

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Initial Navy SEALs Seminar a Success

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The West Point Negotiation Project (www.wpnp.org) recently conducted a one-day course on effective negotiation concepts and tools with Navy SEALs as part of the Naval Special Warfare Platoon Leaders Course (NSW PLC) at Norfolk Naval Station, VA. The NSW PLC is held twice each year at Norfolk and Coronado, CA, and course attendees consist primarily of E7s and O2/O3 from the SEALs but also include special operations support forces and Air Force para-rescue jumpers.

The training, led by Professor Jeff Weiss, MAJ Aram Donigian, MAJ Zachary Mundell, MAJ Neil Hollenbeck and CDT Duncan Aylor, was designed to further enhance Naval special operations forces effectiveness overseas by helping them to better deal with both internal and external engagements. In addition to substantial classroom lecturing on effective negotiation strategy, course attendees were challenged to apply the classroom material during hands-on, practical exercises involving different negotiation scenarios. The WPNP faculty provided coaching during these negotiations as well as during the preparation and review stages. The day ended with the SEALs negotiating scenarios involving an Afghan village elder, a CIA team leader, and a Battalion S3, all situations they often encounter during a combat deployment.

The feedback on the course was extremely positive. Brad Voigt, Director of Professional Military Education at Naval Special Warfare (NSW) remarked "I am impressed with the ability of the West Point Negotiation Project to tailor and deliver a negotiation curriculum to our NSW personnel. Their willingness to openly share knowledge and best practices, developed over several years, shows they are truly team players. Their excellent instruction and products will arm our SEAL leaders with the tools they need to successfully build lasting partnerships when deployed." One student, who requested to remain anonymous for security reasons, a Chief (E7) with over ten years as a SEAL remarked, "With the Village Stability Operations we are doing now, this training is just as critical as some of the kinetic skills during our workup. I wish we could have had more than just one day!" CDT Duncan Aylor, hand selected to assist with this training opportunity because he was the top student in MG390 this past year and completed CTLT this summer with the 10th Special Forces Group, noted "The opportunity to impact a high caliber and extremely relevant force such as the SEALs demonstrates the commitment and capability of the WPNP to go beyond West Point to have a far reaching impact on the military at large." The positive feedback from course attendees has further solidified plans for the WPNP to continue its relationship and training engagements with the SEALs with tentative plans to send a team to Coronado in early 2012.

Over the past three years, the WPNP has taught similar courses to elements of the 25th Infantry Division, the 4th Infantry Division, the 10th Mountain Division, and the 173rd Airborne. This was the first time the WPNP provided a Mobile Training Team (MTT) not only to naval forces but to

the special operations community. When speaking about this new experience, MAJ Donigian stated "I was impressed with how these special warfare leaders seemed to take to the material even more so than the conventional units we've worked with previously. They see the clear importance and application to the missions they are pulling in theater, not only with local leaders but with other government agencies and military leaders." On including CDT Aylor in the trip MAJ Donigian added "One of the highlights of the MTTs has been the opportunity to include cadets as Teaching Assistants. It puts them on the other side and helps reinforce the material as they have to engage with it differently as instructors. CDT Aylor really added value to the day!"

The WPNP, whose purpose is to enhance the ability of military leaders to conduct negotiation in the complex and challenging situations they face in both combat and peace, has grown rapidly since its founding in 2009. It holds a yearly conference attended by cadets and military officers from across North America, consults on various projects for the Army, provides training for deploying forces, conducts research on negotiation training and application, and develops leaders of character within the Corps of Cadets through the Fellows and Senior Members program, AIADs, and guest lectures. This event with the SEALs marked an important transition for the WPNP leadership as MAJ Donigian, co-founder, will deploy to Afghanistan, and MAJ Mundell will co-direct the WPNP with Professor Weiss for the 2011-2012 academic year. MAJ Hollenbeck, currently in graduate school at Fuqua (Duke University) and all ready highly involved with the WPNP, is slated to co-direct upon his arrival at USMA in 2012.