

Relationships matter -- Allied, partner faculty enhance strategic insights

By Curt Keester 19 November 2018



Foreign military faculty members, Brazilian Col. Giovanni Moretto, Chilean Col. Cristian Vial and Spanish Col. Felipe Quero contribute their knowledge and skills to the strategic leaders and planners enrolled in the Army War College.

CARLISLE, Pa. (Nov. 19, 2018) – With their unique insights from rich military careers spent outside the U.S. military, foreign military faculty enhance the U.S. Army War College education. In return, the international faculty members develop both relationships and insights about U.S. processes and principles. Long-term, the network of leader relationships across the world enable close partner nation relations and heightened investment in professional military education and military interoperability.

International officers have served on faculty since 2004. Today, Brazil, Chile, Germany and Spain have assigned senior officers to the USAWC faculty, contributing their knowledge and skills to the next generation of U.S. and partner nations' strategic leaders and planners enrolled in the war

College.

“Each of them bring their own particular skill sets that we try to take advantage of to facilitate the delivery of all the things we accomplish,” said Dr. Mark Duckenfield, chair of the National Security Strategy teaching department here. These officers add to the diversity of the War College team. While they share military culture, they represent nations with distinctive cultures, strategic objectives, threats and challenges. With the students, in discussions and campaign exercises, they broaden the students with different points of view, he said.

Many of the international faculty are recent graduates of the U.S. Army War College. “Having the course, learning it, doing well and then getting selected to be here is really good mechanism for then moving into the instructor’s seat,” said Duckenfield.

Col. Giovanni Moretto, a 2017 graduate, is the first Brazilian instructor on the war college faculty. “I think it’s a great opportunity for us to understand a little bit more about each other -- the different countries, the different perspectives -- but we are all engaged to have a better world, a better place to live, a better place for our people. This is most important.”

Moretto is an infantry officer with experience in mountain warfare. He attended the Brazilian jungle warfare course, commanded the 1st Infantry Jungle Battalion and deployed twice in support of the United Nations Mission for Stabilization of Haiti.

“I learned how to work in an international environment with people from different backgrounds,” said Moretto about operations in Haiti. “I saw a different country with people that really needed some external help. For us in the military, sometimes we concentrate too much on operations in war, and sometimes we forget that we have the other side -- protecting the peace.”

Investing in professional military education

While on faculty, they gain experience and understanding of the Army War College’s style of professional military education, which they can apply to their military when they return.

“The way that we teach in this college is kind of multidimensional, providing people with experts from different agencies, not just the military world, but also the civilian world,” said Spanish Col. Felipe Quero, who teaches National Security and Strategy. “This combination is, I think, unique.”

“**Military** is just a small portion of strategy, so this is the perfect venue for that, because we can share our understanding with people from different agencies and different offices dealing with security,” said Quero.

Quero spent 18 years at the strategic level working in the Spanish Ministry of Defense, the Spanish Joint Defense Staff, and in NATO’s Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Va. “I spent six months in the U.N. Headquarters planning the increase of forces in Lebanon,” said Quero. “In 2006 I was part of a kind of experiment that they did. It was called Strategic Military Cell for Lebanon, a kind of small strategic headquarters to command the new multidimensional military peacekeeping operations in U.N.

“I know how difficult it is to implement what we teach here in the real world. There are a lot of differences. It is much more difficult. We teach here that the environment is difficult, the complexity of the threats, the unpredictability of war, but when you are going to war it’s even more complicated than you can imagine,” said Quero.

“[Their contributions] can help us collaborate more closely together and in the future, help us prevent misunderstandings,” said Duckenfield. “We can have a better idea of where we’re each coming from in a much more amicable way than people who don’t have much contact with each other.”

Developing insights about U.S. processes, principles

German Col. Martin Werneke is the faculty director of Multinational Operations and developed a new lesson on operations with allies and partners.

“His students are looking at the issue of multinational operations and working with allies and partners, not only from the perspective of the United States, but also from the perspective of our allies and partners,” said Col. Douglas Winton, who chairs the Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations teaching department. “What motivates them to work with us? What do they consider the costs and the benefits when they operate with the Americans, and how do two asymmetric partners in a relationship find common interests and common ways of operating?”

“Our department is pretty connected with the combatant commands, the Joint Staff and some senior Army Headquarters,” said Winton, speaking about Werneke’s interaction with senior leaders outside of the of War College. “He gets a level of exposure to that network of U.S. planners that

he probably wouldn't get otherwise, and just like the rest of us, any time you're required to teach something you end up learning more than you knew about that subject."

Improving Army War College education, advancing relationships

International faculty contributions have proven key to success for a special program introduced last year. Before the Advanced Regional Studies' trip to Chile, Chilean Col. Cristian Vial taught lessons and helped coordinate engagements with multiple Chilean military units, government organizations and civilian industry leaders under the umbrella of national power elements. "I think my main contribution to this program is to help expose American officers to the Chilean culture, history and political landscape, which also contributes to understanding Latin American culture and how American policy may enhance relationships with countries of the region," said Vial.

This year, Vial, Moretto and U.S. Army Col. Ian Lyles are collaborating to plan engagements in both Chile and Brazil.

"The world has changed. Society has changed," said Vial. "You need to be more culturally aware in so many ways. I feel that I can contribute every day in my seminar teaching or facilitating discussion."

Vial is the first Chilean officer to join the faculty and a 2012 graduate of the War College. After graduation, he returned to Chile and applied his new knowledge and skills as a decision maker at the strategic level. He was first a battalion commander, and then a director of two different schools which, he said, represented an ideal environment for him to put into practice lessons learned, such as critical thinking, organizational change and self-awareness.

Originally an infantry officer before transferring to Army Aviation, his career included assignment as a teacher of geopolitics and deployment in support of U.N. peacekeeping missions in East Timor and Haiti. In 2017, he came back to Carlisle to join the faculty.

"In each discussion we have in seminar, you can get [students'] attention with a new perspective, with a foreign perspective," said Vial. "That's my personal challenge. When I'm talking, when I'm teaching, or in a simple conversation in seminar, I try to find another perspective useful for the American students."

Enabling close partner nation relations, military interoperability

The international faculty will return home with a better understanding of U.S. perspectives and deeper connections across the Army.

“Since the Army War College is a laboratory of strategic thinking, the main takeaway from here is getting the way Americans -- and not only Americans, but the whole world represented here -- thinks and sees the strategic environment. And that might be applied in my Army,” said Vial, recognizing the fact that one of five students are international officers.

Brazilian Army Lt. Gen. Achilles Furlan Neto, G-3 Director, Training and Doctrine, echoed the expectation for building understanding and relationships, while visiting the Army War College in early November.

“Sending officers abroad is to keep in touch with friendly countries, and to make a good road for the future, because these guys will be senior leaders in the future,” said Furlan Neto. “I know guys from France. I know guys from India, and when I talk to them, it’s so easy because I was there. My family lived there.” This is the main goal, he said.