

## Army War College International Fellows Hall of Fame honors Norwegian Maj. Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen

By Robert Martin, USAWC PAO 28 October 2019



*Maj. Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen, Chief of the Norwegian Army and commandant of the Army War College walk up between Army War College students as they leave Bliss Hall after Kristoffersen's induction into the international hall of fame ceremony, Carlisl*



*Maj. Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen, Chief of the Norwegian Army speaks to the Army War College class of 2020, staff and faculty during his induction into the international hall of fame. Bliss Hall, Oct. 18*



*Maj. Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen, Chief of the Norwegian Army stands with Maj. Gen. John Kem, Commandant of the Army War College (right) and Maj. Gen. Jon Jensen the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard and state partner to Norway in Wel Was*

The seminar experience was an enduring benefit of a student's year at the Army War College, according to Norway's Maj. Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen, speaking to the students and faculty of the USAWC Class of 2020. The Army War College gathered to honor a most distinguished member of the Class of 2015 with an induction into the International Fellows Hall of Fame, Oct 18.

Maj. Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen assumed the duty as the Chief of the Norwegian Army in August 2019 after having most recently served as the Chief of the Norwegian Home Guard. He is the 69th graduate of the war

college to receive the International Fellow Honor.

"The importance of your education here is something you don't realize until you have graduated," said Kristoffersen to the class, following the formal induction ceremony. "Being in a seminar to me is just as if you were in a senior leader engagement. It is the same way the Chief of Defense for Norway runs his decision-making: you bring a group of people together and talk through problems, and we do it in a seminar-like way."

"You can learn so much from the seminar situation. You have to listen to others, interact with others, and understand their viewpoints then get to the decision.... In hindsight, it is the greatest thing I brought back from the War College.

"Another thing is the network you can build here. The system I established here still helps me a lot. It's even better for international officers because we get to know everyone, even before the academic program starts," he said in reference to the six-week orientation for international officers, before fully integrating into the student body. In 2015, the student body of 387 included 79 international fellows.

"Both our present and our future is joint. I don't see any significant operation that does not include elements across all defense branches. If there is something in my special forces background taught me was the need for jointness."

"All operations will not only be joint be combined joint, we are already working across multiple borders and need further understanding at all levels that we will always operate together, that is why this [Army War College] program is so great," he said.

"Our jobs, all of ours," he said, as he gestures to the audience, "our primary job is to prevent war. Secondly -- to win one if it comes our way."

"To the students, use the opportunity now. This is your year. People say there is so much reading if you read it. I don't agree; I think you should read it.... I read all my papers, some of them very quickly. I think that is one of the capabilities I developed here: the ability to grasp something in a short time, which will be very important later on," Kristoffersen said.

In 2008 Kristoffersen was presented with the Norwegian War Cross with Sword for outstanding leadership and bravery during Combat Operations in Afghanistan in 2007 and 2008. He is one of the few Norwegians to receive this decoration since World War Two.

A Native of Bjerkvik, Norway, Kristofferson entered the Army in 1988 as a non-commissioned officer and earned his commission from the Norwegian Army Military Academy in 1995. In 1999, he joined the Special Forces Command and has had held many positions within the command in the past 20 years. He has served in Afghanistan, beginning in 2002. In 2003 and 2005, he served as a squadron commander, and in 2008 and 2009, he served as an operations officer.

The U.S. Army War College International Fellows Hall of Fame was established to provide a prestigious and visible means of honoring USAWC International graduates who have attained, through military merit, the highest positions in their nation's armed forces, or who have held an equivalent position by rank or responsibility in a multinational organization.

U.S. Army War College News Archives