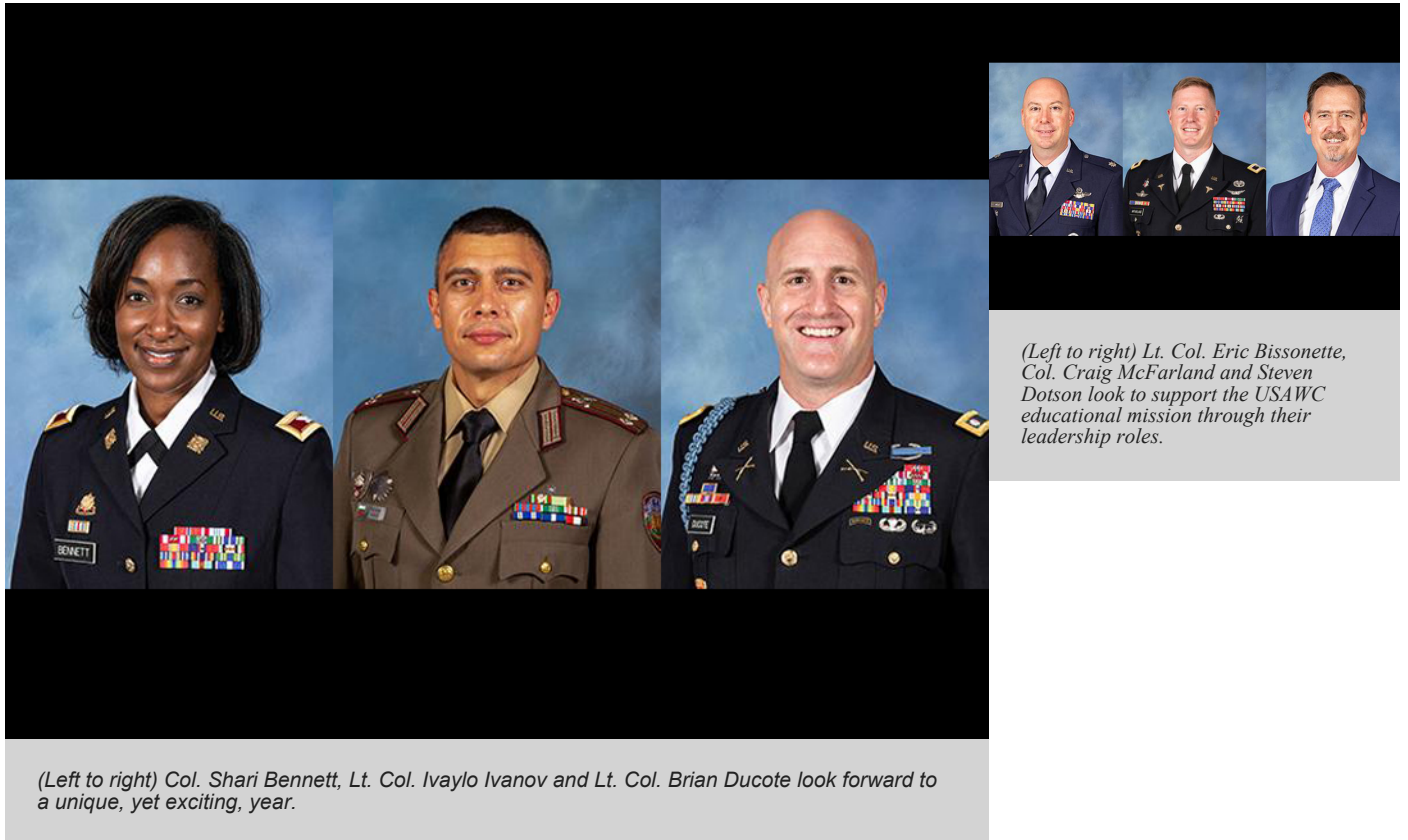


Get to know USAWC student leaders for Resident Class of 2021

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 12 September 2020



With the start of every academic year at the US Army War College, a new student leadership team is voted in as the student council.

Those who attend the war college extends beyond the resident class of 365 students. This year, 391 students attend through the Distance Education Program. They select their own student leadership. An article highlighting those individuals will be released at another time. There are 79 USAWC Fellows for this academic year.

This piece introduces the resident class leadership.

Col. Shari Bennett, this year's class president, was previously the Chief of Sustainment, G4, for 7th Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis McChord. "I

understand the rigors of this course and realize this year will push me harder than any previous professional military education in order to expand my critical thinking skills and prepare me to serve as a strategic leader in the Army.” Bennett went on to set the tone for the year. “Flexibility and communication at all levels is key in this ever-changing environment,” said Bennett. “I plan to foster an environment of transparency, open communication and collaboration with AWC Command leadership and our student leaders.”

Bulgarian Fellow Lt. Col. Ivaylo Ivanov is the International Fellows’ president. Prior to his arrival at Carlisle Barracks, he was assigned as the Commander of the 42nd Mechanized Battalion. Ivanov looks to holistically embrace this opportunity. “This is a challenge for me, but also an opportunity,” said Ivanov. Reinforcing an Army line of effort, he identified his priority. “It’s all about the people,” said Ivanov. “It is a great opportunity that will facilitate further engagements after I graduate from here, this is the most important thing for me.”

Lt. Col. Brian Ducote served as the Deputy Brigade commander for 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade out of Fort Benning, GA. He is currently serving as the class vice president. “I sincerely believe this will be a great time to reflect and mature both personally and professionally,” said Ducote. He went on to explain how this specific leadership role will enhance his personal and professional growth. “Anytime I have an opportunity to serve and support others, I grow. “I know that volunteering to serve as the vice president gives me another opportunity to work on behalf of others”

Air Force Lt. Col. Eric Bissonette is secretary of this year’s student council. Prior to arriving at Carlisle Barracks, he commanded the Air Force’s only Undergraduate Remotely Piloted Aircraft Training Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. “Attending Army War College is a unique opportunity for anyone, but it is an exceptionally unique honor for a member of a sister service,” said Bissonette. “I look forward to developing new friendships and learning more about how the Army and Air Force missions align and support a joint culture.”

Col. Craig McFarland represents the 31 Reserve and 28 National Guard resident students. In his last assignment, McFarland was the Command Surgeon at the headquarters of the Army Reserve Medical Command as

the Command Surgeon. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to really dive into important topics, having time to read deeply, and learn from dialogue with all the impressive people I see here, said McFarland.

Representing the civilian students in the class Steven Dotson is the Previously, the retired Marine served on the HQDA staff as the Deputy Chief of the Army G-4's Logistics Operations Center in the Pentagon. "As a Department of the Army Civilian, this is a unique opportunity for me to hone top-tier competencies and professional effectiveness for future service supporting the missions of the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense," said Dotson. He went on to identify the unique opportunities this leadership role affords. "I am fortunate to have the opportunity to expand my relationships beyond my designated seminar and also help contribute to the overall execution of this academic year," said Dotson.