

USAWC electives: Great captains' inspire students

Lt. Col. Mark McCann, Public Affairs

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Prof. Len Fullenkamp, Professor of Military History in the Department of National Security Studies, talks to a group during a recent Gettysburg Staff Ride. He is teaching the Ride with Great Captains elective this academic year.

“Napoleon’s advice to those who would practice the art of war; ‘Read over and over again the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus, Turenne, Eugene and

Frederick. Make them your models. This is the only way to become a great general and to master the secrets of the art of war, ’” said Prof. Len Fullenkamp, Professor of Military History in the Department of National Security Studies here.

“This premise provides the theoretical underpinnings for the *Ride with Great Captains* elective,” he said.

The elective affords students with an opportunity to, “be more reflective about the subject of leadership in the profession of arms,” according to Fullenkamp.

“There is much to be learned by reading and reflecting on the views of general officers who have confronted the burdens of command and excelled in doing so.”

“Students choose a leader from the 20th century about whom they want to know more and find a way to ‘interrogate’ that individual,” said Fullenkamp. “If you could get into his thoughts, what would you want to know?”

Whether an American military leader from George Washington to George Marshall or wars from the

American Revolution to Persian Gulf, insights gained by reading correspondence, memoirs, or a good biography will stimulate one's thinking about the profession of arms and the consummate challenges of leadership at the highest levels under the most demanding conditions.

“This elective enables students to discuss their research with their peers and ask, ‘what practical use can I make from these insights?’” said Fullenkamp. “They can come away with a deeper understanding of the profession of arms and a more finely developed professional judgment.”

“With this elective, I have fun for 30 hours. I would do this even if no one showed up,” Fullenkamp added with notable enthusiasm.

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