The 4th Annual Symposium on Modern Warfare Agenda
“Leadership and Modern Warfare”

Friday September 20, 2019
International Cultural Center, Texas Tech University

8:30 AM: Opening Remarks

Dr. Ron Milam, Executive Director, Institute for Peace and Conflict, Texas Tech University

8:45 AM: Session 1

Time, Power, and Principal-Agent Problems: Why the U.S. Army is Ill-Suited for Proxy Warfare Hotspots

Presenter: Major Amos Fox, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Fort Bliss

Aiming for Success: The Tailored Command Philosophy

Commanding an element of national power, amid the changing character of war in a disruptive environment, is an exclusive leadership challenge. Senior leaders select promising officers for command and then expect them to succeed. Some they choose struggle. Some transform into poor commanders. Some fail. Perhaps unsuccessful commanders misconstrue their own propensity for command. Possibly, they fail to comprehend or leverage command-unique facets of management, leadership, and power. Maybe unsuccessful commanders come to be incapable of adjusting to, adapting for, and acclimating into an organization with a distinctive structure, mission, climate, culture, and degree of health. Command complexity today and in the future requires advanced and innovative preparation versus more-of-the-same leadership behavior. Emerging leaders destined for command should bring their time-tested leadership philosophy with them into command. This is essential but it is not enough. Budding commanders aiming for success should convert their personal leadership philosophy into a tailored command philosophy. A tailored command philosophy balances personal leadership aspirations, the authority of command, and the uniqueness of an organization. This presentation introduces a four-step process professionals approaching command should follow to develop, mature, and sustain their own tailored command philosophy.

Presenter: Dr. John Blumentritt, Air University, Maxwell AFB

Dr. John W. Blumentritt, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Retired) serves as a course director and an assistant professor at Air University’s eSchool of Graduate Professional Military Education located at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. Dr. Blumentritt holds master’s degrees from Michigan State University, College of Naval Command and Staff at the Naval War College, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, and The Air War College. He earned
his Ph.D. in 2009 from Our Lady of the Lake University’s School of Business and Leadership in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Blumentritt served as a rescue and special operations helicopter pilot during much of his military career. He also served as a “Checkmate” strategist in the Pentagon and commanded an education squadron at the Air Force Academy. He retired from the Air Force in 2011. Prior to joining Air University in 2016, he worked as a course director, instructor, and analyst at Air Education and Training Command. Prior to that, he served as an assistant professor of security studies at Angelo State University and as an adjunct professor of business and leadership at Our Lady of the Lake University. Dr. Blumentritt now develops, directs, and teaches courses primarily associated with leadership, leader development, and command. He enjoys veteran and history-centric activities during his spare time.

Towards a Reformed Operational Control of Private Military Contractors

Presenter: Andrew Thornebrooke, Norwich University

10:15 AM: Break

10:30 AM: Session 2

Reading with Osama: A Critical Analysis of Al-Qaeda’s Abbottabad Documents

Presenter: Dr. Christopher Carey, Johnson County Community College


Presenter: Dr. Brent Talbot, USAF Academy

Crisis in Baghdad: Leadership in a Risk Adverse Environment

This presentation chronicles my story as a base and unit commander during a combat tour in Iraq and includes photographs (taken then) for this fast-paced lecture. However, this is not just an account of our modern military, but it also examines leadership concepts that can be used by those who manage or command in civilian or military settings. This briefing (and my book of the same name) analyzes management issues but also intends to demonstrate that one person can make a difference. It also does not provide a tired and over-used list of leadership traits but gives examples of real ideas and actual motivational successes. It also is not afraid to honestly examining my flaws and mistakes, which had a personal cost.

This story occurred in a perilous period of the Iraqi War when U.S. military forces were locked in a stalemate with anti-government groups. Simultaneously the Iraqis society was tearing itself apart with murderous, religious strife. It was a tipping point of the war, which I helped influence and is discussed in this lecture. When I arrived, I discovered many serious problems that were festering or had not even been identified – posing extreme danger for the base and our people. Find out how I motivated the young millennials, and we worked together to make our base safe and better.
Colonel Gregory Marston was a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978. He graduated from USAF pilot training in 1979 and flew the A-10, A-37, OV-10 and C-141 aircraft in the active duty Air Force and Air National Guard. He has participated in four combat tours and has flown 80 A-10 combat missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait. He has served as an A-10 “Warthog” Operations Officer, Squadron Commander, Group Commander and Wing Commander. In 2002-3 he commanded an USAF Group and the airfield at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Under his leadership this unit flew over 1600 A-10A combat missions supporting U.S. Army Soldiers in Afghanistan. He commanded an USAF Group and Sather AB, Iraq from 2006-7. After Iraq he became the Director of Operations, Pennsylvania Air National Guard until his retirement in 2008.

Concurrent with his military career, from 1985-2008 he was a pilot for American Airlines, becoming Captain in the Boeing 727; Airbus A-300, Boeing 757, 767 and the B-777. He completed his Master’s Degree in Military History from Norwich University in 2019. He is married, has three children and lives near Doylestown, PA.


12:00 PM: Lunch

Keynote Speaker: General John Murray, Commanding General, Army Futures Command

1:15 PM: Session 3


Discusses the tension between the USAF establishment and the Defense Reform Movement (DRM) “led” by Col. John Boyd in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Looks at the USAF/William Perry post-Vietnam technology vision, three “lines of operations” attempted by the DRM to challenge that vision and how one USAF General, Wilbur “Bill” Creech, helped to overcome the DRM in Congress, through the PPBM and with the Administration. Gives credit to the DRM for creating the need for the Tactical Air Command (TAC) to articulate a clear vision for airpower in the Reagan era—along with reinvigorating the ideas of tempo and maneuver, but also recognizes the largely unsung efforts that General Creech’s leadership, congressional testimony and training programs had on tactical aviation to and through Desert Storm. The paper condenses Dr. Price’s in-progress book of the same name, to be published by Naval Institute Press. It leverages a historical methodology anchored in extensive new oral histories of senior Air Force leaders (Generals Jumper, Kross, Loh, andRalston, amongst others) and archival research from the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), the National Archives at College Park, and from the Marine Corps archives at Quantico.

Presenter: Dr. Brian Price, Air Command & Staff College

Dr. Brian R. Price is currently an Associate Professor of Military and Security Studies at the Air Command & Staff College, Air University, Maxwell AFB. He holds a doctorate in military history from the University of North
Texas (2011) and a BA in political science from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA, 1992). Previously he had a Silicon Valley career where he rose to the level of vice-president; ran a history-oriented book publishing company; served a double-tour as a senior socio-cultural advisor on the ground in Afghanistan (2011-12) followed by a tour supporting JSOC (2018) as a social science SME; did a one year POW-MIA Accounting Agency fellowship (2017-18), and taught graduate courses in strategy, counterinsurgency, and American military history at Hawai‘i Pacific University’s interdisciplinary Diplomacy & Military Studies program. He has two main fields of research, a modern one focused on strategy, technology and war and a second focusing on medieval and early modern combat techniques. Recent articles have appeared in Joint Force Quarterly, The Counter-Terrorist, and the Journal of Medieval Military History.

**The Fighter Tactics Revolution, 1937-1944: Command Inertia, Crew Ingenuity, and Combat Innovation**

Presenter: Colonel Matthew Hurley (U.S. Air Force, ret.), PhD, Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies

**The War Against ISIS: Views from U.S. Air Force Operations and Maintenance**

Presenter: Dennis Berger, ABD, Texas Tech University

2:45 PM: Break

**3:00 PM: Session 4**

*Coalition Leadership during Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), 2017-2018: A Historian’s Perspective*

Presenter: Steve Frank, Command Historian, III Corps and Fort Hood, Texas

*An Anecdotal History of an Officer’s Leadership Experience Over the Last 10 Years of War*

The variety of leadership experiences and demands expected of Army officers today is without parallel in military history. As American power continues to be projected across wider swaths of the world and as the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan evolve, tasks given to our Company level leaders are increasingly diverse. CPT Jonathan Austin will share an anecdotal history of his leadership experiences as a microcosm of junior officer combat leadership over the last decade. The views expressed during the symposium do not reflect the official policy or position of U.S. Army III Corps or the United States Army.

Presenter: Captain Jonathan Austin, Operations Officer, G3 (CUOPS) III Corps and Fort Hood, Texas
CPT Austin is currently serving as an Operations Officer/Planner for the U.S. Army III Corps G3. He commissioned as an Armor Officer in 2009 from Appalachian State University. CPT Austin has deployed twice, once as a Mobile Gun System Platoon Leader to Afghanistan in 2011-2012 and then again as an Airborne Company Commander to Iraq from 2016-2017. His last assignment was as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. He is from Decatur, GA, is married to Lauren Austin and they have twin four year old boys, Mason and Gabriel.

4:30 PM: Closing Remarks

Dr. Steve Maxner, Director of the Vietnam Center and Archive and the Archive of Modern American Warfare, Texas Tech University

4:45 PM: End of Symposium