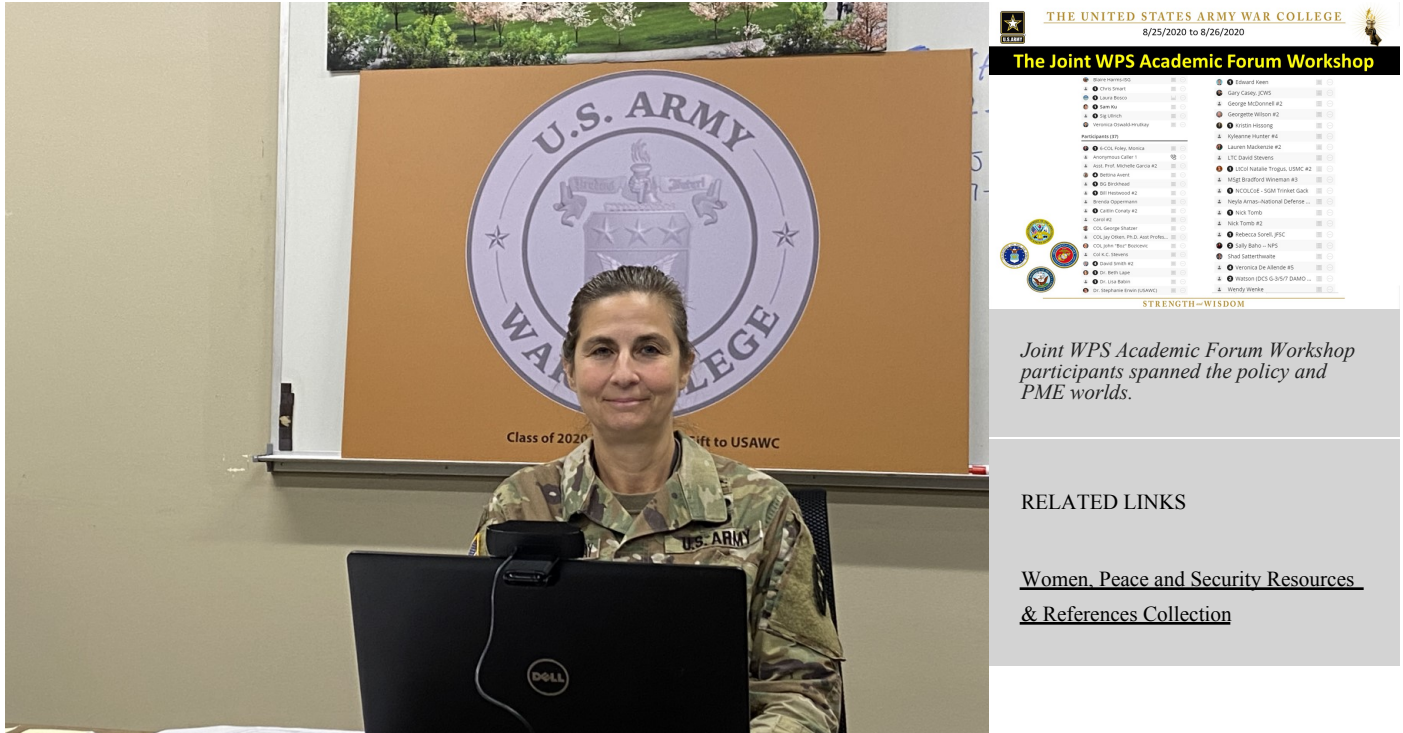


# USAWC sponsors academic workshop on Women in Peace & Security

By Public Affairs Office 26 August 2020



The image shows a woman in a U.S. Army uniform sitting at a desk with a laptop. Behind her is a large banner with the U.S. Army War College logo. To the right of the woman is a slide titled "The Joint WPS Academic Forum Workshop" from August 25, 2020, to August 26, 2020. The slide lists numerous participants from various military and academic organizations. Below the list, it states "Joint WPS Academic Forum Workshop participants spanned the policy and PME worlds." and "RELATED LINKS" with a link to "Women, Peace and Security Resources & References Collection".

*USAWC WPS lead Col. Veronica Oswald-Hrutkay guided the virtual Women, Peace and Security Academic Workshop from a war college seminar. USAWC sponsored the 1st annual event, Aug 25-26, 2020.*

- **USAWC Commandant addresses DoD equities in Women, Peace and Security**
- **USAWC’s WPS lead’s war college education motivated and guided her work with WPS**
- **PME representatives share best practices for WPS integration**

As an Army critical care nurse, Col. Veronica Oswald- Hrutkay has instructed at the Army Trauma Training Center and deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm; UN Protection Force Mission Provide Promise in Zagreb, Croatia; and Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was always about saving lives – then, and now at the strategic level of human security, said the Army War College lead for Women, Peace and Security.

The first of a planned annual series, the Women, Peace, and Security Joint Academic Forum Workshop is a two-day virtual collaboration among those in planning and policy roles and those in professional military education. For two days, Aug. 25 – 26, 2020, the participants focused on opportunities within PME to integrate WPS principles into the strategic mindedness of faculty and student.

“Within the Defense Department, WPS actions are force multipliers,” said U.S. Army War College Commandant Maj. Gen. Steve Maranian, opening the workshop.

“A diverse and innovative fighting force will be a more lethal force,” he said. “Commitment of the U.S. military to human rights and women’s empowerment will enhance interoperability and certainly make the United States an international partner of choice. DoD is implementing WPS concepts across its policies, plans, doctrine, training, education, operations, and exercises – and encouraging partner nations to do the same.

“Education is at the forefront of this important initiative – because education is a powerful tool for understanding and for change,” he said. The leadership skills and attributes needed at the highest levels of advisory, planning and command roles are exactly the skills and attributes we need to implement WPS throughout the Joint Force.

“Logically, the smart way forward is to enlarge and enhance the diversity of skills, knowledge, experience and judgment applied to collaborative problem solving. This is how the U.S. military will increase meaningful participation of women in preventing, mediating, and resolving conflict -- and in countering terrorism.

“The underlying idea [of WPS] is remarkably and disarmingly simple,” he said. “Empowering women will contribute to America’s competitive advantage. It’s the right thing to do and the smart thing to do.”

Speakers in the first panel, “What is WPS and why does it matter?” echoed a point made by Maranian, that strategic leader education guides leaders to develop habits of the mind.

Air War College Professor Kristin Hissong pointed out the opportunities in shifting mental habits formed by culture. Many of the things we associate as masculine or feminine are culturally informed, she said; recognizing the role of culture is a step toward understanding that WPS can thrive in any situation for international partners.

Dr. Clair Metelits, Marine Corps University professor, noted that research shows a relationship between gender equality and conflict – not a causal relationship but one that tends to legitimize violence. Conversely, research shows that women’s participation in peace negotiations increases the likelihood that a peace agreement will endure, although female negotiators are few.

She identified five broad reasons, based in research literature, for including women in security --

- Women take collaborative approaches, including building coalitions across ethnic and religious lines in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Women’s success in coalition building can be explained by the fact that they are more likely to dismiss the hierarchy related to the oppression of the less powerful by the more powerful, she said.
- Women are honest brokers, often operating outside power structures.
- Women work in different sectors of the community; social roles enable access to information and community elements that men do not share.
- Women broaden the scope of negotiations by raising issues in conflict that go beyond military action in standard negotiations -- addressing legal reform, healthcare, education, and reconstitution of public institutions, for example, which become key elements of recovering from conflict.
- Women, themselves, are resources.

“Not just the right thing to do, it makes us better and stronger,” suggested one participant about WPS in response to the first panel of speakers.

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Oswald-Hrutkay’s experience suggests the power of education to look through new lenses and understand with new depth. “I was passionate about the importance of engaging women in peace-making, inspired by an elective with Bill Flavin,” she said about her own experience in the Army War College class of 2012.

Peacekeeping has had personal significance because of the peacekeeping mission she supported in Zagreb, she said. “The war college opened my eyes to the strategic landscape,” she said. “I recognized the influence that women can have within the security environment – and the risk if we don’t consider it.”

In her civilian capacity, the Army Reserve officer received a human rights award from the Boulder County Chapter of the UN Association of USA, honoring her work to establish a collaborative task force of non-profit organizations advancing the global effort to eliminate discrimination against women. After the war college, she said, “I decided to broaden myself

professionally by seeking out the UNA, joining the UNA Association, serving on two two boards of the UNA, and ended up as the 7-state Rocky Mountain chapter coordinator for UNA.”

Personal and professional came together when her assignment to the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, at Carlisle, Pa., coincided with the Army’s move to task PKSOI as the Army lead for WPS. When PKSOI was realigned with the Combined Arms Center last year, she was reassigned to maintain the momentum for WPS principles within the Army War College.

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The workshop examined DoD policy and Services’ strategies and explored best practices in PME that can enable strategic mindedness attuned to WPS opportunity. Shared practices include introducing WPS principles in faculty development, strategic-level academic exercises, electives, research and publication, and student-driven communities of interest.

There are so many integration points across the curriculum, noted one participant – a sentiment that drove discussion, assessments, and brainstorming during the second day. Working groups proposed next steps for integrating gender and WPS into PME institutions, e.g., integration into wargaming and exercises.

Their assessments were informed by the presentation about gender analysis and women’s leadership, offered by Dr. Dyan Mazurana, professor at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Participating institutions, in addition to the Army War College, included the Air War College, Naval War College, National Defense University, Navy Postgraduate School, Marine Corps University as well as the Army Command and Staff College, Joint Forces Staff College, Joint Special Operations University, Army University, and Air Force Academy. Representatives of the Naval Postgraduate School and the Institute for Security Governance spoke primarily about existing courses that integrate WPS concepts in courses offered to partner nations, e.g., Women in Defense and Security Decision-making.

Ultimately, the workshop reflected the collaborative principles that underscore DoD equities in Women in Peace and Security.