

USAWC students learn about international culture

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Every year about 50 foreign military officers come to Carlisle Barracks to be fellows at the U.S. Army War College -- sharing their experience and perspective with US officers and developing relationships of enduring value. The year they spend here gives the International Fellows, and their families, the chance to experience American culture first hand. To reciprocate that experience, the IF's held an International Day at the Letort View Community Center for fellow students, community sponsors, and families.

"The purpose of international day is to provide the opportunity for our fellow students and the people of Carlisle Barracks a chance to see, in one location, a representation of the 49 countries that our fifty fellows represent," said Canadian Fellow Lt. Col. Derek Macaulay.

Each country was represented by a cultural display from the IF's country. The displays included, photos, foods, drinks, and other items associated with that country. Many fellows and their families dressed in traditional clothing.



Norwegian Col. Odin Johannessen and his wife Hilde, pose in traditional attire from their country, during International Day at the USAWC.

"I hope that the people who attended the event now have a better understanding of our cultures," said Macaulay. "As strategic leaders

it is important for us to understand different peoples and their culture, especially as more and more military operations are being fought by multi-national coalitions."

“Unfortunately, many people tend to view all Muslims as terrorists, and this is not true,” said Col. Mohammad Al Mehairi, the fellow from the United Arab Emirates said. “This day, and the entire International Fellows program, gives us the chance to become friends, drink coffee, break bread, and tear down walls.”

Due to the success of the International Fellows program, and the multinational character of international security, the Army War College will increase the number of IFs from 50 in each class to 80 by academic year 2013.

“The purpose for this expansion is to expand our ability to provide international senior leader professional military education to an increased number of allied, partner and friendly nations,” said Col. Alpo Portelli, IF Program Director for the college.

“International Senior Level Professional military education is recognized as a strategic asset and, in the environment of persistent conflict in which we find ourselves, it is increasingly important to capitalize on the continued building of close partnerships with all to meet these challenging times,” said Portelli.

The USAWC Class of 2011 includes 50 officers from 49 nations, including two from Pakistan.