

On the USAWC Mission: Wisdom and Strength for the Future

Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, USAWC Commandant

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On the brink of the U.S. Army War College's 110th anniversary year, there is much to celebrate. We have long been the quiet foundation of strength and wisdom. It's time for everyone here – faculty, staff, and students – to engage your community of contacts and share the extraordinary story of USAWC growth, leadership and contribution.

The past decade alone reflects the strength of this enduring institution. Continued USAWC operation throughout two wars signals the Army senior leadership commitment to senior leader education as an essential investment in our nation's future. The first decade of our second century was marked by uncompromising focus on growing the curriculum and extending USAWC influence via distance education. Our faculty and our research studies have provided extensive support to operational forces and military schools. Our graduates have been critical contributors to planning and executing operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, OEF-HOA, and New Dawn.

Knowledge is the foundation of strength and wisdom. Our mandate is to develop and share that knowledge with the national security practitioners and policy-makers who shape our world. This year is the opportunity to reflect on timeless principles and a framework of greatness. As noted by former Secretary of State Colin Powell, "If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."

A commitment to excellence compels us to see ourselves, assess the environment, and evolve to both

meet and anticipate future demands on strategic leaders.

At the turn of the last century, the Army War College was established as enduring solution to a newly-recognized need for more effective leadership, vision, and planning. It wasn't enough that the nation had prevailed in the Spanish-American War. Inadequate planning and coordination with respect to logistics, disease, etc, had long-term implications for the Army and the nation. National leaders created the Army War College more than 100 years ago to ensure our ability to meet and anticipate challenges to the nation. Words that have resonated through the decades – “**Not to promote war but to preserve peace**” – capture the breadth of responsibilities for today's graduates.

With that enduring purpose in mind, leaders, staff and faculty have executed a bottom-up review of our mission and strategies. As a result, we've refined and expanded the USAWC mission to better capture the scope of what we are doing today and what we must do more and better in the future. Our task was to relentlessly focus on developing the smart, strong leaders who will think and operate effectively in a strategic joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational environment.

The new mission statement reflects an expanded scope of tasks to meet the USAWC purpose, and TRADOC Commander Gen. Martin Dempsey supports our inspired new guideposts --

Mission: USAWC develops, inspires and serves strategic leaders for the wise and effective application of national power, in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment, emphasizing development and employment of land power.

- Educates select military, civilian, and international leaders

- Supports worldwide practitioners

- Conducts research, and publishes to inform thought

- Supports the Army's strategic communication efforts

- Provides comprehensive well-being education and support.

I strongly believe that it's imperative not only to develop and serve strategic leaders, but to **inspire** our leaders and our nation. We manage leadership talent best when we inspire students for heavy lifting of important, yet often-invisible, duties. We nurture national leadership when we inspire them to become lifelong leaders, contributing past retirement in the footsteps of the great USAWC alumni we honored recently: Gen. Gordon Sullivan, Gen. Don Starry, and Dr. Lewis Sorley.

We recognize the transformational experience of the Army War College when we use the word **develop**, rather than ‘educate.’ The journey includes not only academic learning, but refining ethical decision-making, developing comprehensive fitness, and enhancing leadership skills for the complex strategic environment.

We **serve** strategic leaders through significant research studies, faculty expertise applied to the ‘wicked problems’ of today’s theaters, and extension of our expertise through web and publications.

Our refined mission reflects our distinctive contribution in the development and employment of land power. Faculty expertise on theater strategy, design, and campaigning makes the Army War College a unique and crucial resource for the Army.

Our **vision** is to be the institute of choice: the number one request by senior service college selectees who seek to be not only ready, but wise and strong.

Vision: The world’s best institution for developing strategic leaders and thought – the international institution of choice

I am proud of this reset of the mission and vision. I believe it is compelling to encourage our senior leaders to be wise and, together, we will raise wisdom to a level of prominence in strategic leader development that is itself inspirational to our nation and our international partners.