is a great mix of police and military from different nations and delegates come from all age brackets and have included Latin Americans – Patricia!

SLIDE 7

- The Summer Adventure Retreat (SAR) started in 2014 when our small annual summer sailing retreat in the Netherlands became too expensive. After investigating alternative locations the idea of a retreat based in a Bulgarian Black Sea beach resort was tried. Several different adventure activities were included alongside teaching and discussion of basic Christian ethics for military young leaders. This has now transformed into a hiking pilgrimage through southern Bulgaria and northern Greece, and including ancient Philippi and other Christian sites. With young military Christians accompanied by mature, experienced Christian leaders it has become a wonderful time for mentoring, teaching, discussion, fellowship and prayer.
- Skiing holidays have also always been popular ways to involve young European military Christians in our ministry, as well as providing evangelistic opportunities for not-yet believers. There have been several different forms of this over the years and our latest incarnation, again with international experienced military Christian leaders, is run by an energetic young Romanian Army Captain. She has a wonderful heart for evangelism and two Spanish Air Force Captains gave their lives to the Lord at this year's event.
- Individual national meetings are held across the continent, varying in format as we described in our introduction. We wanted all the founding nations of AMCF to be represented here so, with our AFCU delegates present in Brazil, we have chosen these three pictures to bring greetings to you all from events in Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden. Hola!

SLIDE 8 OTHER EUROPEAN ACTIVITIES

- Several important programmes run in different nations alongside the meetings and events: Suicide and PTSD are significant problems for the military and armed police in many European nations. We've noted already that the Croatian MCF was founded in response to high suicide rates. The Spanish MCF has set up a Government-sponsored suicide-prevention telephone help line to provide support for those threatening to kill themselves. The Portuguese, Italians and French are also engaged in this work and the British AFCU is active in sign-posting people to specialist support agencies. These are all signs of an ethical Christian response to a serious military problem.
- Issachar is an intentional mentoring programme recently started by the British AFCU to mentor young military Christians so they can grow into mature and influential future leaders; 'Joshuas' who can shape their environments for good and for God. The men of Issachar were those "who understood the times and knew what to do"! (1 Chron 12:32)
- Christian English Camps are run by the Moldovan MCF with the aim of encouraging children of military families to engage with the gospel. This work receives great support from Dick Barnes of ACCTS and has resulted in several youngsters declaring for Christ.
- AMI There are two major strands of ecumenical engagement in Europe, with the Roman Catholics and the various different Orthodox churches. AMI, the Apostolat Militaire International is a lay-led, international equivalent of AMCF focussed on enabling military Catholics to live out their Christian faith both in their work-place and in their family life. After over 25 years of engagement we are now ready to cooperate in forming practical military ethics for the Christian sailor, soldier or aviator serving on the front line and in the barracks.
- IOC The International Orthodox Consultation arose from a vision of Grozdan to bring together Orthodox bishops and military chaplains to discuss what Christian chaplaincy would look like in

an Orthodox context. This, among other things, has informed the formation of a Christian, though largely Orthodox, military chaplaincy in Ukraine as well as an Alpha for Orthodox.

- These two ecumenical engagements are a key part of European military Christians living out our AMCF motto: "All one in Jesus Christ". As we mentioned in our introduction our MCFs include all three of these Christian confessions and it is essential that we work more closely together, cooperating without compromise, for the good of God's kingdom on earth, as our world turns increasingly away from Him.

SLIDE 9 BEYOND EUROPE

- RIMP is run annually by the French Protestant Chaplaincy and brings together young military people from across Europe and Francophone Africa for daily worship, discussion, exchange of cultural histories and exposure to French Protestant history. It's a great forum for networking! This is Grozdan and Mike with the Slovenian Protestant Chaplain – a nation with no MCF but we now know both the Protestant and Catholic Chaplains, so a visit is planned...
- At IBERIA meetings the Portuguese MEP offers great hospitality and support to other Lusophone nations, particularly the poorer ones in Africa, and they even include the occasional Spanish-speaking delegates!
- TMTI/MMTI is a great adventure initiative for training young military Christians in southern African to become effective Christian leaders in their nations. Lately young serving Germans have been involved on the leadership team: we'd encourage all our MCFs to give their members this kind of opportunity.
- In all these events, regional, sub-regional and national, we have seen changes in format, periodicity, location and numbers attending. What is constant is God's faithfulness to us as we have sought his will, and to serve him in the military in Europe and beyond. Our context is unique, just like all the other regions are, and we are excited to be part of what God is doing in so many different areas. God is on the move – even in Europe!

VP's vision

5 min JMT

SLIDE 10 – SUMMARY AND PRAYER POINTS

To conclude: our vision is to see in Europe a network of mutually-supportive, growing MCFs with dedicated disciples of Jesus reaching out to their militaries in the power of the Holy Spirit with the love of God to transform their nations.

Our goals over the next 5 to 10 years, apart from finding a relief for Mike, are to:

1. Re-establish monthly virtual prayer and fellowship support meeting for MCF Leaders.
2. Deepen ecumenical interactions for the practical benefit of the sailor, soldier and aviator on the front line. (AMI, IOC)
3. Spread good practice eg Joshua 'mentoring' programmes, sub-regional meetings
4. Make more of our 'strategic hubs' eg SHAPE, Shrivenham, Brussels, NATO HQs.
5. Find ways to encourage military Christians in nations with no or weak MCFs.

Our challenges and prayer requests, three from each of us, are:

1. Our work loads are enormous, from our non-AMCF roles, yet the opportunities are many. We need great wisdom in how to spend our time and energy, and in direction for our priorities
2. To visit our unvisited nations and those with no MCF – for time, links, priorities and funds.
3. Our MCF members and leaders are over busy! Life in the military is increasingly demanding and family life is increasingly pressurised, reducing time available for MCF activities. This also feeds into the PTSD/Suicide problem mentioned earlier. Please pray for God's peace and strength for our MCFs.
4. 'Joshua' mentoring programmes to grow. Issachar is one example that we would like to see spread.
5. Can we have more than 2 VPs please? It would just help a lot!

6. The fire of the Holy Spirit to fall on Europe afresh! Urgent and persistent prayer for this is the fundamental need. Without this we can do nothing. With this we can do – everything asked by God!

SLIDE 11 **THANK YOU FOR LISTENING AND GOODBYE**

5 Sec

- highlighting VP cooperation and thanking AMCF P and PSO support