



## **Class of 1978 Student Workshop for Civil-Military Operations 1 April 2019**

The onslaught of emotions captured and archived over the many years of our relationship with our “Rockbound Highland Home” are many and varied; they are especially vivid when one returns to West Point. We spent 47 months or more of our formative years at this garrison: Beast Barracks, an endless number of academic classes, formations, athletic competitions, physical fitness tests and, finally, graduation. We left West Point prepared to fulfill our Class motto of “Proud and Great.” Our individual journeys have taken us on many adventures across the world providing us with ample opportunities to make our mark. It brings to mind.....

"For unto whomsoever **much is given**, of him shall be **much** required,"  
Luke 12:48, King James Version

A team of eleven from the Class of 1978 recently participated in this year’s Class of 1978 Student Workshop for Civil-Military Operations. As you may recall, last May our class provided a \$1MM endowment to the Center for the Study of Civil-Military Operations (CSCMO). This was done with the intent this event would be endowed in perpetuity. It is with the utmost of pride we report that our contribution is exceeding our expectations and is truly a living donation. More specifically, our donation is having significant and meaningful impact on the preparation of our future leaders. I do not believe it is possible to capture the intensity of the dialogue and energy of the participants experienced in this year’s workshop. That said, the following is our attempt to provide you with an inkling of what transpired:

This year’s workshop focused on operations in dense urban environments, a topic that is highly relevant to the Army now and, even more so, in the future. Under the deft leadership of COL Andrew Lohman (Military Director), and John Melkon (Civilian Director) and with the support and collaboration of José Morales ('78) and PJ Zeller ('78), the event included a diverse set of speakers and opportunities for participants to discuss, reflect and absorb on what was presented.

***Welcome and Introductory Remarks*** - Introductory remarks were provided by COL Lohman and Mr. Melkon highlighting the program and its objectives. This was followed by Robert Olds ('78) welcoming the cadets and sharing insights as to why our class was inspired to provide our endowment to make this event possible, as well as reflecting on ways the Corps has changed since our days as cadets. It was clear “to the most obvious observer” the “Corps Has” .....Has changed for the better.



***Urban Combat: A Historical Perspective*** - Dr. Lou DiMarco, CGSC, gave an historic perspective on urban warfare. While the U.S. Army has generally loathed to fight in urban environments, there are many reasons why an adversary would choose to fight in a city: (1) in order to gain control or destroy the habitat and population; (2) undermine the control of religious authority; (3) unseat and seize political power; (4) dominate or disrupt trade and transportation; and (5) hide among the population. Given the steady increase in the number of people living in cities, it is inevitable that future battles will be situated in urban environments, thus the U.S. Army needs to understand the complexities of urban terrain. The terrain itself consists of buildings, roads, sewers, and so on, and it is overlaid with a society and with a concomitant system of commerce, economics, transportation and distribution. While the U.S. Army has historically fought numerous battles in cities, so while a lot is known about dense urban environments, we do not really understand the scope and complexities of operating in a megacity, which is defined as a city with 10 million or more people. One of the obvious issues is of scaling up operations when the size of the U.S. force is not likely to increase from what it is today, but a megacity may be many times larger than any city we have experienced in the past. These challenges will likely be addressed by technologies such as A.I. and robotics; a change in the operational approach whereby commanders of lower level echelons have a higher rank (and experience level); a change on force structure; and a renewed emphasis on developing leaders who thrive in other cultures and in uncertainty. The continuous reincarnation of the battlefield and the need for leaders able to manage said environment places enormous responsibility on all of us to train and equip today's warriors.

***Recent Experiences of a Company Commander and First Sergeant*** - CPT Brett Reichert and MSG Robert Absher shared their operational experiences as a company commander and first sergeant while deployed in Mosul to fight ISIS. Their mission was to advise, assist and accompany the Iraqi forces with a company that was half its normal size. Several things stood out about their presentation. They said this deployment against this adversary was different than any of their previous deployments. The enemy, though a non-state actor, was highly organized and did all the things that a state would to recruit, organize, tax, and fight. The enemy was deeply entrenched in the city, with highly organized systems of defenses, including tank trenches, hollowed out buildings for ease of maneuver, and swarms of drones. The enemy presented a number of tactical surprises that had to be countered by the ingenuity of soldiers under their command. CPT Reichert and MSG Absher empowered their subordinates to solve problems identified by the command team. The challenge the cadets faced from this presentation was how they would develop the "graduate level" analytical skill sets needed to counter a clever adversary. One of the solutions discussed was realistic training every day, where dilemmas are constantly being presented. As the MSG put it: "trauma and repetition, trauma and repetition." One of the topics they discussed in some detail was the decision process that goes into killing, where they ask themselves the questions: Can I? Should I, Must I?



Simple questions with somber implications beyond the simple act itself. This led to the next topic, a session led by Jacob Kurtzer.

***Civilians In The Battlespace*** – Jacob Kurtzer, who addressed the issue of having civilians and humanitarian relief organizations in the battlespace, made the third presentation. Jacob is currently with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and before that spent seven years in the Red Cross, so he spoke from first-hand experience. His first point was that when fighting in a dense urban environment, it is critical that our soldiers be able to distinguish between civilians and military, take necessary precautions and reasonable steps to protect civilians, and exercise proportionality as prescribed by the Geneva Convention. With respect to the relationship between the military and humanitarian relief agencies, it is important to understand that while they should constantly communicate, they have different missions and are not to be viewed as partners in the battlespace. The humanitarian relief organization is supposed to be neutral and if there is even a perception that the military and the relief organization are collaborating, then the risk of their humanitarian actions will be compromised and considered as politically “instrumentalized” and rejected.

***Current Urban Training Initiatives*** - The fourth presentation was made by MG (Ret) Al Aycock SES, who serves as the deputy to the Commanding General of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, spoke to how Special Operations Forces (SOF) training regimen prepares soldiers for urban warfare. Al began his presentation with a compelling (paraphrased) question: If you accomplish your mission, does that mean you have achieved victory? He utilized the U.S. operations in Mogadishu, Somalia and the “Blackhawk Down” scenario as an example of accomplishing a mission and not achieving victory. He also pointed out how easy it is for an adversary to hide in the city and present a major obstacle, if not catastrophic, threat to the mission. If just 1% of a million people residing in a mega city are enemy combatants, this translates into 10,000 individuals; this creates a formidable force to overcome. As Al put it: war is fundamentally and primarily a human endeavor, and SOF is a resistance profession. One of the ways the SOF community prepares its soldiers through the Robin Sage culminating event in its training scenarios: scenarios where participants are faced with numerous ethical dilemmas and situations. This relates to the earlier observations made by Reichert and Absher stressing the importance and need for repetition in training in order for leaders to become comfortable with solving problems in unusual, highly tense scenarios. In addition to the presentation content, Al also made a direct appeal to the cadets to give serious consideration to join the ranks of SOF. Recruitment at its finest.

***Keynote Discussion*** - LTG(Ret) Ken Hunzeker (Distinguished Chair, CSCMO) wrapped up the workshop by putting the discussions of the day in perspective. First, he observed that we have a tendency of “shooting behind the target”. Each week, 3 million people are moving into cities. With the emergence of urbanization and megacities, we need to get ahead of the situation and



give serious thought to how we will fight and operate in these environments. Furthermore, life after the fight can be harder than the fight itself as the humanitarian support considerations are taken into account. To put things into perspective Ken stated: “In 2001 a non-military group made a strategic surprise attack on our nation that resulted in a total reorganization of our forces, the way we conduct warfare and how we live our lives”. Ken emphasized our military leaders need to be able to do more with less. Our military leaders need to be technology proficient. Our military leaders need imagination and creativity to meet tomorrow’s challenges.

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.”  
Winston Churchill (Darkest Hour)

**Concluding Ceremony** – COL Lohman is scheduled to retire this coming May. As such, we decided the conclusion of the workshop presented us with the perfect opportunity to recognize Andy for his leadership and contributions to the success of the Civilian-Military Operation Center. Equally as important, was our desire to recognize Andy for the close partnering relationship he has fostered with the Class of 1978. Given Andy’s Special Forces credentials, we decided to present Andy with the Yarborough Knife (AKA The Green Beret Knife). The Yarborough Knife is issued to SF graduates beginning August 2002. Andy graduated prior to this month so he was lacking one. The knife is serial numbered. Cannot be resold. Can only be purchased by someone successfully completing SOF training. The knife is a combat field knife, specifically designed by renowned knife maker William Harsey. It serves as a link to the brotherhood of unconventional warriors. We bear testament to Andy being an unconventional warrior.

**Plaque Inscription:**

I am an American Special Forces Soldier! I will do all that my nation requires of me. I am a volunteer, knowing well the hazards of my profession.

In recognition of your leadership, morale courage and service to our Nation.  
The Class of 1978

A heartfelt expression of gratitude is extended to José Morales and PJ Zeller for their individual and collective contributions as the leaders of the Class Advisory Board to the Civilian-Military Operations Center. PJ and José have become valued partners to the Civilian-Military Operation Center leadership and have ensured the Class of 1978 has a voice in the overall direction of the program.



## **Class of 1978 CSCMO Participants**

LTC (Ret) Steve Aude – Leavenworth, Kansas

MG (Ret) Al Aycock – Fayetteville, North Carolina

LTC (Ret) Mike Belter – Columbus, Ohio

BG (Ret) Bill Forrester – Huntsville, Alabama

Mr. Rob Grubbs – Virginia Beach, Virginia

Mr. Randall Hill – Playa Vista, California

MG (Ret) Sanford Holman – Bowie, Maryland

Mr. José Morales – Austin, Texas

Mr. Robert Olds – Cincinnati, Ohio

Mr. Jim Steiner – Concord, New Hampshire

Mr. PJ Zeller – Newtown, Connecticut