



# Irregular Warfare Center

# Spotlight

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## IWC Launches Its First Course on Irregular Warfare Approaches for IW Campaigning

Story by: Paul Burton, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired), IWC Ctr.



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ARLINGTON, VA — The Department of War Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) announced its newest online course, Irregular Warfare (IW) 301: IW Campaign Planning, available as of May 2026 for Irregular Warfare professionals. Irregular Warfare (IW) challenges frequently span national boundaries and require coordinated strategies among U.S. government agencies, as well as allied and partner nations. Toward this end, IW-301 is built to educate practitioners on the form, functions, and features of IW campaigning, with a focus on the development of a regionally based, integrated interagency IW campaign plan. This course reviews and expands on key concepts from baseline IWC online courses and includes detailed IW perspectives on interagency, cross-government planning, operational design, and the principles of IW campaigning.

The IWC emphasized the enhancement of the course experience with interactive courseware that integrates text, graphics, video, and other media to enhance learning and encourage participants' engagement. The course focuses on identifying the principles of interagency cooperation and the IW-related roles of U.S. government departments and agencies, analyze a strategic situation containing IW-related challenges and opportunities, and plan the employment of IW activities during competition with an integrated interagency IW campaign plan. As a part of the course, students will be provided with an IW campaign plan template as well as an example of a completed IW campaign plan. Participants will then get to "choose your own adventure" and select from one of three different current IW threat scenarios to develop their own integrated interagency IW campaign plan.

The time needed to complete IW-301 will vary greatly depending on students' existing knowl-

edge and practical experience with IW concepts in the global operating environment, and individual effort and level of detail put into the development of the integrated interagency IW campaign plan submission. The course is estimated to take between 8–16 hours to complete, with participants receiving a certificate for 12 hours of learning credit.

"This course capitalizes on the IWC educational successes with the introductory IW101 course and advanced IW201 course. This latest IWC course is specifically designed for IW practitioners and professionals in the Department of War and interagency partners at the federal, state, and local levels. However, as an unclassified resource, it is also open to anyone interested in understanding how irregular warfare approaches can be employed to counter adversaries in competition," said Chief of Curriculum and Senior Faculty Dr. Jeffrey Gardner.

Additionally, there will be a three-day resident course, IW401, that expands on topics covered in IW301 and introduces some new approaches to campaign design. The pilot course for IW401 is set for 18-20 August 2026 at the Joint Special Operations University at McDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla. Once the IW301 course is completed, those interested can register for the IW401 course once it's released by visiting the IWC website at <https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/education/>

IW301 directly advances the strategic objectives outlined in the 2020 National Defense Strategy IW Annex to institutionalize and operationalize IW as a core competency for the U.S. military, as well as fulfill the IWC's congressionally-mandated mission in Title 10 §345 "to serve as a central mechanism for developing the irregular warfare knowledge of the Department of War and advancing the understanding of irregular warfare concepts and doctrine" and "coordinating and aligning Department education curricula, standards, and objectives related to irregular warfare."

For Irregular Warfare 301 course registration visit: <https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/education/irregular-warfare-301/>

For more news and information about the IWC and its course visit: <https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/>

Follow the IWC on Linked In @irregularwarfarecenter (iwc) and on X @IrregularWarCtr

## Director's Corner

Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director



Director's Corner: Welcome to this month's Director's Corner. **A Unified Approach: The Case for a National IW Proponent**

Welcome to the June edition of the Director's Corner. In last month's column, we explored the necessity of bureaucratic and cultural reform to address the reality that irregular warfare (IW) is no longer a distant expeditionary concept, but a persistent threat extending into the American homeland. Building on that foundation, we must confront another fundamental truth: irregular warfare is, by its very nature, a team sport. Securing our nation against modern asymmetric threats demands absolute, whole-of-government unity of effort.

Today's complex security challenges operate through resonance, rather than direct attack. Adversaries increasingly utilize small, often unattributable actions—ranging from cyber intrusions and influence operations to criminal activity, drone reconnaissance, and economic coercion. The traditional distinction between foreign battlefields and the U.S. homeland has completely eroded, rendering critical infrastructure, information systems, supply chains, and public trust as primary targets in a persistent competition below the threshold of armed conflict.

In this environment, our greatest vulnerability is not the failure of individual systems, but the exploitation of their interdependencies. Our power, communications, transportation, finance, healthcare, and information networks are tightly interwoven. Adversaries aim to target these critical links, engineering cascading effects that amplify minor disruptions into severe societal and strategic consequences.

To effectively defend against this, the United States should consider rapidly shift from an incident-based response model to campaign-based detection. Rather than reacting to cyber incidents, infrastructure disruptions, and influence operations as disparate events, our government must identify them as coordinated elements of broader irregular warfare campaigns. Ultimately, national resilience is our decisive advantage. Our overarching goal must be to make American institutions, infrastructure, and society robust enough to prevent adversaries from turning these small actions into strategic victories.

While the United States is growing increasingly aware of these complex, adaptive threats, we remain organized around institutional stovepipes that prevent a unified response. We possess existing authorities to coordinate these efforts, but much work remains to break down these barriers. Nothing short of a unified, cross-functional structure will suffice.

This requires an empowered IW proponent within the Department of War, one purpose-built to reach beyond the Department to coordinate seamlessly across the interagency. The ideal location for such a proponent is the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASW SO/LIC). As the principal civilian advisory office for special operations and irregular conflict, ASW SO/LIC inherently possesses the statutory mandate, strategic focus, and cross-departmental relationships necessary to bridge military capabilities with interagency partners and coalesce a true whole-of-government IW strategy.

To meet the threats of today, we must actively build the unified team of tomorrow.

I would like to extend an invitation to everyone to our annual symposium in August 4-6. We'll have a powerhouse lineup of speakers and industry leaders sharing their ideas and solutions to the irregular problems we are facing in the homeland defense.

-DW

## Media Highlights

Colombia's ELN rebel group declares cease-fire ahead of election  
by: Associated Press

US-China Rivalry Is Laid Bare by a Contract to Deepen an Argentine River  
by: Jonathan Gilbert, Bloomberg News





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## IWC Engagements

### IWC Explores Strategic Collaboration at ACSS Reception

On June 09, 2026, Matthew Heidel, analyst for Functional Area Networks (FANs) and Africa, Ctr. represented the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) at the Emerging Leaders reception hosted by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. The event honored mid-career students from across the continent who had completed a intensive two-week program in strategy and security studies. In addition to celebrating the students, the gathering served as a vital networking hub, drawing key U.S. government stakeholders from the Defense Security Cooperation University (DSCU) and the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC), alongside ACSS leadership and prominent NGO representatives. While Heidel engaged in enlightening dialogue with international delegates from nations such as Côte d'Ivoire, Botswana, Zambia, and Senegal, the event's most immediate strategic value emerged from high-level consultations with U.S. defense and academic officials.

A primary focus of the engagement was operationalizing a collaborative strategic communication workshop in Africa. Heidel held an extended discussion with ACSS Senior Military Advisor Col. McClure, who strongly recommended targeting the Nigerian Defense Directorate of Information for the initiative. Their conversation also touched on navigating recent security cooperation requests from the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The reception further solidified institutional ties through direct dialogue with top ACSS leadership. Additionally, Heidel connected with some of the ACSS leadership to convey the IWC's formal appreciation for its pivotal role in securing a space for the upcoming Scholars Colloquium, reinforcing a seamless, supportive relationship between the companion institutions.

### IWC Advances Arctic Security and Highlights IW Education Gaps at HDAS 26

Miss Brittany Carroll, IWC senior analyst, NORTHCOM/Defense of the Homeland, Ctr. represented the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) at the 2026 Homeland Defense Awareness Symposium (HDAS 26) at the U.S. Air Force Academy, June 9-10, 2026. Centered on Arctic defense and whole-of-nation strategies, the event convened bi-national stakeholders, including U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), Canadian and Danish representatives, academia, and industry partners.

The forum accelerated critical dialogues on capability developments, security strategies, and mission success within the increasingly strategic High North.

The symposium illuminated significant operational gaps and unique, irregular challenges facing homeland defense. This engagement allowed the IWC to broaden its network, identifying key industry stakeholders for potential invitation to the upcoming 2026 IWC Symposium.

### IWC Advances Irregular Warfare Education and Industry Partnerships at SOF Week 2026

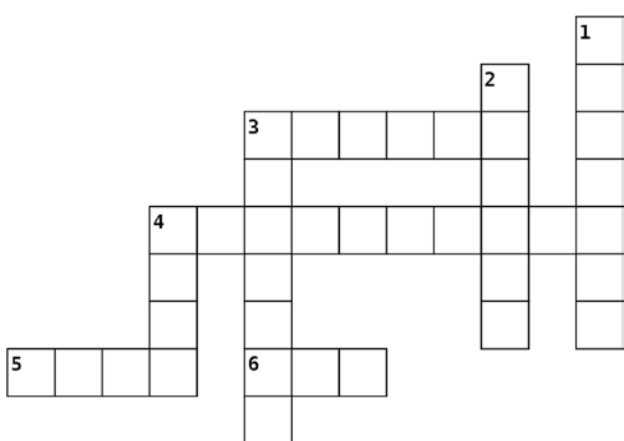
Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) representatives Dr. Jeff Gardner, Chief of Curriculum and Dr. Sandor Fabian, Defense Research Analyst for Africa and Functional Area Networks, Ctr. attended the 2026 SOF Week in Tampa, Florida May 18-21, 2026. Jointly supported by U.S. Special Operations Command and the Global SOF Foundation, the premier international gathering united military operators, government leaders, and industry partners. The event established a trusted forum to merge emerging tactical requirements with strategic capabilities, heavily accelerating mission-focused conversations across the irregular warfare domain.

The symposium yielded significant academic and operational breakthroughs for the IWC delegation. Dr. Gardner drove crucial dialogues regarding irregular warfare education and artificial intelligence integration during high-level sessions with Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SOLIC) staff, the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Vice Provost, and the President of Marine Corps University. Dr. Fabian expanded the center's tactical network by connecting with over 60 industry presenters. He also established a robust pipeline of prospective participants for the upcoming 2026 IWC Symposium.

The SOF Week 2026 Capabilities Demonstration provides a visual overview of the operational environments, advanced technologies, and collaborative maneuvers discussed by defense stakeholders during the conference.

## Current Initiatives, Upcoming Events & IW Educational Offerings

### Irregular Warfare Crossword



#### Across

- 3. What the host nation calls the beautiful game.
- 4. The only player on the pitch allowed to use their hands (inside the box).
- 5. The essential piece of equipment that every player is fighting for.
- 6. One of the three co-host nations for the 2026 tournament.

#### Down

- 1. The official on the pitch responsible for enforcing the rules and issuing cards.
- 2. The ultimate gold prize lifted by the tournament champions.
- 3. The massive venue where thousands of fans gather to watch the match.
- 4. The ultimate objective of an attacking play that sends the crowd into a frenzy.

The Spring 2026 issue of PRISM is officially out, and it's a deep dive into the center of 21st-century strategic competition. From the weaponization of agriculture to the ethical frontier of military AI, this issue explores the porous boundaries defining today's security landscape. Featured Topics include:

- Cognitive Warfare:
- Strategic State-Sponsored Criminality:
- Agricultural Security

Scan the QR Code to read the Spring 2026 issue!



### Spotlight Team

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Crossword answers: 1. Referee, 2. Trophy, 3. Soccer, Stadium, 4. Goalkeeper, Goal, 5. Ball, 6. USA.

### This Month in the History of Irregular Warfare

*June has a storied place in the timeline of irregular warfare, providing some of the most fundamental case studies in insurgency, resistance coordination, and the evolution of modern special operations.*

-June 1916: The Birth of Modern Guerrilla Theory (The Arab Revolt) – In June 1916, the Arab Revolt began against the Ottoman Empire. This campaign became the bedrock for modern irregular warfare theory. T.E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia") used these events to articulate the foundational principles of unconventional warfare: that irregular forces should rely on depth rather than a forward line, use extreme mobility to strike lines of communication (like the Hejaz Railway), and destroy the enemy's materials rather than their troops.

-June 5-6 1944: Three-man "Jedburgh" teams (comprising American OSS, British SOE, and French operatives) parachuted into occupied France. Their mission was to organize, arm, and coordinate the French Resistance (Maquis).

-June 21, 1951: Task Force Perry became operational on Kyodong Island. This cell established command, control, and training regimens (demolitions, small unit tactics, and communications) for thousands of North Korean anti-communist partisans operating along the coast, tying down significant enemy resources.

-June 2021: Institutionalizing the "Gray Zone." U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and Joint planners heavily emphasized a framework that moved beyond traditional counterterrorism. Instead, the focus solidified around the five pillars of modern strategic disruption: Sustain, Understand, Influence, Respond, and Target.

### Connect With Us



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