

Norwegian USAWC Class of 1999 grad inducted into Hall of Fame

Suzanne Reynolds, USAWC Public Affairs Office

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Norway Gen. Harald Sunde, Chief of Defence of Norway, was inducted into the Army War College International Fellows Hall of Fame on May 31. He is a 1999 graduate of the USAWC. Photo by Scott Finger.

May 31, 2011--The U.S. Army War College honored a Norwegian alumnus of the Class of 1999 who has reached the highest position in his nation's armed forces at an Induction Ceremony on Tuesday, May 31, Bliss Hall auditorium.

The College welcomed back Gen. Harald Sunde, who is the Chief of Defence Norway.

“Throughout his career, Gen. Sunde has epitomized the mission and vision of the Army War College,” said Maj. Gen. Gregg Martin, U.S. Army War College Commandant. “In leading his nation’s armed forces, he has developed, inspired and served strategic leaders on a global scale. His actions have had a profound and deep impact—not only within the Norwegian military, but also among the military forces of allies, partners and friends,” said Martin.

Sunde was an honor graduate at the Officer Candidate School for the Cavalry in 1974 and the Norwegian Military Academy in 1979. He graduated from the Norwegian Army Staff College in 1986. Following his graduation from the Academy, he served at the Cavalry School and Training Center, followed by a Special Forces assignment and assignment as commander of the famed Brigade North Recce Squadron.

From 1989 to 1992, following a stint as a student at the German Führungsakademie, Gen. Sunde was assigned as an instructor at the Norwegian Army Staff College. From 1992 to 1996 Sunde commanded

both Norwegian Special Forces, as well as the Norwegian Defense Special Commando from 1992 to 1996. Following these commands, he held numerous senior-level command and staff positions.

Sunde was promoted to general and appointed Norwegian Chief of Defense on Oct. 1, 2009.

“I am deeply, deeply honored,” said Sunde. “This is far beyond what I expected, and I have so much to thank the U.S. Army War College for.”

Sunde shared some of his personal thoughts about his life at the Army War College. When he and his family arrived in Carlisle on a hot summer day in 1998, he was told that this would be the best year of his life. “I am not quite sure if it was the best year, but it was one of the most important years in my life,” he said. “It changed me, it changed my way of thinking, it put me into a new track.”

Since leaving the War College in 1999, Sunde commented that he has met numerous classmates, both U.S. and international.

“It’s a different world when you meet in Iraq, in Afghanistan or somewhere else and you solve some problems. You are in command, and suddenly beside you, you meet a good friend from Carlisle Barracks. It makes a huge, huge difference,” said Sunde. “Bring this friendship from Carlisle Barracks to wherever you go, because you really need it,” he said.

Sunde attributed attaining his position to the Army War College.

“The reason why I am the Chief of Defense Norway is a gift that I was given here at Carlisle Barracks to start thinking about not only the ways, ends and means, but start to think about strategy,” he said. “Think about how should we in the future connect new ideas into new combinations and do that thinking and bring that forward.”

Sunde told the Class of 2011 students, “The best piece of advice I can give you is to continue this strategy thinking because it will bring you into new ideas and understanding because the challenge of tomorrow will be more complicated, will be more multifaceted, and we will not be alone, we will be accompanied by all other strategic factors.”

As the third Norwegian officer to be inducted into the U.S. Army War College International Fellows Hall of Fame, Sunde joins a uniquely prestigious alumni group as the 36th member.