

SSCF Fellows Participate in Orientation Visit to Europe

The Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) fellows from Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), Maryland; APG SSCF Director **Jim Oman**; and four of the Warren, Michigan, SSCF fellows participated in a trip to Europe April 18–28. They were joined by **Mike Roche**, a DAU professor from Midwest Region; **Jeff Caton**, a DAU professor from Capital and Northeast Region; and Col. Doug Mastriano and Mike Neiberg, U.S. Army War College professors. The multifaceted European visit included stops with briefings at the geographical combatant commands, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the United States Army in Europe (USAREUR), as well as staff rides through significant battlefields of both World War I and II.

The trip began in Stuttgart, Germany, with visits to the geographical combatant commands—the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) and United States European Command (EUCOM)—and ended with battlefield staff rides to the five invasion beaches with multiple drop zones located in Normandy, France.

At AFRICOM, the fellows met with Brig. Gen. James Vechery, the director for logistics (J4), and learned about the complexity of operations on the African continent and numerous challenges that include violent extremism, piracy, democratization, trafficking, population growth, strife and instability. The fellows left AFRICOM with a greater understanding of the roles played by the senior military and civilian leaders, especially the daily challenges they collectively face, the criticality of staying engaged throughout the continent through deployments and partnering arrangements and the importance of the region.

At EUCOM, the fellows received multiple highly informative presentations that provided them with insights on the significant challenges facing EUCOM. These challenges included the conduct of operations in a fiscally restrained environment, the current crisis within Ukraine and other topics.

From Stuttgart, the group traveled to the USAREUR headquarters, in Wiesbaden, Germany. The fellows were welcomed by Maj. Gen. John R. O'Connor, commanding general of 21st Theater Support Command. While there, the fellows received briefings relative to the theater and discussed the importance of partnering, the logistical lessons learned and O'Connor's thoughts on leadership. The participants found the visit to USAREUR timely in light of the planned

and ongoing troop deployments in response to the Ukrainian crisis.

Heading to Bastogne, Belgium, the group stopped at the Luxembourg American Cemetery, where they gained an appreciation for the human cost of war. The next day, the fellows traveled in and around Bastogne, visiting the Bastogne Barracks museum. The trip to Bastogne culminated in a day-long staff ride of the Battle of the Bulge battlefield, with stops at Malmedy, the scene of the massacre; Trois Pons, where U.S. Army engineers destroyed a critical bridge; La Gleize, where Kampfgruppe Peiper was stopped; and the Mardasson Memorial, which honors the sacrifice of the soldiers, airmen and the Belgian resistance.

From Bastogne the group traveled to Brussels, Belgium, to visit the NATO Headquarters. The fellows were welcomed to NATO by U.S. Army Col. Kevin Marcus, the U.S. military delegation chief of staff. The group received a “NATO 101” briefing and presentations on the NATO Support Agency and the NATO Communications and Information Agency.

Rounding out the organizational visits was a final stop at the SHAPE located in Mons, Belgium. The fellows received several briefings, including an overview highlighting the complexity of the alliance and ongoing operations; a cyber briefing; and a final briefing on U.S.

National Military Representative policy, guidance, coordination, funding and relationships between numerous NATO and U.S. government agencies.

The final component of the trip was a multiday visit to Normandy, France, which included a stop at Beaumont-Hamel—a well preserved WWI battlefield. There, discussions relevant to leadership and material acquisition were led by Col. Mastriano. While in the Normandy area, the fellows visited Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches; Battery Longes, Point-de-Hoc, Merville Battery, Pegasus Bridge, St. Mere-Eglise; and American and British cemeteries. At each stop, Oman, Mastriano and Neiberg explained the historical significance of the location and provided modern context relevant for today's strategic leaders.

During the 11-day trip to numerous historical and strategic sites, the fellows were exposed directly to leaders who provided them with lessons and discussions on leadership, acquisition support to the warfighter and national security strategy, all of which is designed to shape them as they reflect upon the complexities of strategic leadership.



Members of the 2015 Europe visit stand before a German Mark VI Tiger Tank in La Gleize, Belgium, April 22.