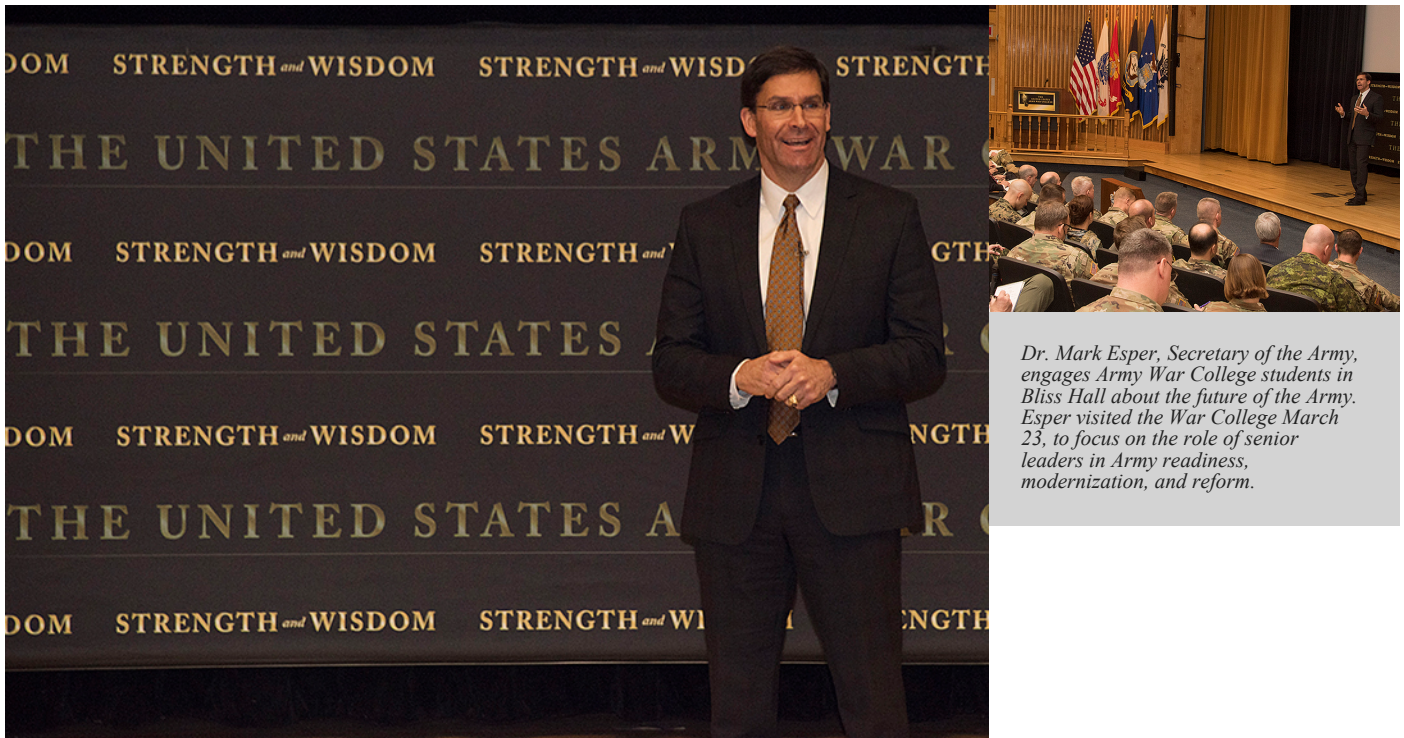


## Secretary of the Army visits Army War College

By Curt Keester 26 March 2018



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*Dr. Mark Esper, Secretary of the Army, visited the War College March 23, to focus on the role of senior leaders in Army readiness, modernization, and reform. During Esper's visit he discussed the future of the Army with the senior service war college*

CARLISLE, Pa. (March 23, 2018) -- Four months after assuming responsibility, the Secretary of the Army visited the Army War College to focus on the role of senior leaders in Army readiness, modernization, and reform.

Dr. Mark Esper engaged USAWC students in Bliss Hall about the future of the Army, shared ideas during a seminar discussion with the Advanced Strategic Arts Program, and received a one-year 'SIT REP' on the Army Strategic Education Program, by which the War College manages all general Army officer education.

"We're undergoing a fundamental reorganization of the Army, -- one not seen since the 1970's -- that will stand up a brand new command, Army Futures Command, that will really bring unity of command and unity of effort

to the acquisition process," said Esper, as he spoke in Bliss Hall.

"I believe we need to modernize the force from head to toe, certainly with regard to combat vehicles, with regard to how we equip the infantry, and with regard to long range precision fire," said Esper. "There is a lot we need to do, and to do that I don't believe we can get there with the current acquisition system.

"We need to be a living, learning, adapting organization, and that's going to mean we have to operate in the gray," he said to the colonels and lieutenant colonels in the joint class of 2018. "Operating in the gray means you have to be comfortable with change, you have to be comfortable with some ambiguity, and that's going to be a challenge."

Army student Lt. Col. Max Brosig commented.

"It's good for us to get his perspective," he said. "It's refreshing to see the thought process he's using, and some of the recommendations he's going to be looking to push down and give that responsibility back to the commanders," he said, referring to the discussion of reforming the Army's talent management system.

Earlier, Esper joined a seminar discussion with advanced students of the strategic arts welcoming their questions and inviting their feedback for his vision statement.

"He sees his role as, How do I balance near-term needs with future needs of the Army," said Professor Doug Douds about the ASAP discussions. Esper talked about the timing of reform. If you are going to reform things that need to be changed, they should be changed when things are going well, when we have force structure and we have resources. "In that way, it's a pretty progressive view about how we should go forward," said Douds.

With Army War College leadership, it was the Secretary's opportunity to ask the questions. He was interested in how to tap the research of the Strategic Studies Institute, how to add to the Key Strategic Issues List, and how the war college develops quality officers to lead the Army into the future.

Sitting with Esper at the meeting were USAWC Commandant Maj. Gen. John Kem, Provost Dr. James Breckenridge, and ASEP director Brig. Gen. Mark O'Donnell.

Prior to confirmation by the Senate on Nov. 15, 2017, Esper was a senior executive at the Raytheon Company as vice president for Government Relations. He has served as national security advisor for Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, and as the deputy assistant secretary of defense for negotiations policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and earlier, on the Army staff as a war planner.

Esper is a 1986 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. An Infantry officer, he retired in 2007 after service in the 1990-1991 Gulf War with the 101st Airborne Division, in the Virginia and District of Columbia National Guard, and Army Reserve.

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