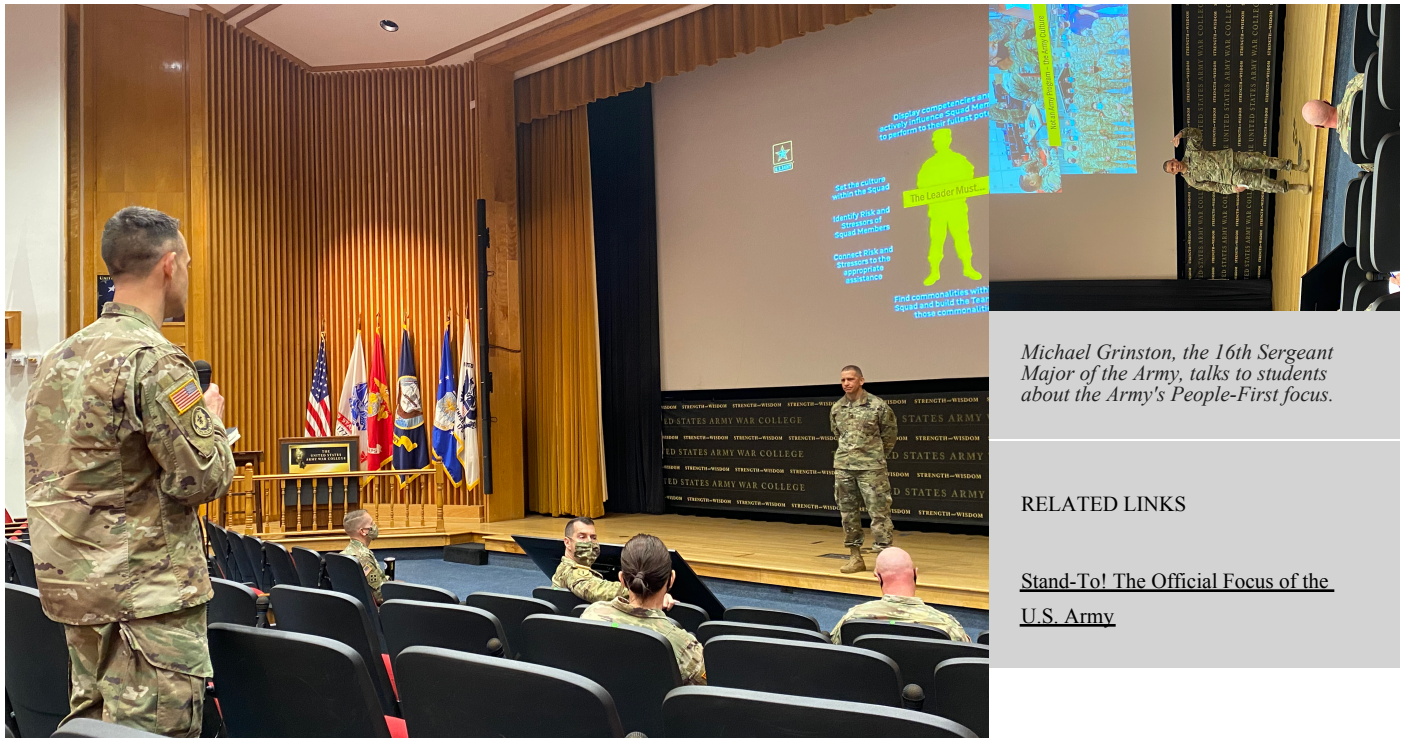


## Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston talks to students about the Army's focus on People-First

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 26 March 2021



*Michael Grinston, the 16th Sergeant Major of the Army, talks to students about the Army's People-First focus.*

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*Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston engages with students during the question and answer portion of his presentation on March 25, 2021.*

Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston focused on the Army's focus on People-First is a focus on Readiness. He spoke to the USAWC class of 2021 in a hybrid presentation – with some students in person in Bliss Hall and some interacting on a virtual platform.

Referring two questions he's received from across the force, he clarified that a people-first focus is key to the readiness priority; it's not an either-or situation and this audience among others can make it a reality. You have to work from the ground up, taking care of all the people in your squad up through the ranks, he said.

Posing the question, "Who is in your squad?" he encouraged students to expand their definition of the squad. It is not just infantry men/women but

also seminar mates, co-workers and most importantly family, said Grinston. “Your squad” is those who know you personally and work with you day in and day out.

Leaders engaging those they lead is another pillar of this vision, he said.

Student Lt. Col. Rachael Hoagland confirmed that he puts that principle into practice, referring to a one-on-one discussion they had after the formal presentation.

“When there is a real concern, he took the time to listen, said Hoagland. “It’s amazing that someone at that level who is that busy took the time to meet with me.”

Building a cohesive team is another crucial element to this perspective of readiness through a people-first focus, he said. Other elements of a cohesive team include -- highly trained soldiers, discipline, and fitness across mental, physical and social domains.

“It was a fantastic opportunity to have the senior enlisted member come to talk to students who will go on to lead in an enlisted capacity,” said Hoagland. It was invaluable to hear him talk about where the Army is, and where it’s going, she added.