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Current and former staff of the Center for Strategic

Leadership turned an anniversary into a reunion, June 1 in Collins Hall. Recognizing 25 years of service, CSL director Col. Chris Beckert dedicated a 25-year plaque in a plain 2nd floor room that belies the high-tech support and specialized expertise that regularly turns Collins Hall rooms into strategic learning platforms

CSL director Col. Chris Beckert dedicates a 25-year plaque with the assistance of Gen. J. Lawton Collins' daughter, Nancy Collins Rubino. Rubino represented her father and was accompanied by husband, Michael, and daughter, Margaret. CSL hosted the anniversary ceremony in Collins Hall, June 1.

The Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership was formally established June 19, 1992, in response to the Chief of Staff of the Army's decision to expand the use of simulation and wargaming at the strategic and operational levels of the U.S. Army. It's a mission that has been executed, and enhanced, thanks to planning forethought about a facility and staff that could flex to meet the fundamental mission while evolving how to do so.

CSL filled a critical strategic gap identified by three successive Army Chiefs of Staff, generals Carl E.

Vuono, Gordon Sullivan, and Dennis J. Reimer. The gap was the Army's inability to codify an education experience for senior leaders that melded experiential learning with theory and doctrine. They further directed that wargaming and simulation would be the medium to galvanize strategic thought and debate, establishing CSL as the Army's Strategic Wargaming Center. Vuono sent his regards to the CSL alumni and professional colleagues.

"Through your imaginative and innovative programs, you have helped forge a new generation of strategists who are uniquely capable of absorbing the experience-based lessons you have presented and forging them into new paradigms of thought in an age of great challenge and change.

"You have exceeded all the expectations that we had for the center at its conception during my tenure as Army Chief of Staff," he wrote in a 25th anniversary greeting.

In his message, Reimer called CSL an important and strategic addition to the Army learning system. "We had a window of opportunity and made the right decision.... You all have done a wonderful job of helping the Army to understand the role of strategic leadership and I, and many others, deeply appreciate all you have done," said Reimer.

Today, CSL integrates its missions with the USAWC School of Strategic Landpower and other war college institutes to continue to be the resource of choice for developing, testing, and reporting on emerging strategic issues, and educating the Army's senior leaders, from Colonels through Lieutenant Generals.

CSL opened its doors to employees from across the post, explaining how a game becomes a learning tool for strategic decision-making.

"We get leaders in a position to make decisions and experience the consequences of those decisions," said Col. Ken Gilliam, who has guided a series of "games" about mobilizing the Total Army in an example of CSL's ability to test assumptions against likely, future scenarios." Leaders can react to an evolving scenario that the U.S. may encounter, and consider the potential political, military and economic effects. When current Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley gave to the Army War College authority and responsibility for the Army's general officer education program, the decision recognized the value of strategic education skills inherent in CSL. CSL executes the four core general officer courses, ASEP-Basic, Advanced, Senior and Transitional and as well as the Combined/Joint Force Land Component Commander Course as a partner with the USAWC Army Strategic Education Program.

Discussions about CSL intertwine with comments about its building, Collins Hall, dedicated in July 1994. Named in honor of Gen. J. Lawton 'Lightning Joe' Collins, this multi-faceted 155,000-square foot facility provides both CSL and the US Army War College with a learning center, a laboratory, a wargaming center, and a conferencing facility.

Collins' daughter, Nancy Collins Rubino represented her father, accompanied by husband, Michael, and daughter Margaret.

"The ceremony was brief, but meaningful," noted Bob Wade, a relative newcomer to the Collins Hall staff. Present for the ceremony were several staff members who have been with CSL since its beginnings. While 'plank holders' is a term normally used to designate individuals who are members of the first crew to take a ship to sea, Beckert borrowed the term to describe current staff members Robert

Chicchi, Eddie Cook, Ritchie Dion, James Kievit, Wendy LeBlank, Mark McKamey, Barbara Mountz, Darlene Pittenger, Barbara Swope and Vincent Walters.

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