

TRADOC Commander to Army War College graduates: Invest this education in your units

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Canadian Col. Matthew Haussmann and U.S. Army Col. Alan Alexander and their seminar mates are all smiles after receiving their diplomas. The graduation ceremony marked the end of the two-year program for a class of 336 Army officers, 4 Navy, 3 Air Force, 10 Marines, 27 Federal Civilians, and 5 International Officers from 5 different countries.

For a highlight video visit <https://youtu.be/x7tYGixQUt8>

For photos visit <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usawc/>

CARLISLE BARRACKS, Pa. (July 28, 2017) – “This class exemplifies grit, determination and professionalism,” said Maj. Gen. Bill Rapp as he addressed his final graduating class as the commandant of the U.S. Army War College, 2014-2017. From Wheelock Bandstand he congratulated 385 members of the Distance Class of 2017 seated on the historic parade ground here. The student body of competitively selected senior leaders from the U.S. military, US federal agencies, and international officers earned a Master’s degree in Strategic Studies today.

“My thanks to you for your great attitude and effort over the past 24 months, and to the faculty and staff of the U.S. Army War College for your professionalism and skills as teachers and mentors. Being the gold standard for strategic leader education and idea development comes from having a world class faculty,” he noted before introducing as guest speaker the commanding general of the U.S. Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, Gen. David Perkins.

“You have been the quintessential leader, and strongest advocate the Army can have for producing great students like this,” said Perkins to Rapp, recognizing Rapp’s contributions in shaping the Army War College.

“You don’t get a better setting than this,” said Perkins, as he turned to the graduates, faculty, family and friends in a salute to Army heritage. “A great, historic Army post with well-manicured grounds, marshal music being played by the band, and the smoke of artillery fire wafting over the audience,” he said about the TRADOC Band and Pa. National Guard’s 1-108 Field Artillery salute at the start of the ceremony.

“It looks like something we just put together in Hollywood, but no, it is real.”

Gen. David Perkins, Commanding General of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, speaks at the graduation of the Army War College Distance Class of 2017, July 28 on the historic parade grounds of Carlisle Barracks. Perkins congratulated the 385 students for their hard work and dedication during two years leading to a Master’s Degree in Strategic Studies.



Perkins encouraged the graduates with personal insights about leading a life of value through leadership that others value.

“As we are about to recognize you today for a great accomplishment.... We have given you great intellectual capability and attributes,” he said, and asked, “What are you going to do with them?”

“When you go back to your unit and your community, they should know that you’ve been through something special -- you have much more capability than you used to have – without even looking at that diploma,” said Perkins. “If you look at life that way, I guarantee what you’re going to find is this investment that you’ll put back

into your unit: it will multiple tenfold.

“And, when people look back on serving with you, what they’re going to talk about is what kind of person you were. What they’re going to talk about is how you influenced them,” he said. “My experience is your subordinates don’t care what’s on your resume. Your subordinates care about what kind of person you are, and what kind of leader you are.”



Maj. Gen. Bill Rapp, U.S. Army War College Commandant, spoke to the USAWC Distance Education Class of 2017 for the last time as commandant. It marked his final graduation ceremony leading the college, as Rapp transferred command to Maj. Gen. John Kem in a ceremony later that day. Rapp officially closed his 33-year Army career with a ceremony following the change of command.

Among the graduates are 336 Army, 3 Air Force, 10 Marine Corps and 4 Navy officers; 27 senior federal civilian employees; and 5 international officers from Botswana, Taiwan, Canada, United Kingdom, and Mexico.

Several students spoke of their experiences in applying new knowledge, analysis and decision-making processes.

“I was especially drawn to [the curriculum] primarily because I deal with a full array of national security, homeland security, and foreign affairs related issues,” said student Sean Snyder, who spoke of the linkage between his studies to his responsibilities as a Congressional staffer.

“While I feel I’ve had a good understanding and grasp of the rationale for a lot of those policy recommendations and why the Army and the other services, for that matter, do what they do, I thought this would be a good opportunity to shorten that proverbial distance between the Pentagon and the Hill,” he said. “I think it was a good opportunity to get first-hand integration and communication with the men and woman who are definitely going to be the future leaders of our Army.

The majority of the class is composed of guardsman and reservists, who complete a two year program, which is the equivalent of the Army War College Resident Program and results in the same diploma and Master of Strategic Studies Degree.

“The briefings that we get are from, literally, the experts at the national level on key issues -- whether it’s the Army, or procurement, or national defense, or leadership,” said Lt. Col. John Pippy of the Pa. Army National Guard, from Moon, Pa. “The format ... allows us to have some real frank discussions with people, and access to key decision makers, and maybe we even share with them some of our thoughts at the lieutenant colonel staff level.”

Another Pa. Army National Guard officer echoed his colleagues' emphasis about applying new learning every day throughout the two-year program.

“I’m a facilities engineer at Tobyhanna Army Depot. Especially the first year, which focuses a lot on leadership competencies ... I would read something and reflect on it for the War College course, and the next day I would have an 'ah-ha moment' about an issue I was having at work. If I just approached it a little differently ... I could change things toward my end state,” said Lt. Col. Patrick Monahan, of Spring Brook Township, Pa.

Christine Stark, Army War College Distance Education Program faculty member, congratulates one of her students after she received her Masters diploma. Each student was part of a seminar learning from their faculty members, fellow students and guest speakers during virtual and residence courses.



The Distance Education Program allows senior leaders to continue to serve and work in their regular full-time job and still receive and Army War College education. The program requires about 15 hours a week, is mainly conducted online and includes 2 two-week summer resident courses at Carlisle Barracks.

Pennsylvania was represented by 13 state residents, four from the Pa. Army National Guard, six from the Army Reserves, two from the active duty Army, and one from the United States Marine Corps.

The College awards the achievement of faculty and students in the domains teaching, scholarship, and service.

Faculty members Army War College Department of Distance Education were selected, by their peers, for exemplifying the highest standards of excellence in teaching, scholarship and service to the Army, joint commands, and federal agencies.

- **Dr. Kevin Weddle**, awarded for excellence in teaching during the first year courses.
- **Col. Frank Frazier**, awarded for excellence in teaching during the second year courses.
- **Col. Brian Cashman**, awarded for excellence in teaching an elective.

- **Col. Charles Grindle**, was honored as an Associate Professor, based upon his accomplishments and potential in the domains of teaching, scholarship and service.

These new graduates were recognized as top performers for their excellence in scholarship, writing, and enduring impact within the national security community.

Daniel M. Lewin Cyber-Terrorism Technology Writing Award

- **Lt. Col. Mark I. Choate**, for "A Potential Deterrent: Reinventing the State Sponsor of Terrorism List."

Outstanding Program Research Project

- **Ms. Margaret Reach**, for "Just War for Small War."
- **Col. David M. Church**, for "Information Operations Remedy: The Citizen-Soldier."

The Army War College Foundation Lifetime Alumni Membership Award

- **Col. William J. Benner**, class president, for his leadership.

The above awards are sponsored by the Army War College Foundation.