



**NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20319-5066**

April 1, 2016

**REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:**

Office of the Commandant

Dear Member of the Class of 2017:

Congratulations on your selection to attend the National War College. We are an integral part of the nation's flagship platform for strategic-level joint professional military education, the National Defense University. Since its founding in 1946, NWC's core mission has been to conduct a senior-level course in National Security Strategy. Your class will be celebrating our 70th year anniversary of producing National Security Strategists. You'll be following in the footsteps of alumni such as General Colin Powell, General Jim Jones, Senator John McCain, Ambassador Dick Norland and General Keith Alexander. Throughout the academic year, we will put you in the shoes of national security decision-makers, and focus relentlessly on helping you to hone your strategy-making skills and to wield the various instruments of national power. It is a rigorous program with weekly reading requirements augmented with a number of writing assignments. Upon completion you will be prepared to serve at the most senior levels of our military and government and capable of dealing with the most challenging joint and interagency environments. The curriculum leads to a fully accredited Master of Science Degree in National Security Strategy. I encourage you to visit <http://nwc.ndu.edu/> to learn more about our program.

Our educational philosophy is centered on developing those critical thinking skills that lead to strategic analysis and synthesis. I want to underscore that we do not provide "school solutions." Our objective is to graduate students who are exceptionally able to:

- Critically analyze strategic problems and issues;
- Communicate clearly and concisely;
- Assess issues creatively and imaginatively;
- Adapt to ambiguity and uncertainty;
- Operate with a joint, interagency, and multi-national perspective; and
- Embrace an abiding structure of continuous learning about a dynamic and ever-changing global environment.

Our student body is unsurpassed in quality and represents potential leadership of our armed forces and government agencies. Historically, over one-third of our graduates have gone on to flag/general officer rank or the civilian equivalent in their careers. You and your classmates are a national asset – among the finest officers and civil servants of our nation. The demographics of our student body include about 55% military officers, 30% DoD and non-DoD civilian agencies, and 15% international fellows. Our non-DoD students represent the State Department, the intelligence community, law enforcement, homeland security and many other government agencies.

Among your classmates will be International Fellows, military officers from up to 32 countries, who will participate as full members of your class. Historically, our International Fellows are extremely successful in their promotion rates to flag/general officer. Many of our NWC Alumni are Chiefs of Defense, Chiefs of Services, and senior ranking officers on general/joint/multi-national staffs. You will find that interaction with your inter-national colleagues will significantly enhance your educational experience. If you are interested in serving as a co-sponsor in tandem with our assigned faculty members, please let us know promptly. Co-sponsoring an International Fellow can be an enriching experience for you and your entire family.

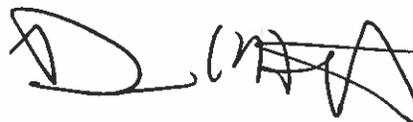
Our faculty will add another unique dimension to your educational experience. They are an outstanding group of civilian and military scholars. We have civilian academics, officers from all military services, State Department and USAID Foreign Service officers, and senior officials from DHS, FBI, CIA, NSA, and DIA. Combined, they give us a true joint and interagency perspective. Members of the faculty bring a broad range of policy and command experience to the classroom, in addition to strong academic credentials. They have built their outstanding reputations on their excellence as teachers, practitioners and mentors.

Your attendance in the 10-month program is an opportunity not only to enrich your mind but to improve your physical conditioning and general health. To that end, we offer a wide variety of physical training and exercise opportunities. You will be afforded some optional medical assessments offered by the Health and Fitness Department of the National Defense University. I encourage each and every one of you to take full advantage of these services. More information will be provided during your orientation.

This year can also be a great year for your family and spouse. Enclosed is a short spouse's note from our events coordinator regarding NWC spousal participation. Please ask your spouse to consider participating in the Spouses' Club. The size and scope of the program is determined by the level of interest. As you are all peers in class and come from diverse backgrounds, the Spouse Program is special. It can add a great deal to what should be a banner year for the entire family. Your spouse should be aware that a number of our academic elective courses are open to them, on a space available basis. And, there is a specific spouse elective called National Security Strategy Overview which is designed especially for all spouses. The course enjoys great reviews and I encourage your spouse to think about taking it as well as to participate in our diverse electives program.

Finally, please mark your calendars for the NWC Class of 2017 Commandant's Reception for you and your spouses on the evening of Friday, August 12th. This is the first of several formal social events held during the academic year. We look forward to welcoming each of you to the National War College and what will be a very special and enriching year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hartford', written in a cursive style.

Darren E. Hartford
Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force
Commandant