

THE GOLDEN AGE OF EN'LIGHT'ENED TROOPS AND SMALL WARS

Conference Date:	15-16 April 2019
Venue:	Croatian Institute of History (Hrvatski institut za povijest), Zagreb, Croatia
Submission Deadline:	<u>4 January 2019</u>
Summary Deadline (100 words):	15 February 2019
Conference Language:	English
Subject Fields:	Early Modern History and Period Studies, Political History / Studies, Military History, Humanities, Diplomacy and International Relations

Traditional European warfare during the long eighteenth century was characterized by large standing armies that fought open-field battles in rigid linear formations. These armies were made up of regular soldiers of the line drilled to keep rank, load quick and fire regular volleys. By the end of the seventeenth century, standing armies had not only become more professional but also grown from five-figure to six-figure strength. Larger professional armies required unprecedented financial support from the state, which heightened the attraction of irregular auxiliaries hired or mobilized for the duration of hostilities, that were cheaper and more reliable than mercenary troops. During the War of the Austrian Succession, the Aulic War Council in Vienna introduced irregular troops from the Austrian Military Frontier on a much larger scale than usual. Small war (*la petite guerre*) was the trademark of these so-called *Grenzer* and it originated from more than one hundred years of continuous skirmishing on the border between the Habsburg Monarchy and Ottoman Empire.

In order to counter this new threat on the battlefield in kind both the French and the Prussians decided to follow suit and raise irregular troops themselves. Irregular troops were soon drilled and disciplined into light troops. Since the mid-eighteenth century small war also became a common concern of military thinkers like the French officers Armand-François de la Croix and Thomas-Auguste Le Roy de Grandmaison, and a fashionable subject to write about. The technique of small war hardly changed until 1900, nor did the practical advice given in military treatises of the period. What did change radically was the function of partisan warfare. In eighteenth century military doctrine, even among the advocates of small war, the partisan always appeared in a supporting role, never in the centre of the stage.

This conference will focus on the long eighteenth century as the Golden Age of irregular warfare, especially the military and political significance of small wars within a broader European context. It intends to answer following questions: What was the impact of small war on traditional regular early modern warfare? For what reasons did the highest military circles praise or condemn irregular warfare? Who constituted these free companies and light troops, how and why were they recruited? What images and stereotypes prevailed of them with regard to regular troops and warfare? What can be concluded from comparisons between different frontier societies?

The organisers aims to bring together scholars, graduate students and early career researchers in the areas related to these themes in order to share and discuss views and research experiences. Even though it is to be expected that the conference will especially emphasize the *Grenzer* experience in small wars, for comparative reasons we particularly welcome papers on irregular and light troops from other countries.

We are inviting proposals for 20-minute conference papers on any of the aforementioned themes and questions. Papers proposals and short biographies should be submitted to Alexander Buczynski (alexander.buczynski@gmail.com) by Friday 4 January 2019.

There is no conference fee for attendees. Free accommodation for paper presenting authors will be provided by the conference organisers. Speakers that need a reimbursement of their travel expenses are kindly requested to inform us about the estimated price. Travel and accommodation expenses of participants not presenting a paper will not be compensated but we are willing to assist in finding good and affordable lodgings.