



7 April 2016

Dear Student:

Congratulations on your selection to the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR) Class of 2017. Selection to a resident top-level school is a distinct privilege achieved by a select few who have demonstrated both superb past performance and superior future potential. Your classmates will include representatives from all branches of the armed forces, various government agencies, and three foreign militaries. You will be guided in your education by a team of military and civilian professors, each an expert in their field of study.

The professional education you experience at MCWAR is a significant investment toward your future. You can expect to be challenged by our rigorous curriculum that combines a graduate program in Strategic Studies with Joint Professional Military Education Level II (JPME II) requirements. As such, the demands of the course are significant, requiring substantial effort from you. In other words, this is not a year to take off your pack.

In addition to classroom work and local field studies, the MCWAR curriculum includes a robust travel program to include:

- Antietam-Gettysburg Battle Staff Ride
- New York City visit to cover areas of finance, risk, counterterrorism, strategic communications, and the UN
- Combatant Command visits
- Participation in various strategic-level exercises
- OCONUS field study for US students
- CONUS field study for International students

MCWAR's mission is to develop critical thinkers, military strategists, joint warfighters, and strategic leaders who are prepared to meet the challenges of a complex and dynamic security environment. To this end, we will develop your ability to:

- Understand history and context
- Understand economics, politics, diplomacy, culture, and society
- Analyze, use analysis, critique analysis, and understand the use of analogy
- Creatively reason and problem solve
- Exercise sound judgment and decision making
- Negotiate and build consensus
- Become better speakers and writers

You will be supported by the faculty and staff who:

- Care about your personal and professional development
- Are dedicated to MCWAR's mission and program outcomes
- Are dedicated to educating (not training) you
- Will challenge you intellectually
- Will assist you in how to think, not what to think
- Will provide you meaningful evaluation and feedback

All MCWAR students will take a writing and critical thinking diagnostic shortly after checking-in based on *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, by Eliot A. Cohen. To help you prepare for this assessment, I ask you to read and reflect on Dr. Cohen's book before your arrival. Additionally, ensure you take care of your personal business and get settled in by 14 July 2016 for international students, 25 July 2016 for US military students, and 27 July 2016 for civilian students, so that you will be ready to hit the deck running.

In addition to numerous articles and portions of books, you be assigned to read the following books in their entirety during the first semester:

The Bottom Billion by Paul Collier

The Great Stagnation by Tyler Cowen

The Little Book of Economics by Greg Ip

The Ugly American by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick

Thinking in Time by Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May

Throughout the academic year, you will need your entire inventory of uniforms. There are occasions when all students will be in business attire. For males, this means a business suit. See the MCWAR Uniform and Attire Policy for more details.

Last year we migrated to .edu and started using Google Apps for Government, which will allow you to access the academic calendar and share files via Google Drive. After arrival, you will receive a .edu email account. Additionally, you will be assigned a study carrel with a laptop for use at the school. The government laptops are not wireless and can only connect to the internet from their port at MCWAR. We have a "bring your own device" policy at Marine Corps University. You are encouraged to use your personal computer, tablet, smartphone, *et cetera* for class work. WiFi is available throughout the building to support wireless devices.

You will receive more detailed information regarding MCWAR, our curriculum, and the academic calendar during your formal in-processing. In the meantime, if you need additional information or assistance, contact us at (703) 784-4081 (DSN 278) or via email using the contacts listed in the "MCWAR Faculty Directory" on our homepage.

Semper Fidelis and Welcome Aboard,



Colonel Keil R. Gentry
Director, Marine Corps War College