

Current Army senior leaders talk national security with Army War College students

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 01 December 2022



Gen. James McConville, the Chief of Staff of the Army, delivered the keynote address, setting the tone for Army Leader Day at the U.S. Army War College, Nov. 17, 2022.



Twenty-four Army leaders shared insights, provided perspectives, and answered student questions during Army Leader Day at the U.S. Army War College, Nov. 17, 2022.

Current Army senior leaders engaged with Army War College about current national security issues and the strategic environment. As part of the college's annual Army Leader Day, the Chief of Staff of the Army, along with 24 enterprise leaders, shared insights, provided perspectives, and answered student questions.

Gen. James McConville delivered the keynote address, setting the tone for the whole day. Following his remarks, students returned to their seminars to talk with enterprise leaders about the topic raised by the CoS and how each leader sees it from their area of responsibility, Nov. 17, 2022.

McConville, a 2001 USAWC Fellow, opened by emphasizing the importance of fighting in a joint, combined force with allies and partners. Where soldiers go, they will not fight alone, and the War College creates an environment where partnerships can grow, he said.

He outlines the complex strategic environment students will enter upon graduating. He was a Fellow before 9/11. Today, North Korea and Iran continue to pose challenges, and the China-Taiwan tensions and the Russia-Ukraine War threaten the world order centered on peace and security. In addition, climate change and COVID add layers of complexity.

Because regional conflicts have global implications, McConville discussed the operational, institutional, and leadership lessons from the Russian-Ukraine War. Then, personalizing it, he offered his insights on strategic leadership, what it is and what it looks like when put into practice.

Character matters, he said. It is not only about doing the right thing but also doing it the right way. Leadership positions at the strategic level require one to understand and navigate multiple, often conflicting, interests. Instincts are helpful, but only if you have developed them. He ended by talking about the importance of work-life balance at all levels of leadership.

Seminar presenters—

Maj. Gen. John Rafferty, Chief of Army Public Affairs and a USAWC graduate, talked about his vision for public affairs 2030 and his role in upholding the “People First” Army values by helping people and units reach their full potential.

In his line of work, telling the Army story is one way to highlight those values. Rafferty was candid about the challenges present. It is a big Army, and bad things happen, but many great things happen every day, he said. He is dedicated to empowering every soldier from the platoon level up through the ranks to tell their story. Everyone has a part in telling the Army story, said Rafferty.

He answered complex questions about the perceptions of the fall of Afghanistan, the role of social media influences, and how both elements positively and negatively impact recruiting efforts.

Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel of the Army and a USAWC graduate, focused his discussion on recruiting and talent management. The recruiting challenge, as he sees it, is how the Army and its people humanize what they do. That will serve as a tool for overcoming stereotypes and negative images people have of the Army, he said.

The war for talent and the Army’s talent management approach is a complex process that presents its own challenges. The goal is to have the

right person in the right career at the right time.

He and his team are developing systems that capture the skills and expertise of soldiers. There is consideration for the system to incorporate career succession planning so soldiers can be placed based on goals and gain the expertise they need to achieve those goals, he said.

Stitt echoed McConville's sentiment that developing relationships is important because operating in a transactional manner does not align with building cohesive teams. He also expanded on McConville's priority of a "People First" Army, explaining that it can take many different forms, from knowing your soldiers to maintaining the equipment that keeps them safe.

Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, Director of the Army National Guard. Jensen previously served as the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard, as well as being the deputy commanding general for U.S. Army Africa. Jensen began his discussion with students by stressing the importance of messaging to internal audiences as a strategic leader.

It takes time to penetrate Army culture with messaging, which is why it is important to message consistently, said, Jensen. When you are trying to convey a message across the Army, it takes time and effort.

Jensen, a graduate of the Army War College himself, also discussed the usefulness of a war college education. He emphasized the importance of working together with strategic leaders from different military branches since they are always connected with each other. He explained that even though he is with the Army National Guard, he constantly works with the Army and Army Reserve in tandem.

The following is a complete list of Army Leaders that participated in Army Leader Day—

- Ms. Laura Jankovic, Vice Director, Army Staff
- Lt. Gen. Raymond Dingle, the Surgeon General, Commanding General MEDCOM
- Maj. Gen. Greg Mosser, Deputy Command General USAR
- Lt. Gen. Robert Marion, Assistant Secretary of the Army Alt. MILDEP
- Lt. Gen. John Morrison, Deputy Chief of Staff G6
- Lt. Gen. Paul Chamberlain, MILDEP, Assistant Secretary of the Army Financial Management
- Mr. Mario Diaz, Deputy Under Secretary of the Army
- Maj. Gen. Thomas Solhjem, Chief of Chaplains, Army Deputy Chief of Staff G8
- Lt. Gen. Erik Peterson, Deputy Chief of Staff G8
- Lt. Gen. Patrick Matlock, Deputy Chief of Staff G3/5/7
- Mr. Jon Hall, Deputy Chief of Staff G4
- Lt. Gen. Stuart Risch, Judge Advocate General, Army
- Mr. Mark Lewis, Assistant Secretary of the Army Manpower and

Reserve Affairs

- Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, Deputy Chief of Staff G1
- Ms. Julie Blanks, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army
- Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, Director, Army National Guard
- Mr. David Markowitz, CIO: Chief Data and Analytics Officer
- Mr. Paul Farnan, Assistant Secretary of the Army IEE
- Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, Deputy Chief of Staff G9
- Brig. Gen. Kimberly Peeples, Director, Contingency Operations, Corps of Engineers
- Maj. Gen. Duane Miller, Provost Marshall, Army
- Brig. Gen. Aida Borrás, Assistant DCOS G2
- Maj. Gen. John Rafferty, Chief of Public Affairs, Army