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School for Command Prep earns award

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Gen. David Perkins, commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, presented the Army Superior Unit Award to the School for Command Preparation Dec. 1 at the Lewis and Clark Center. SCP was specifically cited in the unit award narrative for displaying outstanding meritorious service during the period Aug. 4, 2013, to July 3, 2015.

SCP, one of three schools within the Command and General Staff College, received the award for planning and executing a course redesign that better leverages the school to help the chief of staff of the Army integrate mission command and lead change in the Army. Lt. Gen. Michael Lundy, CGSC commandant and commanding general of the Combined Arms Center, and Maj. Gen. John Kem, Army University provost, also participated in the ceremony.

“It is an honor to be here to recognize the SCP,” Perkins said. “In the Army, we say that the highest honor one can receive is command. And, because the Army values this fact so highly, we have to make sure that command selectees are as well prepared as possible.”

Perkins was the 21st commander of the CAC from November 2011 to February 2014, where he was also the lead for synchronizing leader development across the Army, the management of the Army’s training support and training development enterprises, and the development and integration of Army doctrine.

Upon assuming command of CAC, Perkins asked the School for Command Preparation to conduct a self-examination to determine how it could better help the chief of staff of the Army lead change in specific areas within the Army.

That self-examination led to a redesign that included significant expansion and redesign of the Phase I curriculum, extending the course from one to two weeks, as well as adding several seminar lessons. And, the redesign increased the number of senior leader engagements. This led to increasing integration of learning models that were based in doctrine and also facilitated seminars that were focused on mission command and the art of command.

“Commanders and command sergeants major are disproportionately influential due to the impact they have on young soldiers who are the future of the Army,” Perkins said. “TRADOC is the front door for all soldiers to get into the Army. And, since it is so vitally important to the Army, SCP is a front door to command.”

Soon after that initial redesign, the school was asked to integrate training of U.S. Army Reserve command teams over a two-year period, thus expanding the size of the school. In fiscal year 2016, the school had educated nearly 4,000 students at Fort Leavenworth in its Phase I and Phase II courses.

Four distinct training and education programs reside within SCP. Those programs are the Pre-Command Course, the Command Sergeants Major Development Program, the Command Team Spouse Development Program and the Tactical Commanders Developmental Program.

The school provides students the opportunity to engage a majority of the Army’s senior leaders with more than 30 senior leader and subject matter expert engagements over a two-week period. Christina Love, manager of the Command Team Spouse Development Program, emphasized the importance of preparing the senior leaders’ families for command.

“The resources and tools we provide positively impact senior leader spouses as volunteer community leaders,” Love said. “We also have four main areas of focus when our battalion- and brigade-level spouses come through the course. Those areas address the Army operational environment, family readiness, resiliency and informal leadership.”

Coupled with senior leader engagements, student learning in the art of command and leadership, learning is also taught in seminars facilitated by an experienced faculty comprised of former brigade commanders, battalion commanders and command sergeants major.

“To receive a unit award in the Army is very significant because the review process is very strenuous and involves vetting at many levels,” said Brig. Gen. Eugene LeBoeuf, Army University executive vice provost for academic affairs and deputy commanding general. “This recognition is extremely well deserved. And, an impressive accomplishment for SCP, especially for such a small unit the size of school. Having General Perkins here to present the award to the school is very special too, because the time frame of the award reflects his period as CAC commander.”



Training and Doctrine Command Commanding General Gen. David Perkins congratulates retired Col. Mark McKnight, director of the School for Command Preparation, on SCP being awarded the Army Superior Unit Award Dec. 1 at the Lewis and Clark Center. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp