



The Andrew W. Marshall  
FOUNDATION

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



# Our History

## Andrew W. Marshall (1921–2019)



Andrew W. Marshall dedicated his life to advising senior government officials on issues of strategic importance to the national security of the United States. More specifically, over his seven-decade career, Marshall and his colleagues defined, designed, and refined the intellectual architecture of what became known as net assessment. After a quarter century at the RAND Corporation, Marshall became founding Director of the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and guided its work for the next forty years. During those Cold War decades and beyond, ONA provided substantive multi-disciplinary strategic analysis of the long-term competitive national security environment facing the United States. While often branded military strategy, ONA's diagnostic work transcended narrow military concerns. Marshall's approach to understanding the broader strategic context included the natural sciences, the social sciences, and broad technological and cultural trends.

After Marshall retired from government service in 2015, he continued to engage in rigorous discourse with friends, mentees, and former colleagues to discuss ideas and offer advice, sometimes over an elaborately prepared gourmet meal, if one was lucky. He and Jaymie Durnan formalized long-gestating discussions and established a foundation aimed at identifying and cultivating talented people whose interests in rigorous strategic thinking and national security could be usefully shaped by Marshall's seminal thinking.

The United States lost a great strategic thinker and mentor with Marshall's passing in March 2019, and the Andrew W. Marshall Foundation (AWMF) launched operations in 2021 to honor his legacy by strengthening and expanding the intellectual community of net assessment-style thinkers.

Andy's assessment in 1991 applies again, and just as cogently, to our own times:

**We are at a major turning point in the history of the world.** A new structure is emerging, a more multipolar world with more complex alliance arrangements... It is to be hoped that new centers of **strategic thought** and **innovation** will arise and a **new generation** of strategists... will develop to deal with these problems.

# Letter from the Chair



Each year, the Andrew W. Marshall Foundation revisits the question at the heart of our mission: How can we best find and cultivate people who think strategically about the competitions and challenges America will face in the decades ahead?

There is no single way to pursue this mission, just as there is no stock formula for the kind of strategic analysis Andrew Marshall and his colleagues conducted. Andy and his colleagues practiced multidisciplinary diagnostic analysis at the strategic level, a process that more often ends with question marks than periods. In a world of uneven change, shocks, and emergent complexity, real understand-

ing requires continually reexamining key past and present trends and the flex points that may shape the future.

Andy and his colleagues at RAND and ONA were not oracles, but explorers who built spaces where exceptional minds could debate the unthinkable, the improbable, and the mistakenly inevitable.

That spirit—open to contingency and skeptical of rutted thinking—is the one we carry forward today at AWMF as we seek out those who blend rigorous analysis with flexible curiosity about how the world works and how it might change. By deepening and spreading Andrew Marshall’s practice of strategic thinking, and by supporting those able and eager to do this work, we aim to help future generations refine how they think about long-term competition and change.

The past year has been a year of building forward for AWMF. Dr. Melissa Flagg joined us as Executive Director; Jodi Costain came on as Operations Manager; and Lillie Durnan rejoined us part-time to manage our finances.

2026 will be an exciting year as we continue devising new projects and experiments to help identify and foster future generations of strategic thinkers. We will also continue building our digital collection, growing our library and establishing an archive and expansive oral history project to preserve the context of a highly consequential moment in our history before it is lost.

Finally, many thanks to all those who continue to support AWMF through their generous contributions of funding and time. We again invite you to join us in this work to build the new generations of strategic thinkers our American future will require.

## **Jaymie Durnan**

Co-Founder and Chair

*Jaymie Durnan has served in senior roles in the private, government, and nonprofit sectors. He is honored to have been a friend, confidant, and mentee of Andy Marshall for more than four decades.*

# Charitable Activities

The Andrew W. Marshall Foundation's work is focused on finding and cultivating interdisciplinary thinkers who bring different perspectives to questions about the implications of the long-term competitions shaping the national security of the United States. In addition, the Foundation supports long-term research, timely publications, and the continuing development of the Andrew W. Marshall Digital Collection as a resource for curious minds to better understand not just who Marshall and his colleagues were, but how they thought. Toward these ends, in 2025 the Foundation worked on and/or provided direct funding support for the following array of activities:

## **Fostering, Outreach, and Community Building**

- Fellows
- Scholars

## **AWMF Digital Collection**

- Library
- Archive
- Oral History Project

## **Publications**



# Scholars and Fellows

Our Scholar and Fellow programs provide promising talent the time, resources, and guidance to explore tough questions facing the United States over the coming two decades and beyond. Fellows spend two years in residence at a host institution; Scholars are sponsored for one year, either by a partner organization or by the Foundation itself. The Foundation also selectively provides ongoing support to Scholars and Fellows as they progress in their careers and intellectual journeys.

In keeping with the spirit of Andy Marshall's legacy, Scholars and Fellows are valued for their conceptual originality as well as their ability to think broadly and creatively within existing intellectual templates. AWMF and its partnering organizations provide Scholars and Fellows with the resources to review and refine their work, including outline and draft review, feedback sessions with advisors, coordination with subject-matter experts, and access to new materials.

## **Sam Bresnick**

*2025-2027 Andrew W. Marshall Fellow*

In May 2025, The Andrew W. Marshall Foundation welcomed Sam Bresnick as an Andrew W. Marshall Fellow, hosted at the Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET) at Georgetown University for a two-year period. Mr. Bresnick currently serves as a Research Fellow at CSET, where he is examining China's approach to developing and deploying AI in national security contexts.

## **Cole McFaul**

*2025-2027 Andrew W. Marshall Fellow*

AWMF also welcomed Cole McFaul as an Andrew W. Marshall Fellow in May 2025. Mr. McFaul is hosted at the Center for Security and Emerging Technology (CSET) at Georgetown University for a two-year period. He is a Research Analyst at CSET whose current research includes analysis of China's AI-related defense industrial base, the role of China's S&T-focused stock exchanges in emerging technology development, and China's basic research ecosystem.

## **Carl O. Pabo, Ph.D.**

*2025 Andrew W. Marshall Scholar*

At the end of 2024, the Foundation welcomed noted biophysicist Dr. Carl O. Pabo as a new Scholar. Dr. Pabo received his Ph.D. from Harvard and B.S. from Yale (summa cum laude) and served as a Professor of Biophysics at MIT and as an Investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, with earlier appointments at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. About 25 years ago Dr. Pabo embarked on a remarkable intellectual voyage, leaving the safe harbor of his tenured MIT faculty position to examine the problematic mismatch between the complexity of modern global challenges and limits of human cognitive capacity. Dr. Pabo's AWM scholarship explores how understanding the physiological basis of human thought can help us to more wisely address key strategic questions facing the United States. Carl is writing a book slated for completion in 2026.

# Digital Collection

The Foundation has committed significant time and resources in 2025 to ensure that the legacy of Andrew W. Marshall is preserved. Three parallel projects to support this effort are underway: the library, the archive, and the oral history project. The goals of the Digital Collection are:

- Capturing and preserving tacit knowledge
- Building a reliable picture from many views
- Serving long-term scholarship, not short-term readership
- Preserving context before it's lost
- Creating permanent, accountable records

## Library

The Foundation continues to build out the Andrew W. Marshall Library and add publicly available resources to the AWMF website. This includes books, memoranda, research papers, audio files, and videos from Andy Marshall, his contemporaries, and our growing community. We invite all members of our Foundation community to help us build these historically significant resources by sharing any material by Andrew W. Marshall, related to him, or inspired by his approach. By developing and sustaining a robust archive of primary sources embedded within a searchable online digital library, our aim is to enable further research, increase public understanding about Marshall's contributions to strategic thought, and inspire new lines of inquiry.

## Archive

We are building a digital archive to support preservation of Andrew Marshall's seven decades of thinking about U.S. national security. The archive includes digitization of more than thirty boxes of papers in his home, along with many additional materials that were authored or funded by him and provided by our community. We have digitized over 3,000 documents to date and are currently creating an architecture to facilitate research access.

The goal is to expand the archive in 2026 to include material from Mr. Marshall's contemporaries at RAND, including James Schlesinger's papers and original video of Herman Kahn.

## Oral History Project

While constructing the documentary body of Mr. Marshall's intellectual legacy, we recognized that the people who worked with and around him were instrumental in helping to shape ideas and reframe perennial problems. Thus, as the archive constructs the documentary body of Mr. Marshall's intellectual legacy, oral histories construct its human topology—the web of meanings, relationships, and reflections that cannot be inferred from written materials alone.

Working with an anthropologist, we crafted a semi-structured interview process that typically requires one recorded session of 90 minutes, capturing practical and tacit knowledge that might otherwise fade from collective memory. These oral histories place particular emphasis on understanding the person and how they experienced their work with Mr. Marshall; each prioritizes depth, reflection, and the relationships among people, treating memory and perception as insights rather than sources of error or bias. Together with the archive, these interviews form an enduring source for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and educators seeking to understand the evolution of strategic national security thinking guided by over seven decades of Andrew Marshall's life.

The goal is to complete more than fifty interviews in 2026 and to produce a series of products ranging from videos and transcripts to books and publications leveraging the oral histories as a source.

“We are in a moment of transition, and our current emerging problems resist our old solutions. It's critical that we spend some time reflecting on what frameworks we need to foster resilience in an uncertain world rather than jumping straight to solutions.”

*Dr. Melissa Flagg, AWMF*

# Publications

The publications the Foundation supports are not ends in themselves but means to cultivate strategic thought and engage the wider community in conversations regarding the important questions we should be asking about long-term U.S. interests. In 2025, the Foundation provided developmental support for the publications listed below.

## **Artificial Intelligence, the Complexity Trap, and National Security**



This essay by Dr. Carl O. Pabo introduces a simple modeling system designed to help us think more clearly about the ways in which the rise of AI will change the world. This qualitative, agent-based model identifies several dozen key societal actors—from tech companies and ordinary citizens to political leaders and AI-based agents—then analyzes how their actions and interactions are likely to reshape the world over the next 5-10 years. Dr. Pabo’s model, designed to facilitate scenario analysis and policy development, points to four major transformations that lie ahead: 1) AI will facilitate remarkable technical advances, yet will 2) relentlessly intensify competitive pressures (as in cyber attack and cyber defense), 3) accelerate a “crisis of complexity” that already threatens governance, and will 4) change the nature of work and prospects for human employment so rapidly that governments may not be able to respond effectively. Unlike the Industrial Revolution, the benefits of AI may be distributed so unevenly as to risk disruption of the social structures on which progress and national security alike ultimately depend.

# Fostering, Outreach, and Community Building

In 2025, we expanded the community by engaging with hundreds of people, both within the United States and from every region around the globe, who exhibit the courage to challenge the status quo, have a high tolerance for uncertainty, and share a passion for understanding the trends that are shaping the future.

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## **2025 Advisory Group**

Jesse Ausubel  
Matthew Daniels  
Daniel Patt

## **2025 Leadership and Staff**

Jaymie Durnan, Chair and Co-Founder  
Melissa Flagg, Executive Director  
Jodi Costain, Operations Manager



**The Andrew W. Marshall Foundation**

1 Woodbury Hill Road

Jaffrey, NH 03452

[info@andrewmarshallfoundation.org](mailto:info@andrewmarshallfoundation.org)

Founded by Andrew W. Marshall and Jaymie A. Durnan, with the continued support of generations of people who worked for, worked with, or were mentored by Andy Marshall, the Andrew W. Marshall Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. The people and work it supports are impartial and intellectually fearless.

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Selena Robleto, Red Velvet Creative LLC