

# Crocker, Martin challenge Army War College grads to lead in uncertain times

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs*

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*Amb. Ryan Crocker, the Dean and Executive Professor at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, was the guest speaker for the Army War College Class of 2011 graduation. President Barack Obama named him to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. Photos by Staff Sgt. Corey Baltos.*

*Want more photos? We have a photo of each graduate receiving their diploma.*

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June 11, 2011 – Ten months of readings, papers, exercises and complex seminar discussions paid off for the Army War College Class of 2011 as they graduated in front of friends, family, colleagues and international partners on the historic parade grounds of Carlisle Barracks. Under a sun-drenched sky, USAWC graduate **Army Col. Rob Barnes** sang the national anthem, June 11.

The resident class, made up of senior U.S. and international military officers and senior federal civilians, applied past experiences into today's complex security environment with new studies to develop themselves for strategic responsibilities. The 10-month school concludes with a masters degree of Strategic Studies.

Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, commandant, USAWC, congratulated the students and asked them to reflect on the world they are poised to re-join.

“You’ve done the hard work and hard thinking, and will build on this excellent education. That’s why I know you’ll embrace this quote, in the words of one of our faculty members, Air Force Col. ‘Murf’ Clark:

‘Lives of ease are rarely lives of great meaning. The two rarely intersect. The biographies of our heroes and saints and Soldiers teach us this. You must understand that the work you are doing and the sacrifices you are making are meaningful, so please, do not wish for a life of ease’.

“Meaningful work, selfless service and a purposeful life -- this is what you’ve signed on for and I honor you for that.

“As you navigate the challenges that await, you’ll be wise to recognize and learn from the role models among us,” said Martin.

He introduced guest speaker **Amb. Ryan Crocker**, as an extraordinary role model. Crocker is the Dean and Executive Professor at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. President Barack Obama named him to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan.

“He is a man who inspires. He is wisdom and strength,” said Martin, about Crocker. “He embodies our vision to strengthen our nation and build a more peaceful future.”

***Graduates line up to accept their diplomas.***

Crocker spoke to the students about the world of international security.

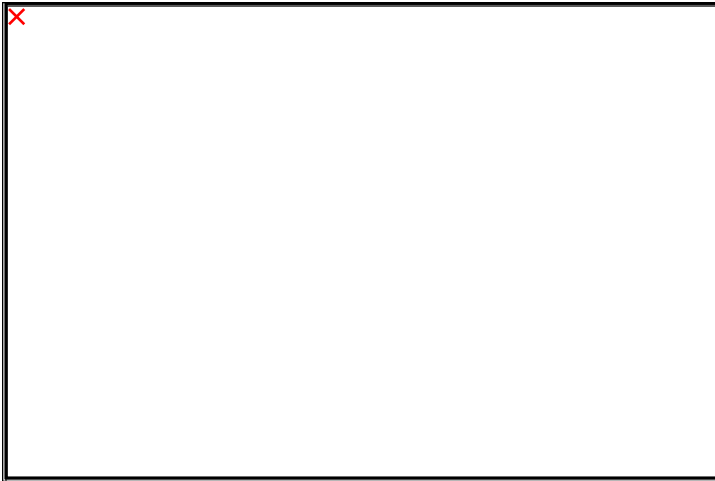


“One of your responsibilities is to understand that we live in a very complex, messy, military-political world,” he said. “Your diplomatic partners are part of the fight. Unless we want to do it alone, so are our international partners.”

“You leave the college with great responsibility and great tools to operate in national and international security strategy. As strategists you will have to measure these developments and their possible effects on the United States.”

“You’ve learned the importance of not going at it alone,” he said. “The U.S. alone cannot dictate outcomes. Your colleagues, other services, governments, and international nations are essential to the solution.”





**Col. Elmer Speights, Jr. receives his diploma from Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, USAWC commandant.** Photo by Scott Finger.

As Crocker completed his comments, he said “If confirmed by the Senate I will be the next ambassador to Afghanistan. I look forward to joining you in that fight.”

Students said they were prepared to enter this uncertain, volatile world thanks to the curriculum and the faculty here.

“What I’ve really learned is how much your focus changes once you begin to operate at the strategic level,” said **Army Col. Elmer Speights, Jr.** “To get here we all focused on the operational and technical level. This course showed me how much your perspective changes and how you have to change your mind set to think at the strategic level.”

“This is an experience I could have never gotten somewhere else,” said Diane Knight. “The passion of everybody who works at the war college or supports the war college is just tremendous. The learning opportunities available to you are unparalleled.”



*Families were able to get together for one last time at the graduation.*

“It’s amazing how much this course has made me look at issues, challenges and questions differently,” said **Barnes**. “It’s really opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking.”

“Learning how to think analytically and using the tools that are provided here at the war college to broaden my base of knowledge and how to process critical thinking and look at the overall big picture from a strategic level was really valuable,” said **Navy Cmdr. Cedric Richardson**.

“It really was an important year in my further development as a leader,” said **Army Col. Kevin Vereen**. “The skills I learned here will serve me well in the future.”

“This course makes you realize how narrow-focused we can get in our own services,” said **Air Force Lt. Col. James Brandenburg**. “We need to look at all of the options each service and branch offers. This course helped me realize that.”

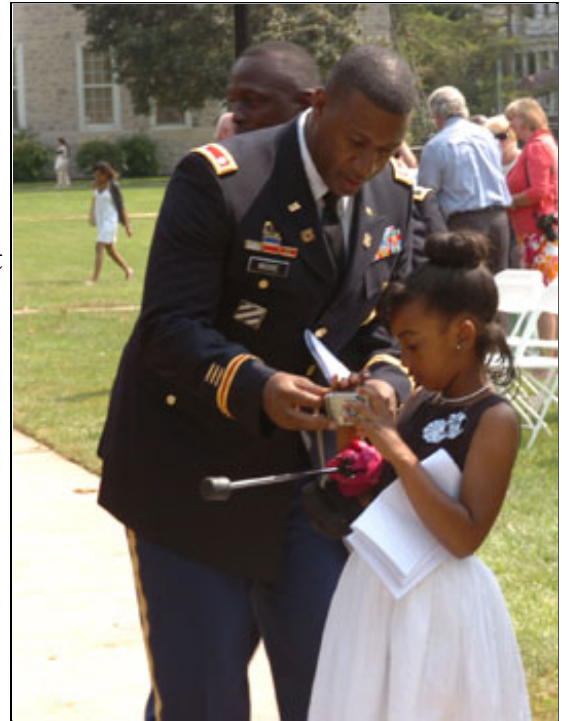
“This has been a tremendous 10 months and I really can’t believe it is over,” said Marine Corps Lt. Col. Tray Ardese. “I wish I could stay here longer and keep learning from my classmates and the top-flight faculty here.”

Beyond the lessons of the classrooms, the students appreciated the bonds they formed that will last a lifetime.

“For the rest of our lives we will drop everything to answer our brothers and sisters of the Class of 2011,” said **Col. Scott King**, class president.

Netherlands Fellow Col. Wilfred Rietdijk, and international class president thanked the U.S. students for fully integrating the fellows into the year here.

“You’ve given your friendship, invited us into your homes,” he said to fellow students. “You now have 49 comrades to trust your life with.”



“The friendship and relationships which we made here is the most important thing,” said **Pakistan Fellow Brig. Naveed Mukhtar**. “This is a great curriculum and there was a great opportunity to interact with so many people with and learn so many new things and most important from my point of view to share and understand the perspective of each other. ”

Professional development was enhanced by the additional opportunists.

“The core of the war college is, of course the academic piece,” said **Army Col. Kimo Gallahue**, who noted that multiple war college institutes support comprehensive. “There is not one classmate that didn’t benefit from the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute assessment and guidance,” he noted as an example.

“The Army War College looks at the entire individual academically, holistically,” said **Army Lt. Col. Adam Roth**. “We’re talking about the Army’s commitment to recapitalize its most important asset.”



*Under a sun-drenched sky, USAWC graduate*



*Army Col. Rob Barnes sang the national anthem, June 11.*

### **Class of 2011 details**

The 336 members of the U.S. Army War College graduating Class of 2011 include: 198 Army officers, 15 Navy, 32 Air Force, 17 Marine Corps and two Coast Guard officers, representing Active, Reserve and National Guard: 49 international officers: 23 senior civilians of federal agencies.

### **About the Army War College**

The U.S. Army War College was established in 1901 “not to promote war, but to preserve peace,” by developing, inspiring and serving 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. The college educates more than 1,000 officers annually in its resident and distance programs and specialty courses for strategists and strategic leaders.

For more information about the U.S. Army War College, visit the website at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil>, or share the expertise of the War College at [www.youtube.com/usarmywarcollege](http://www.youtube.com/usarmywarcollege)

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