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July 27, 2012 -- The War College Commandant **Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo** offered a personal message to the graduates and their Families, as he described a particularly tough meeting during his recent Pentagon assignment. He had scanned the room full of “iron colonels” and lieutenant colonels and Army Civilians -- admiring their quiet commitment to critical roles at the national level, engaged in some of the most complex issues and challenges in decades.

“Where do we get such men and women, and who will step up and take their place when these talented people move on?” he had wondered, he said.

“We get such men and women from your selfless ranks and the U.S. Army War College,” Cucolo said to the student body. “The next wave of strategic leadership for our nation, and six allied nations, is the US Army War College Class of 2012.”

Graduation speaker **Lt. Gen. William E. Ingram, Jr.**, director of the Army National Guard, highlighted the skills the new graduates have acquired.

He reminded the graduates of the course requirement to analyze a hypothetical strategic scenario that defied an easy solution. The exercise required that the students work with others, exercise critical thinking, innovate, and be adaptive. They balanced cultural, geopolitical and logistical considerations with the limitations of force strength, lines of communication and a hundred moving parts.



“You had to do all this collaboratively so that you would finally arrive at a solution that would work in the real world,” said Ingram, drawing the parallel to responsibilities ahead.

“Seeking counsel, listening, applying judgment – that’s how general officers, CEOs, prime ministers and presidents make the toughest decisions,” said Ingram.



Ingram is an Army War College alumnus of the distance program, but missed his own graduation ceremony when called to active duty to command a task force and base in Croatia. He found immediate need then for the critical skills and expanded

knowledge of the Army War College experience, and reminded the new graduates that expectations of them are high.

Classes end; relationships continue.

“The day before you began your Army War College studies, you knew what a good unit looked like, but did you know what a complete force looks like?” he asked the student body. “Did you have a grasp of Joint Doctrine? Did you have the broad scope, the diplomatic range, the informed worldview necessary to lead at the highest levels and work with other agencies?”

“You do now,” said Ingram.

“You have juggled competing priorities, full-time jobs and family duties, along with your rigorous War College studies,” said Ingram. “Soon, you will take on challenging assignments. Many of you will be expected to redesign your commands, wings and fleets. Some of you will go on the shape the security of your nation.

“You are our prospective generals, admirals, our principal strategists,” said Ingram. “You are expansive thinkers – ready to thrive in a fluid, joint, multinational environment. Starting right now, it’s your turn to make history.”



The War College alumni look back

The ceremony marked the end of the two-year distance education experience and followed the final two-week resident course. Course speakers included Chief of the Army Reserve **Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley**, historian **Rick Atkinson**, and **Dr. Paul Stockton**, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs.



1997 graduate Lt. Gen. William Ingram (left) received an honorary USAWC degree from Army War College Dean Dr. Lance Betros (right), with Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo on the historic parade ground of Carlisle Barracks.

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 2003 graduate. “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 changes ahead as the military 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.”

“This has been an overall exhausting but great experience,” said **Lt. Col. Karl Nell**. “The ability to look at issues and challenges from a new perspective is exciting.”



“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,” said **Todd Wheeler**, Department of Homeland Security civilian in the Federal Emergency

Management Agency. This course has helped teach not what to think, but how to think.”

“This course has really helped expand my horizons to leadership at the strategic level,” said **Lt. Col. David Matthew**. “Our perspectives have really changed as it is much different than operating at the tactical and operational level.”

For the two years of internet-based studies of the Army War College distance program, 'it takes a family' for encouragement and support.

The 349 graduates include 309 Army officers, 3 Air Force, 14 Marine, and 1 Navy officer, with the majority from the Reserve or National Guard. Sixteen interagency civilians and 6 international officers completed the program. With the resident program, the Class of 2012 totals 717 students.

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