

# USAWC BSAP program helps develop strategic planners

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

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Aug. 13, 2010 – While the Army War College is best known for its resident and distance programs that prepare future strategic leaders, it may surprise you to learn that it is only one of the many programs preparing the leaders of tomorrow.



*The BSAP classes stands for a group photo after graduation. After completing the course graduates have gone on to serve in positions on the National Security Staff, the Department of State, the Joint Staff, the Army Staff, and in the Office of the Secretary of*

*Defense. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.*

One of those programs is the Basic Strategic Art Program, an intensive 14-week graduate-level program designed to educate newly-designated Functional Area 59 Strategists in the fundamentals of national strategy. The most recent class completed their studies with a graduation ceremony Aug. 13.

“You will now be integral parts of your profession,” said Dr. Bill Johnsen, Army War College Dean of Academics at the ceremony. “You are now bona fide strategists.”

The course introduces the students, typically majors, to the skills and knowledge needed for their development as Army strategists. FA59 is the Army’s only functional area solely dedicated to developing strategic practitioners.

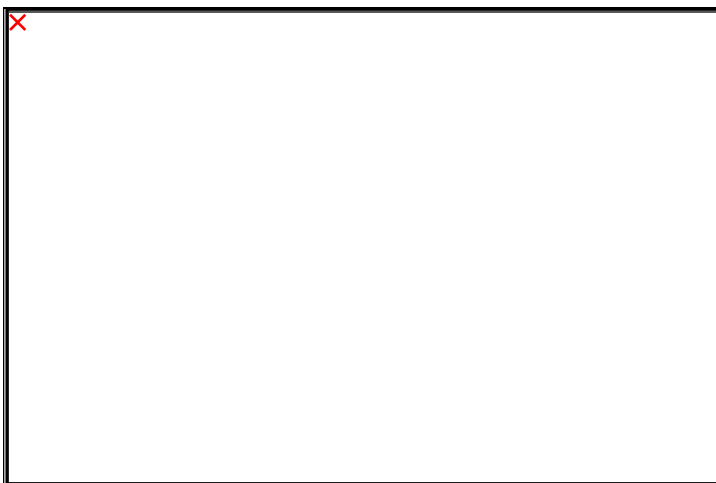
In late 2002, the BSAP conducted a pilot course at the request from the Army G3 to develop a basic qualification course for the FA 59s. After a successful pilot, the program was made mandatory for all newly designated FA 59 officers. The program now conducts three courses per year, graduating an average total of 45 officers. Graduates of the program occupy key positions within the broader defense community, serving on the National Security Staff, the Department of State, the Joint Staff, the Army Staff, and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

“BSAP offers the opportunity for officers newly assigned into FA 59, Strategist, to gain a firm foundation in the fundamentals of strategic concept, theory, and practice,” said Johnsen. “Most importantly, the program allows officers to hone their critical thinking skills at the strategic level of warfare, where most of them will spend the bulk of the remainder of their service. The totality of these skills will be invaluable to the Army and the nation in this period of persistent conflict.”

The course’s six modules explore strategic theory, strategic art, Joint and Army Systems, national security decision-making, contemporary strategic challenges and joint and Army planning. In many cases the modules are presented as case studies that challenge the students to dissect and discuss the strategic aspects of the example.

“The goal of the course is to review the history, application, and evolution of strategy in all of its complexity not so a student can access a particular historic event and try to apply it today, but rather so a graduate can recognize current and future issues within their strategic context and provide an informed strategic appraisal,” said Lt. Col. Charles Moore, BSAP director. The course is taught by Moore, retired Col. Michael Matheny and retired Col. Stephen Kidder.

The mission of the USAWC and its programs are built around the concept of mastering the strategic art, so it only makes sense that the course is held here.



*Dr. Bill Johnsen, Army War College Dean of Academics, speaks to recent graduates of the Basic Strategic Art Program, a 14-week program for Functional Area 59 Strategists. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.*

“We take full advantage of the Army War College resident experts in joint operations, strategic leadership, history, national security policy formulation, and regional studies,” said Moore.

“One of the real advantages of being collocated with the USAWC is that we share guest speakers, educational resources, and seize on other targets of opportunity.”

One of the graduates, Maj. Lisa Livingood, said that the course has been vital to her development as a strategist.

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