

## **Editorial**



*Major General Lino Loureiro Gonçalves  
Military Academy Commander*

Dear readers,

It is with particular pride and a deep sense of purpose that the Portuguese Military Academy presents this special edition of *Proelium*, dedicated to the International Seminar on Military Leadership (ISMIL), held on 15 and 16 May 2025. This event marked the first edition of an international seminar that is intended to become a regular, annual event, bringing together academics, researchers, and military professionals from Portugal, the United Kingdom, Spain, Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, and Romania in a space for strategic reflection on the contemporary challenges of military leadership.

ISMIL was structured around three major thematic panels, each preceded by a plenary opening session. In these sessions, invited speakers of recognised national and international relevance shared their insights on the key topics under discussion, setting the tone for the debates and framing the central issues of each area. These inaugural contributions, of high strategic and institutional value, helped enrich the overall framework of the seminar and promoted dialogue between different schools of thought and professional backgrounds.

Moreover, it is worth noting the welcome and opening speech by the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army, Lieutenant-General Paulo Emanuel Maia Pereira, which we also publish, as well as the presentation given by the keynote speaker, Lieutenant General João Boga Ribeiro, who addressed the subject Military Leadership Challenges in 2025. Both were fundamental to initiating the subsequent discussions.

Complementing these sessions, scientific communications were presented by researchers and professionals, forming the true core of ISMiL and the driving force behind this special edition of *Proelium*. These articles explore the themes in greater depth, grounded in empirical research and academic rigour, and offer a broad and critical perspective on the key challenges facing contemporary military leadership.

The first panel, Military Leadership and the War Challenges, was opened by Brigadier Leigh Drummond, from the Centre for Army Leadership (United Kingdom), and Lieutenant General Lemos Pires, Director General for National Defence Policy (Portugal), who reflected on the evolving nature of warfare and leadership in operational environments.

Following this, the articles included in this volume address, among other topics, psychological warfare as a strategic tool in the 21st century, the role of international humanitarian law as an ethical and legal framework in a volatile global system, and cultural factors in combat decision-making, with a case study on naval responses to attacks in the Red Sea. These contributions provide a well-founded analysis of modern armed conflicts and their impact on military leadership.

The second panel, Military Leadership and Technological Challenges, featured opening contributions from Colonel Anselmo del Moral Torres, from the Centro Universitario de la Guardia Civil (Spain), and Lieutenant Colonel Wilson Antunes, from the Military Laboratory Unit for Biological and Chemical Defence (Portugal), who explored the emerging connections between technology and command.

Alongside these reflections, the scientific articles now published examine the use of machine learning to predict self-leadership among military cadets, highlighting the potential of artificial intelligence to support leadership development, as well as the relationship between leadership styles, engagement, and motivation in the context of military academies. These studies illustrate the growing importance of technology as a tool to support leadership and optimise organisational performance.

The third and final panel, "Military Leadership and Human Challenges," was opened by Colonel Juan Pavón Coto from the Centro Universitario de la Defensa (Spain) and Lieutenant Colonel Nuno Monteiro from the Portuguese Armed Forces University Institute, who emphasised the centrality of the human dimension to effective command.

In line with this framework, the articles presented in this section of Proelium explore topics such as the prevention of PTSD among Portuguese peacekeepers, leadership self-efficacy in joint teams, the impact of servant leadership on psychological empowerment and engagement, and the influence of leadership styles on talent retention and stress management. Other papers address military leadership in the context of climate change and propose an "emotional toolbox" for leaders operating under demanding conditions. Together, these contributions reinforce the idea that leading today also means having a deep understanding of people – their limitations, motivations, and transformative potential. The success of this first edition of ISMiL was made possible thanks to the strategic support and institutional trust placed in it by General Eduardo Ferrão, Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army. The commitment to developing military leadership was instrumental in enabling the realisation of this vision. We are also deeply grateful to the foreign guest speakers, whose presence and thoughtful contributions enriched the seminar's debates and strengthened its international scope.

With ISMiL, the Portuguese Military Academy reaffirms its commitment to a form of leadership that combines operational excellence, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility. This special edition of Proelium is not merely a reflection.

May these pages serve as a starting point for new ideas, renewed dialogue, and, above all, for the sustained development of informed, visionary, and profoundly human military leadership.

Enjoy your reading!

Lisbon, the 30<sup>th</sup> of June of 2025,

*Major General Lino Loureiro Gonçalves*

*Military Academy Commander*

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.60746/8\\_16\\_42452](https://doi.org/10.60746/8_16_42452)