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West Point Society honors Gen Sharp

Seoul — The West Point Society of Korea hosted the 2011 Founders Day Reception May 14 as an opportunity for U.S. Military Academy graduates to come together and renew old acquaintances on the anniversary of the founding of West Point.

This year's reception, at the Dragon Hill Lodge on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan, was in honor of Gen. Walter L. "Skip" Sharp for his service to the Republic of Korea-U.S. Alliance and his upcoming retirement from active duty.

Sharp is the commander of the U.N. Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, so it can be said that he is accustomed to wearing many "hats." He also wore another two "hats" during the reception as he was the guest speaker and the oldest graduate.

"You get a two-for-one tonight," said Sharp. "Not only the oldest grad but also the guest speaker, but you're only getting one speech and it will be the old grad speech."

The old grad speech is a tradition that is usually intended to be comical by making fun of how the "Corps has" become progressively easier year after year for the Corps of Cadets at West Point.

"I am going to talk a little bit about how I think the 'Corps has' and the changes that have happened since I graduated in 1974," said Sharp.

As expected, Sharp joked about some of the younger graduates in attendance, such as 2nd Lt. Michael Migliaro, class of 2010. All in good nature, Migliaro said previously that Sharp was issued a "slide ruler" and might have been present at the founding of West Point.

"You can really tell a new grad because they have never heard of slide rulers," said Sharp. "Now only the old people in here will understand that they weren't called slide rulers. They are called slide rules."

Later, Sharp and Migliaro would cut the Founders Day cake together as the oldest and youngest graduate respectively.

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Throughout the night, Sharp talked about West Point memories and Army-Navy football games, but also took the opportunity to recognize the new graduates. He thanked them for their service, reminding everyone that “Corps has” speeches are all in good fun.

“All kidding aside, when we look closely at each one of the graduating classes, we still see all the shared experiences, the struggles, and remember all that the Long Gray Line has gone through,” said Sharp.

This annual West Point tradition has been ongoing since the Civil War. The reception in honor of Sharp was coordinated by Lt. Col. Robert F. Hynes and Cpt. Vincent Lee of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District and both West Point graduates.

When all the festivities were complete, Lee was convinced that the society had given Sharp his well deserved farewell.

“The mission was accomplished with an outrageously entertaining evening that was both festive and light-hearted, all while commemorating Gen. Sharp’s last Founders Day while on active duty,” said Lee. “We also honored his unwavering and steadfast leadership of those that serve this great nation and the ROK – U.S. Alliance.”

At the end of the night Sharp led the attendees in singing the West Point Alma Mater and shouted “Go Army! Beat Navy!”

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Gen. Walter L. “Skip” Sharp, commander of the U.N. Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, was honored during the West Point Society of Korea 2011 Founders Day Reception May 14 at the Dragon Hill Lodge on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan. Sharp gave an old grad speech making fun of how the “Corps has” become progressively easier year after year for the Corps of Cadets at West Point. (Photo by Patrick Bray)

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2nd Lt. Michael Migliaro (right), class of 2010, and Gen. Walter L. “Skip” Sharp (left), class of 1974, cut the Founders Day cake together as the oldest and youngest graduate. Sharp was honored during the West Point Society of Korea 2011 Founders Day Reception May 14 at the Dragon Hill Lodge on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan. (Photo by Patrick Bray)

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Lt. Col. Robert F. Hynes (center), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District Deputy Commander, and Cpt. Vincent Lee (left), FED Executive Officer, coordinated the West Point Society of Korea 2011 Founders Day Reception May 14. The society honored Gen. Walter L. “Skip” Sharp, Commander of the U.N. Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea at the Dragon Hill Lodge on U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan. (Photo by Patrick Bray)

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