

Army War College adds Gulf War case study to curriculum

David Vergun, Army.mil

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CARLISLE, Pa. (Army News Service, Aug. 25, 2015) -- When classes began Aug. 17, the U.S. Army War College, or USAWC, introduced a new seven-day introductory course to strategic studies, which includes a four-day Gulf War case study.

The idea for an introductory course and Gulf War case study came about as a way to capture key themes of the curriculum up front and help orient students, many of whom are non-Army and not part of the U.S. military, said Dr. Richard Lacquement, dean of the USAWC School of Strategic Landpower.

Dr. Richard A. Lacquement Jr. Dean, School of Strategic Landpower, U.S. Army War College



Per joint guidelines, no more than 60 percent of the student body can be Army lieutenant colonels and colonels. The rest are equivalent ranks from the other services, as well as interagency partner personnel, such as the Department of State, and foreign military officers, he said. The same 60 percent holds for the uniformed faculty who provide joint education.

Teaching for the resident program is carried out by faculty in three departments: national security and strategy; military strategy, planning and operations; and command leadership and management, Lacquement said. Themes from all three departments are included in the new introductory course.

The rest of the resident curriculum remains the same, he said, adding that the introductory course replaced an elective, so the length of the 10-month graduate-level resident course remains the same.

After the core courses, students will be surveyed and results of the oral comprehensive exams will be analyzed to determine what, if any, impact the intro course has had, and a determination will be made whether or not to continue with the course, Lacquement said.

By the time students enter USAWC, they will have commanded a battalion or have had an important leadership responsibility, he said. They're at the top of their game.

The War College takes students beyond tactical command and other warfighting responsibilities they learned and got really good at in the company and field grades, he said. Now, it's about educating and developing adaptive senior leaders for a complex world in which they'll be working with joint,



multinational, and interagency partners at the corps level and higher.

PERSIAN GULF WARThe Gulf War was chosen because it illustrates elements that are of persistent interest today, such as instruments of power that include diplomacy, information, military and economic, Lacquement said. Students learn how to make the connection between strategy and policy.

Col. Bob Forsten makes a point while attending the U.S. Army War College's new seven-day introduction to strategic studies course, which includes a four-day Gulf War study. The new curriculum was implemented in August 2015. (photo: David Vergun)

The 1990-91 Gulf War (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm) is interesting because the military and the nation were in transition periods as they are today, he said. The Cold War with the Soviet Union was nearly at an end, the Army was beginning a drawdown, and Vietnam-era weaponry was being replaced by Apache and Black Hawk helicopters, Patriot missiles, Abrams tanks and Bradleys. The use of GPS, night vision and improvements in communications was beginning.

The U.S. military approach to combat operations was also changing, he said. The services were conducting operations under a single combatant commander, in the wake of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act that strengthened joint integration with more prominent roles for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the geographic combatant commanders.

On the policy front, the United States was working a strong international diplomacy angle with the Soviets and Middle East nations. At home, Congress was also involved in authorizing a resolution for the use of force.

These are issues resonant today, he said: multinational and interagency partnerships, diplomacy, drawdown and new types of weaponry.

SOCRATIC METHOD

During the Gulf War case study, the instructor asked questions and let the students posit opinions and interact with each other. They read and prepared for the discussion on their own outside of the classroom.

For example, the students discussed U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf's frustration with what he regarded as the slow movement of VII Corps, led by Lt. Gen. Frederick Franks, Jr. in the attack on the Republican Guard.



Discussions went back and forth. Some said Franks was being prudent in massing his forces, not running too far ahead of his logistics tail in the absence of good military intelligence. Others thought his risk-averse personality may have affected his decision-making as a commander.

Another topic dealt with the buildup of forces during Desert Shield in 1990, and how vulnerable the U.S. ground forces were during that period. Had the Iraqis moved south then, the only U.S. force that came fully equipped and ready was the Navy-Marine team. Without the Army's capabilities, however, the relatively smaller amphibious force would not have been able to sustain itself for long.

This led to the discussion about how all of the services bring unique and important capabilities to the battlefield. Today, a student noted, one would be hard-pressed to find a strategist, who thinks airpower alone could win the war. But, then, such advocates still existed.

Numerous other topics were discussed as well.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

While it is too early to get feedback on the entirety of the Army War College from the students, some offered their thoughts.

Sonya Tsiros, a career foreign service officer with the Department of State, has worked with Soldiers in several assignments, and in Afghanistan as a member of a provincial reconstruction team.

The War College is important because it addresses the interagency role in military operations, she said.

Navy Cmdr. Tara Hodge, a supply corps officer, said she hasn't had as much inter-service experience as she would have liked and welcomed being at the USAWC. It's interesting to get others' perspectives, she said.

Col. Nicholas Lancaster, a staff judge advocate, said in his normal job he's focused on the task at hand and doesn't have the luxury of studying and collaborating with folks from outside the Army. He thinks that getting fresh and unique perspectives will broaden his outlook.

Lt. Col. Jason Wolter said he watched Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm unfold from the barracks at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, where he was a cadet. The thought at the time, he said, was that the war would be protracted and perhaps his class would graduate early so he'd be able to participate in the campaign.

At the time, he and the other cadets experienced a "youthful" mix of anxiety and enthusiasm, hoping to participate, yet realizing the danger, he said.

Nearly all of the students were not yet in uniform during the war. But a few were, including Col. Guy Hasson, a brigade commander with the Israeli Defense Forces, who joined in 1990. He said he remembers civilians preparing for the war, with the understanding that the Iraqis might attack Israel with chemical or biological weapons.

There was a lot of uncertainty in Israel about whether the nation would counterattack if attacked by Iraq, Hasson said. The United States thought if Israel responded with combat operations, it might result in the fracturing of the Arab coalition that had been formed.

Lt. Col. George Hammar was a private during the time of the Gulf War, stationed in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, working in communications. He said he was a "wire dog," running a lot of phone lines, none of which the Army uses today. Communications today is a lot more complex, he said.

Studying the Gulf War gives students the opportunity to compare and contrast the military then and now, and learn, Hammar said. The Gulf War was really the last time divisions and corps deployed in the manner they did and this could be relevant for the future.

ABOUT AWC CLASS OF 2016

The USAWC resident class of 2016 totals 381 students, of which 219 are Army, 26 Air Force, 16 Marines, 11 Navy, one Coast Guard, 79 international fellows and 29 civilians. Among the civilians are members of the U.S. military services, U.S. Agency for International Development and the departments of State and Homeland Security.

The six courses after the new introduction to strategic studies course are the traditional ones still offered: strategic leadership, theory of war and strategy, national security policy and strategy, theater strategy and campaigning, regional studies program and defense management. There are still electives as well.

Upon completion of AWC, graduates are awarded a master's degree in strategic studies.

http://www.army.mil/article/154380/Army_War_College_adds_Gulf_War_case_study_to_curriculum/

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