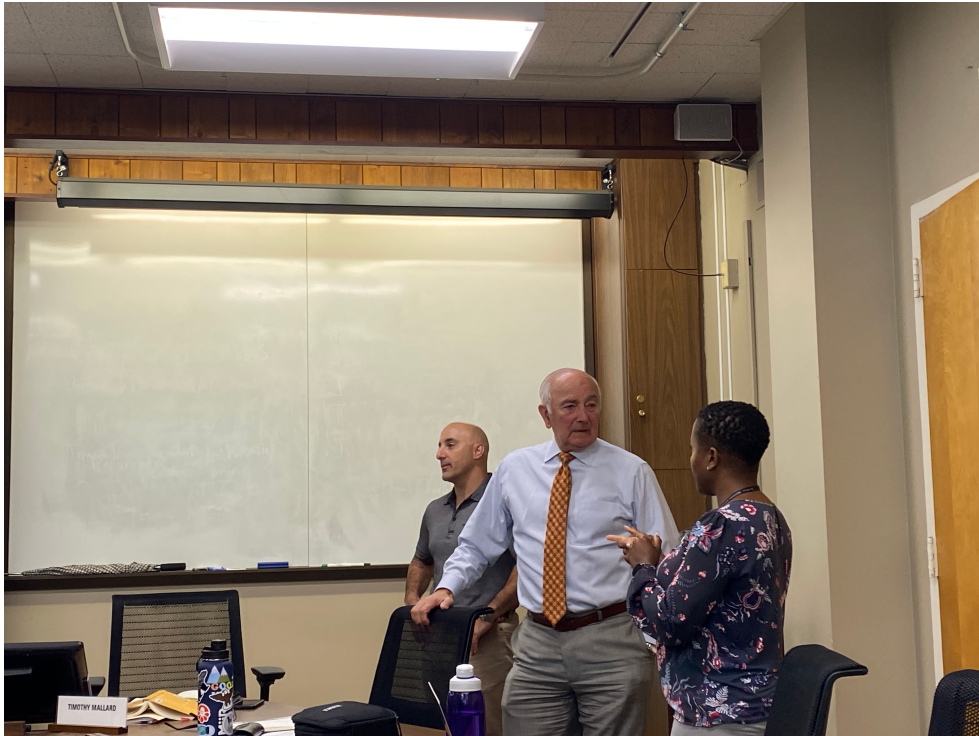


Retired Lt. Gen. James Dubik talks with students about the ethics of war

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 03 June 2022



Lt. Gen. James Dubik talks with USAWC student, Lt. Col. Tanasha Stinson, following his seminar discussion with students.

Understanding moral injury is a tool of resilience, which enables individuals and populations to frame traumatic events with language and thought categories to better recover from the events. This understanding is critical to the senior leaders who will undertake decisions of war and who have experienced war, said retired Army Lt. Gen. James Dubik who engaged with students, sharing his insights as a soldier, scholar, and leader.

Dubik's last active-duty assignment was as commander of the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq and the NATO Training Mission-Iraq during the "Surge" of 2007 and 2008. After 37 years of service, he retired, earned a Ph.D. in Philosophy, and published *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory*.

Dubik engaged in dialogue with students in the "Moral and Spiritual Injury in War: A Strategic Assessment" elective. Taught by Army Chaplain Col. Timothy Mallard, the course aims to elevate this topic to a strategic level through studying moral injury history and current theories, analyzing its nature in soldiers, and engaging the multi-faceted strategic implications of ethics of modern warfare.

During his discussion, Dubik drew from his book. He made a distinction between previous scholarship analyzes the moral issues that arise before, during, and after conflict for combat soldiers and the moral responsibilities of senior political and military leaders. Drawing on his experience and expertise, Dubik argues that political and military leadership need to be held accountable for decisions, planning, and execution of war.

Civil-military relations are the way forward in addressing the complex and ever-changing issue of just wars and how to fight them, suggested Dubik. His book offers some criteria that military and civilian leaders can reference when making decisions about war, such as time, the likelihood of success, and obligation.

The class discussion made it clear that there is no formula, which is why dialogue between civilian and military leaders is so important.

"This dialogue enables civilian leaders to get the best military advice, take it, consume it, ask questions of it so it informs civilian leaders on reasons why we go to war or how we fight the war," said Lt. Col. Jeremy Kerfoot, sharing the insights he gleaned from the discussion. "It is also important for military leaders to understand the same principles in the context of having to commit the coin of our realm—people."

Kerfoot gave an example of how AWC encourages and facilitates these civil-military dialogues.

"Next week, NSS week, civilians from all walks of life are going to see that the war college is a misnomer. Civilian leaders will learn how senior leaders address the national security challenges of our nation," he said.

Dubik's engagement indicated that senior leaders, civilian and military alike, have not only an obligation to participate in these discussions but also to create an environment that encourages candid dialogue between soldiers, civilians, and their leaders.

"There must be an ongoing civ-mil dialogue before, during, and after the war to understand what is going on and how to strategize, operationalize,

and succeed," said Michael Rossmann, a USAID foreign service officer. "I will be on the country team, and when I am advising my boss who is advising the ambassador who is advising others, I will bring this perspective."

This was the first year this elective was offered, and AWC is currently the only PME or academic institution to offer a course on moral and spiritual injury.

"Moral injury will not decrease in scope of pace but rather get more complex, as senior leaders will be expected to deal with its complexities in future multidomain warfare, which is why this core is so important," said Mallard.

Lt. Col. Adam Seibel said that this elective, in conjunction with other electives and core courses, set him up for success in his next assignment as the commander of the 8th Army Reserve Careers Group, a geographically dispersed unit spanning six states.

"I took electives that would allow me to succeed as a senior leader by giving me different perspectives," said Seibel.