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|| Heritage  
and Future



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## Heritage and Future

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**C.A. Brebbia and C. Clark**

*Wessex Institute of Technology, UK*

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## Preface

The second International Conference on Defence Sites, Heritage and Future took place in Venice in 2014, following the success of the first meeting that took place in Portsmouth, UK in 2012.

The meeting was co-organised on this occasion by the Wessex Institute of Technology and the Arsenale of Venezia.

The Conference objective is to raise the knowledge of the scale, design and functions of defence sites. It brings a better understanding of the issues raised by their redundancy and the implications of different disposal processes for the land.

As defence priorities change, new weapons technology develops and political maps are redrawn, a huge variety of defence buildings and sites: barracks, training grounds, forts, arsenals, armouries, and naval and airforce bases are becoming redundant in different parts of the world. State land is disposed of in many different ways, ranging from sale to the highest bidder to free transfer to new community users. Former defence sites present new owners with difficult challenges: decontamination, new infrastructure, funding, physical adaptation and negotiation over different countries' conservation regimes. This conference explores these issues, focusing on innovative examples of sustainable new life in these often symbolically important sites.

Heritage tourism may place unacceptable pressures on fragile sites, so that visitors' experience needs to be carefully managed in order not to damage historic structures or the ecology. Understanding and respecting a defence site's history and significance is essential to appropriate new use, but its potential may not be recognised or respected. Some sites once dedicated to national security are being transformed by artistic activity, via rededication of whole sites, conversion of individual military buildings, and the construction of new galleries in former defence enclaves, temporary installations, festivals and arts events. Remote sites may need new infrastructure in order to reconnect them with the civilian world,

but countries with economic pressures may find financing new infrastructure hard to fund, or they may be overwhelmed by the sheer weight of their historic defence legacy.

This book contains papers presented at the Meeting. The Editors are grateful to the authors for the quality of their contributions and to the members of the International Scientific Advisory Committee for helping to select the papers.

The Editors  
Venice  
2014

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