

# NSS tackles issues facing military, nation

*Thomas Zimmerman, Army War College Public Affairs Office*

## National Security Seminar tackles issues facing military, nation



*Christopher DeMuth, American Enterprise Institute president, answers a question in Bliss Hall June 2 as part of the 2009 National Security Seminar. The Army War College welcomed more than 160 "new member" guests of the National Security Seminar, June 1 – 5, and sent them into 20 different seminar rooms to exchange thoughts about compelling and challenging topics national security.*

*Photo by Megan Clugh.*

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June 5, 2009 -- A cross-section of Americans from education, law, business and other fields traded daily work routines for a week-long experience as new members of the Army War College seminars. Informed citizens interested in national and international issues traded the 'flash card' version of the news for an immersion experience with the men and women here who will make the news.

The Army War College welcomed more than 160 "new member" guests of the National Security Seminar, June 1 – 5, and sent them into 20 different seminar rooms to exchange thoughts about compelling and challenging topics national security. These discussions provided a mixture of opinions and gave the topics new dimension for faculty and students.

"Our nation and military are in a time of war and that will take precedence on the discussions this week," said **Maj. Gen. Robert Williams**, USAWC commandant, in greeting the NSS seminar members. "We look forward to getting to know you and learning from you."

Since the beginning of the NSS program in 1954, the Army War College has hosted more than 6,000 participants from all walks of life and all regions of the United States.

The week-long seminar focused around dialogue and discussions of various topics and serves as a type of "final synthesis" of the year's education for the Army War College students.

Guest speakers included keynote speaker retired **Gen. Barry McCaffrey**; **Christopher DeMuth**, former president of the American Enterprise Institute; **Dr. Richard Betts**, Council on Foreign Relations; and **Hon. Lee Hamilton**, director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Each speaker focused on a specific topic, which led to a dialogue during the questions and answer session that continued once the students and new members returned to seminar.

McCaffrey discussed a multitude of issues, including the fact that the Army War College will increase its number of International Fellows in next year's class.

"I think it's great that the college is doing that," he said. "I couldn't think of a better idea. International partners are an essential part of the fight."

"He gave us a unique perspective on the situations going on world-wide, especially those in Afghanistan and Iraq," said student **Col. Michael Aberle**, talking about the keynote address by McCaffrey.

"I think the speakers have been great," said **Sam Frymyer**, of Hanover, Pa. "They are very educational and informative."

"The seminars are extremely informative and interesting," said **Sam Bonasso**, civil engineer, Alpha Associates of Morgantown, W. Va. "They give a perspective of what these men and women have to learn to be senior officers."

"I am thrilled to be here," said **Rick Lucas**, regional manager, McQuade & Bannigan, Copenhagen, N.Y. "The seminars are very good, enlightening and motivational. I might sign up for the Army," he joked.

Topics ranged from current operations and foreign relations to the role of government, the latter tackled by DeMuth.

"There is no more important role for the government than national defense and national security," he said. "We need to focus on not just what's happening now, but plan for the future. Too often we neglect what the military needs."

Hamilton focused his remarks on America's role in the world.

"We stand alone at the top of the world's nations, no one rivals us," he said. "While we may lead the world we certainly cannot control it. We must weigh the costs of interventions, both in dollars and in lives. We should peruse that goal modestly."

The seminar was deemed a success by many of the participants.

"This was a great opportunity to get a chance to see first-hand what our senior military leaders are thinking and talking about," said **Linda Williams**, superintendent, Lake County Educational Service Center, Concord, Ohio.

**Vernon Jacob**, Senior Vice President, USB Financial Services, Wellfleet, Ma., agreed.

"I wish I had been able to take part in this type of seminar earlier," he said. "It really has been quite an experience."