

## USAWC gives distance ed students an immersive educational experience

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 30 June 2022



*Distance education students participate in the Baltics war game, an experiential learning exercise at the Army War College.*

Students in the Distance Education Program begin their immersive experience at the Army War College. In-person for the first time since beginning their studies in August, students will engage in seminar discussions, meet their faculty instructors, and hear from subject matter experts as part of their First Year Resident Course, June 21-July 1.

The 374 USAWC students are part of a two-year program graduating in 2023. The class consists of 290 Army. 9

Marine Corps, 9 Navy, 22 Air Force, and 36 federal civilians and Congressional staffers. Eight international fellows are in the class from Botswana, Canada, Cyprus, Ghana, Guyana, Spain, Sweden, and Latvia.

While taking courses, most of the students balance their Guard or Reserve duties with their full-time civilian careers.

“We look forward to making the most of the next two weeks with you while you’re here,” said Maj. Gen. David Hill, USAWC Commandant, during his Welcome to the class.

We are going to expose you to what’s best about the war college, said Hill.

“The main thing I am looking forward to is meeting my seminar mates and developing those relationships, as well as having that more immersive Army War College experience,” said Arkansas Army National Guard Lt. Col. Bryan Shipman.

During their two weeks at Carlisle Barracks, students will hear from internal and external subject matter experts that represent the best in thought. Students will participate in a war gaming exercise, complemented with a negotiations exercise. Students will go to the Gettysburg Battlefield for a staff ride—a tactical, operational, and strategic leadership experience. Every day will be enhanced with in-depth seminar dialogue.

“With the design of the [First Year Resident Course], you get to know your classmates, and it helps facilitate the dialogue and discussion as we move forward into our second year,” said Kentucky Army National Guard Lt. Col. Jason Penn.

“That’s one of the main benefits that being here in person and being able to do this for the next two weeks,” said Col. Heather Smigowski, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Distance Education and a 2020 USAWC graduate of the distance program.

“I am excited to see everybody in person and interact in person, rather than virtually, and just see how everything rounds the corner to the second year,” said USAWC student and Naval Reserve Capt. Cathy Wise.

This two-week period marks a shift. “[Students] are going from the theoretical to the application... taking what they have learned in the past year and applying it to the world around them,” said Dr. Edward Kaplan, Dean of the School of Strategic Landpower.

“I am looking forward to being exposed to things like foreign policy and international relations theory that I would not have gotten otherwise,” said Texas Army National Guard Lt. Col. Charlie Heath. “I have never been to a world-class institution like this, so it is very exciting to be here.”

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Throughout the week, students heard from several keynote speakers. Retired Gen. Carter Ham, former commander of AFRICOM, shared his strategic leadership insights and experiences with students. Hal Brands, Senior Fellow at American Enterprise Institute and professor of Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, spoke with students about how the Cold War can help us better understand the challenges the U.S. faces with Russia and China.

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During the two-week resident phase, students engaged with leaders from 16 different embassies and government agencies. In virtual sessions, students learned how these entities operate to accomplish their mission and how they aid in the military accomplishing its mission.

As part of their immersive experience at Carlisle, USAWC students met in small groups with experts from the Canadian embassy, the Atlantic Council, International Atomic Energy Agency, and others, June 28-29.

Navy Capt. William Quinn, Acting Defense Attaché for the Canadian Embassy, spoke to students about the importance of the U.S.-Canadian 64-years strong partnership strengthened by shared strategic goals and values. Together, the countries train, patrol the North and South Arctic waters to ensure freedom of navigation, provide surveillance of the Caribbean Sea to intercept illegal narcotics, address climate change, and support Ukraine to counter transregional threats.

“I have worked numerous times with Canadians, both in the Special Operations and conventional force, at the operational level,” said Army Col. Benjamin Sprouse, student. “I now have a better understanding, as I can contextualize that into to their national interests at the strategic level.”

“Being able to evaluate the global strategic environment ... not just being able to describe it but also leveraging the interagency and international community to solve big, important problems is important for the students who come here,” said Faculty Instructor Dave Price.

Matthew Kroenig, Deputy Director, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council, talked with students about the importance of deterring Russia and China simultaneously. Both are near-peer nuclear powers with substantial impact on the global security environment. He then outlined how this can be achieved through resourcing, a whole of free world defense strategy, and nuclear deterrence.

Students heard from Tracy Brown, Public Information Officer International Atomic Energy Agency, Liaison Officer, New York. She talked about the positive and negative implications of nuclear power. It has enabled medical and agricultural advances, but when used by adversaries, it poses a threat to global security. IAEA holds an advisory, rather than authoritative, role, helping countries assess whether they have capabilities to support nuclear power and provide frameworks for how to implement and use nuclear power safely.

“They have the literature, background, and courses that lead up to this,” said Col. David Jenkins, First Year Resident Course director. “This is a culmination of experiences which synthesizes the literature and the national security policies they have studied by allowing students to talk with subject matter experts.”

Leaders from the following agencies took the time to engage with USAWC students—

- Canadian Embassy
- Australian Embassy
- German Embassy
- Heritage Institute
- RAND Corp.
- Peterson Institute
- Atlantic Council
- National Academies of Science
- International Atomic Energy Agency
- Congressional Budget Office
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- U.S. Agency for International Development



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