

International Fellows bring their experiences to the Army War College

By Robert Martin, USAWC Public Affairs Specialist 26 June 2020



Army War College Provost James Breckenridge stands with members of the academic preparatory class after their graduation, June 19, 2020.



Lt. Col. Saminou Mani from the Niger Special Forces stands with USAWC Provost James Breckenridge after his graduation from the academic preparatory course, June 19, 2020



Lt. Col. Mohamed Habaneh from Djibouti's presidential guard stands with USAWC Provost James Breckenridge after his graduation from the academic preparatory course, June 19, 2020.

CARLISLE, Pa. (June 19, 2020) – Eight international fellows graduated from the 10 week USAWC's academic preparatory course here, now more prepared for graduate-level seminar discussion, research, and academic writing as students in the resident class of 2021. These senior officers will be members of the Army War College Class of 2021, representing Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mali, Mongolia, Niger, Senegal, and Vietnam.

These officers were already in the United States when COVID-19-related travel restrictions locked out the full complement of 40 students, normal to the highly-regarded Academic Preparatory Course.

“The overarching goal is to prepare them to succeed academically in completing a demanding USAWC resident course through teaching and practice in the four language skills -- reading, writing, listening, speaking. Familiarization with U.S. academic learning including the writing and

research process will achieve this goal,” said APC director Jeremy Beussink.

Instructors Tom Marchi and Gilda Hein each led a student group of only 4 students each in classrooms selected to enable social distancing. All classroom instruction, reading, discussion, and lecture is in English, to hone understanding, experience, and confidence in English-based national security studies.

The course serves as well to help prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language. International students must pass this test with an 83% to be eligible for the master’s degree in Strategic Studies.

“My primary goal is to get the international fellows to a knowledgeable and functional level on writing and the ability to express themselves in good, clear English,” said Marchi. “In the writing, I concentrate on fundamental sentence structure and grammar skills, composition, and punctuation.”

“If I can build a logical progression of thought from the beginning to the end of a paragraph, then one paragraph to the next, [in] a combination of paragraphs they will be able to achieve a well-flowing essay or research paper.”

“I want them to have confidence, knowledge, and be comfortable because their writing will reflect that and be more interesting to read,” said Marchi.

This year the War College added to the curriculum. Students would specifically and precisely give their position about a plan or policy to a leader. The students were teamed up in pairs from each class to write an integrated research project. IFs picked their topic and presented both in written form and presented a three-minute video using the “One button studio.”

“As an international fellow I will be able to share my experiences as a Special Forces officer,” said Lt. Col. Saminou Mani from Niger. “Also, the security challenges I faced in the sub-region of West African and how my country handles the fighting in the field.”

“You can see it from America but it’s so far, we are living it.”

“I look forward to my next year here -- meeting more people, interacting, and discussing issues so I can know the American people, to not only share our military experiences but know each other as human beings,” said Mani.

“We live in one world and knowing each other is one of the best things we can do,” said Lt. Col. Mohamed Habaneh from Djibouti.

“The majority of international fellows that come here will become leaders in their country. Building relationships with country leaders and being able to communicate with them directly allows us to intervene to lessen the trouble spots in our world” said Habaneh.

By July 6, the eight APC students will be joined by 63 other international fellows that make up this year’s class. Due to the precautions mandated by the Covid19 pandemic, this year’s class of 76 will complete in-processing and orientation that will be very different than past years.

Once they arrive on Carlisle Barracks they will be screened by Dunham Clinic medical personnel and then be placed on a restricted travel protocol for 14 days. Once that period have passed the students will be tested for Covid19.

The international fellows program office is planning to have an abbreviated Orientation Course starting July 20, then on the 31st the students will be officially handed over to their respective seminars.

This year class has 76 international fellows from 71 different countries:

Albania; Algeria; Argentina; Bangladesh; Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Croatia; Croatia; Czech Republic; Czech Republic; Denmark; Djibouti; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Estonia; Ethiopia; Georgia; Germany; Ghana; Greece; Guatemala; India; Indonesia; Iraq; Israel; Italy; Japan; Jordan; Kenya; Korea; Kuwait; Lebanon; Lithuania; Malaysia; Mali; Mexico; Mongolia; Morocco; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Niger; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Oman; Pakistan; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Romania; Rwanda; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Taiwan; Tanzania; Thailand; Tunisia; Turkey; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; Vietnam