

1 May 2020

US Army Heritage and Education Center

Strategic Plan 2020

New Direction for a New Decade

"It is important that we can't be constrained by our experiences. Sometimes new and different perspectives are necessary for innovation."

-GEN James C. McConville, 40th CSA

"If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less."

-GEN Eric K. Shinseki, 34th CSA

US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

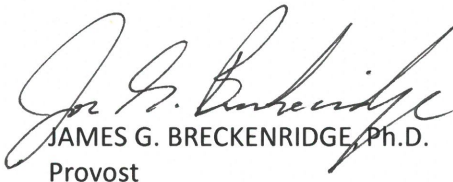
Message from the US Army War College Leadership

The US Army War College has a long and distinguished record of preparing senior military officers and civilians for strategic leadership responsibilities and providing thought leadership in the national security arena. The US Army Heritage and Education Center is an integral part of the War College that supports and extends the intellectual efforts to wider audiences. Our collective future relies on the collaborative effort of all component organizations to operate as one organization with a shared vision. This strategic plan reflects our vision and represents the consensus of talented and experienced leaders throughout the Center, and the War College.

Strategy sits between the mission and operational plans. It is the pathway to deliver on the mission, rather than the specific steps (or tasks) to implement strategy. It sets broad direction based on being patron focused and digitally enabled. In that regard, it is more of a compass than a road map.

Creating the intellectual overmatch and mental agility that our Army requires in the near future demands change in emphasis and urgency. Similarly, patron expectations are increasingly driven by rapidly evolving consumer technology product experiences. The Center has a responsibility to modernize in a new direction because the needs of the Army, Army educators, and patrons around the world demand and deserve it.

The US Army War College enhances national and global security by developing ideas and educating US and international leaders to serve and lead at the strategic-enterprise level. For over 100 years, it has generated outstanding results. The Center's strategic plan capitalizes on the current window of opportunity to innovate and set the foundation for the next decade's success.



JAMES G. BRECKENRIDGE, Ph.D.
Provost



JOHN S. KEM
Major General, US Army
Commandant

Opening Message

The US Army Heritage and Education Center's Collection and our human expertise, together are a unique national treasure. The rich holdings of knowledge, memory, and connections afford patrons and visitors an unparalleled perspective and ability to draw upon past lessons and apply them towards future challenges. Collection-centric resources alone are no longer sufficient to articulate our value proposition to the War College and the Army, however. As we aim to support the goals of the War College and partner institutions, we must also understand and anticipate the evolving needs, expectations, and requirements of our patrons.

Therefore, the mission of the Center is expanding, and our work is transforming. The Center seeks to be on the forward edge of learning and educational methodology. We are contributing to faculty productivity and research initiatives, cultivating student success in scholastic as well as strategic achievements, and advancing the mission of the US Army War College in developing ideas and educating leaders to lead and serve at the strategic-enterprise level. To be successful, the combined intellectual resources of the Center must be practically applied in developing ideas for the Nation, and used to develop field grade and general officers in order to achieve intellectual overmatch against our adversaries.

We see a future where much patron activity takes place in a virtual environment, in addition to our physical realm. Both the Collection and our human expertise must be more discoverable, accessible, and useable to a distributed audience. The Center must continuously assess, adapt, and innovate, as the needs of our patrons continue to evolve over time.

The 2020 Strategic Plan lays the foundation for future modernization and growth at the Center—how we develop a workforce ready for patron centered and digitally enabled operations, and how we set conditions to remain a continuously innovating and modernizing organization. We cannot afford to be complacent, nor can we afford to shortchange the Army and its students with barriers to effective learning. The digital transformation of the Center is the heart of our modernization efforts and ensures we remain the place of choice for research, analysis, collaboration, and education; both physically and virtually.

In pursuit of that future, we will look at ourselves with clear eyes and fresh thinking. We are moving in a new direction that favors our patrons and their needs with first-rate experiences and products. We hope you will participate alongside us.

Our Enduring Values

We believe studying the past is required in order to understand the present, and essential to forecasting the future.

We believe our people drive our success.

We believe in engaging life-long learners, of all types.

We value our patrons' time; we want to be timely, efficient, and effective.

We believe in serving all Americans; we want to share the Collection with larger audiences.

We know we cannot do it alone; teamwork, collaboration, and partnerships are essential for success.

Who We Are

The Center is an integral part of the War College, and maintains the knowledge repositories that support scholarship and research about the US Army and its operating environment. The mission statement of the Center reflects the convergence of library books, archival materials, and museum artifacts into a single collection of knowledge that supports learning and research, while prioritizing support to patron communities.

Our Mission

The US Army Heritage and Education Center engages, inspires, and informs the Army, the American people, and global partners with a unique and enduring source of knowledge and thought.

Our Vision

The place of choice for innovative research, analysis, collaboration, and education—physically and virtually.

Our Underpinnings

Secretary of War Elihu Root established the historical origins of our organization on 21 February 1903, in his vision of the War College. “Membership in the War College will mean honor and opportunity. In its confidential archives will be garnered the results of the best thought of the Army, and in the continuous existence of the institution...will be found continuity of knowledge, of thought, and of military policy always available for practical uses.”

Service to the Army, with a focus on supporting scholarship and research, has been and remains at the core of our mission. What began small, quickly grew with the addition of rare books and archival holdings. Eventually, museum artifacts joined photographs, map sheets, and audio visual recordings. Today, these elements form a rich and unique repository of knowledge and thought—the Collection.

War College Mission

The US Army War College enhances national and global security by developing ideas and educating US and international leaders to serve and lead at the strategic-enterprise level.

Our Plan

This strategic plan, launched in 2020, outlines the direction and priorities for the Center as we enter a new decade. Through this new and creative approach to our historic mission, and through our leadership and convening power, we will pioneer a new kind of cultural and heritage center. The strategic plan articulates our goals and objectives, and describes how we will achieve them in broad terms. Implementation guidance, published separately, contains specific signature efforts or tasks.

Our Imperative

We face a future that demands change in emphasis and urgency. Helping create the intellectual overmatch and mental agility that our Army requires cannot be achieved with silo systems focused on typological holdings and legacy processes. Patron expectations of finding, accessing, and using content and services are increasingly driven by consumer technology product experiences that have dramatically re-centered on the patron. We have a responsibility to modernize as our audience evolves or else we will cease to exist due to our lack of relevance.

Patron Centered and Digitally Enabled

In executing our mission, we make a deliberate decision to be patron centered and digitally enabled. What does that mean? Simply, we must understand and impact 21st-century audiences, using 21st-century technology and platforms.

While the Collection will always be at the core of what we do, it is imperative to shift our focus to the people who use the Collection. It is not solely the things we hold, but rather the audiences we serve, and how they use the Collection that is most important. We must engage our patrons where they are, in the medium of their choosing, and in a format that is readily understood and employable by them.

As much as we desire to have every American come to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and visit the Center, that is not possible. The Center is increasingly focused on advanced initiatives that foster scholarship and support the research enterprise—digitally enabled operations are our future. The systems and mindset needed to enable this work require a transformation just as complete.

Our Goals and Objectives

Expand Access to the Collection

The Collection is the nucleus of the Center. We continue to grow and cultivate the Collection, while sharing our rich holdings with scholars and researchers across the globe. We deliver effective stewardship of the Collection to enhance relevancy by focusing the Collection on topics most important to the War College, and the Army. Prudent collections management actions refine and improve the quality and relevance of the Collection with respect to the Center's mission, vision, and programmatic goals. No matter what direction technology takes us, the Collection remains at the core of what we do. We cannot stop caring for the Collection once it is digitally available.

While we will always occupy a central position on campus, we see a future where much patron activity takes place in a highly decentralized, virtual environment. The Collection must be more discoverable, accessible, and useable for our many customers. Our legacy systems failed to adequately manage increasingly complex and digitally-oriented information environments. We are creating new digital platforms, leveraging cloud computing and storage, for scholars and researchers to better access the Collection and our resources with a single search tool. In the near future, we expect to apply machine learning and natural language processing software that culls through scanned material to accelerate research and uncover insights in our unstructured data. Current products do not meet Army requirements, and we cannot wait for a perfect system. Rather, we will innovate alongside industry leaders, and in doing so, drive the Army's future systems.

We must build new and inspiring spaces that bring in visitors to experience the Collection firsthand. We need additional venues, mediums, and techniques to display the Collection in ways that engage, inspire, and inform our patrons. Expanding the Hall of the American Soldier allows us to develop new and creative ways to inform and inspire through displays that are tactile, interactive, and rely less heavily on traditional artifact display methodology. Creating gallery space to showcase the collection along with some limited

collaboration spaces that engage audiences in critical conversations is our first priority in the physical domain. Adding environmentally-controlled, purpose-built spaces to Ridgway Hall for the preservation of film, photographs, rare documents, and a place to support virtual presentations, is an exciting opportunity for a public/private funding venture. We actively pursue spaces in the new academic building, and across campus, to continue our efforts towards engaging, inspiring, and informing.

We will bridge to similar digital repositories that mutually enrich patron experience and understanding. By creating virtual exhibits, we can link items together that are physically scattered across continents. Interconnecting with other academic and research facilities is crucial to ensure the Center is the place of choice for our patrons. As part of our modernization effort, we seek opportunities to develop concepts and capabilities with our allies and partners, which will give our patrons unprecedented access to authoritative knowledge.

Enhance Our Programs and Services

Our programs reconnect the people we serve to their Army through a myriad of educational offerings that engage thousands annually. The War College conducts public scholarship, and the Center is a primary element of execution. We will rapidly increase the academic rigor of our adult public scholarship programs to a level that merits academic credit, and clearly links to War College institutional learning outcomes. Our youth-oriented programs are designed to inspire greater interest in America's Army, while emphasizing Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking.

We prioritize the Center's research products at the strategic-enterprise level, over tactical and operational. Our professionals create knowledge and ideas through high-impact research. They provide responsive, on-demand analysis of contemporary problems from a historical perspective. The knowledge we generate shapes Army thinking at the top tier levels, and informs enterprise-level decision making.

We must elevate digital experiences to improve services and online assistance. Using our digitized resources to create tailored products for all of our audiences is important. As we connect to life-long learners, we extend the bell curve of learning by bridging the gaps between episodic institutional learning opportunities. Our virtual presence will engage national and global audiences with inspiring content.

We will better understand our patrons by measuring our impact. We meter and adapt our work processes based on the results of these assessments. Customer feedback determines if we are providing the right service at the right time. What served us very well in the past, may not be what our patrons need in the future. A well-designed assessment informs our practices, products and services, and empowers us to better anticipate our customers' needs.

Empower Our People for the Future

We invest in our talent while we advance and expand the depth and diversity of our workforce. The Army has always relied upon capable and highly trained Civilians. We make a commitment to the advancement of insightful leadership in the realm of our most valued capital—people.

The Center promotes a culture of self-development within our workforce, not only to place individuals in positions of greater responsibility, but also to ensure their fluency with emerging technologies. We must update our development processes to increase critical, creative, design, and system-centric thinking to prepare ourselves for the complexities of the future. We will leverage training opportunities through Army career program managers and professional associations, when appropriate.

At the Center, we recognize that an innovation mindset is inherently tied to our people. We encourage people to work on what they are passionate about, individually or in groups, with dedicated time for innovation or experimentation. We will use working groups to create a pool of practical ideas that are nurtured into opportunities and provided necessary resources for success. Incentives programs recognize the results.

We embrace fellowship, intern, and volunteer opportunities to cultivate the future workforce. In partnership with regional universities, we offer mutually beneficial cooperative or internship programs targeting the graduate student level. Interns and volunteers are invaluable to the Center, and are found at all levels of daily operations.

Optimize Our Resources for the Future

We will diversify and expand our sources of funding by demonstrating value. Our scan of the fiscal environment tells us that bigger budgets are unlikely. To enable our ambitious modernization agenda in a flat fiscal environment, the Center must ruthlessly prioritize our resources to achieve our modernization goals. We will evolve our operations to build up revenues from philanthropy and entrepreneurship. We actively seek opportunities to partner with new organizations (both inside and outside the Army) that bring resources (intellect, time, money, manpower) to our highest priorities.

We will use quantitative and qualitative information to plan and set realistic goals, and promote continuous improvement. We will use this strategic plan to establish our priorities, focus our transformational initiatives, measure and guide our progress, and adapt to the needs of the future. Of course, we will integrate risk management and mitigation into all our operations and decision making. We rapidly divest under-performing legacy programs and products to free up resources for modernization priorities.

We are good stewards of our surroundings, to protect the environment for future generations. We strive to reduce energy consumption, waste generation, and production of greenhouse gases. We reduce our carbon footprint by upgrading lighting systems with high efficiency fixtures at every opportunity. Storm water management programs will ensure runoff from parking lots does not contaminate streams or drinking water. Even our outdoor lighting is selected to minimize light pollution.

We validate our processes with external professional-level perspectives. In doing so, we acknowledge that we do not have all the answers and can learn from peer organizations. The Center must remain accountable to the Army and the Nation. Audits and evaluations, both internal and external, drive accountability and make us a better organization.

Catalyzing Critical Conversations

Our unique position as part of the War College brings a responsibility to address complex problems within the communities of interest we touch. Modernization and digital transformation require a reassessment of existing policies and authorities, and we should engage in meaningful dialogue that shapes Army thinking. We share what we learn (successes and setbacks) in open dialogue so the entire enterprise is stronger.

We will bring people together to spark creative synergy and learn from each other. Our Center, steeped in Army heritage, is a remarkable venue for collaboration. We will optimize the shared use of the Center's facilities to convene gatherings that are mutually beneficial to the Army and the community. We must leverage the academic environment to connect with top-level experts of diverse backgrounds and experiences to add breadth and depth to the dialogue.

We embrace experimentation, to learn...with discipline. In addition to the Center's ongoing investment in IT modernization, we encourage a culture of continuous learning, and capacity for innovation. We will engage with new technologies and communities in open dialogue. We are deeply motivated to explore new avenues that connect our knowledge and expertise with patrons.

We must also articulate our story in persuasive ways to attract additional resources. We work together as one at the Center to amplify the stories we tell, increasing our reach and impact. All members of the Center are encouraged to share their exciting work with others, in a wide variety of media and formats.

Conclusion

Ahead of us lies great opportunity. Our response will transform the Center more profoundly than at any point since its founding. The 2020 Strategic Plan lays the foundation for future modernization and growth at the Center—how we develop a workforce ready for patron centered and digitally enabled operations, and how we set conditions to remain a continuously innovating and modernizing organization. Successful implementation of this strategy requires a whole-Center effort, in close coordination with our partners. We synchronize these efforts using more detailed implementation guidance, developed in concert with the War College.

As we consider the next decade, it is clear that our mission is more relevant today than ever. The US Army Heritage and Education Center engages, inspires, and informs the Army, the American people, and global partners with a unique and enduring source of knowledge and thought.

The Center continues to serve as an investment in the future and a steward of Army heritage. Though the Center's roots extend over many decades, the next decade of the Center's history may be its finest yet. We hope you will participate alongside us, because we cannot wait to show you what is on our horizon.