

Panel Proposal for ISMS 2023
Preferred Working Groups: Military History, Military Education, War Studies,

Panel Title:

Defence Alliances and Partnerships in the American Ways of War: Perspectives from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

Panel Abstract:

In 1973, the same year the Paris Peace Accords and a brutal conflict in the Middle East sparked debate about the past and future of war, Russell F. Weigley's *The American Way of War* appeared. In this book, which for years occupied a place of prominence on the Army chief of staff's recommended reading list, Weigley provided ammunition for those who argued the United States needed to leave behind the jungles and frustrations of Vietnam and for the country's defence planners and strategists to return their focus to preparation for large-scale combat operations. The American way of war, according to Weigley, had historically been exemplified by large-scale combat operations conducted by warriors like Ulysses S. Grant and George Patton. These and other like-minded men achieved America's strategic objectives through an approach to war that focused on mobilizing America's resources and applying conventional military force until the enemy had been completely defeated on the battlefield and had no choice but to submit to American might. Conversely, an inability or unwillingness to apply this American way of war had produced frustration for the United States in Vietnam. Echoes of this line of thought have informed debate over the course, conduct, and outcomes of the military campaigns the United States has conducted the Middle East in recent decades.

The concept of "ways of war" is a central focus of the curriculum developed and executed by the Department of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), with the work of Weigley and other theorists occupying a central role. Unfortunately, as a consequence of the focus on the attitudes and outlook of military actors like Grant and Patton who commanded American forces exclusively, the role of alliances and strategic partnerships often do not receive the sort of attention they merit in discussions of ways of war – either in how they shaped American planning and conduct of security affairs or were shaped by American conduct of security affairs. In this panel, members of the faculty at CGSC, one whose research and teaching interests focus on American military affairs prior to 1945 and one whose research and teaching interests focus on American military affairs since 1945, present perspectives on the role of alliances and partnerships in the American way of war that is informed by their experiences on the faculty at CGSC. Particular focus will be on the important role alliances and partnerships with other nations played in the evolution of America's approach to war, the defence policies it pursued between wars, and how this at times underappreciated dynamic is incorporated into the curriculum at CGSC. This will be offered with an eye on stimulating discussion that will be of value to, and further collaboration among peers and colleagues occupying a variety of positions in military education institutions and other organizations committed to research and academic education in military arts and sciences

Panelist (and point of contact):

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Abstract

Defence Alliances and Partnerships in American Ways of War to 1945

Dr. Ethan S. Rafuse, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

For most of its history, the focus of those responsible for strategic planning in the United States, thinking about the ways and means of war, and developing and executing policy in regard to national security was ensuring the security of its borders and fulfilling the nation's "manifest destiny" to extend its control over the North American continent. For a variety of reasons ranging from popular disinterest in foreign affairs to idealization of precedents established during the presidential administrations of George Washington and James Monroe to an at times unseemly chauvinistic sense of occupying an exalted place in global affairs, American policy makers and strategists generally resisted playing the game of alliances, partnerships and international cooperation that did so much to shape security affairs in Europe before 1945. Not surprisingly, these attitudes toward alliances and partnerships had a distinctive impact on how Americans both within and outside the uniformed military services thought about the ends, means, ways of war.

Attitudes began to change around 1900 as a consequence of completing the task of conquering the frontier, new technologies driving changes in the global economy, dramatic shifts in the international system, and the acquisition of an American overseas empire. These developments were in turn shaped by American strategists and planners who possessed an enhanced appreciation for the benefits to the country of greater engagement with others on the world stage. With this came a greater appreciation for how American's security interests could be advanced and secured through cooperation with state and non-state actors in other countries. Involvement in the World Wars brought the United States to a position of unprecedented global influence and made cooperation with other states through strategic partnerships and alliances an essential component of American statecraft. How this all shaped and interacted with the evolution of American thinking about its ways of war are the subject of this presentation, as are the ways these topics are addressed in curriculum at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in order to provide defence planners of the future with an understanding of the evolution of American and statecraft prior to 1945 that will positively inform how they address the threats and opportunities of the current and future operational environments.

Biography

Ethan S. Rafuse received his Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in history and political science at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and since 2004 has been a member of the faculty at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, where he is a professor of military history. His publications include essays in *War in History*, *Parameters: U.S. Army War College Quarterly*, *Cambridge History of the American Civil War*, *The Journal of Military History*, and *Naval War College Review*. In 2018-19, he was the Charles Boal Ewing Distinguished Visiting Professor of History at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Abstract

Defence Alliances and Partnerships in American Ways of War since 1945

Dr. Sean Kalic, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

For the duration of the Cold War, as well the dynamic security environment since 1991, the United States has relied on alliances as a critical part of its foreign policy, strategic planning, and grand strategy. Through the Cold War U.S. presidents have emphasized and built the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Australian, New Zealand, and United States Alliance (ANZUS) with varying degrees of success. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has remained, however, a steadfast plank within the military, foreign policy, and diplomatic history of the United States. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the role of NATO has once again become a central point of discussion in military, foreign policy, and diplomatic circles. Therefore, this discussion will focus on the evolution of NATO from its inception as a collective security alliance at the start of the Cold War to its current status based upon Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Of specific focus will be how successive U.S. Presidents from Harry S. Truman to Joseph Biden have viewed NATO as a central and critical element of US military and foreign policy planning. This discussion of military history and strategy will focus on three distinct periods of NATO's evolution (The Cold War, the post- Soviet Environment, and the Global War on Terrorism and Beyond) as a means to better understand how alliances and partnerships have become an essential component of American statecraft and military policy within the context of the American Ways of War. Beyond the historical focus, this discussion will also incorporate the way this topic is addressed in the curriculum at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College as a way to provide future defence planners and practitioners with a richer understanding of the past as a means to better prepare them for the threats and opportunities of the current and future operational and strategic environments.

Biography

Sean N. Kalic received his Ph.D. in history from Kansas State University and joined the faculty at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in 2004, where he is a professor of military history and the senior instructor in charge of curriculum in the Department of Military History. His publications include *US Presidents and the Militarization of Space, 1946-1967* (an Outstanding Academic Title, presented by Choice Magazine), *Spies: The U.S. and Russian Espionage Game from the Cold War to the 21st Century*, and *Combating the Modern Hydra: Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism*.