

# Gettysburg Staff Ride is tool for strategic education

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## education

April 17, 2014 -- Although there are many reasons to participate in a staff ride, Gettysburg is special to the Army War College and part of the Carlisle Experience. There is no substitute for standing on the battlefields and experiencing what Generals Lee and Meade did as they sized up the terrain and the situation in the context of political and military objectives.

Students of the class of 2014 participated in the national security staff ride to Gettysburg, April 17, led by experienced historians.

Prof. Al Lord began the staff ride almost immediately upon leaving Carlisle Barracks, pointing out to the students of 'bus 4' the canon ball marks the Confederate Army left on the Courthouse on the corner of High and Hanover streets.

*Students view the Gettysburg Battlefield as staff ride leader Prof. Al Lord discusses the terrain as a significant factor in employing*

**19th century Landpower.**

Throughout the staff ride, Lord pointed out, where applicable, his four rules for *USAWC – the short course*. Rule 1: It's the context...the best tactics cannot trump the wrong strategy; 2: It's all about logistics – resources available determine the art of the possible; 3: Words mean things – communication aligns unity of effort; and 4: Personalities matter – building trust for the long term.

This was Army student Col. Jeff White's 6<sup>th</sup> visit to Gettysburg. "I signed up to gain a broader perspective on this very important historical and strategic battle in our nation's history. Every time I come here I learn more and more."

For Air Force student Lt. Col. Mark Bloomey, a pilot, this was his first visit to the battlefield. Walking the terrain allows you see it from a different perspective, features like the rock walls, and rolling pastures – you just can't appreciate from the air, he said.

"I like military history," said Burundi Fellow Lt. Col. Elie Bukuru. "I respect the heroes. We learn from the past to improve the present and the future,"

In general, students reported that the staff ride was a valuable tool for better understanding strategy and felt that it should be considered a mandatory part of their studies.