

Personal Reflections on Beauty and Terror

Jonathan David Farley

Abstract The history of the Conference on Mathematical Methods in Counterterrorism is briefly described.

1 Shadows Strike

It was a Tuesday morning, and I awoke into a nightmare. The phone rang; a friend spoke. "Turn on the television," she said.

You couldn't see it at first. This was before anyone knew it had been caught on camera. All you could see was a plane disappearing behind a building, and a burst of hellfire.

Terrorism is the watchword of the day, and the fear – regardless of whether the threat is real or imagined – requires an antidote.

2 The "Thinking Man's Game"

The opening line of the Oscar-winning movie *A Beautiful Mind* is: "Mathematicians won the war." Winston Churchill recognized Alan Turing, the mathematician who had mastered the German codes, as the man who had perhaps made the single greatest individual contribution to Hitler's defeat. Bletchley Park is now a place out of legend. During the Cold War, research in game theory heated up, even as the first frosts descended on the Soviet East.

Now there is a new war. What is the new mathematics?

Jonathan David Farley
Institut für Algebra, Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, 4040 Linz, Austria, e-mail: latticetheory@gmail.com