

AWC colonel works to establish a foundation for Women, Peace and Security in the military and PME

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 08 March 2022



Maj. Gen. David Hill, USAWC Commandant, recognizes Col. Veronica Oswald-Hrutkay for her work with Women, Peace and Security initiatives in the military and across PME, March 15.

Professional military education is a potent avenue to address the U.S. Government's commitment to global initiatives in Women, Peace, and Security. Nations. An Army Nurse with experience in international humanitarian operations dedicated her time at the Army War College to establishing a foundation for WPS in the military -- itself a foundation for Defense-wide integration of WPS awareness in plans and operations.

Army Col. Veronica Oswald-Hrutkay's work of several years has positioned the Army War College as a leader in supporting OSD's concept for operationalizing WPS within the defense and security sector, said Oswald-Hrutkay, who noted that this includes protection of civilians across the conflict and competition spectrum. This year, she collaborated with Army Lt. Col. Dana Perkins in these efforts.

The Office for Global Partnerships in the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, in coordination with the Joint Staff J5, oversees the Women, Peace, and Security program within DoD. The U.S. Army War College is an important partner. Through professional military education, the war college advances the DoD objectives, exposing senior U.S. and partner military officers to U.S. WPS objectives and guiding their understanding of how, when and where they will integrate WPS principles into policies, plans, operations, and partner-nation engagements.

Oswald-Hrutkay has created four key initiatives for raising WPS awareness among senior military leaders.

In November 2020, she sponsored a joint PME forum to examine Women, Peace, and Security issues through the lens of professional military education. Keynote speaker Maj. Gen. Steve Maranian opened the forum explaining how WPS initiatives will strengthen the force.

"Commitment of the U.S. military to human rights and women's empowerment will enhance interoperability and certainly make the United States an international partner of choice," said Maranian, then-commandant of the Army War College.

She worked with course authors to integrate DoD WPS concepts, language, and priorities into core courses, special programs, and electives. For example, the core course on Military Strategy and Campaigning included learning objectives and outcomes related to WPS. The Joint Land, Air, Sea Strategic-Special Program concludes with a capstone exercise involving students at multiple Senior Service Colleges; that exercise incorporates WPS-related scenarios.

Oswald-Hrutkay encouraged the establishment of an annual Joint WPS academic writing award. The Marine Corps University Press will publish the essays.

USAWC students in resident and distance education had an opportunity to delve deeper into WPS topics. For example, the elective "A Cross-Cutting & Emerging Approach to Operating in a Joint Environment," was co-taught by Oswald-Hrutkay and Perkins. "The seminar leveraged concepts in operational design to develop an approach to implement the WPS framework into joint, operational planning, and decision-making to prevent and resolve conflict and address post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding," said Perkins. "Students attending this seminar concentrated on sustainment below the level of conflict within Great Power Competition."

Oswald-Hrutkay is completing her 33-year Army career, which included UN Mission service in 1992. She wore the "blue beret" while supporting humanitarian assistance with the U.N. Protection Force, UNPROFOR, she noted.

"I have worked passionately on saving soldiers' lives downrange," said Oswald-Hrutkay. "Now I am working the human domain at the strategic level to save lives downrange," she said about Women, Peace, and Security in PME.

Perkins holds a Peace Operations Specialized Training Certificate in Military Studies and is a graduate of the Joint Staff's Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security-levels 100 and 200 courses. The new director of WPS Studies will be Amanda Clare.