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Print Page

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International Hall of Fame welcomes 3 officers

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Three international graduates of the Command and General Staff College were inducted into the International Hall of Fame in an Oct. 6 ceremony at the Lewis and Clark Center.

The induction brings the number of leaders who have been honored in the IHOF to 266 from the nearly 8,000 international officers who have graduated from CGSC. In his introductory remarks, Maj. Gen. John S. Kem, provost of Army University and deputy commandant of CGSC, noted the success of international officers at the college.

“Truly an amazing group of men who have led their countries, led their armies and led their partnerships to great heights. We’ve been fortunate to host international students here since 1894. The exchange of knowledge and talent, along with the mutual benefit of ambassadorial interaction throughout this history is truly amazing,” Kem said.

International military student participation in cooperative military studies in the United States originated at Fort Leavenworth with the arrival of Swiss Lt. Henri Le Comte in 1894. Since then, international students representing 164 countries have become an integral part of the Fort Leavenworth experience.

Kem further referred to the members of the IHOF as “an elite group of an elite group” for having achieved the most senior positions of leadership within their countries. He noted that more than half of the college’s international graduates have achieved general officer rank. He then introduced the three international honorees: Gen. Volker Wieker of Germany, Brig. Gen. Igor Gorgan of Moldova and retired Brig. Gen. Mark Anthony Phillips of Guyana.

Wieker began his career in the German Army in 1974. He completed a number of armored artillery assignments commanding at the battery and battalion levels. He also commanded a German Armored Brigade and the Multinational Brigade South in Kosovo. As a general officer, he commanded the 1st German/Netherlands Corps. Wieker participated in international operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Iraq. Today, Wieker serves as the 15th chief of staff of the Bundeswehr. He graduated from the Command and General Staff Officer Course in 1992 and is the eighth German officer to be inducted into the IHOF. Wieker was not able to attend the ceremony. The German Army Liaison Officer to the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Col. Carsten Treder accepted the honor on Wieker’s behalf.

Speaking on behalf of Wieker, Treder relayed the general’s gratitude and honor for being recognized by the IHOF. He also noted that in 1991, when Wieker arrived at Fort Leavenworth, the idea of a Bundeswehr combat mission or deployment in support of an international task force was nearly unthinkable. However, he said, the events of that time — German Reunification, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and the fall of the Soviet Union — were the beginning of a changing security environment that includes broad challenges.

“Strong trans-Atlantic partnerships are paramount in today’s world,” Treder read.

Gorgan was selected as the chief of the general staff of the National Army of Moldova and commander of the National Army in 2013. He continued in those positions until his retirement in June of this year. He previously commanded a motorized battalion and the 1st and 2nd Motorized Infantry Brigades, as well as serving as chief of the J-7 Training Directorate of the National Army General Staff. A 2002 graduate of CGSOC, he has also served overseas deployments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Iraq. Gorgan is the third Moldovan officer to be inducted.

Gorgan began his acceptance by thanking his instructors and classmates for helping him through the year at CGSC. He also thanked CGSC sponsors for helping him to learn about America. He said the lifelong relationships with American and fellow international officers are the most important takeaway from CGSC.

“That was never more important than it is now,” he said, noting that much remains to be accomplished in today’s security environment.

In closing, Gorgan said that attending CGSC helped him to develop three principles that he lives by: professionalism, sense of duty and loyalty.

Phillips has commanded at every level of Guyana’s military. He was the inspector general for Guyana beginning in 2011. Earlier, he was Guyana’s delegate to Inter-American Defense Board in 2009 and Guyana’s non-resident military attaché to Venezuela in 2010. Phillips was appointed as the chief of the staff of the Guyana Defense Force in September 2013 and served in that position until his retirement this month. Phillips is the third CGSOC graduate from Guyana to attain the rank of general and the second to be inducted into the IHOF.



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

The portraits of Command and General Staff College International Hall of Fame inductees German Gen. Volker Wieker, chief of the Defence Staff; Brig. Gen. Igor Gorgan, chief of the Main Staff and commandant of the Moldovan National Army; and retired Brig. Gen. Mark Anthony Phillips, chief of staff of the Guyana Defence Force, line the stage after being unveiled Oct. 6 in Eisenhower Auditorium. The portraits will be displayed in the International Hall of Fame Gallery on the third floor of the Lewis and Clark Center. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

In his remarks, Phillips said that CGSC rekindled within him an interest in the study of war and international relationships. He also said that his year attending CGSC strengthened his understanding of operational leadership, taught him to remember the “be, know and do” of leadership, and improved his understanding of how the U.S. operates with international partners. He also said that the Guyana Defence Forces are better today because of CGSC, and noted that the officer who replaced him as chief of staff was also a CGSOC graduate, as were the two officers next in line for that position.

The CGSC International Hall of Fame was established in 1973 jointly between CGSC, the Greater Kansas City Chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars and the CGSC Foundation. In addition to being inducted into the IHOF inductees are presented a CGSC certificate of honor by the Military Order of the World Wars and a Life Constituent Certificate by the CGSC Foundation.

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Print Page