

## Celebrating 122 Years of Excellence

By Robert D. Martin, USAWC PAO 20 November 2023



*Outstanding alumni for 2023 stand between Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Gregory and Commandant of the Army War College, Maj. Gen. David Hill. from left to right: Maj. Gen. retired William Clark, Col. retired Kip Lassner, Col. retire Gen. Vincent Brooks*

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On November 15, 2023, the U.S. Army War College marked its 122nd birthday, featuring the Outstanding Alumni Recognition Ceremony. The ceremony honored four distinguished individuals whose post-retirement service exemplified the values of the USAWC, showcasing a commitment to community service and national contributions.

The Outstanding Alum Program acknowledges excellence in community service by USAWC graduates after their government service. The awards are granted irrespective of active-duty rank or position, emphasizing the spirit of ongoing service to communities or the nation.

This year's outstanding alum recipients included Gen. (Ret) Vincent K. Brooks (USAWCF' 99), Maj. Gen. (Ret) William N. Clark (RES' 83), Col. (Ret) Eda W. Cummings (RES' 01), and Col. (Ret) Kip O. Lassner (DDE' 16).

**Kip O. Lassner**, with 35 years of military service, has demonstrated selfless dedication since retiring from the Army Reserve as Commander of the 128th Legal Operations Detachment in Oklahoma. His law firm's involvement in the Governor's GI LAW initiative, providing pro bono legal services to service members and veterans, showcases his commitment to supporting those who have served.

Lassner's philanthropic efforts extend further through establishing the SPC Matthew Prestridge Scholarship Fund, benefiting veterans and current servicemembers attending South Florida State College. Additionally, his volunteer work with the YMCA of South Florida has established an annual Veterans' Day event, becoming the largest of its kind in South Florida in 2022 and raising significant funds for military personnel support.

**Eda W. Cummings**, Chief, Reserve Forces Integration, USNORTHCOM/NORAD (retired in 2003), has dedicated herself to recognizing and honoring the contributions of women veterans. Her work since 2018 has focused on the 6888 Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-female, all-African-American unit to deploy overseas in World War II. Through her efforts, the unit received a Meritorious Unit Citation, a memorial at Fort Leavenworth, and approval for the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal in 2022.

Cummings' advocacy extends to supporting veterans' children through the Warrior Fund, established while serving on the Appalachian State University Foundation Board of Directors. Her commitment to veterans earned her induction into the Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame and recognition as a Military Officers Association of America national "Changemaker."

**William N. Clark**, a Vietnam Veteran and retired Commanding General, 87th Division (Exercise), U.S. Army Reserve (2000), has continued to serve Alabama as a premier criminal defense lawyer. Noteworthy achievements include leadership in improving the state's statutory law, election to the American Law Institute, and presidency of the state Bar Association in 2003. Clark's dedication is further evident in his initiatives, such as creating the state Bar's Leadership Forum and addressing deficiencies in Alabama's Death Penalty process.

**Vincent K. Brooks**, a U.S. Army War College Fellow, retired in 2019 after serving in significant command roles in Korea. He has remained a thought and action leader post-retirement, contributing to institutions like the

Institute for Defense and Business, Harvard University Belfer Center, and the University of Texas. Brooks serves on the Defense Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, holds the Class of 1951 Chair for the Study of Leadership at the U.S. Military Academy, and is a Board Director for the Gary Sinise Foundation.

These outstanding alumni embody the spirit of service and leadership instilled by the U.S. Army War College. As the institution celebrated its 122nd birthday, these honorees stood as living testaments to the values of duty, honor, and country that define the legacy of the USAWC.

U.S. Army War College News Archives