



SYSTEMS SYMPOSIUM 2026

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Distinguished Speaker

Major Matthew A. Cooper, PhD

U.S. Space Force Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE) Academic Fellow at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)

Major Matthew A. Cooper serves as the U.S. Space Force Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE) Academic Fellow at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). In this role, he bridges the warfighter and research communities, translating disruptive scientific breakthroughs into next-generation capabilities to secure the space domain.

Major Cooper first enlisted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and took part in multiple deployments supporting operations ENDURING FREEDOM, NOBLE EAGLE, and IRAQI FREEDOM before being awarded his commission in 2013 through the Officer Training School program. Major Cooper is a skilled program manager with specialized experience in intelligence as a Geospatial Intelligence Project Engineer where he executed a \$21M annual budget and led the forward deployment of the ACES-HY airborne hyperspectral sensor. He completed his master's degrees at the Air Force Institute of Technology, moved on to Kirtland AFB as the Deputy Program Manager of laser beam control R&D supporting SHIELD, and later took a role as Program Manager for the Novel High Energy Laser program during which he received the AFRL's Science & Technology Manager of the Year award. He earned a PhD in optics and photonics at the University of Central Florida. Most recently Major Cooper, served as the first Deputy Commander of U.S. Space Forces Korea.