

Torrance reflects on 30-year Army career

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Col. Thomas Torrance and his wife, Ellen, pose at the International Fellows Farewell Reception for this year's class. Torrance has been the Army War College Deputy Commandant since July 2006, and will be retiring after a 30-year Army career. Photo by Lizzie Poster.



After a return trip to the Army War College and Carlisle Barracks, Col. Thomas Torrance, USAWC deputy commandant, will retire from a 30-year Army career and return to his Southern roots.

Torrance, a native of Milledgeville, Ga., and USAWC Class of 2001 alumnus, will host a retirement ceremony on May 29, at 3 p.m. in Bliss Hall. The ceremony will mark the end of a career that started in 1979 as a Field Artillery Second Lieutenant after graduating from Georgia College and State University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

In July 2006, he was assigned as the USAWC's 48th Deputy Commandant. As the deputy, Torrance was responsible for a number of tasks, each constantly evolving and changing to meet the needs of the school and installation.

"One of my primary duties is to work to support the commandant and garrison commander to ensure the college is a great place to live, work and learn," said Torrance. He was responsible for handling the day-to-day operations, so that the Commandant could focus on the future plans for the next 5, 10, 15 years.

Torrance said his time at Carlisle was more than just a great experience for himself but also for his family. He and his wife, Ellen, jumped at the chance to return to the war college, Torrance said.

As a student, he didn't have the appreciation for all that goes on behind the scenes at Carlisle and helps make it the place it is, he said.

"When you're a student, you come to class, go home, study or spend time with your family," he said. "You don't really see all the hard work that goes on at all of the different agencies and programs. I now have a much greater appreciation for that."

He went on to say that what makes the Army War College unique is the total family experience available here.

"In the DC area or at the other war colleges I don't think you get the same experience as you do here," he said. "The youth services, child development center, the chapel or one of the many other programs on post really help make this a great place to live and work."

Torrance expects to miss the camaraderie, seeing the fresh faces and the fun in coming to work each day when he retires.

"Carlisle Barracks is like a Norman Rockwell painting," he said. "Everyone here seems to be where they want to be and love what they are doing."

Col. Bobby Towery, currently the USAWC Chief of Staff, will become the 49th Deputy Commandant June 15.