

## War College partners with middle school students to celebrate Black History

By Robert Martin USAWC PAO 24 February 2020



All the essay winners along with Maj. Gen. Kem the commandant of the Army War College and Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Hummel and the Army War College student speakers



Cole Klein from Big Springs Middle School signs his essay



Army War College Commandant Maj. Gen. John Kem stands with Myukah Busby from Lambertson Middle School and resident students Col. Tony Dedmond and Lt. Col. Alexia Fields

Recognizing Black History Month, the Army War College celebrated the talent of 21 area students for their essays about the struggle for Black Americans' voting rights, and about famous Black Americans. The students wrote about the theme, "African Americans and the Vote" in a college-sponsored regional essay contest.

The guest speakers were three Army War College residents' students: Col. Tony Dedmond, Lt. Col. Alexia Fields and Col. Larry McCord

Dedmond led off the presentation with a quick look back at his family, the struggles African Americans in Arkansas under the suppressive Jim Crow laws. His families move half-way across the nation to Washington State only to find that equality had alluded them again. He talked how his father



Chase Tubs from Eagle View Middle School stands with his essay



excelled in an unsegregated High School because there was only one in their town and his father becoming the first African American from the state of Washington nominated to attend West Point.

“Having civil liberties and the right to vote is not enough,” said Dedmond. “We all have to ensure that we maximize our educational opportunities. So, when the time comes to choose the people that make the laws, that will change our lives and the world we live in, that we are smart enough not to vote for someone just because they look like us or dress like us. But, because they represent the ideas, morality, and sensibilities of someone that will treat everyone with dignity and respect. That is what black history has taught me the most – be the change that you want to be, through education and positive action.

Lt. Col. Fields directed her comment to the essay winners

“As I sit here and looking at all of your faces, I think of my children,” said Fields. “My children are very young, so they are following in your footsteps. I want them to grow up in this world, knowing they have you as examples to look up to. So be a good example, be kind, and be generous of spirit because that’s how you get to be the change. That’s how you get to be that better person that makes this world a better place to live,” she said.

Col. McCord spoke last and congratulated the essay winners on their effort to tell a story of African American's struggles.

“All of your essays tell a story. Your essays are indeed a tribute to generations of African Americans, to women and men that struggled through adversity to achieve full citizenry in our great nation,” said McCord, Army War College student and guest speaker.

“I had the opportunity to read all 21 essays ... and I can’t express the impact that your essays had on me,” said McCord. “Thank you for expressing your ideas about our right as citizens of the United States to express our ideas and concerns and ensure all American people can participate in good government,” he said.

"My purpose of my remarks today are to join in the commemoration of the considerable achievements and contributions of African Americans to our great nation, "said McCord. "2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the 15th amendment which gave black men the right to vote in 1870 after the Civil War. This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment which granted the right to vote to all women. The passage of these amendments to the Constitution were actually two incredibly important



*Pedro Camacho from Wilson Middle school receives his certificate of appreciation from Maj. Gen. John Kem Commandant of the Army War College next to Camacho are Lt. Col. Alexia Fields, Col. Tony Dedmond and Col. Larry McCord.*

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elements in a long journey of African Americans to share in the promise of the constitution of the United States," he said.

Honored students included two whose essays were selected were singled out by judges of three: Sophia Goss from Mechanicsburg Middle School and Morgan Coleman, Saint Patrick's School.

"I decided to do something on Benjamin O. Davis Jr.," said Coleman, an 8th grader. "I feel he is not talked about very much even though he moved African Americans along to where they are today in politics and government. Davis never listened to anyone that told him he could not do something. Davis just went and did it anyway. This is what drew me to him -- he knew what he wanted and that was very inspiring to me," she said.

From Wilson Middle SchoolThe 21 honored students represented Wilson, Lamberton

Representing Carlisle Area School District were –

Pedro Camacho and Jake Kiesow -- Wilson Middle School, Carlisle

Emily Newill and Aroostine Lively and Mykah Busby – Lamberton Middle School, Carlisle

Sadie Robeson and Riya Srinivas and Tili Dendukuri and Chase Tubbs – Eagle View Middle School, Cumberland Valley

Christina Bunker and Tawona Chiwaka and Krish Mittal - Mountain View MS, Cumberland Valley

Mya Borgel and Sophia Goss and Anika Teru -- Mechanicsburg MS, Mechanicsburg

Caroline Foster and Cole Klein and Jane Patterson -- Big Spring MS, Big Spring

Morgan Coleman and Caedan Moffatt and Megan Posey – Saint Patrick School

Each February, Black History Month brings special attention to the contributions African Americans make every month, every day, to our nation. The U.S. Army recognizes the contributions black soldiers made in the past and continue to make today.

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