

Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin's Deputy Adjutant General for Air completes Executive Leaders Program at Naval Postgraduate School

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MONTEREY, Calif. – Brig. Gen. David May, the Wisconsin National Guard's deputy adjutant general for Air, completed the Executive Leaders program at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) on August 11th.

In his role, May serves as chief advisor to the adjutant general on all matters pertaining to Air National Guard programs, policies, operations, management and command and control of the Wisconsin Air National Guard. He also provides staff assistance guidance and direction concerning Air National Guard personnel, administration, training, recruiting and retention incentives and budgetary matters. May is responsible for more than 2,300 Wisconsin Air National Guard personnel serving in two flying wings and a Combat Readiness Training Center.

Throughout the hybrid program, May collaborated with homeland security officials from across the nation on current policy, strategy, and organizational design challenges.

"I've basically gotten recent immersion and exposure to the big issues of the day, whether it's cybersecurity, logistics, COVID, dark sky events," May said. "I've got a current education on where we're at with those issues, as well as a lot of tools for leadership."

The NPS-CHDS participants represent a snapshot of the homeland security enterprise, including professionals from the fields of emergency management, education, law enforcement, fire service, homeland security, public health, and city/county government.

"The network that you take forward is the powerful part," May said. "This class has been around for 20 years. Not only are you networked with your own class, but you're networked with the entire alumni of the entire program for the rest of your career."

May added that the program exposed him to executive-level leadership at all levels – local, state, and federal. Collaboration and inclusion of the right people at all levels has led to successful partnerships and responses between the Wisconsin National Guard and domestic partner agencies, with the most notable being the Guard's role in the state's COVID-19 response.

"We've worked together enough over the years and planned together enough that we're really ready to come together, so we need to keep doing that," May said. "That inclusive approach, the collaborative approach is super powerful."

He also learned the importance of quickly reassessing information and evolving throughout domestic operations responses.

"Do we spend energy criticizing ourselves? Or do we spend our energy adapting?" May said. "I would say adapt and move on. We really need to learn and relearn, acknowledge a mistake and move on, because that's what the public that we serve needs from us. They need that continually evolving response."

Located at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), CHDS is the nation's homeland security educator. CHDS program participants develop critical thinking, leadership, and policy skills. CHDS is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), National Preparedness Directorate, within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). For information, visit www.chds.us.

ABOUT NPS: The mission of the Naval Postgraduate School is to provide unique advanced education and research programs in order to increase the combat effectiveness of the U.S. and Allied armed forces as well as enhance the security of the United States. For information, visit www.nps.edu