

AUSA offers a chance to hear senior leaders

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Col. Chris Fry, member of Seminar 16, meets longtime hero Maj. Gen. Byron Bagby, Chief of Staff of U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army, at the 1st Region reception at the Association of the United States Army exposition in Washington D.C. on Oct. 7. More than 40 USAWC students attended the event to listen to speakers, including Gen. David Petraeus, the incoming CENTCOM Commander. Photo by Kelly Schloesser.

Oct. 9, 2008 -- Nearly 40 U.S. Army War College students fought Washington D.C. morning traffic to attend the annual Association of the United States Army meeting and exposition held at the districts' convention center on Tuesday.

Though the students left the exposition with bags full of everything from Camelbak water bottles to Raytheon posters, they said it was the speakers at the event that truly served as their highlight.

"Certainly the greatest part of the day was getting to hear so many great leaders speak," said Col. Jim Nickolas, a member of Seminar Three.

General David Petraeus, the incoming CENTCOM Commander, gave a speech that was attended by so many that it forced the majority of the USAWC students to listen from an overflow room. Though the students may not have been in the same room as the commander, they said they felt the impact of his words.

"Hearing General Petraeus give his assessment on Iraq, all that goes into the surge and not just

having more troops, but also applying political pressure, was very interesting," said Nickolas. "He provided a good progress report and talked about responsibly drawing down our numbers."

Petraeus was only one of the many speakers of the day that the students attended. In a forum held on Army Force Generation, General Charles C. Campbell, U.S. Army Forces Command and Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, Army Reserve Commander lent their voices.

"I thought both generals did a great job in explaining their role and goals in refining the process," said Lt. Col. Ernest Erlandson, a member of Seminar Three. "As a reservist it was good to hear the commander speak."

Erlandson was not the only student who had opportunity to see someone they said they hold in great esteem. Both Lt. Col. Chris Fry, a member of Seminar 16, and Col. Sylvester Cotton, a member of Seminar Two, met and conversed with one of their personal heroes, Maj. Gen. Byron Bagby, the Chief of Staff of U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army.

"Today was just a great opportunity to meet people. I have always looked up to General Bagby and I actually got to speak with him," said Fry.

Additionally, about half of the students attended the Dwight David Eisenhower reception and luncheon where the Army Chief of Staff, General George W. Casey gave the keynote address.

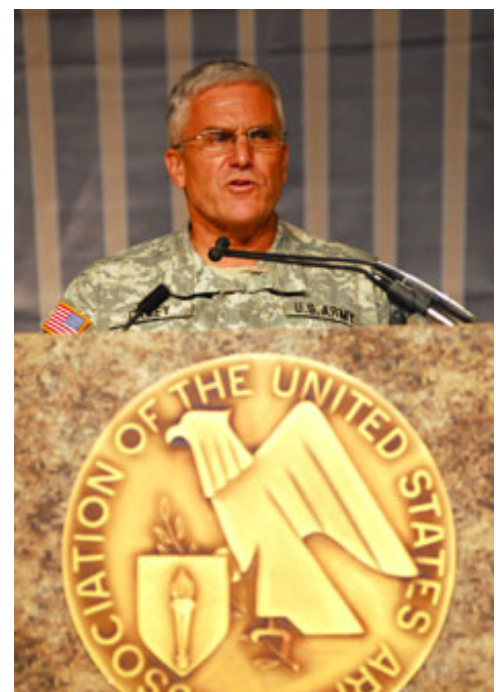
"Certainly seeing the Chief of Staff at the luncheon was the highlight of the trip," said attendee Lt. Col. Joe Sledd, a member of Seminar Five.

During an address at the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, which runs Oct. 6-8 in Washington, D.C., Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey said he sees a future for the Army involving persistent conflict, dominated by warfare that is "decidedly different than the character of conflict" that has predominated his career. He said the Army should expect to deal with enemies that are not bound by internationally recognized standards of behavior.

Photo by C. Todd Lopez.

Students also commented that throughout the day they were constantly running into people they knew.

"I ran into guys I served with as a captain and a platoon leader,"



said Nickolas. "The event just really reinforced the idea that the Army is a small family."



While students spent much of the day attending speakers, they also had the opportunity to meander through the several hundred booths that covered the convention floor. The exhibits consisted of various private companies, such as General Electric and Lockheed Martin, which work closely with the military, as well as military associations and units, such as Army Family Programs, Army National Guard, or U.S. Special Operations Command.

As students walked from booth to booth they had the chance to learn about the company or unit through videos, simulations, or hands-on interaction.

AUSA holds their annual meeting and exposition every October following the Army 10-Miler. All Army Soldiers, families, reservists, guardsmen, retirees, veterans, and DA civilians are invited to attend.

For more on the AUSA meeting check the [AUSA website](#) or www.army.mil