

TRADOC Commander emphasizes mission command

By Curt Keester 25 February 2019



Gen. Stephen Townsend, Commanding General, TRADOC, discussed mission command, TRADOC priorities and senior leader communication with the joint student body of the Army War College in Bliss Hall Feb. 28, 2019.

CARLISLE, Pa. (Feb. 28, 2019) – The commanding general of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command renewed emphasis on mission command as he spoke to the urgency of readiness for a fight with a near-peer competitor.

Gen. Stephen Townsend discussed the six principles of mission command with the joint student body of the War College in Bliss Hall Feb. 28. Mission command depends on a climate of cohesive teams built on trust, mission orders that tell subordinates what to do but not exactly how to do it, a clear commander's intent, shared understanding of what must be accomplished, exercise of disciplined initiative, and acceptance of risk, he said.

Townsend's topic resonated with Lt. Col. Dennis Stitt, an Idaho National Guardsman. "In an effort to improve our organization for the state in the

future, our current adjutant general's message is the same, get back to a mission command leadership style.”

Townsend discussed the top priorities he lays out to his commanders and staff: accessions, initial entry training, mission command, reform and combat fitness. He encouraged students to develop their own list of five priorities and said this will help focus and organize their lives and energy.

“He mentioned that TRADOC, as an organization, doesn't have any internal equity in the things they do. Everything they do is to support the Army,” said Chap (Lt. Col.) Jacob Scott. “[For] everything his organization is focused on, the entire Army is his customer. That's who he supports, and as a chaplain, I appreciate that. That's a very selfless way to look at what your vocation is, what you're given to do.”

During the question-and-answer exchange, Townsend singled out a single demand for leaders. Communication skill is critical to leadership, he said, necessary to influence and persuade others and advance future priorities. Student questions explored TRADOC's relationship to the Army Futures Command, today's recruiting challenges, and the Army's new Combat Fitness Test. The engagement links to the students' course in Defense Management.