



## **IDA Hosted First In-Person Women’s Wargaming Network Event**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA (August 2021)** — IDA hosted the first in-person event of the Women’s Wargaming Network (WWN) on June 26. The event was organized by Yuna Wong, founder of the WWN and research staff member in IDA’s Joint Advanced Warfighting Division (JAWD).

The event was held at IDA’s current headquarters near the Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. Women from IDA and their guests gathered to network and play board games. These types of in-person events are what the WWN is hoping to have more frequently to build connections and provide mentorship opportunities for women with an interest in wargaming.

Men are much more likely to have spent their adolescent years playing hobby gaming whereas women did not grow up with the same experiences. The mission of the WWN is to help women thrive in professional wargaming, a historically male-dominated field. These efforts contribute to bridging the gaps between men and women and raising the visibility of women in the discipline.

Addressing barriers specific to women in professional wargaming is key to getting more women involved in the discipline. “All too often, women are assigned as note takers and announcers; they don’t receive the core tasks of game design and adjudicators,” says Wong. “Minority women face even more barriers. The WWN is committed to having a place for all women.”

Paris Nero, research staff member in IDA’s Operational Evaluation Division (OED) was among the participants who is new to the discipline. “One of my favorite pastimes is playing board games with friends,” says Nero. “I left the WWN event thinking about how the game’s mechanisms capture various aspects of warfare and how I could apply wargaming in my research. It’s nice to be part of a community that can gather around an activity I enjoy so much.”

More seasoned wargamers also participated, including S. K. (Sue) Numrich, JAWD adjunct research staff member. She has experience in theater and training simulations, so wargaming is a natural extension. “In wargaming, every perspective is valuable, and it’s especially important to include women as they tend to approach situations differently than men do,” says Numrich. “These are games of the mind and the ability to see from different perspectives and craft solutions along different lines is critical to developing a creative solution to a strategic problem.”

The WWN started at the 2020 Connections Wargaming Conference. With aims to become a formal non-profit, the network comprises members from around the world including Australia, Turkey, the Netherlands and the UK. “The purpose of the WWN is to become a community for women interested in wargaming, to raise the profile of women in the profession and to find networking opportunities,” says Wong. “We need to continue to create opportunities that allow women to get involved and to grow the numbers.” Upcoming WWN events and the Connections Wargaming Connections Conference help Wong and others to do just that.

IDA will host the 2022 Connections Wargaming Conference on July 26–29, 2022. This in-person event will be held at our [future headquarters](#) location in the City of Alexandria’s high-tech Potomac Yard corridor. Registration and logistics information will be available closer to the conference.

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