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Editor's note: This is a correction of the original article originally posted Sept. 5.



Sept. 13, 2013 -- An expert with more than 25 years of experience at the State Department, including being the first resident U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Palau, is contributing her insights to the Army War College to help guide the next generation of military, interagency and international strategic leaders.

Ambassador Helen Reed-Rowe, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Carlisle on July 29 as a key member of the Army War College Command Team. Before coming here, she served as the first resident U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Palau, starting in 2010.

The Republic of Palau, a presidential republic, consists of eight principal islands and more than 250 smaller ones lying roughly 500 miles southeast of the Philippines at a pivotal crossroad in the Pacific, an area near critical sea lines of communication and rich fishing grounds. As our strategic interests and equities expand and shift more toward the Asia-Pacific region, Palau has been a strong partner and is important as the US balances its leadership, military as well as political and diplomatic, in this quickly evolving strategic environment, Reed-Rowe noted. The United States and Palau cooperate on a broad range of issues, including strengthening regional security, promoting sustainable development and curbing climate change, and protecting fisheries and the environment. The Compact of Free Association defines economic and defense agreements between the countries.

During the Ambassador's time in the capital city of Koror, she worked closely with the government and the people of Palau. She traveled extensively to include all of the states within the country and expanded her outreach to women's organizations and schools.

"It was a remarkable tour that provided wonderful opportunities to solidify our partnership with Palau and positively impact regional issues. The Pacific Command and Department of State offered outstanding support of our Mission goals and the rotating U.S. Civic Action Teams provided exceptional project support to the host government and community," she said. "The U.S. Coast Guard responded when Search and Rescue needs surfaced and also, provided preventive training to the law enforcement community and others responsible in country for boat operations. During port of call visits in Palau by our U.S. vessels, community relations activities extended to local high school students who toured ships and received information regarding careers in the U.S. military."

What surprises many about the small republic is that hundreds of native Palauans have served in the U.S. military, going back as far as the Vietnam War. Reed-Rowe said that one of the highlights of her time there was being able to hold town hall meetings for the large number of veterans, with military leadership coming from Veteran Affairs in Guam and Honolulu to provide support and answer questions.



Ambassador Helen Reed-Rowe, center, the newest member of the Army War College Command Team, poses for a photo with 13 Palauans and 5 Yapese who took their oath as enlisted personnel of the United States Army during her tenure as the first resident U.S. Ambassador to the Republic

of Palau.

A Baltimore, Md., native, Reed-Rowe was interested in world affairs from an early age.

"I grew up in a household where we looked at the news every day," she said. "My parents were very involved in the community and wanted us to be concerned not just with the local area, but the rest of the world. I think that had a strong influence on me."

After completing her studies at the University of Maryland, Reed-Rowe began to look for ways to act on that influence, which later in life led her to the State Department.

In many ways, she said, her decision to join the Foreign Service had an effect on her family not unlike those made by military families.

“I realize that my family made as much of a sacrifice as I did when I decided to join the State Department,” she said. “But we also benefited greatly from the experiences. I believe my family has been shaped by our exposure to the wonderful cultural experiences, the special relationships and the challenges of travel and life in places very different from our home base. In retrospect, all of the new things that I did because of this new exciting foreign service career were new adventures for my children, which they handled quite well. The support of my children, my mother and my brother was instrumental in me reaching the higher levels of responsibility in the diplomatic corp.”

Her time as a student at the Navy War College in 2008 proved to be a life-changing experience, she said.

“That was the first year that I actually lived with my military colleagues and by the end of that year we had truly bonded,” she said. “I believe that they better understood diplomacy and who we were in the State Department and I better understood the different services, the different military cultures and the reality of what we share in our missions to support the goals of our country.

“We are all moving forward toward the betterment of our government, we are all trying to do best what we can do to make sure we reach a joint goal for the United States of America," she said.

“For the students, both resident and distance, fellows and internationals, this educational setting provides an opportunity for an extended period to focus on examining and developing within oneself those areas that produce strategic leaders. Also, establishing a rich network of contacts and colleagues can be invaluable for future engagements.”

She jumped at the opportunity to come here.

“When I saw the opportunity to come here I did not even hesitate because I already understood the jointness between diplomacy and defense, something articulate by the highest levels within our agencies,” she said. “I am optimistic about my time at The War College and in Carlisle which is quite a beautiful and historic location. I also have an opportunity to work with my military colleagues, the interagency and of course, our international officers. And I look forward to meeting with Family members, visiting guests and others to share opportunities available from the Department of State.”

While her role has not been specifically defined, she looks forward to working with Maj. Gen. Cucolo

and his team to achieve the goals of the U.S. Army War College, she said.

Reed-Rowe has served as a Senior Advisor to the Office of Performance Evaluation in the Department of State and as a Foreign Affairs Advisor from the Department of State to the Avian Influenza Action Group. Her Washington assignments include management positions in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs and the Overseas Building Operations.

Reed-Rowe has served as a Desk Officer in the Bureau of African Affairs and an Examiner on the Board of Examiners in the Bureau of Human Resources. She served a one year assignment on Capitol Hill as a Pearson Fellow. Her overseas assignments include Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands and supervisory management positions in U.S. Embassies Jamaica, Ecuador and Niger. She is the mother of two children (Nikkia T. Rowe and Kevin A. Rowe) who traveled with her during her earlier overseas foreign service assignments.

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