



# Continuous Improvement

# The JWC's Vision Aims to Make NATO Better

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Organizational change is easy to talk about, but hard to do. That is why, in 2020, the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) adopted a long-lasting programme to enable internal change. Initially labelled “Fit for Future”, the programme was initiated by the former Commander, Vice Admiral Jan C. Kaack, inviting two change management experts from the German Navy to work with a small, diverse representation of the JWC team members.

Through workshops, this group developed an implementation strategy that employed change management principles from renowned experts such as John Kotter<sup>1</sup> and Kurt Lewin<sup>2</sup>. The programme, now renamed Continuous Improvement, created the Centre’s vision statement for 2025, which stated that the Centre was NATO’s “trusted advisor bridging Operations and Transformation, underpinning NATO readiness and future capability development”. Based on this, the implementation strategy would centre on an annual workshop involving all members of the JWC, with the purpose to harvest input from all levels to create an actionable list of quick wins and longer-term goals to work towards, for both annual and multi-year time horizons. The core team that enabled this process was Amul Waraich, Paul Sewell, and Lieutenant Colonel Michael Kraus, with Colonel Marcus Jones providing leadership for the programme.

In February 2020, the core team organized the first annual workshop, which was designed to solicit bottom-up inputs, drive organization-wide “buy-in”, and to bring to life the great ideas for “themes for action”. Four themes rose to the top in 2020, each for their potential to progress substantial change while complementing ongoing work strands. Those themes were organized along the following enduring project lines: collective training, warfare development, professional development, and organization.

## Collective Training is the JWC's Core Mission

“Together! We make NATO better!” is the JWC’s strapline because the Centre exists to improve the readiness of the Alliance’s strategic, operational and tactical headquarters through large-scale, collective training events.

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The JWC’s  
**Continuous Improvement**  
vision strategy  
centres on  
an annual  
workshop  
involving **all**  
**members of**  
**the JWC.”**

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
The annual JWC  
vision workshop

The question for how to better deliver collective training resulted in a new capability in 2020 with the creation of a wargaming design concept. This concept, which was born out of a collaboration during the first workshop, is an alternative method for the JWC to help deliver much detailed and advanced training. Additionally, the collective training project line adopted processes for standardization of recurring outputs, such as exercise webpages, training objectives, and exercise content/storyline development (i.e. scripting).

## Warfare Development is Inseparable from the JWC's Core Mission

By bridging transformation and operational readiness, the JWC creates the environment to implement doctrinal and procedural changes, as well as to experiment with new operational concepts. With transformation inherent in the work of this project line, the workshops have focused on three questions for consideration since 2020. Aligned with competitor-centric functions, the core team asks how to out-think, out-fight, and out-last to ensure that the JWC remains fit for purpose. Based on this, "out-think" mindset gave rise to the concept of integrating design thinking into training material to give the planning teams in NATO additional tools to counter complex problems. "Out-fight" mindset resulted in the drafting and publication of the NATO Advisory Team Handbook and the Warfare Development Handbook in 2020. Finally, "out-last" mindset produced a study on methods to improve resiliency training both in and out of exercises.

## Professional Development is Necessitated by the Core Mission

The JWC's One Team demonstrates their professional acumen every day in NATO. While each team member arrives with exceptional skills and experience, the vision workshops are aimed at uplifting the processes used to ensure continued growth. In 2020, for instance, this resulted in the publication of the JWC Professional Development Directive, which established a framework and plan for a continuous cycle of education aimed at individuals, branches, and the Centre as an organization.

## Organization Enables the Core Mission

The JWC is already a uniquely structured establishment because it employs a blended matrix rather than a purely hierarchical organizational chart. This empowers team members across multiple programmes, while depending heavily on personal leadership and influence rather than position and rank. The workshops illuminate the need to better understand the whole organization. This has driven a comprehensive critical look at internal processes, including review of the many formalized policies and procedures employed to deliver our core outputs.

In 2020, a key output was the request for, and initiation of, the Allied Command Transformation (ACT)-led Future Exercise Support Capability Study, detailed in

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Left: The professional development project line during the workshop in 2021, which involved the Centre's entire One Team

Right: Colonel Fide Schönrade, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Support



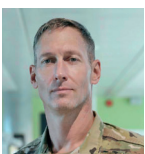
the October 2021 edition of the JWC's The Three Swords magazine.<sup>3</sup> Extending into 2022, this study will build understanding of the future opportunities to improve the ends, ways, and means of the NATO exercise environment.

Both workshops in 2020 and 2021 were tremendously successful, as they built a series of internal tasks that were independent of the JWC's core mission of exercise delivery. Additionally, due to their collaborative spirit, they empowered the whole of the team to become part of the change process. Not driven by a top-down push for change, the workshops set the tone and expectation in terms of change efforts and how these result in improvements in the day-to-day performance of duties.

Over the course of 2020, the programme added strategic communications as a support line. As the JWC's staff completed tasks and reached project milestones, the core team continued to update the Commander on the programme's progress. The allocation of organizational resources to the JWC's Continuous Improvement Programme produced tangible returns on investment in 2020 and throughout 2021. The real value creation, however, is expected in the years to come. ✦

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.kotterinc.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change/>
- 2 [https://www.change-management-coach.com/kurt\\_lewin.html](https://www.change-management-coach.com/kurt_lewin.html)
- 3 [https://jwc.nato.int/application/files/6116/3280/7994/issue37\\_04.pdf](https://jwc.nato.int/application/files/6116/3280/7994/issue37_04.pdf)



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By bridging **transformation** and **operational readiness**, the JWC creates the environment to implement **doctrinal** and **procedural changes.**”