

## Perna to USAWC graduates: Our task, purpose is in support of warfighters

By Curt Keester 13 June 2018



Gen. Gustave Perna, Commander of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, marked the completion of 10 months master's level Strategic Studies when he spoke at a ceremony on the parade grounds of historic Carlisle Barracks, June 8, 2018.



Gen. Gustave Perna, Commander of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, addresses a crowd of students, families and friends of nearly 400 future strategic leaders who graduated from the United States Army War College, June 8, 2018.



The 378 graduates of the Strategic Studies program represent the Total Force of the U.S. Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard; federal agencies associated with national security; and 76 allied and partner nations around the world.

**CARLISLE, Pa. (June 8, 2018)** – Families, friends, faculty members, and the commanding general of Army Materiel Command honored today the achievements of a group of nearly 400 future strategic leaders graduating from the United States Army War College.

Gen. Gustave Perna, Commander of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, referred in his remarks to generals Pershing, Eisenhower, and Schwarzkopf as role models for having prepared with urgency for an unknown future while at the war college and thereafter. Perna's salute to the class marked the completion of 10 months master's level Strategic Studies at a ceremony on the parade grounds of historic Carlisle Barracks.

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The 378 graduates of the graduate educational program in Strategic Studies represent the Total Force of the U.S. Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard; federal agencies associated with national security; and 76 allied and partner nations around the world. Several students accepted additional honors for their writing, public speaking or leadership achievements during the academic year.

Commandant Maj. Gen. John Kem told the graduates he was privileged to have served as their commandant and to have known them.

“Three hundred and six days ago ... I welcomed you to the Army War College and challenged you to find your gaps, whether personal or professional,” said Kem. “Break out of the toolbox that has made you successful to this point in the tactical and operational realm to get you here and make you successful.... Build new tools to get ready for the future, to get ready for the next challenges as strategic leaders, strategic advisors and, very importantly, as stewards of our profession.”

Kem introduced graduation speaker Gen. Gustave Perna, responsible for the Army’s primary logistics and sustainment command, ensuring the best-equipped and sustained fighting force in the world.

Perna reminded the graduates that this year of study matters because what they will do for the nation matters.

"The requirements --whether you go to command, or you work on a higher staff -- will require every bit and more of what you learned this last year," he said."It will force you to reach into the depth of your knowledge and intellect. It will require you to assess and make recommendations quickly and responsibly for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines that are under your command.This is an unprecedented responsibility.

"And, only in our profession, the profession of arms, do we self-educate continuously over time. It is because of this, I would argue we are the greatest at what we do," said Perna.

The Army War College was created before World War I was on the horizon, yet, “Gen. Pershing was a student here in 1904, and 14 years later would lead 1.2 million Soldiers in what was deemed the Great War,” he said.

"We didn’t realize in 1943 that we would be in the midst of world war against Germany, Italy and Japan, but we did have Dwight D. Eisenhower as a student here in 1928.We didn’t know that in 1990 we were going to be

huddled in Kuwait getting ready to cross the border into Iraq ... but in 1978 we did have Gen. Schwarzkopf here as a student.

"We did not know, yet prepared -- thanks to the leaders who had the vision to understand the responsibility ... to have not only well-educated leaders, but leaders who know how to think; who can be innovative, agile, and adaptive; who will understand problems, develop solutions, assess risk, make recommendations.

"This is what this institution is about. This why we're here. This is why you spent 306 days here. Because we don't know what our future holds for us," said Perna.

Several students echoed his emphasis on applying this education in their future responsibilities.

Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Augustine, who will next work with Jordanian Armed Forces, expects to apply much of the curriculum. Defense management and strategic thinking will be particularly relevant to working with allies and partners, he said.

Army Lt. Col. Matthew Olson, force management officer for the Army, said he had been impressed by the collaborative environment among students, and how that supported his learning. "What I'll apply in the future will be a greater strategic insight on how things work at the enterprise level and how [DoD] systems fit together."

"The course work on relationships and team work is something I will carry forward," said Army Lt. Col. Anne-Marie Wiersgalla, a 21-year Army Signal Officer, headed to the Pentagon to serve in the Army's Chief Information Office/G6.

Adding to the richness of the ceremony, Caleigh Crisafulli sang the national anthem. The daughter of new graduate Army Col. John Crisafulli, she was singled out on the stage by Perna as representative of all the graduates' family members for appreciated support this, and all, years in service to the nation. Elements of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 108th Field Artillery fired an honorary cannon salute on Indian Field. The 78th Army Band from Fort Dix, New Jersey, provided music for the day's ceremony.