“…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.”

– General Albert C. Wedemeyer ’19,
Principal author of the 1941 Victory Plan and member of the War plans team for the Normandy Invasion
Imagine a West Point senior today, contemplating her pending service in a very uncertain world. Where will she turn for information if conflict escalates and U.S. forces respond to pro-Russian unrest in the Baltic States? How should she be thinking about and studying the use of force where state-backed rebels present a hybrid threat of unconventional tactics and sophisticated precision weapons systems? Or imagine a freshman today; what can he be doing over the next three years to prepare for potential conflict in a densely populated urban area? How does he conduct effective information operations in an environment dominated by cell phones, social media, and nearly the instantaneous proliferation of battlefield intelligence and propaganda?

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 study of modern war and warfare.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MODERN WAR

The West Point Association of Graduates is seeking $19.2 million 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.

“Under MWI,” explains Colonel Liam Collins, Director of the Modern War Institute, “cadets will have the opportunity to build on this foundation and pursue multi-year research projects in specialized topic areas, such as megacities, subterranean warfare, and human performance optimization. In addition, MWI will help incorporate findings into the broader curriculum and advance research already conducted by the Army through additional study.”

All of MWI’s research will be collected and disseminated through the “War Room,” a physical and online library that will house a wide range of categorized resources related to modern warfare, to serve the Academy as well as recently commissioned officers preparing for deployment. “The War Room will provide a one-stop source for research and related information organized thematically and regionally,” says Major John Spencer, Deputy Director of the Modern War Institute, “and ensure MWI’s positioning as a national resource.”
**Cadet Enrichment**

MWI offers cadets out-of-classroom experiences through which they are able to travel to regions of recent conflict, conduct field research, and work with organizations or entities dealing firsthand in current or recent conflicts. “It’s imperative for cadets to gain firsthand experience with the regions, people, and entities directly related to modern war so that they can develop a level of understanding that extends beyond the classroom as well as form relationships with organizations and people that they may soon work with as commissioned officers,” explains Dr. Lionel Beehner, Director of Research at MWI.

For instance, MWI carries out Contemporary Battlefield Assessments in which a small group of cadets conduct field research on 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. Participating cadets then developed individualized research projects that contribute to MWI’s overall research program.

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 at places like the Asymmetric Warfare Group, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, and Combatant 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 MWI 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), a dynamic publishing platform that hosts daily commentary on 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 & RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES**

MWI Endowment ................................................................. $19.5 million
MWI Annual Requirement .................................................. $770,000

**Cadet Enrichment**

Contemporary Battlefield Assessments
- Endowment (Field Research Trip) (reserved) ............... $1 million
- Endowment (3 Credit Hour Course) ......................... $1.25 million
- Annual Requirement ................................................. $68,000

Academy Scholars
- Total Endowment .................................................... $711,400
- Cadet (1) Endowment .............................................. $100,000
- Annual Requirement (6 cadets/year) ....................... $20,500
- Annual Requirement (1 cadet) ................................. $3,400

Speaker Series
- Endowment (reserved) ............................................. $1 million

War Council Panel Series (reserved)
- Endowment ............................................................. $1 million
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $40,000

The Modern War Institute Podcast Series
- Endowment ............................................................. $750,000
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $20,000

“The Spear” - a Podcast Series on the Combat Experience
- Endowment ............................................................. $1 million
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $35,000

**Scholarly Research**

- Endowment ............................................................. $625,000
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $25,000

**Events**

Sandhurst Conference Endowment (funded) ............... $284,000
War Conference Endowment (funded) ......................... $426,000

**Communications & Outreach**

Website / Virtual War Room
- Endowment ............................................................. $710,200
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $28,400

War Room Library
- Endowment (funded) ............................................... $100,000

**Center Staffing**

Distinguished Chair
- Endowment ............................................................. $2.1 million
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $85,200

Editorial Director
- Endowment ............................................................. $4 million
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $160,000

Content Editor
- Endowment ............................................................. $2.8 million
- Annual Requirement ................................................ $110,000

Research Associate (reserved)
- Endowment ............................................................. $2 million