

Distance education class of 2012 reports for first residence session

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Distance education student members of the Army War College Class of 2012, take part in the Army Birthday celebration as part of their first residence session. The students will be here for the next two weeks to participate in seminar group sessions, attend lectures, receive an APFRI assessment and more. We'll add more photos and more for the next two weeks so keep checking back.

June 24, 2011 -- After a year of reading, studying, writing, researching and collaborating behind a computer screen, the members of the Distance Education Class of 2012 reported to the Army War College June 14 for the first of their two resident sessions.

The two-week sessions allow students to participate in seminar group sessions, to attend lectures and work with classified material relevant to the course of instruction. Attendance at both scheduled resident courses of instruction is required for successful completion of the curriculum.

During their two weeks here, the students learned from guest speakers like Amb. Ronald Neumann, who discussed the challenges of diplomacy today; retired Gen. Michael Hayden, who discussed information and intelligence as an instrument of power; visited Washington DC for small group visits; took part in an Antietam staff ride; underwent health assessments from the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute and more.

“The first residence course really provides a capstone for the first year of studies,” said **Col. Darrell Fountain**, first resident course director. “We bring in guest speakers who provide a wrap-up on each of

the four courses, as well as guest speakers who talk about each element of national power, diplomatic, information, military and economic.”

"The speakers have really been valuable and provided some great insights into some of the issues we're facing," said **Col. Thomas Parker**. "I thought General Hayden really gave us some candid thoughts on intelligence and how we can effectively use it."

Fountain said that the course ties together all of the strategic themes of the Army War College and prepares them for the second year of studies, including introducing them to their new seminar mates.

“When they arrive here they are split into the seminars that they will be a part of until graduation,” he said. “This allows them to form relationships here that will carry on during the next year of studies and when they arrive next year for the second residence course.”

The program differs from the resident course in the aspect that it’s a two year program instead of the one year duration for the resident class. Technology overcomes the geographical challenges of students spread around the world. Instead of mailing in papers, students log onto a secure website and watch videos and guest speaker through Defense Connect Online. The distance education site provides students with primary and supplementary materials and allows students to participate in real-time discussions. This site is the focal point for faculty-student interaction, for viewing multimedia course work, constructing papers, sending course papers, and receiving evaluated work.

Fountain said that the distance education course remains committed to its charter when it was formed in 1960 as the correspondence course.

Members of Seminar Six pose for their group photo in the Bliss Hall foyer.



“We have a responsibility to emulate and parallel the curriculum and educational experience of the residence course,” he said. “The delivery method is different, but the educational experience is the same.”

Students said that the course has been beneficial on many levels.

"It's great to see all the people you've been corresponding with online for the last year and put names to

faces," said **Lt. Col. David Chacon**. "Getting to talk with my fellow students and the faculty has been great."

"It's hard to believe that we're here for our first residence course already," said **Lt. Col. Charles Jenks**. "The last year has flown by, it's been busy, but has really flown by."

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