

# THE MODERN WAR INSTITUTE AT WEST POINT



*"...an indomitable will and broad military knowledge, combined with a strong character, are attributes of the successful leader... [leaders] must have a clear conception of tactical principles and their application...and only by continual study of military history and of the conduct of war with careful attention to current developments can the officer acquire the above stated attributes of leadership."*

*– Albert C. Wedemeyer '19, Principal author of the 1941 Victory Plan and member of the War plans team for the Normandy Invasion*

West Point  
**READY**   
READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



From left to right: Retired Gen. Stanley McChrystal speaks to cadets; cadets using virtual reality goggles on MWI Cadet Leader Development Training lane; cadets, staff, and faculty gather to discuss conflict in Ukraine.

## MODERN WAR INSTITUTE

Imagine a West Point senior today, contemplating their pending service in a very uncertain world. Where will they turn for information if conflict escalates and U.S. forces respond to Russian revanchism in Eastern Europe, or to Chinese territorial aggression in the Taiwan Strait? How should they be thinking about and studying the use of force as a component of competition in cyberspace, or in the polar regions as competition migrates there due to climate change? Or imagine a freshman today; what can they be doing over the next three years to prepare for potential conflict in a densely populated urban area? How do they conduct effective information operations in an environment dominated by smart phones, social media, and nearly the instantaneous proliferation of battlefield intelligence and propaganda? How do they prepare to fight stateless enemies representing threats that the current international system is ill-suited to address?

Today's cadets will face different challenges that include non-traditional enemies and complex operating environments, and in order to win their battles, they must persistently study modern war. While West Point has always trained and educated its cadets in modern day warfare, technologies, and strategy, it had no central program or hub that coordinates these lessons and disseminates them across the curriculum.

In response to this need, the United States Military Academy established the Modern War Institute (MWI) within the Department of Military Instruction to conduct tactical, operational, and strategic research that moves the boundaries of current military and academic knowledge and serves as a resource for the Academy, Army, and Nation. For Soldiers, scholars, and students, the MWI serves as the source for the comprehensive study of modern war and warfare.

## A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MODERN WAR

The West Point Association of Graduates is seeking to endow MWI and its Margin of Excellence programs, which include: research; cadet enrichment; events; and communications and outreach.

### Research

Research is central to MWI's mission. The institute leverages the unique intellectual capital of West Point's cadets, faculty, and staff to conduct rigorous research on modern warfare and relevant military problems. Currently, cadets actively seek venues for the study of contemporary warfare, and in the last few years, cadets have pursued research into the Army's capability to operate in contaminated nuclear environments, multivariable targeting assessments for Afghanistan, and policing during stability operations, among other topics.

"In order for West Point cadets to be educated militarily to the world-class standard," explains Colonel Patrick Sullivan, Director of the Modern War Institute, "they must engage intellectually and academically on the most relevant problems stemming from the most incisive assessment that we can make of the emerging strategic landscape. MWI provides opportunities for such engagement, and primarily through our research program which allows cadets to pursue expert-assisted research projects in specialized topic areas. Ideally, cadet research nests with that being undertaken by the Army and other research institutions, and cadets will carry their research agendas forward into their careers."

All of MWI's research is collected and disseminated through the "War Room," a physical and online library that houses a wide range of categorized resources related to modern warfare, to serve the Academy as well as recently commissioned officers preparing for operational deployments. "The War Room at the MWI provides a one-stop source for research and related information organized thematically and regionally for the cadets, Defense and Security Studies program instructors, and MWI contributors," says LTC Tom Church, Deputy Director of the

Modern War Institute, “and enhances MWI’s standing locally, abroad, and online as a national resource.”

### *Cadet Enrichment*

MWI offers cadets out-of-classroom experiences through which they can travel to regions of recent conflict and work with organizations or entities dealing directly in current or recent conflicts. For examples, MWI carries out Contemporary Battlefield Assessments (CBA) in which a small group of cadets conduct field studies of recent conflicts around the world. To date, the cadets and faculty have traveled to Bosnia to conduct research on urban operations and siege warfare, to Sri Lanka to study counterinsurgency during the civil war there, and to Georgia to examine the 2008 Russia-Georgia War. On the back end of a CBA, participating cadets will develop individualized research projects that contribute to MWI’s overall research program. “The CBA is a vital developmental experience for cadets. It provides an opportunity for total immersion in a foreign culture—for many of them, their first such experience—while simultaneously receiving sustained, close mentorship with subject matter experts. Perhaps most importantly, it allows them to learn and apply classroom concepts firsthand and with new perspectives; it is one thing to read about what happened in a battle, it is another entirely to literally see how the armies had to move through space,” explains Dr. Max Margulies, Director of Research at MWI.

With private funding, MWI plans future Contemporary Battlefield Assessments in Ukraine, Colombia, Rwanda, Lebanon, and eventually locations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Somalia.

In addition to these research trips, MWI contributes to cadet enrichment by coordinating internships and capstone projects at places like the Asymmetric Warfare Group, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, and Combatant Command Headquarters.

### *Events*

MWI expands West Point’s military program’s access to distinguished visitors through lectures, symposia, and conferences. These events, which are open to cadets and faculty in a variety of academic departments, include senior military, policy, and academic leaders, all of whom can contribute to the study of current warfare or military problems.

MWI hosts two annual conferences. Each fall it holds the War Studies Conference, which brings together distinguished representatives from the private sector, government, academia, and the military services to discuss issues centered on a designated theme related to modern war and warfare. In the spring, MWI holds the Sandhurst Conference, the intellectual counterpart to the annual Sandhurst Competition. This conference promotes professional dialogue on global topics concerning war and warfare among a multi-national

and diverse group of military professionals. Private funding is vital in order for MWI to continue to hold these conferences, which directly benefit the Corps of Cadets, the Army, and the Nation.

### *Communications & Outreach*

Only through effective communication and outreach can MWI truly advance its mission and serve as a hub for an active network of stakeholders interested in the study of warfare. To that end, MWI looks to extend its outreach to peer academic institutions and service academies, think tanks, the wider Army, Combatant Commands, and other institutions.

The institute’s primary outward-facing communication vehicle is its website ([www.mwi.usma.edu](http://www.mwi.usma.edu)), a dynamic publishing platform that hosts daily commentary and analysis, original research, podcasts, and multimedia. “The website is such a powerful tool for us,” John Amble, MWI’s Editorial Director, says. “It gives us a voice in important discussions about modern war and how the Army is prepared to meet a new generation of security threats.”

### *Center Support*

In order to sustain and grow its robust menu of programming, MWI needs to expand its staff, which coordinates activities, develops and implements strategic planning, and advances MWI’s mission. The staff will ultimately include a Distinguished Chair, Director of Research, Senior Associate, Research Associate, and Program Assistant. Each position will play a critical role in establishing and sustaining the institute’s programming in an aggressive and cohesive manner and ensure its long-term viability.

West Point’s Modern War Institute directly enhances the quality of cadet military education and training while providing cadets the opportunity to pursue the study of modern war in a way that has never been done before. With your support, the Modern War Institute will become the informational hub for West Point cadets and faculty, the Army, and the Nation, and create the intellectual capital required to educate, train, and inspire current and future generations of military leaders.



Cadets departing for two month-long survey of Great War European battlefields in June 1919.

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**MWI Endowment** ..... \$32.3 million  
**MWI Annual Requirement** ..... \$1.3 million

## Cadet Enrichment

Contemporary Battlefield Assessments (*funded*) ..... \$1 million  
 Speaker Series (*funded*) ..... \$1.1 million  
 War Council Panel Series (*reserved*) ..... \$1 million  
 Modern War Institute Podcast Series (*reserved*) ..... \$1.8 million  
 “The Spear”, a Podcast Series  
 on the Combat Experience (*reserved*) ..... \$1 million  
 Academy Writing Competition  
 Total Endowment ..... \$1.1 million  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$44,000  
 Strategic Studies Capstone Research Project (*reserved*) .. \$1 million

## Communications & Outreach

Fellows Program (15)  
 Endowment ..... \$150,000 each  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$6,000 each  
 MWI Suite (naming) ..... \$2 million  
 Research Suite (naming) (*funded*) ..... \$1 million  
 Editorial Suite (naming) (*reserved*) ..... \$1million  
 The Journal of War Studies (*funded*) ..... \$1 million

## Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiatives (*reserved*)  
 Total Endowment ..... \$2 million  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$80,000

## Center Staffing & Cadet Education

Distinguished Chair  
 Endowment (*reserved*) ..... \$2.5 million  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$100,000  
 Editor-in-Chief, Assistant Professor  
 Endowment ..... \$4.5 million  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$180,000  
 Managing Editor, Assistant Professor  
 Endowment ..... \$3.5 million  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$140,000  
 Chief Research Officer, Assistant Professor  
 Endowment ..... \$4.5 million  
 Annual Requirement ..... \$180,000  
 Research Associate (*funded*) ..... \$2 million

MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE



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