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NEWS RELEASE

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WEST POINT COMPETES IN CYBER DEFENSE EXERCISE – April 8, 2016

WEST POINT, NEW YORK – U.S. Military Academy cadets will compete against the four other service academies in the 16th annual Cyber Defense Exercise April 11-15. The exercise is designed to teach students how to protect and defend the nation's information systems.

Established in 2001 by the National Security Agency, the exercise challenges each team to design, build and configure a real-world computer network similar to what you would find in a deployed joint service command. A network attack team, composed of NSA and Department of Defense personnel, then identifies the vulnerabilities and launches attacks on each network over a three-day period.

"Evidence has shown that most of the computing systems upon which we now rely do not merit our trust," said Maj. W. Michael Petullo, assistant professor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. "What seems to follow from the prevalence of system compromises is that the current generation of software is inadequate, and that the next generation of computer scientists and information technology professionals must vastly improve on our work.

"The experience of designing, implementing, and defending a network against the NSA Red Team---along with similar experiences students receive at civilian institutions---provide one small piece of an education which we hope will well serve the next generation as they produce the more robust computer systems required by our society," he said.

Cadets will actively defend their networks against the NSA in an effort to keep systems on-line and available. Each team is evaluated on their ability to maintain services, as well as efforts to prevent and recover from security breaches and provide forensic analysis of compromised systems.

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NSA presents the winning team with the National Security Agency-Director's Trophy at the end of May. The USMA team last won the competition in 2014 and has won the trophy a total of seven times.

About West Point

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point is a four-year, co-educational, federal, liberal arts college located 50 miles north of New York City. It was founded in 1802 as America's first college of engineering and continues today as the world's premier leader-development institution, consistently ranked among top colleges in the country. Its mission remains constant-to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the U. S. Army. For more information, go to www.westpoint.edu.