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CGSC announces Educators of Year

Two CGSS educators representing civilian and military faculty were named Command and General Staff College Educators of the Year.

Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

Two Command and General Staff School educators representing civilian and military faculty were named Command and General Staff College Educators of the Year Nov 18. Both educators advance to the next level in the process to compete for the Training and Doctrine Command civilian and military Educators of the Year.

Dr. Jack Kem, a professor in the Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations, is CGSC Civilian Educator of the Year. Lt. Col. Christopher Johnson, who is an instructor in the Department of Military History, is CGSC Military Educator of the Year.

Seven civilian educators and six military educators were among the candidates competing for the honor to represent CGSC faculty at the TRADOC level. A selection board evaluated the 13 educators Nov. 9 and 17 as part of the award process.

The CGSC Educator of the Year selection board was comprised of Dr. James Martin, CGSC Dean of Academics; Dr. Ted Thomas, director of the CGSS Department of Command and Leadership; Col. Lee Gentile, director of the CGSS U.S. Air Force Element; Col. Charles Blumenfeld III, director of the Department of Logistics and Resource Operations; and Dr. Gerald Gorman, deputy director for Academic Affairs, School for Advanced Military Studies.

“The CGSC award selection process was fairly comprehensive and evaluated us across the range of teaching domains,” Johnson said. “For example, the board evaluated our teaching philosophies, our classroom management, and conducted a panel-style board to ask us questions about our approach toward education.”

Kem said the award selection process included several steps that began with his first being selected by DJIMO as the departmental Educator of the Year. That selection was based upon a nomination and vetting process within his department by the curriculum developers, division chiefs and senior members of the faculty.

“First of all, I was surprised. The competition for Educator of the Year includes a lot of dedicated and professional faculty members, both civilian and military. As a result, being selected is a great honor,” Kem said. “Secondly, I realize that the TRADOC Civilian Educator of the Year (award process) will also have tough competition. It is my hope that I can represent the CGSC faculty well in that competition.”

Kem added that his packet included a detailed summary of key contributions, challenges encountered as a faculty member, faculty certifications, and an assessment by the DJIMO department director.

Johnson, who also won the CGSC Military Educator of the Year award in 2014, described a similarly rigorous process. There were also five different classroom observations by senior CGSC leaders, followed by a selection board chaired by the dean of academics.

“As an educator, I am always looking for ways to connect with my students and to help them develop their learning strategies. From a personal standpoint, I am working on my Ph.D. in history at (the University of Missouri-Kansas City),” Johnson said. “I felt surprised and honored to be selected as the Military Educator of the Year. CGSC has great instructors who are passionate about their mission and their students. It is an honor to represent the faculty and the students going forward to the TRADOC competition.”

The Department of Military History, where Johnson teaches, educates students in critical thinking skills and equips them with historical perspectives that make them better prepared to achieve the national objectives in war and peace. The DMH develops subject matter curriculum, including courses in the CGSOC common core.

“I am the history instructor for Team o8 of the Command and General Staff Officer Course. I am responsible for teaching military history to approximately 60 CGSOC students,” Johnson said. “Our classes discuss military history and how it relates to being a better professional military officer.”

Kem teaches within the Department Of Joint, Interagency And Multinational Operations, which develops curriculum designed to educate officers in the planning and execution of joint, multinational, and interagency operations during peace, conflict, and war, with emphasis at the operational level of war. DJIMO is also responsible for developing curriculum in the CGSOC common core. The two specialty tracks of Joint Advanced Warfighting Studies and Special Operations Forces are unique to DJIMO.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Command and General Staff College Military Educator of the Year Lt. Col. Christopher Johnson, Department of Military History, gathers feedback from his Command and General Staff Officer Course students about what stood out in their reading as something that should be covered in the class Dec. 8 at the Lewis and Clark Center. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

