

THE IRREGULAR WARFARE CENTER

Spotlight

Vol 2 • 4

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April 2024

W.VA. Guard & Irregular Warfare Center sign Memorandum of Understanding

The West Virginia National Guard (WVNG) signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) during a Ridge Runner Irregular Warfare exercise at Camp Dawson, in Kingwood, West Virginia, April 19, 2024.



Maj. Gen. Bill Crane, Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard, and Dr. Dennis Walters, Director of the Irregular Warfare Center, signed the memorandum to formalize the existing WVNG/IWC partnership which includes enhancing opportunities for joint training exercises such as Ridge Runner and Ridge Healer programs and additional sponsored events.

“Building U.S. and partner capacities and skillsets to compete in nonconventional arenas against state, non-state, and near-peer competitors is fundamental,” stated Crane. “Our partnership with the IWC helps strengthen existing and developing ties between defense industry, educational institutions, and governmental and private sector partners both here and abroad. And it drives the authorities that gives us the ability to aggressively pursue opportunities here in West Virginia that will help to train and prepare our own U.S. troops as well as our allies and partners to face the future fight.”

Walters stated that the WVNG brings unique capabilities that support the IWC mission.

“This signing symbolically represents a union of innovative thinkers that will help move the United States and our allies and partner nations forward in irregular and unconventional warfare concepts during conflicts and competition,” he said. “Our mission is to empower our servicemen and women to operate in places and in ways they might not otherwise be able to do. Since our inception, our relationship with WVNG has been essential to our mission, and we couldn’t be more excited about our future together.”

The IWC serves as the central mechanism for developing the Department of Defense’s (DOD) irregular warfare knowledge and advancing the Department’s understanding of irregular warfare concepts and doctrine in collaboration with key allies and partners while bringing stakeholders from across the Irregular Warfare domain together to establish a distinct IW capability advantage.

The Ridge Runner Irregular Warfare training exercise, held at Camp Dawson and at locations around West Virginia, is a special forces multi-domain exercise for both U.S. and Allied and Partner Nation forces, tailored to specific evolving threat scenarios faced by modern special operations and conventional forces. Exercise participants experience scenarios in real-world settings having to deal with rugged terrain and austere conditions requiring innovative solutions to movement and mission execution. The current exercise includes participants from multiple U.S. branches, and eight separate allied and partner nations.



Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director, and Maj. Gen. Bill Crane, Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard, shake hands after signing a formal Memorandum of Understanding during Ridge Runner DV Day at Camp Dawson, W. Va. on April 19.

The Center supports FBI National Academy Engagement

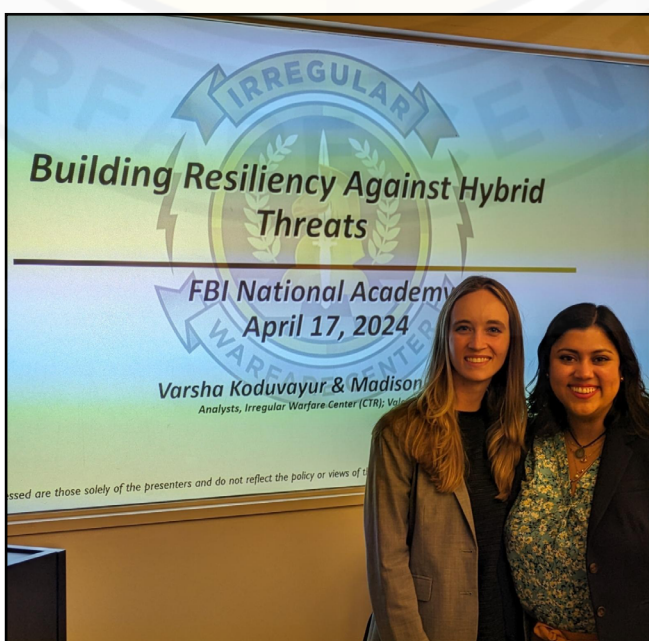
Building on its engagement at the FBI National Academy Alumni regional retrainers, IWC Senior Analyst, Varsha Koduvayur, and Analyst, Madison Urban, both contractors with Valen’s Global, presented at the FBI National Academy on April 17.

Both presented on Building Resiliency Against Hybrid Threats and provided information to more than 100 state and local law enforcement officials on how hybrid threats impact law enforcement.

In addition, both shared various resources the Center provides for further engagement, including the IWC’s courses and trainings, working groups, research program, and in-country engagement, which garnered significant interest from attendees.

The presentation covered the definition and concept of hybrid threats and utilized four case studies—information operations, critical infrastructure, transnational criminal organizations, and generative AI—to show how law enforcement is already contending with hybrid threats. The analysts then turned the floor to the attendees at the end of the presentation and asked them to share about the hybrid threats they are seeing in their home jurisdictions leading to a rich discussion of state and local challenges.

The IWC looks forward to continuing to engage with this critical community at future FBI retrainers.



IWC Senior Analyst, Varsha Koduvayur, and Analyst, Madison Urban, both contractors with Valen’s Global, presented at the FBI National Academy on April 17 in Quantico, Va.

Director’s Corner



Dr. Dennis Walters
IWC Director



Greeting from the IWC,

It’s been another productive and busy month for the Center and as always I’m excited to share highlights about all of the latest IWC happenings.

Our April engagements included representation across the globe at the FBI’s National Academy, International Studies Association’s (ISA) annual conference, West Virginia National Guard Ridge Runner DV Day, EUCOM Security Cooperation Education and Training Workshop, AFRICOM Security Cooperation Education & Training Workshop, Latvia Tabletop Exercise, NATO SOF Advisors Conference and much more!

Recently, the Irregular Warfare Center and West Virginia National Guard signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding during a Ridge Runner Irregular Warfare exercise at Camp Dawson, in Kingwood, West Virginia, April 19, 2024.

Maj. Gen. Bill Crane, Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard, and myself, signed the memorandum to formalize the existing WVNG/IWC partnership which includes enhancing opportunities for joint training exercises such as Ridge Runner and Ridge Healer programs, and additional sponsored events.

In support of the IWC’s continuous partnership with the Ridge Runner Program and West Virginia National Guard, throughout the event I emphasized the importance and value of this ongoing partnership.

This was the 2nd Annual Ridge Runner Distinguished Visitors Day. The Ridge Runner Irregular Warfare exercise is a West Virginia National Guard-led, multinational IW exercise that provides a training venue for elements of B. Co., 2/19th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and the 92nd Civil Affairs Brigade to train on various special operations training objectives.

Foreign partner participation included conventional and special operations forces from Slovakia, the United Kingdom, and partners from the INDOPACOM theater with observers from Georgia and Croatia. Ridge Runner IWX 24-01 featured more than 100 participants and observers from six nations.

We’re proud to showcase a few new multimedia products on our website highlighting significant accomplishments and initiatives throughout the Center. One of those is the Center’s new IW Global Network, which employs a strategic approach to address global irregular challenges through the establishment of Functional Area Networks (FANs).

These networks are centered around areas of concern identified in collaboration with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, and key global partners. The IWC FANs act as a force multiplier by creating a comprehensive whole of government approach. These networks foster cooperation across various sectors including the DoD, interagency, private sector, and global partners.

We continue to identify a number of action items our FANs will be tackling in the coming months and I’m excited for the future of this critical initiative. If you’d like to be a part of this great network, please let us know at fan@irregularwarfarecenter.org. The problems we are working to solve will make the world a safer place.

For other IWC related news and event information, please ensure to check out the Center on our social media platforms & website with links provided on page 2.

Thanks to the incredible team at the IWC for your continuous hard work and dedication to our important mission!

Stay tuned for more great things!

Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director

Call For Action! - IW Articles

IRREGULAR WARFARE CENTER

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Save the Date: Irregular Warfare Lessons Learned Since 9/11



Who: The Department of Defense’s Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) and the Foreign Policy Research Institute’s (FPRI) Center for the Study of Intelligence and Nontraditional Warfare

Where: U.S. Naval Institute Jack C. Taylor Conference Center, Annapolis, Maryland

When: September 17-18, 2024

What: The conference aims to capture lessons learned, including positive and negative examples, in the conduct of irregular warfare operations around the world by U.S., allied and partner nations, and non-state actors after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. While Afghanistan and Iraq were the most prominent of the post-9/11 wars, the conference welcomes papers that draw on lessons learned from irregular warfare operations in the Philippines, Horn of Africa, the Sahel region of Africa, and elsewhere. Submissions should pertain to sub-topics relevant to the seven main areas below:

- Information Operations
- Human Terrain
- Logistics/Supply Maintenance
- Medical, Dental and Veterinary Operations
- Intelligence and Counterintelligence Activities
- Engaging with Partner Forces
- Utilizing Local Police and Militia Forces in a Counterinsurgency

For more information on event details and paper submissions, please visit <http://irregularwarfarecenter.org/news/announcement/iwc-call-for-papers-2024/>

Invite Coming Soon

Photo Of The Month



Erik Herr, IWC Chief of Operators, provided an Irregular Warfare (IW) professional development session to members of the Washington Association of Military Attaches (WAMA) in April. The Center appreciates the opportunity to share the importance of IW education and training with partners and allies and will continue supporting WAMA and its activities moving forward.

Media Highlights

The Growing Use of Scamming Techniques and Social Media on the Battlefield by David Kirichenko
<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/publications/perspectives/the-growing-use-of-scamming-techniques-and-social-media-on-the-battlefield/>

The Devil Went Down to Georgia: Executing Cyberspace Resistance to Counter Russia by Mark Grzegorzewski, PhD and William Holden
<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/publications/perspectives/the-devil-went-down-to-georgia-executing-cyberspace-resistance-to-counter-russia/>

The Evolution of Intelligence Operations in Support of Irregular Warfare by Sal Artiaga – Irregular Warfare Practitioner
<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/publications/insights/the-evolution-of-intelligence-operations-in-support-of-irregular-warfare/>

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The Center Explores Conceptualizing the Use of Drones in Irregular Warfare

For more than two years, the full-scale war in Ukraine has been a battle lab for many of the emerging technologies that will define the next era of warfare.

The rise of drone warfare, in particular, has allowed Ukrainian forces to stay in the fight despite their quantitative disadvantages against the Russian invaders. For their part, the Russians have copied Ukraine's innovations in unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and employed them at a scale that the Ukrainians, as of now, are unable to match.

Drawing on lessons gleaned from the Ukrainian battlefield, Irregular Warfare Center Subject Matter Expert (Valens Global contractor) Nolan Peterson delivered a half-day course in drone combat on April 5 for Ridge Runner participants, a special operations training exercise hosted by the West Virginia National Guard and the Irregular Warfare Center. Participants included U.S. special operations forces as well as elements from several U.S. allies and partners.

Peterson outlined the latest developments in drone warfare in Ukraine to showcase the potential applications of unmanned systems in a resistance warfare scenario.

"In a resistance war, drones are effectively precision-guided IEDs that can be operated beyond visual line of site using automated, AI-driven targeting algorithms," Peterson said during his presentation.

"In the hands of irregular warfare operators, drones can have tactical, operational, and strategic effects – from killing individual enemy soldiers to disabling power stations and oil refineries or destroying nuclear-capable bombers sitting on the tarmac at an air base."

A former U.S. Air Force Special Operations pilot, Peterson lived full-time in Ukraine for a decade. Working as a Kyiv-based war correspondent, he covered Russia's war against Ukraine since 2014. During the eight years of limited warfare prior to Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion, Peterson had a front-row seat to observe how Ukrainian and Russian forces adapted small- and medium-sized drones to accomplish a variety of combat missions – from intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) to dropping small munitions.

Peterson also drew on other anecdotes from his time as a war correspondent, including how Islamic Fighters nearly turned the tide of the 2016 Battle of Mosul using small drone strikes.

"Drones are a bridge between conventional and unconventional warfare – they've democratized long-range, precision strike capabilities that were once limited to states that could afford weapons like cruise missiles," Peterson said.

Overall, Peterson's presentation underscored the trend lines of drone combat in Ukraine and other theaters, providing a conceptual foundation for Ridge Runner participants to imagine new and transformative ways to employ drones in irregular warfare.

"The No. 1 lesson from Ukraine is that the human element is more important than any weapons system," Peterson said, adding:

"When it comes to drone warfare, it's not good enough to just be an operator – you must also be a MacGyver."

Photos below: Nolan Peterson's experiences in the field as a war correspondent



IWC Provides Expertise at Annual ISA Conference

On April 3, the IWC's Chair of Research, Dr. Joshua Haste (Morgan 6 contractor), presented an in-process research project he is co-authoring with IWC Analyst, Andrew Lifyandchick (Valens Global contractor), at the International Studies Association's (ISA) annual conference. Their paper, *Scholarship by Other Means: Exploring the Role of State Influence on Academic Institutions*, was well-received and has already generated interest in follow-on studies and conference presentations once this initial study is completed.

The ISA is the premier academic conference for international relations scholars around the world. The conference is selective, especially in the areas of security studies and intelligence studies sections of the conference, and participation in the conference provides access to leading scholars of international relations, security studies, and intelligence studies. Dr. Haste, as well as IWC SME, Andrew McKay (Valens Global contractor) and IWC Analyst Madison Urban (Valens Global contractor) are attending panels and roundtables throughout the conference, engaging with academics and practitioners, and inviting participation in the IWC's Functional Area Networks (FANs) and future events.



Upcoming Events & Current Initiatives



Mission

The Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) is a congressionally mandated organization, charged with developing irregular warfare (IW) knowledge for the Department of Defense (DoD) and advancing the understanding of IW concepts.

The **IW Global Network** employs a strategic approach to addressing global irregular challenges through the establishment of **Functional Area Networks (FANs)**. These networks are centered around areas of concern identified in collaboration with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, and key global partners.

The IW FANs act as a force multiplier by creating a comprehensive whole of government approach. These networks foster cooperation across various sectors including the DoD, interagency, private sector, and global partners.

With this approach, multiple stakeholders from different sectors collaborate, share information, and pool resources to address issues that span multiple policy areas and ultimately maximizes irregular warfare capabilities.

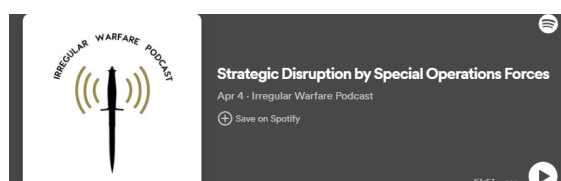
Current FANs

- Intelligence
- Emerging Technology
- Operations in the Information Environment (OIE)
- Medical Resilience
- Contested Logistics
- Mission Assurance

JOIN OUR NETWORK

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<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/initiatives/iw-global>



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