

Eisenhower program educates beyond the barracks

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Col. Steve Williamson, a member of the Eisenhower Series College Program, addresses a classroom during their week-long trip to Pittsburgh recently. The communication and outreach program is designed to encourage dialogue on national security and public policy between students and the public. Courtesy photo.

April 23, 2009 -- The Army War College is known for annually producing well-educated senior officers and civilians, equipped to become our nation's future strategic leaders. The lesser known success of the war college is that it not only educates our students on national security issues but also goes beyond the borders of Carlisle Barracks and educates the nation's public.

The Eisenhower Series College Program is a communication and outreach program designed to encourage dialogue on national security and public policy between students and the public. Every year, a select group of 10-12 war college students travel throughout our nation to academic institutions, professional organizations, civic groups, businesses, and media organizations.

"The goal of the Eisenhower program is to bring the issues that we are studying here at the college to the outside community," said **Lt. Col. Irene Glaeser**, ESCP member.

The program members are currently concluding a three-month, nation-wide tour, where they visited over 15 colleges, several high schools, public libraries, and civic organizations.

The 'hot' issues

Every individual in the program is well-versed on a few "hot" military topics and are ready to provide a presentation on the topic and also undergo a question and answer period with the audience.

"We spent several months prepping on the topics and digging deeper into them. With Afghanistan operations, I combined my personal experience while deployed and my interest in the culture, environment, and mission," said **Col. Steve Williamson**.

The troop build-up and the Afghan-Pakistan region was only one of the many hot topics that ESCP provided experts on are:

- The "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy
- North Korea and Nuclear Weapons
- Ethics, Torture and Abu Ghraib
- US. Policy and Iran
- International Criminal Courts and U.S. Law
- Piracy in Somalia and U.S. Navy Challenges
- Civilian Casualties in war
- Closing Guantanamo Bay

The educational benefit

The members of Eisenhower all agreed that the hard-work and long travel hours were all well worth it.

Many of the students noted the personal gain was immense. Since they were further educating themselves on not just the topics they were discussing but the art of public speaking and strategic communication. Strategic communication has been a learning objective for all of them throughout the year at the war college.

"One of the major personal take-aways from this was certainly learning the art of rhetoric," said Williamson.

Glaeser agreed.

"Communicating effectively to diverse audiences is a skill that I think we are all taking with us," said Glaeser.

The members all had their own story of when they knew they were having a lasting effect on those they were speaking to.

"For me personally I found the trips to Brown University and Purchase College the most valuable," said **Lt. Col. Hal Lamberton**.

Lamberton noted he was slightly anxious after reading on both schools' well-known political-leanings and was concerned how the group of military members would be received.

"We were actually very well-received. The students and faculty were truly interested in gaining more information and getting the bigger picture. There were no snap judgments being made and I really think we had the kind of impact on our audience that we strive for," said Lamberton.

That trip, he thought, had the biggest pay-off for the war college and the military in general.

"We really introduced people to a new way of thinking and I think built a new relationship with our audience," Lamberton continued.

For several, the first trip to the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh was the most memorable.

"My favorite experience was our Pittsburgh trip since we engaged everyone from intelligent high school students to senior citizens at public libraries. It was really a diverse group and it really helped us work on staying on your message while at the same time encouraging dialogue," said Glaeser.

"There was defiantly a moment in Pittsburgh where I just felt like we were really breaking down the perceived barrier between the public and the military," said Williamson.

The Eisenhower team spent an entire week with the council in Pittsburgh and talked to hundreds of community members with whom they formed lasting impressions.

"They all provided us with such an outstanding week of programs. Our students and teachers are still talking about the seminars they attended, and I feel like I really learned a lot, too," said Christina Unger, education program manager for the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh.

Members of the Eisenhower Series College Program

Col. Mike Hoadley, faculty advisor

- **Col. Maxine Girard**
- **Lt. Col. Irene Glaeser**
- **Lt. Col. Hal Lamberton**
- Air Force **Lt. Col. Eugene McFeely**
- **Col. Bob McLaughlin**
- Navy **Cdr. Greg McRae**
- Marine **Col. Jack Monroe**
- **Col. Glenn Richie**
- **Andrew Stewart**
- **Col. Fred Taylor**
- **Col. Steve Williamson**