

Army Material Commander shares five leadership thoughts

By Robert Martin 28 February 2019



Gen. Gustave Perna discussed his priorities for AMC and five insights on senior leadership with the class of 2019 in Bliss Hall during his visit to the Army War College Feb. 27.

How do we prepare our organizations to “fight tonight?” Attitude, said the commanding general of Army Materiel Command, and understanding what it means to go to war in another country in all-out decisive action against a near-peer competitor.

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Have we done everything we are supposed to do, he asked the students? Do we know how to get our equipment to the battle? When you leave here, you must be ready for what is next, he said. You must hold yourselves accountable for being ready.

... soldiers from the Army. It's about to be you, he said, as he looked across the audience. "You are going to influence. You are going to help us drive to where we are going. You are going to be sent into meetings and have to articulate your general's intent and win the day."

"You must raise your game."

In the body of his remarks, Perna offered his five thoughts on senior leadership, charging the students to reflect on these challenges:

1. The basic five: Mission, Training, Supply, Maintenance and Administration

Operational tempos will only increase, and resources will not keep up. Leaders have to understand the importance of, and be accountable for, the basic five. As leaders, what are we ultimately responsible for, he asked? Our soldiers and their families, he said, but how do we get there? Will be the students' future responsibility.

2. Vision, Time, Resources and Risk

Take time out from the Army's fast pace and think intellectually about where you and where you are going, he urged. Who is responsible for risk, he asked the students? Commanders are responsible for risk, but the presence of risk does not mean you cannot do something. Leaders must learn how to operate with risk.

3. Battle Rhythm

Don't grade yourself on the amount of work you are doing, he said. Ask yourself instead, how are you going to execute the battle rhythm and influence those around you?

4. Uncomfortable - personally and professionally

If you are unwilling to be uncomfortable personally and professionally, you will not be able to move forward, he said. Some of you will be good at something, but I need you to be good at everything.

5. Understand How to Influence

Learn how to get involved in the decision cycle, he said. Learn how to influence and how to participate, or you will not understand why your course of action wasn't chosen.
