

National Commission on military, national, public service starts the conversation at the Army War College

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The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Services started its multi-state listening tour with military students of the US Army War College, today.

The student body of the U.S. Army War College epitomizes the public service that the commission intends to study and encourage. On average, US military students have served in the Armed Forces for 22 years. At their sides in the USAWC graduate studies are senior civilian members of federal agencies engaged in national security pursuits, e.g., the State, Defense, Homeland Security departments, among others.

The visit to Carlisle preceded the commission's first public conversation scheduled for Feb. 22-23 in Harrisburg, Pa. Members of the American public have been invited to offer opinions and observations and motivations, incentives, barriers, and benefits of public service. The commission website is open for submissions at www.inspire2serve.gov or www.facebook.com/Inspire2ServeUS.

"We are a nation built on service," said Dr. Joseph Heck, who chairs the commission and thanked the students who volunteered to lend their insights. Heck is a 2006 graduate of the U.S. Army War College, and knows well the history of public service at Carlisle Barracks, since 1757.

“Service helps define who we are as a nation and our collective sense of civic engagement and responsibility.” From Benjamin Franklin’s first volunteer organization of firefighters and the volunteers who fought in the American Revolution, service has been a part of the American character. Many presidents have reinforced the American service ethic with new programs, said Heck, listing the Civilian Conservation Corps, Peace Corps, VISTA, National Points of Light, AmeriCorps, among others.

The commission members met with almost 40 war college students who offered exceptional feedback to the committee, exploring three themes in three small forums.

The intent, said Heck, is to listen and learn from those who serve and those who don’t, and to move toward a catalyst to reenergize public service in all of its aspects. The discussions explored the value of the Selective Service; propensity to serve in military, national and public service; ways to inspire and grow the ethos of service.

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service was created as a two-year federal agency to review the military selective service process and consider methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service. The 11-member commission plans to visit locations across the nation to hear from the public, and to develop a report for Congress, the President, and the American people, due by March 2020.

The commission brings together national leaders with diverse experiences in the military, government, private, and nonprofit sectors. It is chaired by Dr. Joseph Heck, Brigadier General in the U.S. Army Reserve and former Member of Congress from Nevada. Debra Wada, former Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and Mark Gearan, former Director of the Peace Corps, serve as Vice Chairs. A full list of Commissioners and their biographies can be found [here](#).

"It's an important topic and we're pleased to be able to help," said Deputy Commandant Col. Ken Adgie. He and Provost Dr. Jim Breckenridge met with commission members before the student forums, and offered further assistance in research by the Army Heritage and Education Center.