

Naval Postgraduate School Examines Hybrid Force 2045



This week, the Naval Postgraduate School is hosting a hybrid version of its annual Warfare Innovation Continuum, focused on the future hybrid force. *Naval Postgraduate School*

The U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) is conducting its annual Warfare Innovation Continuum (WIC) scenario this week on a critical naval priority: the future hybrid force.

Led by the NPS Naval Warfare Studies Institute (NWSI), WIC 2021 is addressing a “design challenge” of “How might emerging technologies, new operational concepts and alternative fleet designs contribute to a more effective naval force across the spectrum from competition to conflict, and how do the alternative fleet designs enhance the effectiveness and resilience of joint, combined and coalition forces across all domains?”

NWSI serves as a hub to facilitate teamwork and collaboration with the NPS innovation ecosystem to optimize NPS’ interdisciplinary educational and research response to naval warfighting needs.

The hybrid event is led by retired Capt. Jeff Kline, the NWSI WIC director, and research associate Lyla Englehorn, the NWSI concepts branch lead, and is taking place both in person on the NPS campus in Monterey and on the “Virtual Campus” via Microsoft Teams this week.

According to NPS spokesman Dave Nystrom, the organizers expect more than 140 participants, including facilitators, panelists, moderators, observers and students, with international participation from Australia, Indonesia, Ecuador, Greece, Romania and the United Kingdom. “Participation teams” will look at the design challenge from different perspectives, with

two working at the classified level.

“WIC leverages classroom projects, theses and research in advancing naval concepts, assessing new technologies and developing tactics while enhancing our students’ educational experience and sharpening their combat skills,” Nystrom said. “It’s a perfect example of how NPS combines student operational experience, defense-focused education and applied research to deliver real solutions and leaders educated to employ them.”

Retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau, president of NPS, told the participants that Hybrid Force 2045 theme will examine “how the naval services will operate in an era of robots, drones, crewed and un-crewed systems as part of the CNO’s vision outlined in the NAVPLAN and [Marine Corps] commandant’s vision outlined in Force Design 2030. As you consider this challenge, joint concepts and capabilities must also be accounted for as it is the Joint Force that will allow us to fight and win but will also give our nation’s leaders options in the competition phase or in preparation to employ our kinetic capabilities in conflict.

“This is the tenth year NPS has hosted the warfare innovation workshop, which is fully integrated into our year-long Warfare Innovation Continuum,” said Rondeau. “Following the workshop, the Continuum will carry on your ideas, proposed concepts and assessments of emerging technologies as capstone projects, theses work, prototyping, experimentation, modeling and simulation, and other research threads. You are the first step in, and now completely part of, that Continuum.”

NWSI Director, retired Vice Adm. Dave Lewis added, “Using participant insights, NWSI will begin to inspire formation of various interdisciplinary research groups to address major topics of concern for our naval service. We anticipate the Hybrid Force 2045 Warfare Innovation Continuum to morph into a NWSI Research Task Force named “Hybrid Force 2045” in early

fiscal year '22. Other NPS Research Task Forces, which the WIC will inform, are the already established Task Force Overmatch and another Task Force planned for FY22 "Maritime Gray Zone." Research groups will leverage the WIC and follow-on workshops as initiating events and as a construct to begin their own work," Lewis said. "As some of the very best and brightest from industry, academia, system commands and defense labs, our WIC participants are invited to participate in these efforts."

In its 70th year, NPS provides defense-focused graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership and warfighting advantage of the naval service.