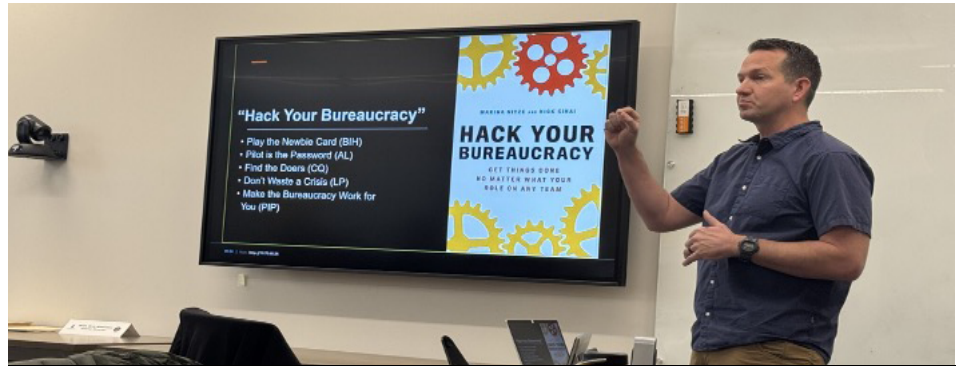




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Navy Commander Todd Fruehauf presents on *Hack Your Bureaucracy* at the US Army War College Innovation Champions Course, guiding participants through the book's key strategies for navigating complex systems and driving change within organizations.

INNOVATION CHAMPIONS COURSE: BRIDGING THE CHASM FROM IDEA TO ADOPTION

By Professor Kristan J. Wheaton

In November 2024, the Center for Strategic Leadership at the US Army War College piloted the Innovation Champions Course, a transformative five-day program designed to equip military leaders with the skills needed to drive innovation within their organizations. The course addresses a critical capability gap in military innovation: successfully transitioning promising ideas from early adoption to widespread implementation—what technologist Geoffrey A. Moore calls “crossing the chasm.”¹

A Unique Approach to Innovation

Unlike traditional innovation courses that focus primarily on theory or technology, the Innovation Champions

Course combined three critical elements: effectuation theory for entrepreneurial decision making under uncertainty, practical bureaucracy-hacking strategies for navigating complex organizations, and evidence-based exercises for developing innovation mindsets.

The course employed a project-based learning approach where participants worked on real innovation challenges from their home units while learning and applying new concepts. This practical focus ensured immediate relevance and application, resulting in participants developing an average of five innovation plays—actions they could implement immediately upon returning to their organizations.

One participant highlighted the course's practical approach: “This training needs

¹ Geoffrey A. Moore, *Crossing the Chasm* (HarperCollins, 2014).

to be widespread so that when we are faced with challenges that do not fit into causal systems, we are equipped to face them effectually. Don't let this only stay at the Army War College; this is needed across the services!"

Technology Integration and Hands-On Learning

The course leveraged the US Army War College Futures Lab and its advanced technologies to reinforce learning and build confidence. Participants particularly valued hands-on experiences with three-dimensional printing, virtual-reality systems, and artificial intelligence tools.

What began as a simple introduction to artificial intelligence capabilities evolved into a comprehensive exploration of various artificial intelligence tools including Claude, ChatGPT, NotebookLM, Google Gemini, and others. Participants eagerly adopted these technologies, incorporating them into their innovation plays and final projects—demonstrating both the participants' adaptability and the immediate practical value they found in the tools.

A serendipitous highlight occurred when the authors of *Hack Your Bureaucracy*, Marina Nitze and Nick Sinai, discovered the course through social media and arranged to speak directly with participants. This real-world demonstration of effectual principles and networking added substantial credibility to the course content and provided students with direct access to thought leaders in the field.

Exceptional Results

The course pilot demonstrated remarkable effectiveness, with assessment data showing the following.

- **Eighty-eight percent rated the course a six or seven out of seven for overall value.**



During the US Army War College Innovation Champions Course, authors Marina Nitze and Nick Sinai join the class via Zoom to discuss their book *Hack Your Bureaucracy: Get Things Done No Matter What Your Role on Any Team*, a required reading for the course, providing valuable insights on navigating and driving change within complex organizations.



- **Ninety-four percent indicated a strong likelihood of recommending the course.**
- **Seventy-six percent created five or more actionable innovation plays during the week.**
- **Multiple participants reported fundamental shifts in their approach to innovation.**

One participant noted, "This course was once again fantastic. I learned so much, everything was new for me . . . I wish there was a second course for our follow on from this first course!" When evaluated against established research benchmarks for educational pilot programs, the Innovation Champions

Course significantly exceeded expectations. Research on innovation adoption typically shows a rule-of-thirds distribution of enthusiastic adopters, cautious participants, and those showing resistance. The course far surpassed these benchmarks, with nearly 90 percent of participants showing high engagement and strong adoption of core concepts.

Future Development

Based on the pilot's success, the Innovation Champions Course is on track to become a regular US Army War College offering, with three to four iterations annually to meet demonstrated demand. Several participants have already requested the course be expanded to other locations, with one specifically noting, "I want to see about getting the course to MacDill for the command."

As one participant summarized, "Thinking about challenges differently changed how I look at my organization from just five days ago." This transformative impact highlights the potential of the Innovation Champions Course to build innovation capacity across the force and to address the critical gap between promising ideas and successful implementation. ■

*By Professor Bert Tussing and
Dr. George Schwartz*

The US Army War College hosted the second annual Homeland Defense Symposium (HDS) at Carlisle Barracks on February 18–20, 2025. In honor of the Army’s 250th birthday, the theme of this year’s conference was “This We’ll Defend.”

The symposium examined a different theme each day. The first day considered the challenges associated with intelligence collection in the homeland. The second day explored the vital integrating role homeland security fusion centers could perform in a homeland-defense scenario. The final day focused on the authorities necessary to enable homeland-defense operations.

As with last year’s event, each discussion began with a featured speaker, nationally known for possessing expertise on the issues. Following the speaker’s remarks, a panel of experts shared presentations on components of the topic. Having heard both the remarks and the panel, the symposium’s participants—experts in their own right—convened in breakout groups led by facilitators from the war college faculty. Participants subsequently shared their observations in plenary sessions, and rapporteurs captured the commentary in each group, which will contribute to a white



Homeland Defense Symposium breakout group with participants from the interagency discussing homeland defense authorities.

paper on the symposium (in early March 2025) and a more extensive compendium (in summer 2025).

In addition, the symposium was fortunate to have Lieutenant General (retired) John R. Evans Jr. serving as a senior mentor for the event. Drawing on his perspective as the former commander of US Army North, Evans provided a conceptual framework at the beginning of the forum for pursuing a cohesive train of thought surrounding the topics, explaining how each topic would contribute to preparing a whole-of-nation approach to defending the homeland. Finally, the symposium was privileged to welcome two keynote speakers to the event: General Randall Reed, US Air Force, Commander of the United States Transportation Command; and Lieutenant General Allan M. Pepin, Commanding General of US Army North.



LTG (R) Evans opens the 2025 Homeland Defense Symposium.

Professor Bert Tussing and the Homeland Defense and Security Issues Group planned and organized the symposium in collaboration with the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) at the Naval Postgraduate School and the United States Northern Command’s Homeland Defense Institute, located at the United States Air Force Academy. Beyond these institutional partners, extraordinary support was provided from across the war college, including the Center for Strategic Leadership’s Strategic Landpower and Futures Group and Department of Strategic Wargaming, the Strategic Studies Institute, and the School of Strategic Landpower.

Last year’s Homeland Defense Symposium conference proceedings are available to download through the Center for Strategic Leadership page



Homeland Defense Symposium 2025 – Homeland Defense Integration Panel.

on the US Army War College Press website, and a conference paper from last year's panel on cognitive defense is pending publication from the US Army War College Press. In addition to the previously mentioned white paper and compendium, podcast episodes featuring some of the symposium presenters will also be available on the war college's *War Room* blog over the coming weeks.

The US Army War College's Homeland Defense Symposium is the Homeland Defense and Security Issues Group's flagship contribution to maintaining a focus on and conveying an urgency to homeland defense. With our partners in the US Army War College's School of Strategic Landpower, the Homeland Defense and Security Issues Group will participate in the annual Civil-Military Symposium in May, presenting a panel on civil support to military operations. Later that month, the Homeland Defense and Security Issues Group will bring together a general officer panel discussing the total Army perspective on homeland defense, at the war college's Strategic Landpower Symposium. In June, the Homeland Defense and Security Issues



Dr. Greg Cantwell and Professor Greg Hillebrand attend a plenary session in preparation for facilitation of the participant breakout sessions.

Group will support our partners at the Homeland Defense Institute by offering a presentation at the Homeland Defense Awareness Symposium.

These initiatives will be accompanied by plans for homeland defense education aimed initially at preparing both the War Colleges and the services' Intermediate Level Education (ILE) institutions. USAWC will continue in its partnership with NORTHCOM and CHDS in developing syllabus templates for classes and/or courses. In turn, too, we will attempt to assist

in the development of these initiatives in civilian institutions, thus reiterating the notion that homeland defense is inevitably a whole-of-nation requirement. Preparations for the same must be borne of civil-military partnerships across the spectrum of federal, state and local government. Those public preparations must concurrently be incorporated into partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and other elements of what the Department of Homeland Security has labeled "the homeland security enterprise." ■

JOINT LAND, AIR, AND SEA STRATEGIC SPECIAL PROGRAM REBRANDED AS NATIONAL SECURITY SIMULATION EXERCISE OF COMPETITION, CRISIS, AND CONFLICT PROGRAM FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025

By Mr. Brian Foster

The National Security Simulation Exercise of Competition, Crisis, and Conflict (NSEC³) program is a continuation of the former Joint Land, Air, and Sea Strategic Special Program. The NSEC³ is a 42-year-old program, and this name change is not its first. The NSEC³ started as the Carlisle-Maxwell program, which was a collaborative-exercise program between the Carlisle Barracks-based US Army War College and the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base. As the program

expanded and evolved to include other professional military education institutions, it became the Joint Land, Air, and Sea Strategic Special Program. For most of its existence, the Joint Land, Air, and Sea Strategic Special Program looked at regional scenarios. But in the last decade, the program has focused on a global scenario at the national-strategic and theater-strategic levels. The new name better reflects the program's evolution.

The NSEC³ program is unique, being a large, collaborative program with the US Army War College's own

distance- and blended-learning student programs, three other US senior service colleges, and four international-partner professional military education institutions. All the students across the participating institutions are placed in the role of strategic leader at the combatant command level and above, addressing an array of global challenges to national security in a world set 10 years in the future. We present the students with a set of strategic problems that simultaneously presents competition, crisis, and conflict across the globe and asks how the students—

as strategic leaders—will develop options to protect US, allied, and partner national interests.

The culmination of the NSEC³ program is the collective exercise, hosted during the last week of April in Carlisle in the new Root Hall. The students from our partner institutions—including our US Army War College blended- and distance-learning colleagues—come to Carlisle in person. The attendees include about 150 students and 50 supporting faculty and exercise-control personnel. The event is fantastic and offers a real opportunity for students to do meaningful work role-playing as strategic leaders with US and international students outside the US Army War College's Resident Education Program.

Thus far, NSEC³ hit the ground running in December 2024, with lectures from retired Lieutenant General Reynold Hoover on his experience being last year's senior mentor and his current service as the chief executive officer of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. Former provost Dr. Jim Breckenridge graciously serves as President McGraw, who continues to defy the Twenty-Second Amendment as the longest-serving exercise president. The 2025 resident seminar focuses on United States Africa Command and received counsel from retired United States Africa Command Commanding General Stephen Townsend, who talked about the region and his role as a commander. Several other senior leaders, senior mentors, and US



Army War College subject matter experts are planned for both the Resident Education Program and Distance Education Program during the distributive and collective phases, which conclude in April. ■

VALLEY FORGE MILITARY COLLEGE NATIONAL SECURITY SYMPOSIUM

By Dr. George Schwartz

As part of its outreach efforts, the Homeland Defense and Security Issues Group delivered a panel presentation on homeland defense at the annual H. R. McMaster Center for Security Studies National Security Symposium, hosted by Valley Forge Military College, on February 28, 2025. The panel consisted of Dr. George Schwartz, Homeland Defense and Security Issues visiting professor; Lieutenant Colonel Todd Hamski, an academic year 2025 resident student in the Homeland Defense Area of Concentration; and Major Loris Lepri, resident course director for the Distance Education Program.

To help prepare the cadets for their future military and homeland security careers, the panelists reviewed the historical context for homeland defense,



Dr. Schwartz receives a certificate of appreciation from Valley Forge Military College Provost Dr. Robert Smith, along with Lieutenant Colonel Todd Hamski and Major Loris Lepri.

the current threat environment, and the challenges involved in conducting military operations in the homeland. Around 50 cadets were in attendance, and many asked the panel members questions after their presentation.

Valley Forge Military College, the Military College of Pennsylvania, is a private, coed, two-year college in Wayne, Pennsylvania. The institution offers associate degrees and certificates in security studies, cybersecurity, and digital forensics. Valley Forge Military College also has an Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps Early Commissioning Program that enables

graduates to commission as officers in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve in two years. Notable graduates of the academy (grades 7–12) and the college include Lieutenant General (Ret.) H. R. McMaster, General (Ret.) Norman Schwarzkopf, and Maryland Governor Wes Moore. ■

"The surest way of achieving your goal is through the single-minded pursuit of simple actions."
– Helmuth von Moltke the Elder

By Patricia Hayes

Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Ryan is the first US Army War College Fellow at the Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) in Estonia. He is originally from Randolph, MA and received his commission as a military intelligence officer from Norwich University in Vermont. He holds two master's degrees: in public policy, from The George Washington University; and in military art and science, from Marine Corps University. Lieutenant Colonel Ryan is married to a US Army intelligence officer, and they have two children, ages 12 and 9.

Tell me about your fellowship. I am the first US Army War College Fellow to have the opportunity to study at the BALTDEFCOL in Tartu, Estonia. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania established BALTDEFCOL over 25 years ago, and this institution is the longest-lasting and most important symbol of defense cooperation between these so-called Baltic nations. The mission of the college is to educate military members and civilians—from senior enlisted to field-grade officers, through the senior executive service and flag-officer ranks—on security issues affecting the greater Baltic Region and NATO's eastern flank. My research focus is on the long-term sustainability of the Baltic nations' defense strategies, and I have taken advantage of numerous opportunities to attend conferences and meet with experts on the topic. I have also had the opportunity to lecture at the Civil Servants' Course and the Joint Command and General Staff Course on various defense and

leadership-related topics prior to attending BALTDEFCOL's version of the senior service college, the Higher Command Studies Course, which began in early January 2025.

What has been your favorite part of being a US Army War College Fellow?

The immersive nature of this particular fellowship is phenomenal. The US Army War College Fellowship has allowed me to experience the security challenges of the Baltic Region and NATO's eastern flank firsthand, thoroughly enriching my understanding of the strategic challenges in the region.

It sounds like your US Army War College faculty advisor (Dr. Bob Hamilton) provided some great connections for you in terms of your research. Can you tell me more about that?

Dr. Hamilton is a regional expert who connected me with important regional thinkers, helped connect me with stateside think tanks focused on the region, and helped me publish my strategy paper for wider consumption.¹ His contacts and knowledge were incredibly valuable to me.

How has living in Estonia been? What have you learned from living there?

Tartu is Estonia's oldest city, dating back to conquests by the Teutonic Order in the year 1030. Tartu is best known now as the academic and cultural heart of Estonia, with the highly ranked University of Tartu attracting a very diverse and international crowd to the city. Tartu is a very fun, well-resourced, safe, and small college city that is walkable and has great public transportation. I like to tell people: If Tartu was a city in the United States, it would be your favorite one!



Where have you traveled during this fellowship? With the college, I have traveled to Tallinn, Estonia and Riga, Latvia for defense conferences and attended the BALTDEFCOL Senior Leaders' Course. For leisure, my family and I have traveled around the region to Finland and Norway. We've also spent time in Germany and France, and we plan to take trips around Europe as our schedules allow during the rest of the year.

I saw you cotaught a few lectures on military ethics at BALTDEFCOL. How did that come about—is that something you've studied in the military or in which you have a particular interest?

I do not have a background education in military ethics, but I have emphasized its importance in nearly every role I've had as a leader within my professional-development programs. I have a deep interest in the topic and was fortunate enough to colecture with the executive director of The International Society for Military Ethics in Europe, Dr. Ted van Baarda. Dr. van Baarda offered the deep

¹ Kevin Ryan, "The New 'Baltic Way': Assessing the Baltic Defense Line Concept," Foreign Policy Research Institute, December 13, 2024, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/12/the-new-baltic-way-assessing-the-baltic-defensive-line-concept/>.

theoretical background, and I layered in the practical application of those theories as a battalion commander. Lecturing in military ethics really was the highlight of my first-semester lecturing experience.

You've had exposure to some amazing speakers this year—do you have a favorite? To choose just one is hard, but I think BALTDEFCOL's Senior Leaders' Course in Riga brought in a diverse array of speakers who really helped to frame the strategic environment in this region and assisted greatly in developing my understanding of the issues impacting my research.

Any unique or memorable experiences (Army or personal) because of the fellowship? Meeting the prime minister of Estonia and the chiefs of defense in each of the Baltic countries stands out as a unique experience resulting from the fellowship. Our family's travel throughout Europe has also allowed



LTC Ryan conducting two lectures in the leadership and command module on the topics of mission command and military ethics at BALTDEFCOL. The military-ethics block of instruction was a full-day block cotaught with Executive Director of the International Society for Military Ethics in Europe Dr. Ted van Baarda.



LTC Ryan's graduation certificate from the Senior Leaders' Course (on left). On the right, LTC Ryan is posing with MG (Ret.) Juris Maklakovs, class senior mentor and graduate of the US Army War College class of 2004.

us to make collective memories we cherish.

Tell me about your Fellows Strategic Research Project. My research has focused on the sustainability of various defense initiatives within the Baltic Region, a subject I had zero familiarity with prior to the fellowship. The Baltic Defence College has experts and connections to a community of experts on the subjects that impact this research, so I had a very supportive community here to enrich the research and my understanding of the regional security issues from a strategic standpoint.

How was your experience studying and learning at a foreign institution? What surprised you? The Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) is an entirely English-speaking institution, so if anything, I have an advantage over a lot of my colleagues as a native speaker. The challenge of lecturing in that environment has been to create content for field-grade officers that enhances their understanding of operational and strategic-level concepts while acknowledging English is a second or third language for most of them. This language barrier means, as a lecturer, you must put thought into every slide

and approach most topics as a student instead of as a lecturer with expertise.

What have you found to be different from (or the same as) your expectations about the fellowship? I didn't expect the city of Tartu to be as enjoyable as it has been from a living and working perspective; it truly is a great city I will be sad to leave.

Has this fellowship allowed you to do things you wouldn't have normally had the opportunity to do? Certainly, one does not often get the opportunity to travel to the Baltic Region and appreciate how—though Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have a shared heritage of Soviet oppression and threats from a revanchist Russia—each nation has a unique culture and unique security concerns that really give depth to the understanding of strategic defense in this region, which I hope will help me as I continue my career.

What's next for you—do you know where you'll be headed after this fellowship? I will be headed to Stuttgart, Germany and very likely joining the United States Africa Command J2 staff. ■



FROM DATA TO DECISION IN WARFIGHTING COURSE, CLASS 25-01

By Mr. Chad Jagmin

The US Army War College and the Center for Strategic Leadership designed, developed, and executed the third iteration of a two-day executive data-literacy course for Army senior leaders titled “From Data to Decision in Warfighting,” which took place from February 24–25, 2025. This course addresses a critical gap in Army data culture by equipping senior leaders with the skills necessary to leverage data effectively in decision-making processes, particularly in warfighting contexts.

The course is structured in several instructional blocks covering data, data analysis, Army data initiatives, communicating data, governance, and ethics. These blocks are designed to empower participants to

- **comprehend and apply the data-literacy lexicon;**

- **design data-focused questions to address warfighting challenges;**
- **investigate Army data initiatives to integrate within Army commands and organizations; and**
- **examine methods of operationalizing data for enhanced decision making.**

Tailored specifically for Army senior leaders based on feedback from pilot iterations at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, this course stands out from other military and civilian data-literacy courses by focusing on three core elements.

1. Real-world challenges:

Participants tackle their own real-world challenges via a data-enabled decision-making process and practical exercises that build throughout the course.

2. Live Army data demonstration:

Army units and organizations demonstrate live data used in making decisions, highlighting the process of converting senior leaders’ questions and staff processes into live dashboards to create shared understanding.

3. Data-literacy lexicon: The

course covers critical data-literacy concepts Army senior leaders need to be able to read, understand, work with, and communicate data.

With an ideal composition including general officers, senior executives, and senior civilians; colonels; senior command sergeants major; and chief warrant officers, the course excels with a mix of components, branches, and organizations.

Colonel Jim Starling, the course director, also invited Major Kevin Quigley, 3rd Infantry Division operations research



US Army Materiel Command G-3 Principal Deputy Mr. Myles Miyamasu (Senior Executive Service) works with Chief Warrant Officer 5 Kent Shepherd of the US Army Ordnance Corps, to understand a key warfighting challenge for both US Army Materiel Command and the Ordnance Corps. Earlier, Mr. Miyamasu provided an update on how US Army Materiel Command uses data in decisions. Each participant brought an Army challenge to address with data throughout the course.

systems analyst, to provide a live demonstration of the 3rd Infantry Division's Common Operating Picture of the Rock. Participants overwhelmingly recognized the immense value of observing an organization use live operational data to inform decision making.

Our goal is to enhance the data literacy and decision-making capabilities of our Army senior leaders, moving the Army toward data centrality. If you are interested in the course, please contact Mr. Chad Jagmin at chad.t.jagmin.ctr@army.mil or 717-245-4665. The next course dates are tentatively scheduled for June 17–18, 2025, and September 9–10, 2025. ■

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