



Board selects 213 new LEAP Airmen



Photograph by Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Mr. Jay Warwick, Air Force Culture and Language Center director, addresses Language Enabled Airman Program Selection Board members on the opening day of evaluations. The twelve experts from diverse career fields across the Air Force evaluated candidates on their potential to succeed in the program.

By Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team

Air Force Culture and Language Center officials here announced selection of 213 applicants for the Language Enabled Airman Program Nov. 14. The new participants in the career-long language and culture learning program will receive in-depth language training, ensuring the Air Force has a “bench” of language and culturally competent Airmen from across Air Force specialties, officials said.

Applicants for LEAP must exhibit some level of capability in a foreign language to enter into the program, and that capability is sustained and enhanced through online classes and language immersions. The new participants have abilities in 42 different languages, and come from a diverse cross-selection of Air Force specialties, including medical, acquisition, communications, support, special operations and aviation career fields.

“We’re excited to have these new participants join the ranks of the more than 1,300 Airmen currently participating in LEAP,” said Capt. Breezy Long, the LEAP operations manager. “Through LEAP, we’re providing the cross-culturally competent, language-enabled Airmen that commanders need to accomplish their missions. We’re not taking people

out of their ‘day jobs’ for LEAP, but we’re making sure these Airmen can accomplish their ‘day jobs’ in another language and another culture – something our service members are called to do more and more in today’s complex global environment.”

More than 700 Airmen applied for the fall selection board, with language, region and culture experts from across the Air Force evaluating more than 400 eligible candidate packages. The two-day review was accomplished Sept. 25-26. Of the more than 700 Airmen who initially applied, 329 active duty officers and 88 cadets from the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps and the Air Force Academy met the completion standard and were evaluated. Forty-three different languages were represented in the eligible pool. The most-prevalent language was Spanish, with 121 applicants listing it as their primary foreign language. However, many languages less-commonly seen in the Air Force were represented, including Amharic, Burmese, Hindi and Swedish.

Twelve experts from a variety of career fields evaluated the applicant packages on the demonstrated language ability and the applicants’ potential to be successful LEAP participants. Language ability was demonstrated through applicant scores on Defense Language Proficiency Tests, as well as by overall academic performance with an emphasis on foreign language course performance. Other important factors were the applicants’ performance and training reports and commander’s endorsement letter.

“The board members’ job was to find the most qualified volunteers who were both willing and able to use their language abilities to meet Air Force requirements,” said Mr. Zachary Hickman, the AFCLC’s deputy language division chief. “The experts on the selection board are representative of the communities who need these language enabled Airmen. They’re uniquely qualified to select those Airmen for the program.”

Board participants included Ms. Cara Aghajanian, the director of the Air Force Language, Region and Culture Program Office, as well as representatives from the medical, intelligence and special operations communities.

The AFCLC hosts two LEAP Selection Boards each year; one board is for officers and officer candidates, and one board is for enlisted applicants. The next board will focus on enlisted candidates and is planned for spring 2014. For more information, e-mail afclc.language@us.af.mil.

Colleagues,

We've come through some difficult times this year. Furloughs and shutdowns have disrupted our operations and our lives. And I have no guarantee that we won't see more of the same in 2014. But I can guarantee you one thing – the work you do matters.

You make a difference in the lives of Airmen every day, and you guarantee our Service has Airmen with the cross-cultural skills needed to operate in today's complex global environment.

Across the Air Force, Airmen are asking for more of what you do. They're requesting our existing Expeditionary Culture Field Guides, and they are requesting ECFG's on other countries. Airmen are setting their



clocks for midnight to be first in line to register for the Community College of the Air Force-credit online courses you build. They're asking what extra work can they do to be competitive in a Language Enabled Airman Program board. And they're signing up for the elective classes you teach across Air University.

I can't think of a better metric – a metric that matters more – than the feedback we get from our Airmen.

They know what I know – you are meeting a critical need, and doing it under less-than-ideal circumstances.

For all you've done, and all you'll continue to do, I say thank you.

Mr. Jay Warwick
AFCLC Director

COMMENTARY

Captain LEAPs into Senegalese life

By Capt. Manuela Peters

Vance Air Force Base, Okla.

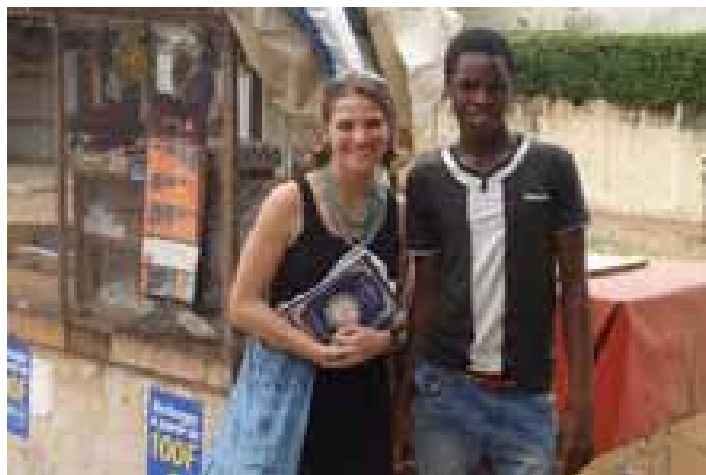
I recently spent a month living in Dakar, Senegal, completing a language immersion for French, as a member of the Language Enabled Airman Program. The program is designed to identify language-capable Airmen, and to develop them into more cross-culturally competent leaders who can support the Air Force mission.

During my time in Senegal, I lived with a Senegalese family, attended language class six hours a day, and explored on my own with three other Americans (two of whom were also Air Force LEAP participants, one who was in training to become a Regional Affairs Strategist.) It was an awesome learning experience, but it was also an "America Appreciation Tour." In Senegal, the poor are very poor, and the rich are very rich. It is not uncommon to see very expensive cars driving by someone riding on a cart and horse.

I came home with many great memories, and an appreciation for another culture that would be impossible to gain from only reading about Senegal. Here are a few of my favorite, and not-so-favorite, things about Senegal.

Love #1: The ability to make the most of not very much.

Senegal is not a rich country. The family I lived with was



Courtesy Photograph

Capt. Manuela Peters, a Language Enabled Airman Program participant, poses with Cheikh, one of the friends she made during her recent Language Intensive Training Event to Dakar, Senegal.

probably lower middle class. The two children that lived with me (Olivier, 9, and Marie, 8,) owned very few toys. As far as I could tell, they only had a soccer ball (which I gave them when I arrived), and they owned Monopoly (with some pieces missing). They used everyday items in their house

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AFCLC partners with Army to discuss language, region, culture, negotiation learning



Courtesy photographs

(Shown left) Attendees at the Army Maneuver Center of Excellence Maneuver Warfighter Conference examine Air Force Culture and Language Center products Sept. 12 at Fort Benning, Ga. (Above) Dr. Stefan Eisen (standing), the director of the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence, addresses attendees at the MCoE Maneuver Warfighter Conference.

By Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team

Five culture, language and negotiation experts from the Air Force were special guests of the U.S. Army Sept. 12, offering expertise to the premier gathering of armor and infantry Soldiers for the 2013 Maneuver Warfighter Conference at Fort Benning, Ga.

Faculty from the Air Force Culture and Language Center and Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence here traveled to Fort Benning Sept. 12 to serve as panel members during the Regional Expertise and Cultural Integration Working Group, attended by nearly 200 soldiers, including service members from nine other nations. The conference was hosted by the Army's Maneuver Center of Excellence, the largest training organization in the Department of Defense.

Topics addressed in the working group included how the Army could integrate and sustain language, regional and cultural expertise, to include cross-cultural negotiations, throughout professional military education. Also discussed was how to deliver cultural training without increasing soldiers' current course loads. These topics are non-negotiable for today's Soldier, according to the lead organizer of the conference.

"In today's environment, not understanding regional and cultural expertise is not an option," said Lt. Col. Trevor Robichaux, as he introduced the AFCLC panelists. "We're trying

to institutionalize this here at the MCoE. Teaching Soldiers how to be able to operate in any environment – a skill set that transcends any one individual culture."

AFCLC participants were Dr. Stefan Eisen, director of the Air Force NCE; Dr. Will Dulaney, AFCLC assistant professor of organizational communication; Dr. Lauren Mackenzie, AFCLC assistant professor of cross-cultural communication; Dr. Jennifer Tucker, AFCLC professor of assessment; and Mr. Zach Hickman, AFCLC Language Division chief.

Eisen, who coordinated the AFCLC's participation, said the event was a great example of pooling geographic resources to facilitate partnerships across services. "The MCoE reached out to their Army liaison at the Air War College to see if there was in-house expertise to support the Regional Expertise and Cultural Integration Working Group," Eisen said. "From there, we assembled a representative group that could tell the story of how the Air Force approaches what we call "LRCN," or language, region, culture and negotiations. Each of these components supports the concept of an adaptive Airman, able to quickly assess environment and appropriately operate to achieve mutual mission success. At the MCoE conference, we were afforded the opportunity to share our experiences with institutionalizing cross-cultural competence in the U.S. Air Force, but we also gained useful insights on the Army's approach to these concepts."

LEAP Airmen assist Pacific airpower leaders

By Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team
and

Master Sgt. Victoria Meyer

Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs

An Air Force program integrator, an acquisitions officer, and a weapon systems officer attended the Pacific Rim Airpower Symposium in Thailand in September, but it wasn't to because of their integration, acquisitions or weapons jobs. Majors Veasna Pel and Paul Sebold and Capt. Jay Park are all members of the Language Enabled Airman Program, and they were specially selected to participate in the symposium because of their language skills – Cambodian/Khmer, Russian, and Korean, respectively.

PACRIM is an annual meeting of senior air operations officers and senior enlisted leaders from the air forces of the Indo-Pacific region. This year's symposium was held in Bangkok, and was attended by representatives from 22 countries. LEAP is a U.S. Air Force program that sustains, enhances and utilizes the existing language skills of Airmen from across the Air Force. Although almost all the PACRIM delegates spoke English as well as their native languages, pairing the LEAP participants with delegates provided greater understanding, the delegates said. The arrangement benefitted the LEAP participants, as well, by giving them experience using their language skills in an Air Force environment.



Photograph by Master Sgt. Victoria Meyer

(Far left) Capt. Jay Park, a Language Enabled Airman Program participant, translates for the Chief Master Sergeant of the South Korean Air Force, Lee Jung Yeol, during the Pacific Rim Airpower Conference in Bangkok Sept. 11. Park was one of three LEAP participants selected to assist delegates to the annual meeting of senior air operations officers and enlisted leaders from the air forces of the Indo-Pacific region.

In fact, Pel, Sebold and Park's participation at PACRIM was a prime example of how LEAP provides the Air Force with linguistically and culturally competent Airmen, said program organizers. "We have a great relationship with our partners in PACAF," said, Capt. Breezy Long, LEAP Operations Branch chief. "We were looking for real-world opportunities for some of the more advanced LEAP participants, and we asked our contacts at PACAF if there were any upcoming requirements that would be a good fit." The PACRIM Airpower Symposium was a natural choice, said Maj. Darin Gregg, one of the Symposium organizers.

"Having a LEAP Airman that is both fluent in the language and experienced in their trade allows us to cover detailed items that are not easily translated," Gregg said. "Standard language programs do not typically cover complex maintenance, operations and logistics ideas, so a LEAP Airman in these specialties is in a better position than a standard translator to explain these concepts."

While at the Symposium, the LEAP participants assisted the delegates from Cambodia, Mongolia, and Korea. The assistance was greatly appreciated and increased understanding, said Maj. Gen. Som Yom, deputy chief of staff of the Cambodian Air Force, who worked with Pel during the event. "At some points, we need to have it expressed in our own language because we couldn't get the deeper meaning of the presentations or discussions," Som Yom said. "He increased the level of understanding for me. With 21 nations here, there are many speaking dialects. I can understand the English words, but because of the different dialects and the speed of speech, I cannot get 100 percent, so I would ask for his help."

Chief Master Sergeant of the Korean Air Force Lee Jung Yeol worked with Park, and he echoed the value of the LEAP participants' attendance. "If Capt. Park was not here, I would still be able to get the general idea of the briefings but not the detailed understanding that is necessary. Our discussions during have helped me conceptualize it down to the more detailed level," Jung Yeol said. "And it was also nice to have a fellow Korean here." Jung Yeol also illustrated the relationship building that came from having a LEAP participant to help, saying, "I would like to especially thank the U.S. military for providing a linguist so my experience could be expanded. I will always be grateful for this opportunity."

The LEAP participants were also grateful to have the opportunity to use their language abilities outside of a training environment. "As part of the LEAP program, I understand the culture and the language and that is invaluable to developing relationships in the region," Pel said. "I am glad I am part of the program and I got to help out as much as possible out here in an actual operational environment."

AFCLC faculty article delivers key findings on culture education

Dr. Lauren Mackenzie, Dr. Patricia Fogarty and Dr. Angelle Khachadoorian, all of the Air Force Culture and Language Center Culture Branch, were recently published by EDUCAUSE Review. EDUCAUSE Review published the scholars' article, "A Model for Online Military Culture Education: Key Findings and Best Practices."

The article details the AFCLC's two online, self-paced culture education courses, and highlights key topics including discussion of how the courses' real-life scenarios and their flexibility have proven key to student success and retention. The full article can be viewed at www.educause.edu.

Negotiation course available now on JKO

A new course is now available on Joint Knowledge Online to support the continuing need for Department of Defense members to effectively engage with partners in culturally-diverse environments. The Defense Language and National Security Education Office, the JKO Program office and Air University's Negotiation Center of Excellence have developed the Cross-Cultural Negotiations course to help DoD members improve these key leadership skills. The CCN course is an interactive learning experience that gives users a framework to determine and employ essential negotiation strategies.

Key objectives covered in the course include the language of negotiations, cultural cues affecting negotiations, and engaging skills lab exercises where students can apply knowledge from the course. To access JKO and take the CCN course, see their website at <https://jkodirect.jten.mil> and search for "negotiations." There are three separate mission-specific courses available.



Photograph by Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Ms. Cara Aghajanian (seated, in blue), director of the Air Force Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Program Office, visited the Air Force Culture and Language Center in September. AFCLC leadership and faculty briefed Aghajanian on current projects and other topics of interest from the Center.



Courtesy photograph

Mr. Hank Finn, Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence, addresses students at the Army Warrant Officer Career College at Ft. Rucker, Ala. Mr. Finn and Dr. Will Dulaney, Air Force Culture and Language Center professor of organizational communication, traveled to Ft. Rucker in September to present a one-day seminar on cross-cultural negotiations for senior Army Warrant Officers. The NCE works with the Army WOCC on a regular basis to deliver this specialty curriculum.

SENEGAL,

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and played “store.” They found containers around the house, filled them with water, and played “house.” This ability to make the most of things was not particular to my household. I lived right on the neighborhood basketball court and soccer field. These were not state of the art sports complexes, but the individuals who played treated each game like a competition. Guys would show up and form teams, assign referees, and play competitive games (and abide by the rules). Kids would play in plastic sandals--no cleats, no shin-guards, but they still played their hearts out, as if they were on the competitive field. They made the most of their circumstances. When I think about the piles of toys in my house that don't get played with, it makes me cringe. Even the very poor in our country are very blessed.

Dislike #1: Getting “Toubab'd” (our own linguistic invention).

In Wolof, one of the most widely-spoken languages in Senegal, “toubab” is the term used for a white person. It is not a derogatory term; it just means “white person”. I was one of only four “toubabs” in my neighborhood. Although I tried to blend in, wearing long skirts and conservative clothing, it was so obvious that I was a stranger. We always joked when we went to the market or when we needed to bargain with a taxi driver for a fare, that we should take a fourth of the price they were telling us, and that's what the real “non-tourist” price would be. That could be frustrating -- like when I got completely ripped off when exchanging my money right after getting off the plane (totally got “Toubab'd”).

Love #2: The food.

The Senegalese make some delicious dishes with the same basic ingredients: fish, rice, onions, and spices. Somehow they find creative ways to make these same ingredients into new meals. The cook their fish whole, with the skin on, and they fry it in oil in a pan over a propane gas tank (like the kind we put under our gas grills here). The term for this traditional dish of fish and rice is thiebou dieune. The first couple of times I ate it, I loved it.

Dislike #2:

The food. No matter how delicious thiebou dieune is, it gets old after a while. I ate thiebou dieune for every lunch and dinner every day of my entire Senegalese experience, with the exception of four special meals, when I ate chicken, lamb, and beef (with rice). I also almost never ate fruit or vegetables while I was there.

Love #3: The faith of the people.

Senegal is 95 percent Muslim. This means they take time

five times a day to pray. Islam guides many of the cultural norms. What impressed me the most was that people are very tolerant of those belonging to other religions. It was not atypical to see a Muslim married to a Catholic. The people are very faithful, but they are not extremists. It was refreshing to see how peacefully different religions could co-exist.

Dislike #3: How awkward I felt as a female.

Senegalese culture does not repress women, but our American idea of what women do is different than their traditional view. Please do not misunderstand me. There are Senegalese women who work outside of the home and who are well-respected in the community. One of our other sponsors, Tata (Aunt) Abbey, always worked outside of the home. She is well-educated, fluent in several languages, and has a great knowledge of the western lifestyle. She is well-respected. But she is the exception to the rule. Generally speaking, women are not as encouraged to get an education, and they learn the traditional roles of wife and mother from an early age. I have a great respect for women who work in the home, who are wives and mothers and make that their life's work. I also have a great appreciation for education and the freedoms that I have been given as an American woman. I almost never mentioned that I was in the military, let alone a pilot, unless someone directly asked me. And when they did, it just blew their minds.

Love #4: The people I met.

Cheikh (pronounced “Cher”) is an 18-year-old Mauritanian man who works at his father's Senegalese convenience stand in the summers. He works every day from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m., selling convenience items like phone cards, sodas, and water. He works incredibly hard. He is shy, but sweet, and you can ask him questions about his culture and get honest answers. Cheikh's stand was just outside the walls of the house of my friend and RAS trainee, Aaron. Aaron made it his mission to expose Cheikh to western culture. Cheikh had his first experiences with ice cream, pizza (his favorite) and hamburgers while we were there. Seeing someone discover even those simple things was such a joy. When I left, Cheikh spent his own hard-earned money (and he didn't make a lot) and bought me a Koran translated in French. It is one of the most heartfelt gifts I have ever received, and I will always treasure it. Cheikh is the face of Africa for me – so much potential if he is only given the opportunity.

Africa is alive. I can't quite put my finger on it. African culture is so old, but is still so raw in a lot of ways. It doesn't feel stale and mundane. It feels new and fresh and vital. I can't really explain it. You'll just have to visit, and I'm grateful that I had the chance to do so through LEAP.



Photograph by Mr. Timothy Frantz

1st Lt. Gordon Randall, finance officer for the Language Enabled Airman Program, recently brought home four trophies from the U.S. Armed Forces Open Chess Tournament. Randall bested 34 players to achieve a four-way tie for first in the main event, a two-way tie for first in the ten-minute Blitz tournament, first place in the team event, as well as earning the award for the best sacrifice move. The scores pushed his ranking in the United States Chess Federation to "Expert," and placed him in the top five percent of the USCF.



Photograph courtesy of Air University Public Affairs

The leadership, faculty and staff of the Air Force Culture and Language Center and the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence recently posed for a group photo in front of the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

ABOUT THE AFCLC

AFCLC VISION: The Air Force Culture and Language Center, as the acknowledged experts, will lead the U.S. Air Force in building a cross-culturally competent Total Force to meet the demands of the Service's dynamic global mission.

AFCLC MISSION: The Air Force Culture and Language Center creates and executes language, region and cultural learning programs for Total Force Airmen, and provides the Service with the subject matter expertise required to institutionalize these efforts.

The Air Force Culture and Language Center was founded at Air University in April 2006, embracing the Air Force Chief of Staff's intention to improve Airmen's cross-cultural competence.

In April 2007, the Air Force further demonstrated its commitment to culture learning by selecting cross-cultural competence as the centerpiece of Air University's re-accreditation efforts. In December 2007, the Center was made responsible for culture and language training, as well as education, across the entire Air Force.

Air University's Spaatz Center for Officer Education hosts the AFCLC.

CONTACT US

600 Chennault Circle Bldg 1405

Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

Phone: 334-953-7729

Fax: 334-953-1614

E-mail: afclc.outreach@us.af.mil

Follow us on Twitter @AFCLC or Facebook at www.facebook.com/airforcecultureandlanguagecenter

Public Website: culture.af.mil

For Common Access Card users on the .gov or .mil domains, language, region and culture training is available at <https://wwwmil.maxwell.af.mil/afclc>.

