

Speakers praise service and influence of NCOs

Gregory Welker, Army War College Public Affairs Office

Speakers praise service and influence of NCOs

Veteran and serving NCOs of the Carlisle Barracks community gather with the USAWC speech competitors. The USAWC speech competition was dedicated to the noncommissioned officer, and each speech included vivid examples of unique NCO contributions that give the US Army 'a competitive edge,' as Lt. Col. Hal Lamberton phrased it. Photo by Charity Murtorff.



"Sgt. Gardner was an NCO for only a year, but he was a non-commissioned officer for every second, minute, hour, and day of that year," said Col. Fred Johnson in his winning speech at the Army College's 11th Annual Speaking Competition.

After a lengthy debate among the judges, Johnson was selected as the USAWC "top speaker" in a field of four student contestants. The other speakers were Col. Timothy Stark, Lt. Col. Hal Lamberton, and Ms. Jimmie Vaughn, the only civilian in this year's competition. Speaking in Wil Washcoe Auditorium, the contestants addressed a room filled with fellow students, faculty, staff, and veteran NCOs from organizations across Carlisle Barracks.

While keeping an overall serious message, Johnson got a laugh out of the audience by telling a story of two Soldiers addressed by their drill sergeant who had asked where their NCOIC was.

"They had only been in the Army about a week. They hadn't taken their Army acronyms class yet and didn't know that NCOIC meant noncommissioned officer in charge. The drill sergeant was starting to lose his patience, and said, 'Soldiers, I will give you five seconds to tell me where the NCOIC is. 5 ... 4 ... 3' Then, one Soldier shouts out, I don't know what NCO you see but you're the only NCO I see."

Stark, who placed in the contest, believes that no other army in the world has better NCOs than those of the US Army.

"If you take out our noncommissioned officers, take out our backbone, you will leave our military paralyzed," said Stark,

Vaughn, who tied for third with Lamberton, said that NCOs should not



only be seen as leaders in the field, but also as a person for moral guidance.

Col. Fred Johnson recalls the quiet, compelling influence of a senior NCO during his award-winning presentation of the USAWC 11th Annual Speech Competition. Photo by Charity Murtorff.

"You must never take lightly the role and the attributes, the person of the NCO."

Lamberton spoke on the level of experience of today's NCO Corps.

"It takes our NCOs to give our Army a competitive edge. It is the back-to-back-to-back deployments that give our NCOs the experience and leadership skills to give the Army a competitive edge," he said.

Among the five judges were two NCOs: Sgt. 1st Class Jason Bowden of the Carlisle Barracks Dental Clinic and Staff Sgt. Kevin Betton of the Carlisle Barracks Chapel. The judging panel included Deputy Commandant Col. Thomas Torrance, faculty member Dr. Tami Biddle, and Public Speaking faculty member Dr. Anna Waggener.

"It is always the year of the NCO. That is why we have the greatest Army in the world," closed Johnson. As the winner, he will be honored with a plaque at graduation, and a cash prize sponsored by the USAWC Foundation.

