

Distance Class of 2012 comes to Carlisle for last resident session

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Members of the Army War College Distance Education Class of 2012 listen to author Rick Atkinson speak in Bliss Hall July 18. The 349-member class came to Carlisle Barracks July 16 for their final resident course. Their studies will culminate with a graduation ceremony July 27 at 9 a.m. Photo by Tyler Davis.

July 19, 2012 -- Two years spent behind computers screens, posting on messages

boards and doing required readings while on vacation with the family have finally paid off as the Distance Education Class of 2012 reported to Carlisle Barracks for their final resident course July 16.

The 349-member class will officially wrap up their studies with a graduation ceremony at 9 a.m. on July 27, but before then are guest speakers like **Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley**, Chief of the Army Reserve, **Rick Atkinson**, and **Dr. Paul Stockton**, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs.

The keynote address featured Maj. Gen. Ziyai, a senior Afghanistan national Army officer, and Brig. Gen. Jamshed, a senior Afghanistan police officer.

“They discussed in great detail some of the issues and challenges that are still facing Afghanistan, some of which I really hadn't considered before,” said **Lt. Col. David Matthew**.

A session featuring Talley, and **Brig. Gen. William Roy**, Deputy Director, Operations, Readiness and Mobilization for the National Guard, discussed strategic challenges facing the Army Reserve and National Guard and what these futures leaders will need to know to be successful in the future.

“You will need to get outside your comfort zone,” said Talley, a Class of 2003 USAWC grad. “Get an assignment that will force you to be a broader leader. That’s what happened to me and I’m a better leader for it.”

Roy focused his remarks on the full spectrum of challenges that face our nation and military as it comes out of a decade of war.

“The future force will face a full spectrum of challenges,” he said. “You need to be prepared to deal with everything from unconventional, asymmetric enemies to the new threats of cyber and space.”

Students in the class spoke about how the program has help mold and in some cases, change their way of thinking.

“The biggest lesson I have learned through this course is the importance of perspective,” said **Todd Wheeler**, who works for the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency. “Most times we only consider our own perspective but in my seminar I have 16 different perspectives that each brings their own unique view to a particular issue. This course has helped teach not what to think, but how to think.”

In addition to the guest speakers and seminar discussions, the students will take part in the Commandant’s National Security Program, the capstone event of the program. 66 civilian guests are invited to attend the program and are integrated into USAWC student seminars.

Each day includes a guest speaker or a panel presentation and a general theme for discussion like the media impact and academic perspectives on national security strategy development and implementation, the challenges of civil-military relations, the role of domestic politics in national security, globalization, foreign policy, and international security issues. Besides the guest speakers and the seminar discussions, guests also have the opportunity to hear additional presentations during optional lunch time lectures on various national security related topics.

The students and the guests will also take part in a Gettysburg staff ride in order to better understand what happened, why it happened, and what could be learned and applied to future strategic issues.

While here at Carlisle Barracks, the students are also able to take advantage of the new Army Wellness Center. Using state-of-the-art technology the staff takes readings on body composition, bio metrics, cardio vascular fitness and body fat percentage. The results are then used to develop a personalized fitness regiment including general nutrition and a dietary plan. After students leave Carlisle Barracks and return to their normal duty stations they will be able to maintain contact with the Wellness Center via Defense Connect Online to provide updates on fitness progress and overall health and wellness.

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