

# Distance Class of 2009 prepares to finish studies

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## Distance Class of 2009 prepares to complete studies



Army War College distance education students Col. Jeff Mascoll and Navy Cmdr. Brian Brethen talk in the hallways of Root Hall after a seminar session July 15. The Distance Class of 2009 are here for their final two-week resident phase, culminating with graduation July 24. Photo by Greg Welker.

July 13, 2009 – More than 300 students in the Distance Education Class of 2009 entered the home stretch of their two year program when they came to Carlisle Barracks July 13 to start their second and final two-week resident phase, culminating with graduation July 24 on the historic Carlisle Barracks parade ground.

The two-week sessions allow students to participate in seminar group sessions, take part in electives, attend lectures, learn from guest speakers and work with

classified material relevant to the course of instruction.

### **NORTHCOM Commander delivers keynote**

Air Force Gen. Gene Renuart, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, delivered the course keynote address July 13. He focused his remarks on the importance of the resident phases of the distance program and issues that they will all deal with in the future.

"This is probably the most important part of this class," he said. "It's true when they say that the relationships you develop here are crucial in your future." Renuart speaks from experience as he is a 1992 Army War College graduate. "You will all be responsible for shaping our future."

### **Guard, reserve issues focus**

The majority of students in the distance education are officers from the Guard and Reserve so the challenges facing those services received attention during their resident phase.

Renuart noted that National Guard officers will find relationship building even more important.

"Someday soon you may find yourselves walk the streets of New Orleans, Galveston or California helping to respond to a natural disaster," he said. "You will form bonds now that will pay off down the line."

Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, Army Reserve Chief, discussed the issues and challenges facing the Army Reserves.

"It's a very busy time for the Guard and Reserve," said Stultz. "In the midst of everything going on we're still trying to transform the reserve to an operational force." He highlighted how the structures and organization of units may change in the coming years to meet the needs of the Army.

"We're about 80 percent to where we want to be but we still have a lot of work ahead of us," he said. "It's not about a wire diagram, it's about taking care of and making sure people are in the right place."

Maj. Gen. Grant Hayden, Commander of the 29th Infantry Division and Special Assistant to the Director, Army National Guard, focused on the need to balance the Guard when he spoke to the student body.

"Since 9/11 we've supported an unprecedented number of operations," he said. "We need to reorganize to be more versatile and agile but still be available for the homeland needs of our nation. We need to maintain our existing conventional and strategic technological edge. We can do so by institutionalizing some of our best programs across the Guard." He pointed out the counterinsurgency and international coordination capabilities of the Guard as these types of programs.

Upcoming speakers include Maj. Gen. Michael Tucker, deputy chief of staff for Operations for the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan; Robert F. Lentz, director of Information Assurance in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense; Chuck de Caro, former CNN special assignment correspondent; and Dr. Montgomery McFate, Senior Social Science Advisor for the Army Human Terrain System Program.

### **Technology bridges the gap for distance students**

The distance program is a two-year internet-based curriculum through which the students earn a master's degree of

Strategic Studies. Students log onto a secure website that provides students with educational materials and supports real-time discussions among students and faculty. This site is the focal point for faculty-student interaction, for viewing multimedia course work, constructing papers, sending course papers, and receiving evaluated work.

The second year of the program focuses more on the application of knowledge, according to Col. Christian Brewer, second resident course instructor.

"The students now use the skills they've acquired during their careers and during the first year of the course to help them make the important decisions at the strategic level," said Brewer.

Students reflect pride in their accomplishments and about the program.

"It's very strenuous. It's very hard but very rewarding," said Col. Duane Coffey.

"I enjoyed it. It has been a challenge, as it should be," said Col. John Baranowski.

"It's very constructive and demanding of your time. I think there is more learning done in the di

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