

2024–2025 Dubik Fellows

Demonstrating the Pen Is Mightier than the Sword

Col. Todd Schmidt, PhD, U.S. Army

Nearly a year ago, with the approval of senior leadership, Army University Press (AUP) began developing a nonresident writing fellowship designed to mirror similar, existing nonresident fellowship opportunities at military service academies, think tanks, and institutes. The original concept of the nonresident fellowship was to create a prestigious program supporting the Harding Project initiative. The Harding Project is a chief of staff of the Army effort, championed by Gen. Gary Brito, commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, to strengthen the Army profession.

The intention of the nonresident fellowship is to deliberately build annual cohorts of Fellows over time, employed across the military and civil society, who are empowered and encouraged to participate and engage in professional military discourse. Opportunities for Fellows include potential participation in projects that include film production in support of professional military education, working with a team at AUP in book editing and production, and, of course, publishing professional articles with AUP's *Military Review* and other similar platforms. Over time, the desired steady state is a growing community and network of dedicated professionals committed to championing writing, sharing, and improving our collective ability to absorb information, think critically, analyze thoughtfully, and communicate effectively.

The fellowship namesake, retired Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, is the author of several books and countless



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articles written over the course of his retirement and his thirty-seven years of active military service. His last assignment in the Army was commanding general of the Multinational Security Transition Command–Iraq and the NATO Training Mission–Iraq, from 2007 to 2008. Currently, he teaches at Georgetown University and has served as a senior Fellow and member of the Institute of Land Warfare, the Institute for the Study of War, and the Council on Foreign Relations. He has completed fellowship and executive programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Finally, he is a graduate of the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies and holds a PhD in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University.

Why the Dubik Fellowship?

One of the most prevalent questions I am asked by skeptics related to the Harding Project is, "What



Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, U.S. Army, Retired

problem are we trying to solve?" Every time I am asked this question, I pause and take a deep breath. Rather than give a soundbite incorporating a command message, I endeavor to explain something that, to me, is glaringly obvious and imperative. First, military leaders must be able to write effectively to communicate, particularly at the strategic level. Second, as an Army, we have a long way to go to improve our professional writing ability.

To win war in the future, we must be able to outthink the enemy. To outthink an adversary requires training our intellectual selves. It requires developing our cognitive complexity and intellectual curiosity and our ability to receive, synthesize, and incorporate vast amounts of information. Experiential knowledge is a valuable heuristic for solving tactical challenges, but it is not enough to be exceptional at the strategic level. More plainly, we do not want senior leaders that achieve the highest ranks solely because of how they may have performed as a tactical leader at the battalion and brigade levels.

Average leaders often talk about the importance of being physically and mentally tough and the importance of physical and mental resilience. Yet, too often, leaders are unable and unwilling to challenge themselves mentally from an intellectual perspective. Developing our intellect can often be dismissed or disavowed.

Intellectual development can often be like "leg day" at the gym. Most people dread it. For a professional warrior-scholar, however, there is a deeper awareness, not just superficial acknowledgement, that professional reading and writing are the basic building blocks that develop our core ability to

outthink our competitors. The Dubik Fellowship aspires to contribute to this core ability to outthink the enemy.

Whether one agrees or disagrees about the influence and use of hard power, there is an aged truism undergirding the idiom, "The pen is mightier than the sword." As English author Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote in 1839,

*Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanters wand! Itself nothing!
But taking sorcery from the master-hand
To paralyze the Caesars—and to strike
The loud earth breathless! Take away the sword
States can be saved without it!*

Please join me in congratulating our inaugural cohort of scholars, the 2024–2025 class of Dubik Fellows:

Chaveso Cook, PhD
Ryan Crayne, MBA
Melissa Czarnogursky
Noel DeJesus, MA
Timothy Devine, MPA
Nicholas DiMichele, MA, MPP
Josephine Hessert, MD
Nathan Jennings, PhD
JohnPaul LeCedre, JD
Matthew Moellering, MA
Robert Rose, MPP, MPhil
Christopher Salerno, MA
Jared Stefani, MA
Matthew Tetreau, MA, MS

They have served on the Office of the Secretary of Defense staff, the Army staff, and in operational units across the globe. They have served in a variety of organizations, including the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Army Reserve, multiple infantry divisions, the 75th Ranger Regiment, and the Joint Special Operations Command. They have diverse demographics, including senior noncommissioned officers and officers. All Fellows demonstrate a passion for professional education, writing, and scholarship. To learn more about our fellowship, please visit our Writing Fellows Program page on the AUP website at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/journals/ltg-james-dubik-writing-fellows-program/>.

Over the course of the next year, this cohort of Fellows will contribute to our professional military discourse and shape the future of the Dubik Fellowship, professional military writing, and, hopefully, the Army. ■