

Looking back on our first year

The inaugural year of the Research School has come to an end, and what a successful one it was! We now have almost 20 PhD students and more than 30 soldier-scholars in the network, hailing from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the United States and the United Kingdom.

This year's events and activities included panel discussions, our 1st Annual Soldier-Scholar Conference and membership meeting, courses and the launching of our [homepage](#). Perhaps most important of all, four of our members have defended their doctoral theses and have returned to their respective armed forces as soldier-scholars!

Thank you all for your support. We look forward to another exciting year with you!

Antulio, Kersti and Lydia (the management team)

Soldier-Scholar Conference 2025

The first annual Soldier-Scholar Conference of the research school for was successfully held on 25–26 September at the Swedish Defence University in Stockholm.

The two-day conference featured a keynote speaker, panel discussions, roundtable, and publishing and networking opportunities. The conference hosted around 40 participants, including people from across the international defence community.

More information about from the conference can be found on our [website](#).

Member meeting 2025

The first member meeting of the research school was held in connection with the annual conference, where members discussed the aim and further activities of the research school.

Suggestions included joint workshops with the armed forces, accessible online seminars, initiating the mentorship program and monthly informal gatherings. The meeting also proposed keeping the two-day format for the annual conference and adding an open poster session.

The meeting concluded that the research school should keep emphasising the 'soldier-scholar' identity and the school's dual purpose of academic excellence and relevance to the armed forces.

PhD defences 2025

During the spring and autumn semester, four PhD students from the research school, all at the Department of War Studies at SEDU, successfully completed their PhD defences. Congratulations to all of you!

16 May 2025 Peter Bovet Emanuel, PhD thesis [*Exploring decision advantages: Improving speed, precision and efficiency in military targeting by applying artificial intelligence*](#)

23 May 2025 John Nisser, PhD thesis [*Implementing Military Doctrine*](#)

26 September 2025 Daniel Smith, PhD thesis [*Focalizing Warfighters: Combat Cohesion from Below*](#)

7 November 2025 Anders Ekholm, PhD thesis [*From the Linear to the Circular: Re-thinking Operational Depth*](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Upcoming courses 2026:** *The Practice of Soldier Scholars* (7.5 ECTS) in weeks 19-23 and *Research in Sensitive Contexts: Ethics and Secrecy* (7.5 ECTS) in weeks 41-45
- **17-18 September 2026:** Soldier-Scholar Conference at the Swedish Defence University
- **Member meeting 2026:** will be held on 18 September after the conference

Upcoming events and activities 2026

Upcoming courses 2026

The Practice of Soldier Scholars (7,5 ECTS), with Professor Jan Ångström.

Do you become a better researcher on war and military operations if you are an officer and do you become a better officer if you are a researcher? How do these roles and identities interact in the research process as well as in the military profession? This course aims to introduce and develop analytical tools to better deal with and reflect over these dual identities.

The course is primarily, but not exclusively, catered for military PhD students, and runs with weekly seminars on Zoom, with a concluding on-site workshop in Stockholm. The course runs during weeks 19-23.

Research in Sensitive Contexts: Ethics and Secrecy (7,5 ECTS), with Professor Maria Eriksson Baaz.

This course focuses on research ethics in sensitive contexts – specifically, research on topics related to national, societal, and human security conducted under challenging and precarious circumstances. It approaches research ethics as an open-ended question, shaped by multiple relationships: with research subjects, society at large, colleagues, and authorities that enable research, as well as the sensitive environments in which research takes place. Additionally, it encourages researchers to reflect on integrity, honesty, and ethical responsibilities.

The course is organised together with the PhD Programme in War Studies at the Swedish Defence University. Both military and civilian students are welcome. The course runs during weeks 41-45.

For more information about the courses and how to apply, please see our [website](#).

Soldier-Scholar Conference 2026

Next year's annual Soldier-Scholar Conference will be held on 17-18 September 2026 at the Swedish Defence University in Stockholm.

The core objective of the conference is to promote research relevant for professional military practices (such as warfighting, strategy and tactics, military organisation and profession, military leadership, military technology and defence planning), and to foster a strong international network of soldier-scholars. While paper presentations are reserved for military doctoral students and soldier-scholars (i.e. officers with a PhD) who want to present their ongoing research, all are welcome to attend the conference and participate in the discussions!

For more information about the conference, please see our [website](#).

Seminars and workshops

The research school offers support to members who are interested in organising a seminar or a workshop. A workshop should consist of at least six participants, including members of the research school from at least two universities. For more information, please see our [website](#).

Where are they now?

Peter Bovet Emanuel: Military teacher at the Department of War Studies, Swedish Defence University and researcher at the Institute for Warfare, Swedish Defence University.

John Nisser: Staff officer at the Strategic Plans, Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters and affiliated researcher at the Swedish Defence University.

Daniel Smith: Developing Lessons Learned practices in the Swedish Joint Forces Command and affiliated researcher at the Swedish Defence University.

Anders Ekholm: Head of Joint Advanced Staff and Command Programme Directorate (PL HOP), Swedish Defence University.

Publications

Books and articles

Garbino, H. 2024. “It wasn’t because of human rights”: exploring the limited use of landmines by Colombian paramilitary groups. Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.

Other publications

Bovet Emanuel, P., 2025, “Comprehensive Shield 2025 - An Explorative Study of the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Operations Planning Process” Swedish Defence University Report Series 2025:7, (Swedish Defence University).

Bovet Emanuel, P., Funk P., Sundelius N. Sohlberg R, 2025, ‘Context-Aware Mission Planning and Decentralized Execution for Heterogeneous Teammates in Dynamic Environments’. Vol. 215: FT2025: Proceedings of the 12th Swedish Aerospace Technology Congress.

Garbino, H; Robinson, J; Valdetaro, JMDL. 2024. ‘Civil-military what?! Making sense of conflicting civil-military relations concepts’. Providence, RI, United States: Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University.

Media appearances and commentaries

Garbino, H; Antil Avoine, P. 2025. ‘Are landmines legitimate self-defence? The folly of leaving the Ottawa Convention’. Colchester, United Kingdom: The Loop (blog).

Garbino, H. 2025. ‘Pragmatic engagement: advancing non-humanitarian drivers of restraint (part II)’. Utrecht, the Netherlands: Armed Groups and International Law (blog).

Garbino, H. 2025. ‘Pragmatic engagement: advancing non-humanitarian drivers of restraint (part I)’. Utrecht, the Netherlands: Armed Groups and International Law (blog).

Garbino, H. 2025. ‘Assessing Trump’s first 50 days: U.S. funding cuts to humanitarian demining’. Washington, DC, United States: Forum on the Arms Trade (blog).

Garbino, H. 2025. “Do Brasil para o Mundo: O trabalho de desminagem humanitária do CICV” [From Brazil to the World: ICRC’s humanitarian demining work]. Comitê Internacional da Cruz Vermelha. Episode 6. 19 August 2025.

Garbino, H; Vaarakallio, T. 2025. ‘Perustuuko jalkaväkimiinojen pelotevaikutus Suomen valmiuteen vahingoittaa niillä itseään?’ [Is the deterrent effect of anti-personnel mines based on Finland’s readiness to harm itself with them?]. Voima. 23 May 2025.

Garbino, H. 2025. “Wie im Ersten Weltkrieg” [“Like in the First World War”]. Süddeutsche Zeitung. 2 April 2025.

Garbino, H. 2025. ‘Behöver Finland personminor vid östgränsen igen? Vi frågade experter’ [Does Finland need anti-personnel mines on its eastern border again? We asked experts]. Svenska Yle. 3 January 2025.

Garbino, H. 2024. ‘Bidenin hallinto antoi jalkaväkimiinat Ukrainalle – seuraukset jäävät Trumpin hallinnon kannettavaksi, asiantuntija sanoo’ [Biden administration gave anti-personnel mines to Ukraine – Trump administration will bear the consequences, expert says]. Yle. 21 November 2024.

Publications

Media appearances and commentaries (cont.)

Garbino, H. 2024. '[Två tillskott i Ukrainas vapenarsenal – så fungerar de](#)' [Two additions to Ukraine's weapons arsenal - this is how they work']. Aftonbladet. 20 November 2024.

Garbino, H. 2024. '[Civil-military what?](#)' [audio podcast episode]. One CA Podcast. Civil Affairs Association.

Garbino, H. 2024. '[A short story of landmines](#)' [audio podcast episode]. Stockholm, Sweden: Militärhistoria. Swedish Defence University.

Hazarika, M; Garbino, H. 2024. '[Manipur's "pumpi guns:" why should we care about them?](#)' Washington, DC, United States: Looking Ahead (blog).

Career news

Garbino, H. Short-term deployment to Nagorno Karabakh with the International Committee of the Red Cross as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialist (January-April 2024).

Garbino, H. Short-term deployment to Gaza with the International Committee of the Red Cross as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialist (April-June 2024).