

# FLAGS, creating leaders world-wide

*Kelly Schloesser, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

## FLAGS, creating leaders world-wide



*Participants in the Facilitating Leadership and Group Skills*

*seminar check their notes during a recent session in Collins Hall. FLAGS is one of the unique programs offered exclusively at the Army War College designed to refine leadership and problem solving skills. FLAGS however, is for the spouses, not the students. Photo by Kelly Schloesser.*

Dec. 10, 2008 - "My husband is definitely a lion, there is no doubt about it," said one senior leader spouse, smiling. Laughter broke out in a Collins Hall classroom as 15 senior military spouses gathered to train for the annual Facilitating Leadership and Group Skills seminar held in February. Upon graduating from the training in December, these spouses will be prepared to lead their own FLAGS seminar group and share what they have learned to others.

On Oct. 29, the lesson was identifying one's strengths based on three distinct personality types: lions, owls, and St. Bernard's. And for an intriguing twist, the spouses were naming their husbands' personalities instead of their own.

Though this may not seem like a typical leadership seminar, FLAGS is one of the unique programs offered exclusively at the Army War College designed to refine leadership and problem solving skills. FLAGS however, is for the spouses, not the students.

The program began at the War College in 1992 and has remained a success ever since. The lead facilitator of the program this year, Lisa Towery, describes the lessons learned as a toolbox of skills. Towery emphasized that these skills are applicable in a wide range of situations, whether in one-on-one conversations, small teams, or in a leadership role.

"The goal of FLAGS is to provide a unique opportunity for self-exploration in a safe and open

environment," said Towery.

During the five-day program, participants take various tests, exploring their personality, leadership style, conflict management and approach to decision making. Additionally, by engaging in peer-to-peer activities, they will discover their own and others preferences for listening, learning, and inclusion.

"By participating in all of these activities, they will gain a better understanding for themselves and others," said Towery.

"Ultimately by understanding ourselves and others in a group, whether that can be applied to a military group like FRG or in a more professional environment at work, we will make better and stronger members," said one spouse.

Similar to the goals of the war college, it is the hope that the skills acquired during this program will transfer to installations worldwide.

"As we head to our new post, I have no doubt I will take the skill set I learned here to other spouses, especially in a situation like a Family Readiness Group," said Army Spouse, Jackie Anders.

"For me, this is a great help professionally," said Jane Arundell, an International Fellow's spouse and community health nurse in the United Kingdom.

"As I pitch FLAGS to the international spouses I will highlight that this is free professional training and can easily be applied to any profession worldwide," continued Arundell.

"Wherever we may move to next, we are all going to pay this forward," said Air Force spouse, Shannon Enold.

The spouses agreed that the leadership skills learned during the program will not just benefit those attending the program here at Carlisle Barracks but also community members at the installations these FLAGS graduates will soon join.

The one-week program offered in February is open to USAWC spouses as well as civilian personnel with the permission of their supervisor. Sign-ups will be held in January through Military Family Programs.

For more information and to sign up for the program contact MFP Director, Joe York, 245-4787.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 10 December 2008