



FALCON
FOUNDATION



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

GENERAL
LAURIS NORSTAD

U.S. AIR FORCE

General Lauris Norstad

Gen. Lauris Norstad, and outstanding Air Force commander in World War II, helped create the new Department of Defense in the late 1940s and was Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (NATO) for six years - longer than any other commander before or since.

He had a brilliant military career. In February 1942, Norstad, a pilot, intelligence officer, and lieutenant colonel, aged 35 was made a member of the Advisory Council to the AAF Commander, General H.H. "Hap" Arnold, in Washington, where he helped plan initial air offensives for World War II.

In August he was named Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations of 12th Air Force, which went to England then to Algiers, North Africa. In February 1943 he was assigned the same function in the Northwest African Air Forces as an additional duty. Late in 1943 he became Director of Operations of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces at Algiers, and later at Caserta, Italy.

Norstad was made Chief of Staff of the 20th Air Force in August 1944. This was the strategic air force headquartered in Washington that would direct, through bomber commands the final heavy air blows against Japan.

Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, Commander of the 21st Bomber Command at that time, said later that Norstad had told him to "get results with the B-29 against Japan or be fire." To fail to get results, said Norstad "will mean eventually a mass amphibious invasion of Japan, to cost probably half a million American lives."

During the next four years Norstad served in Washington successively as assistant chief of Air Staff for Plans; director of War Department's Plans

Operations Division; deputy chief of Operations of the newly independent Air Force and acting Vice Chief of Staff.

A subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs began working in 1946 on a unification bill with Major General Norstad and Vice Adm. Arthur W. Radford, who represented the Army and the Navy. Many conferences with top leaders of the services followed. Finally, in April 1946, the last of nine drafts was introduced as a bill and accepted by the full committee in May. But it got no farther at that time.

Then, in November 1946, the Services agreed to have Major General Norstad and Vice Adm. Forrest P. Sherman work out an agreement to be offered as a basis for legislation. The two officers reached agreement on general organization of the military departments and on their function in a draft bill that was readily approved by President Truman. The completed draft of the bill went to Congress at the end of February 1947. The final legislation, resulting in the National Security Act of 1947 and including formation of the National Security Council, was a product that reflects, today, the farsightedness of Norstad's contributions.

In October 1950 Lieutenant General Norstad was assigned as commander in chief, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, and several months later assumed the additional duty of commanding general of the Allied Air Forces in Central Europe under the Supreme Headquarters of Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE).

The Supreme Allied Commander at that time was Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had first met Norstad in Algiers in 1942. Eisenhower recalled later that Lieutenant Colonel Norstad was

General Lauris Norstad

“a young air officer who so impressed me by his alertness, grasp of problems, and personality that I never thereafter lost sight of him. He was and is one of those rare men whose capacity knows no limit.”

General Norstad was designated air deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, SHAPE, in July 1953 and in November 1956 President Eisenhower appointed him Supreme Commander.

As Supreme NATO Commander in Europe during the next six years, General Norstad became known as a “military statesman.” He was respected by heads of government, defense ministers and chiefs of staff of the member nations.

While NATO was strengthened as a force for international stability under Norstad’s leadership, it was not free from coping with repeated crises, the most serious of which was the East-West test of nerves in Berlin in late 1961. President Kennedy said later that he had felt “particularly fortunate” that Norstad was in command “when the situation in Berlin reached crisis proportions.”

The man who at 46 achieved leadership of the largest of international military commands was born in Minneapolis, Minn. on March 24, 1907.

He was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in June 1930 and commissioned a second lieutenant of Cavalry. He entered Primary Flying School at March Field, Calif., was graduated from Advanced Flying School and transferred to the Air Corps in June 1931.

It was on December 7, 1941, while serving as an intelligence officer at Air Force Combat Command Headquarters at Bolling Field, that Major Norstad telephoned the officer-of-the-day to inform him that President Roosevelt had confirmed on the radio the report of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Fifteen years later, in 1956, another President, John F. Kennedy, wrote to General Norstad in an answer to his request for retirement: “Your personal contribution to the strengthening of the Alliance in a difficult and critical period will be permanently recorded in the annals of the history of Freedom. Never was there, for the defense of the Free World, a more important military responsibility than the one you carried on your shoulders for so many years, and I do not know of anyone who could have carried its weight with such ability.”

Dear General Bellis:

The great leaders, for whom the Falcon Scholarships are named, have set outstanding examples of leadership and service and built a solid foundation for others to follow and build on.

We hope this scholarship will inspire and encourage the recipient to achieve his or her goals.

We are privileged to provide this opportunity for the development of future leaders.

Iron Gate Chapter

Air Force Association



The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.