

Industry Day at the Army War College – Modernization, Acquisition and Soldier Readiness

By Robert Martin 27 February 2019



(left to right) Jeffrey White, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, Andrew Hove, AM General and Keith Hudson, Perkins Technical Service sit with Col. Bob Bradford, USAWC, during the panel session of industry day.



Mr. Stefan Blomgren, Product Manager for munitions, Weapons systems for BAE systems Sweden talks with Seminar 18 during industry days, Mr. Blomgren was the only international executive to be invited to the USAWC industry day event.

Defense industry representatives filled the halls and seminar rooms of Root Hall Tuesday as the Army War College hosted its annual Industry Day, Feb. 26. The Morning began with three keynote speakers who represented large defense corporations, small business, and the Army.

“This year's theme, 'The critical role of the defense industrial base in providing warfighter capabilities,' emphasizes the important relationship between government and industry,” said Maj. Gen. John Kem the Commandant of the Army War College. “For the students in the room, I would tell you, it is an important relationship.”

“The students spend a lot of time this year learning about national strategy, how countries put them together, how we develop and implement policy.

They spend time looking at the national defense strategy, military strategy, national security strategy, how politics comes into play, how diplomacy and information, military and economics come together to support our national interests.”

“They're in the Defense Management Course, which really talks about how we can develop the capabilities to achieve those objectives, and this [industry day] is an important part of it because one of the parts they don't get a close tie-in is how does industry support that effort,” said Kem.

AM General, LLC

The first speaker representing large business was Andrew Hove, President and CEO of AM General, LLC, talked about the critical role of the defense industrial base in providing warfighter capabilities. He asked students to consider three main points. What drives the unique nature of the defense industrial base in the United States? What are the underlying risks to the U.S. industrial base? And, what steps do industry and the military need to take to ensure the health of the defense industrial base and its ability to provide warfighters the equipment and material they need?

He said the U.S. must make sure the U.S. industrial base can provide the warfighting materials needed in the event our allies are unable. He focused on three things he felt were necessary to nurture that capacity in the U.S. When defining the requirements for any warfighting capability, we need to balance the vision of future requirements with the ability to produce something today.

We need to work together to ensure we have an efficient and effective procurement and regulatory system that preserves purchasing power for the warfighter, innovation and capacity, and global competitiveness for the U.S. defense industrial base, he said.

Perkins Technical Service, Inc.

Keith Hudson, Director of Business Development for whose company is fielding radio components to the Army, spoke to the small business perspective. Hudson discussed the challenges of constant advancements in technology and believes the customer drives the requirement, and then we build the capability. At the end of the day, it's for you to be able to see that industry is a partner with the warfighter, he said.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology)

Jeffrey White, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (ALT) and USAWC Class of 2000 graduate, provided the government's side of the relationship with commercial industry through an overview of the Army Acquisition process.

He brought up how the Army is modernizing for tomorrow's fight by investment in the top six priorities, long-range precision fires, air and missile defense, combat vehicles, vertical lift and soldier lethality.

The importance of partnering with the defense industry to build these next-generation Army platforms. White reviewed acquisition reform in the development of new technologies, accelerating testing, and increasing financial accountability.

He also touched on Other Transaction Authority that may be used to engage industry for a broad range of research and prototyping activities. He discussed the changes required to improve Army acquisitions. Some of those improvements are - streamline the acquisition process; expand technological innovation; attract nontraditional companies and remove barriers to entry and bureaucracy.

After the presentations students returned to their seminars for small-group discussions, each joined by an experienced industry representative. Industry Day provides a forum for students to gain a better understanding of the military-industrial relationship, the Army requirements and capabilities development process, and acquisition processes.