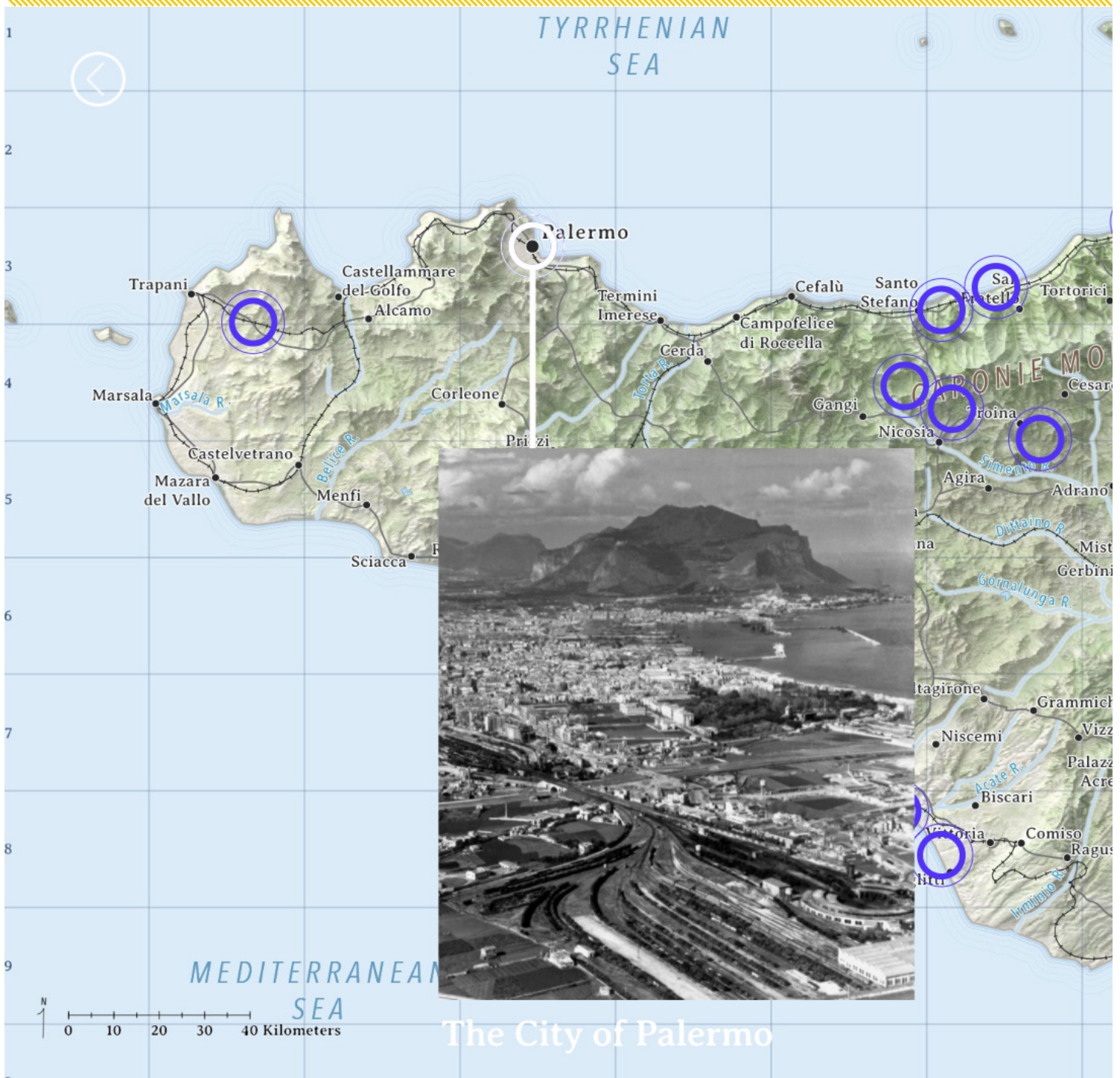
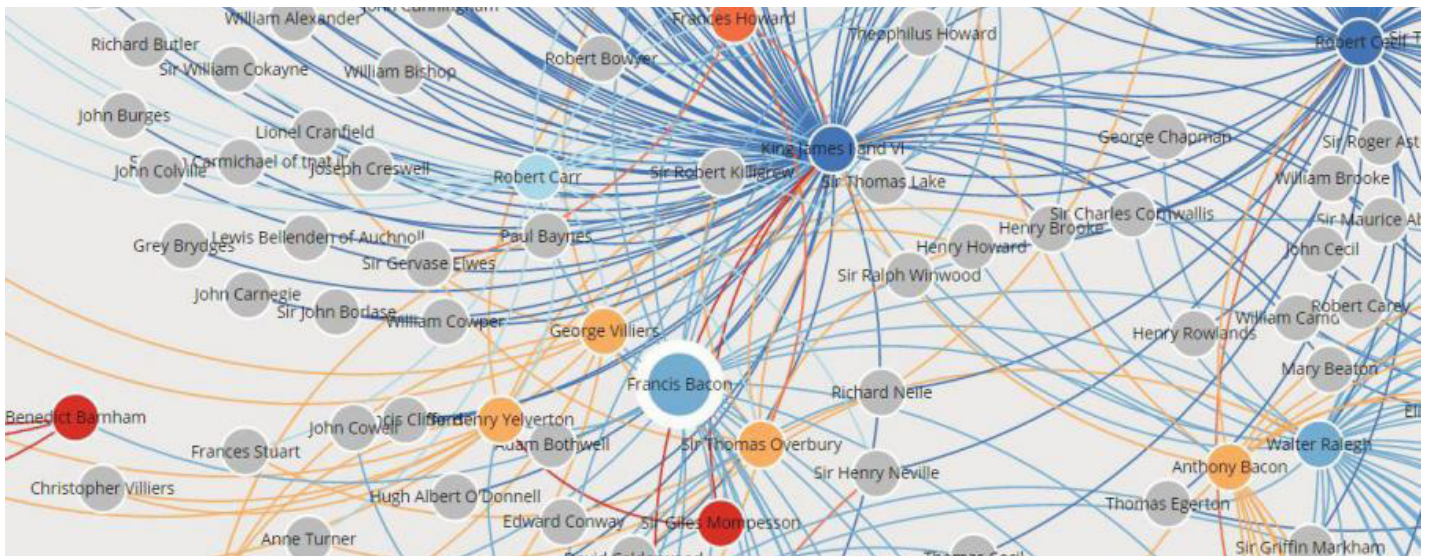


WEST POINT DIGITAL HISTORY CENTER



West Point
READY 

READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



Housed within the Department of History, and taking seeded beginnings from the former Cartographic Center for Excellence, the Digital History Center (DHC) at West Point will be a twenty-first century public-facing digital makerspace that not only preserves—but also makes interactive—a critical corpus of primary source materials and cutting-edge publications, instilling “wisdom through history” for the next generation of U.S. Army Officers and beyond.

As a customized digital product built by West Point, the DHC will serve as a content-generating digital laboratory, in-house distributor of cadet educational materials, and will function along several other primary lines of virtual space that serve indispensable USMA needs: first, it will provide a state-of-the-art digital archive that safely preserves some of the nation’s most important military history in perpetuity. Beyond maps and documents, Department of History faculty will partner with the West Point Military Museum to create a Material Culture package which seeks to digitize over 32,000 artifacts.

Second, through the use of interactive Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) capabilities, the DHC will enable cadets, faculty, other military history scholars, and the public to not only access—but to experience—historic events and military movements like never before. By turning static 2-D surfaces into interactive 3-D models, the DHC will have the capability to “experientialize” historical military movements, decisions, and operations in the topographical and cultural context in which they occurred, resulting in an immeasurably deepened understanding of and connection to military history. A virtual reality walk along Omaha Beach in Normandy, for example, combined with historical imagery and historical context can provide a much greater sense of what it was like on June 6, 1944. Augmented by partnership with the Center for Oral History and its first-hand audio and video accounts of those who were present, cadets will gain access to a truly comprehensive level of historical engagement. Not only will this foster reinforced

connections between past, present, and future members of the Long Gray Line and all soldiers; it will also take the written history of old off the page to extend deeper knowing and to prepare cadets exceptionally well for future leadership in battle.

Third, digital technologies widen the scope of historical inquiry, providing unprecedented opportunities for original research into topics that could not have been designed or even easily conceived prior to their existence. One outstanding feature of the DHC is the capability to build customized, codable databases of historical information. With this, cadets can move beyond a limited analysis of a single historic event and achieve a broader perspective on a collection of events that can then be compared to datasets of different eras and geographic locations. For example, a database of sieges which occurred during the medieval period following the Norman conquest of England in 1066 can be coded for certain repeating factors such as duration, success rates, and the nationalities of the besiegers and besieged. This data can then be analyzed and compared to other sieges occurring during the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) to discover patterns of change or continuity in methods of warfare. This new methodology of “doing history” tells a more detailed story, and answers questions that scholars hitherto did not even know to ask.

To further and to share the analysis of data, the DHC will be equipped with state-of-the-art data visualization capabilities—the latest technologies and techniques to display historical information in pictorial, graphical, table, or map forms. With this, data can be manipulated and animated to show change over time, exposing cadets and faculty to cutting-edge practices for converting data into knowledge that is useful, engaging, portable, and flexible. It is anticipated that cadets will have in-depth engagement with the DHC as they prepare capstone projects and theses, as well as through small independent research groups with senior faculty, known as Digital History Research Labs, to be held in the summer and fall terms. In this

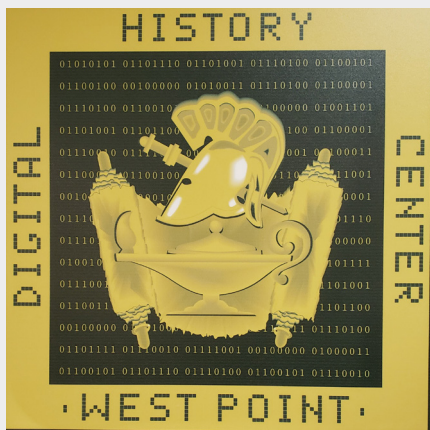
way, the DHC will act as a digital workspace and test site through which participants can conceptualize the “making of history” in innovative and powerful ways. It will also provide greater opportunities for student-faculty cooperative research projects in the Humanities, leading to conference presentations and ultimately even select faculty publications with cadets as co-authors. Digital History products are unlimited. Imagination and innovation will set standards for visual, aural, and interactive learning, and West Point stands ready to lead in this arena.

Partnering with the DHC, and an integral piece of the History Department’s digital library, is the West Point Center for Oral History (COH). The COH is dedicated to recording, preserving, and presenting the stories of Soldiers, statesmen, and others who have influenced the profession of arms in both war and peace. The COH creates new primary source material for scholars which will contribute to the development of aspiring Army officers, enhance the public’s understanding of the experience of the Soldier, and promote analytical discourse in the field of history. Interviews capture moments that define Army leaders, journalists, political leaders, and scholars, serving as a powerful learning and online research environment for West Point cadets, the Army, scholars, and the general public. Collectively, the Center’s archives will enable cadets and the general public to hear firsthand experiences of pivotal moments in history while also creating historical records where none had previously existed.

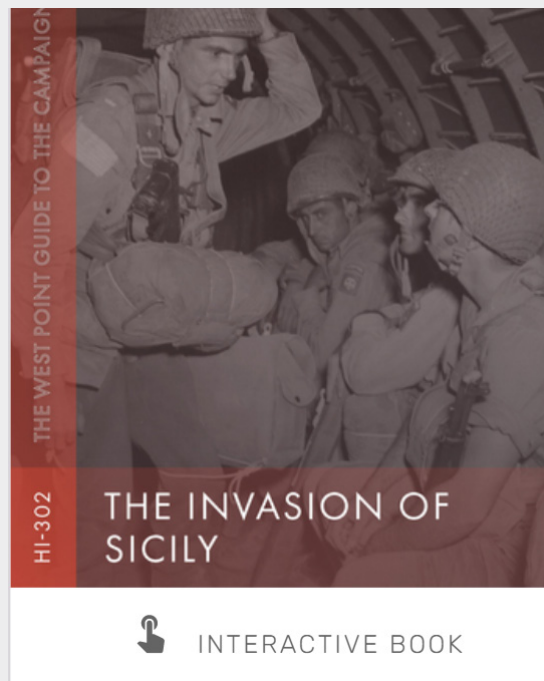
Comprehensively, the DHC will enable USMA to generate new content for a unique proprietary curriculum which will inform core courses in American, International, and Military History, including West Point’s own History of the Military Art course. The curriculum will include material culture such as digital books of music relating to military history as well as collections of historical imagery, which will use “hotspotting”

to explain complex vocabulary or culturally relevant vernacular of the time period. It will provide the capability to steadily improve award-winning digital textbooks and modules with original content yet be extremely portable and permanently accessible wherever it is needed. Gone are the days of hauling footlockers filled with books to the battlefield. This body of information in digital form will be highly practical in the classroom or in the field and will serve to support Staff Rides and trip sections for faculty and hundreds of cadets multiple times each year.

With these capabilities and more, the Digital History Center at West Point will revolutionize the way USMA “does history,” bringing it into the next century and propelling cadets—so called “digital natives” —forward in their learning, conceptual capacity, and military history expertise. Much of the history USMA teaches was made by the people it taught. As the world of information gathering, analysis, and dissemination rapidly changes, it is imperative that West Point deeply engage tomorrow’s officers in the robust lessons of yesterday and equip them with full proficiency of cutting-edge technology so they can succeed in leading the Army of the future anywhere in the world. Please join us in this remarkable endeavor—for West Point cadets, for those who have come before us, and for our nation.



“For nearly 2,500 years, historians have relied on analog methods. At West Point, we are changing the craft.”



“Mil Art gets a modern make-over as cadets explore digitized maps, primary sources, oral histories, and commentary to support research and writing about critical army campaigns in World War II.”



Photo: Lee Ross '73

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Digital History Center Endowment \$4.3 million

Digital History Center Director Naming \$3.5 million endowment
 Center for Oral History Archive Naming \$1 million endowment

Digital Curriculum Archives Endowment \$1.5 million
 1 Archive \$375,000 endowment/\$15,000 annual
 4 Archives \$1.5 million endowment/\$60,000 annual

Digital History Lab Endowment \$1.1 million
 Cadet Capstone Projects \$365,000 endowment/\$14,600 annual
 Cadet Research & Publication \$365,000 endowment/\$14,600 annual
 Augmented & Virtual Reality Experience Hub \$365,000 endowment/\$14,600 annual

Digital Makerspace Endowment \$1.7 million
 Imagination, Innovation, Interactive Initiatives \$850,000 endowment/\$34,000 annual
 Digital History Production & Publications \$850,000 endowment/\$34,000 annual

MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE



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