

Joint Forces commander shares lessons with USAWC

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Marine Gen. James Mattis, commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, spoke to Army War College students, staff and faculty in Bliss Hall Oct 23. Photo by Scott Finger.

Oct. 23, 2009 – Army War College students were able to learn more about the practical applications of the joint and multi-national operations they are learning about in seminar today as Marine Gen. James Mattis, commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, spoke to them in Bliss Hall.

Mattis spoke about how the nature of today's war is even more dependent on cohesive coalitions and joint warfare. The importance of creating harmony among an international force is an essential skill as each nation has an important role to play, he said.

"If you don't believe that, you are helping the enemy," he said.

Col. Eric Homan, student, said that the topics Mattis discussed were perfect as they were fresh off of the strategic leadership block of instruction.

"So much of what he said about communication, especially with our coalition partners reinforced what we have been discussing in seminar," he said. "It was a very good discussion."

Mattis also stressed how important it is sometimes to analyze current conflicts through a historical perspective. He said that many of the same issues facing U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan are very similar to those faced by Alexander the Great's armies. The important part is applying those lessons to today's fight, he said.

"I can't think of a better leader to help us learn about today's problems using historical context," said Marine Lt. Col. Douglas Douds. "His experience and knowledge help bring a unique perspective to the fight which I think we all can learn from."