

Catching up with the times, old friends

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Students from Seminar 7 check out some of the latest military vehicles on display at the AUSA annual meeting and exposition in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Photo by Erin O. Stattel

October 8--This year's Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition proved to be a time to learn and reflect for Army War College students as new products and technologies and old colleagues converged on the floors of the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

Students, family members and faculty traveled down to the annual meeting Oct. 6 and students said they found the event to be informative, useful and relative to what they are learning in Army War College classrooms.

Janet Mysliwicz, student, said she found the speakers to be noteworthy and was glad to see what she is currently learning demonstrated and discussed right in front of her.

"This was a very nice opportunity to be here and to touch base with folks I have served with before," she said. "A lot of what we are learning, we are hearing in these presentations-the partnering and regional approaches-it helps relate what we are learning at the Army War College to real life."

With the Dwight D. Eisenhower luncheon featuring Gen. George Casey as one of its speakers, students, faculty and family members were able to hear the latest news of the Army's current state of affairs from the Chief of Staff.

Lt. Col. Arlester Vernon, student, said he was grateful for the opportunity to listen to what senior Army leaders had to say.

"This event really provides a great opportunity to hear from senior leaders, all four-stars, across the Army," he said.

Later in the day USAWC students, staff and family members were able to listen to a thorough update on the current state of CENTCOM directly from Gen. David Petraeus.

"It is always good to hear the most current updates right from Gen. Casey and Gen. Petraeus," Mysliwiec said.

With hundreds of vendors, booths, displays and demonstrations, students, faculty and family members could enjoy a day of learning about the hottest new trends, such as the Army's engagement in social media, as well as see what new gadgets Jeep has added to their line of military vehicles.

Col. Rob Timm, student, and Foreign Area Officer, said he enjoyed becoming reacquainted with where the Army is today.

"I have been on the outside of the Army, basically doing other and different things, and it has been great to get back in touch with what the Army is currently doing now," he said after a day of walking the expo halls and listening to forums and briefings.

Other students said seeing old friends and former colleagues was a pleasant addition to the trip.

"This was a great opportunity to meet colleagues that I haven't seen in a long time and find out where everyone is and how things are shaping up for them," said Col. Mick Fleetwood.

As for this year's AUSA theme, it highlighted family and followed the Army's own "Year of the Noncommissioned Officer."

"We are continuing with "America's Army: The Strength of the Nation" and Noncommissioned Officers: The Strength of the Army," explained Jane Hurst, who manned the Army's booth. "The purpose is sending out a message showing the many faces of strength and it has been well-received so it was decided to continue with it and we are basically showing all the different aspects of the Army family."

According to their Web site, AUSA is a private, non-profit educational organization that supports America's Army - Active, National Guard, Reserve, Civilians, Retirees and family members. This year's annual meeting ran from Oct. 5-7.