

By Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

Print Page

February 16, 2017 10:55AM

## Top cadets gather for leadership seminar

Thirty-six top U.S. Military Academy cadets and 275 of the top ROTC cadets attended the 39th annual George C. Marshall Awards and Leadership Seminar.

Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

Thirty-six top U.S. Military Academy cadets and 275 of the top ROTC cadets from colleges and universities across the country attended the 39th annual George C. Marshall Awards and Leadership Seminar Feb. 13-15 at Fort Leavenworth.

Gen. Robert Abrams, Forces Command commanding general; Gen. David Perkins, Training and Doctrine Command commanding general; and Lt. Gen. Michael Lundy, commanding general of the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, were among the featured speakers.

Perkins opened the event with his keynote addressing Army mission command, highlighting the three areas of unified land operations, mission command philosophy and commander tasks. He said the principles of mission command assist commanders and staff in balancing the art of command with the science of control.

“In today’s force, it is important for commanders to be able to develop teams, both within their own organizations and with unified action partners,” Perkins said. “This involves possessing the leadership attributes of ‘be and know.’ But, successful application in our current paradigm relies heavily upon mastery of specific competencies — leading by example, creating a positive environment that fosters esprit de corps and getting results.”

Cadet seminars and round table discussions with Army and Department of Defense experts focused on critical defense issues, geopolitical matters and the profession of arms. The exposure to contemporary civilian and military leaders at a high level provides unique opportunities not necessarily available within a college ROTC curriculum.

USMA Cadet Andre Michell said he was impressed with the subject matter of each keynote address and seminar presented.

“The opportunity to hear from the experiences of a diverse array of successful leaders in the Army has been incredible. It has been a great reinforcement of things that we are currently learning at the academy and an introduction to new things as well,” Michell said. “As an example, I had never heard General Perkins explain mission command before. I’d heard the concept — never heard it articulated like that. And, to hear General Abrams speak with such authority and passion about leadership was very motivating.”

During his address on Feb. 14, Abrams spoke of brigade command and operations. He said the Army had to be rotational focused and surge ready. Abrams showed cadets a map of the world that he said depicted 140,000 FORSCOM soldiers forward staged or deployed in more than 100 countries.

“You are going to inherit a world that is much different than the world I stepped into as a second lieutenant. When I was commissioned, we were in the middle of the Cold War and facing a monolithic enemy called the Soviet Union,” Abrams said. “Life was pretty simple back then — bad guys over there, good guys here. But, in its simplest form, our defense strategy today says that we have to be prepared to deal with near peer competitors.”

Cadets also had the opportunity to interact with Joe Galloway and retired Lt. Col. Bruce Crandall, who participated in the 1965 Battle of Ia Drang in Vietnam. Crandall received the Medal of Honor for his actions as a pilot during the battle. The citation states that day Crandall completed a total of 22 flights, most under intense enemy fire, retiring from the battlefield only after all possible service had been rendered to the infantry battalion.

“I envy you all. You will be lieutenants soon and are just starting your careers,” Crandall said. “Listen to your platoon sergeants, learn from them and take care of your soldiers.”

Both men took time to mention the passing of retired Lt. Gen. Hal Moore, who as a lieutenant colonel commanded the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, at the Battle of Ia Drang. Moore co-authored “We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young” with former war correspondent Joseph Galloway documenting the battle. The book, a best seller and critically acclaimed, was later adapted into the film “We Were Soldiers” starring Mel Gibson as Moore.

“The Battle of Ia Drang was the first major battle between U.S. and North Vietnamese troops in the Vietnam War,” Galloway said. “We found ourselves simply doing what needed to be done.”



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Joseph Galloway, who co-authored “We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young” with retired Lt. Gen. Harold “Hal” Moore, shares some of Moore’s leadership lessons with Army Reserve Officers’ Training Corps and U.S. Military Academy cadets during one of the guest speaker engagements of the George C. Marshall Leadership Seminar Feb. 14 in Eisenhower Auditorium at the Lewis and Clark Center. Moore, Battle of Ia Drang battalion commander depicted by Mel Gibson in the movie based on the book, died Feb. 10 at the age of 94. Galloway said he will fulfill a promise he made to Moore and deliver Moore’s eulogy at his funeral Feb. 17. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

Cadets who attended the seminar are recipients of the George C. Marshall Award, which is presented to future officers who rank at the top of their respective programs. The award recognizes cadets who are nominated based on scholarship, leadership, physical fitness and community involvement. Recent award winners include prior enlisted service members with combat experience.

“It’s been an incredible experience. We’ve got a ton of information in a short amount of time from truly unique perspectives of these high-ranking thought leaders across the institution,” said ROTC Cadet Patrick Maffett, cadet battalion commander at Georgia Tech University who will commission as an armor officer in May. “They’ve been able to offer some really unique insights to everyone in attendance.”

During his mid-afternoon address Feb. 14, Lundy spoke on the subject of leadership development. Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, talked about officer and enlisted command relationships during his address Feb. 15.

Nearly 10,000 Army ROTC and USMA cadets have been named Marshall Award winners. This year, the seminar included top cadets from the 112 battalions. The program promotes the Army’s “One Corps of Cadets” philosophy and exposes cadets to the Army’s premiere leadership training center, the Center for Army Leadership.

“Coming into the seminar, I didn’t expect to gain as much knowledge and experience that I am actually getting here. I am excited to turn around and go back to my school and share what I’ve learned,” said ROTC Cadet Lauren Hill, who just concluded serving as cadet battalion commander at the University of Utah. “I am going for my branch to be in nursing, which offers an inherently different spectrum for utilizing these leadership techniques. Qualified leadership and those related skills are universal to all aspects of military service.”

---

<http://www.ftleavenworthlamp.com/article/20170216/NEWS/170219538>

Print Page