



Maurice Carbonnell, Ingénieur général géographe  
(1923 – 2015)

Maurice Carbonnell was born on 20 September 1923 in Paris. With two baccalaureates (mathematics and philosophy), he passed the examination to become a student engineer for cartographic work in 1945 and entered the French *Institut géographique national* (IGN). Appointed to the IGN photogrammetry department in 1947, he took part in many field surveys between 1952 and 1955 (Morocco, Madagascar). In 1954, he was promoted to the highest engineer rank in IGN (*ingénieur géographe*). From 1955 to 1962, he was at the same time head of the overseas photogrammetric works department and photogrammetry professor at the IGN school, *Ecole nationale des sciences géographiques* (ENSG). During that time, he was on a temporary assignment to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a photogrammetry expert for the Vietnamese government, for 14 months beginning in October 1957. From November 1959 to February 1960, he supervised training courses at the “training centre for experts in international technical cooperation”. In 1961, at IGN France, he was involved in various studies concerned with glaciology, photo-interpretation and non-topographic applications. Between 1962 and 1972, he kept on pushing for the use of modern photogrammetric techniques and he attended many congresses, conferences and international symposia (in Moscow, Venice, Brussels, Vienna, Prague, Athens, Rome, Brno, Ottawa, Zurich, Teheran, Helsinki...).

In 1964, during the Venice congress, which brought together architects involved in heritage restoration work, Maurice Carbonnell, already famous for his participation in campaigns to save the Nubian monuments in Egypt, together with his Austrian friend and colleague Hans Foramitti, presented interesting projects involving photogrammetry. The Venice charter was signed immediately after that congress, and a new international organisation, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (**ICOMOS**) was founded. In 1968, immediately after the international colloquium on “the applications of photogrammetry to architecture” which was organised in Paris by Carbonnell, *the Comité international de photogrammétrie architecturale* (**CIPA**), a new scientific committee of ICOMOS established in collaboration with the International Society for Photogrammetry (ISP), was created in order to improve the links between photogrammetry experts and architects. Maurice Carbonnell was elected as first president of CIPA, and he remained president for 20 more years. Some days later, during the ISP Congress in Lausanne (July 1968), the Congress elected Maurice Carbonnell as President of ISP Technical Commission V dealing with non-topographic applications of photogrammetry.

Maurice Carbonnell also contributed to the creation of the French Society for

Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (SFPT) in 1959. He was the SFPT president from 1973 to 1977, and was Editor of its journal for 28 years.

Meanwhile, in IGN France, he was the head of the photogrammetry department in 1968, deputy head of the IGN production department in 1975, deputy head of the aerial activities department in 1976, and head of the aerial activities department in 1977. In 1979, he worked for the managing director as the main contact between IGN and various public or private national services or international scientific societies. Very much involved in teaching from the beginning of his career, Maurice Carbonnell became the head of the *Ecole nationale des sciences géographiques* (ENSG) in January 1981. He retired in 1984.

Maurice Carbonnell was an excellent engineer and communicator. He worked successfully in a number of positions. He was responsible for technical production in the field as well as in the office, in charge of studies and research related to photogrammetry, expert for a foreign government, head of a strategic IGN department, and president of national and international specialised scientific societies. He also wrote many high quality papers.

Finally, it is worthy of note that Maurice Carbonnell was officer of the French order of academic palms (1973) and *chevalier* (knight) of the French national order of merit (since 1969). He was also awarded the medal of research and technique of the French Academy of Architecture (1976).

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