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CARLISLE, Pa. (August 22, 2017) – Deployments are hard for both service members and their families, which is why the Army War College sponsors a unique Family Readiness Group to ensure service members can know their families benefit from mutual family support and command commitment to their well-being.

(From Left to Right) Dr. Latinia Shell, Bridget Sullivan, Martha Kem and Sharon Haseman discuss counseling services offered through Army Community Services at Carlisle Barracks. Shell was introduced to the Blue Star Seminar spouses during a planning meeting and luncheon held for the Blue Star Seminar at the Delaney Field Clubhouse Tuesday.

The Blue Star Seminar met Tuesday at the Delaney Field Clubhouse for a luncheon and meeting to plan out their upcoming year, and to enjoy the valued support and camaraderie of friends. Recreating the seminar camaraderie of the war college experience, the Blue Star Seminar is the command-sponsored family readiness group for spouses of recent graduates and faculty who are deployed.

The 18 families in this year's Blue Star Seminar include 11 local families and 7 geographically remote families who benefit from a support network and community connections. The war college integrates the seminar in all its special events and programs as evidenced by the Blue Star spouses' fourth place finish in the recent "boatyard wars," the team-developing challenge during the Class of 2018 Welcome Picnic.

Sharon Haseman was a blue-star seminar member last year when her husband served in Afghanistan; she now acts as a co-advisor to the group. She spoke to the importance of the support she received from other War College families, whose soldiers were also deployed, and to the difference that support can make throughout a deployment. "It's important to stay connected to your spouse as much as possible during deployment, but to remember the community is here to support you, and the Blue Star Seminar represents that in a fantastic way," she said.

"There really is a ton of support here at the war college for families when your husbands are deployed," said Bridget Sullivan, co-leader of Blue Star Seminar.

"The great thing about the Blue Star is the camaraderie and support system, because most of us have been through it before, so we all kind ... know the ropes of deployment, but you still need to have that support group and the friends to help you get through it," she Sullivan.

USAWC Deputy Commandant Col. Ken Adgie joined Martha Kem, spouse of Commandant Maj. Gen. John Kem, to offer the support of the command group, and a few points of advice and encouragement.

"The key is always communication, both from the command side down to the families, or from the families back up," said Adgie.

Kem talked about how important the support networks she had during her husband's deployments were to her, and how happy she is to support the Blue Star Seminar. "I think we're going to have a lot of fun together, and I'm looking forward to the year with you," she said.

Seven families of the Blue Star Seminar live near college campuses around the country. Their student-spouses were Army War College Fellows and completed their year of studies at a partner universities throughout the country.