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Wilbanks receives award

VICKSBURG, Miss., June 5, 2001 -- Rayford E. Wilbanks was awarded an exceptional achievement award for his leadership and academic accomplishments as a graduate of the Sustaining Base Leadership and Management program at the Army Management Staff College, Fort Belvoir, Va.

Wilbanks is chief of the economics analysis division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg, Miss. His is a native of Carthage, Miss., and is the son of Dayle and Johnnie Faye Wilbanks of Carthage. He and his wife Pam have one son, Jason, who attends Mississippi State University.

Wilbanks was board-selected to attend the 12-week resident program. That selection, made after a careful screening of all applicants, was based on his potential to assume top-level leadership and managerial roles in today's Army. Wilbanks was also chosen as the class president based on his application.

The Sustaining Base Leadership and Management program educates the future leaders of the Army's sustaining base ? the agencies and programs that support those soldiers on point for the nation.

The Army Management Staff College's commandant compares the sustaining base to the handle for a bayonet: "We're training soldiers as the pointed edge of the bayonet from basic training all the way through the War College. But the hilt, the part that supports the pointed edge, we have frequently [ignored]. How effective can the point be, even though it's very sharp, if the 'handle' doesn't sustain it?" said Col. Philip L. Wilkerson, Jr. "The sustaining base - those future civilian and military leaders we are educating - gets the soldiers 'on point,' and makes sure they have what they need to do their job and, oh by the way, also covers all the areas that support their families ... to get those concerns out of the soldiers' minds."

Graduates of the program may receive graduate and

undergraduate college credit, based on a recommendation from the American Council on Education.

The students receive instruction in such areas as leadership, management, decision making, resource management, acquisition and logistics. The material is presented in a mix of lectures, group discussions, hands-on practical exercises, case studies, briefings by senior Army leaders and field trips.

Classes stress critical thinking and active learning, intensive self-preparation and in-depth analysis of various problems and situations.

