



AFCLC supports African Airman alumni event

By Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team
and

Airman 1st Class William J. Blankenship

Air University Public Affairs

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – “To help us see things through your eyes,” said Dr. William Dulaney, the Air Force Culture and Language Center’s professor of organizational communications. “That’s the whole reason I’m here.” These words, spoken to an assembly of senior officers from several African nations, summarized the AFCLC’s support at the African Airman Alumni Symposium here in June.

Nearly forty air force officers representing 16 countries attended the three-day event, sponsored by U.S. Air Forces Africa and hosted by the Air War College. All attendees were prior graduates of Air University schools, returning to Alabama to discuss a variety of airpower topics with leaders from across the U.S. Air Force.

The symposium advanced communication and the relationships between all attendees and organizers, according to one participant. “Partnerships don’t exist as a one time affair,” said Maj. Gen. Placid Diratsagae Segokgo, from Botswana. “You build and work on those relationships so they build and strengthen them by interacting, and that is exactly what we are doing here. We get a chance to interact and reflect on the challenges that we are facing, not only in Africa, but globally.”

The AFCLC played a key role in the event, with faculty members serving as facilitators during the conference’s small group discussions. Additionally, AFCLC staff attended and recorded research notes throughout the event. The center became involved when Col. Mark Brown, the AWC’s lead planner for the symposium, requested the AFCLC’s expertise in moderating the small group breakout sessions.

“I thought the AFCLC was the ideal organization to lead the seminar sessions, since many on the staff have expertise

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Photographs by Mr. Micah Cordes



(Above left) Attendees at the African Airman Alumni Symposium interact during a break between sessions June 12 at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. Nearly forty officers representing 16 countries attended the three-day event. (Above right) Dr. William Dulaney, the Air Force Culture and Language Center’s professor of organizational communication, facilitates a small-group discussion between participants at the AAAS at the Air War College June 12. All participants at the AAAS were alumni of Air University schools.

Colleagues,

Despite being in a very difficult sequester environment, the Air Force Culture and Language Center is pressing ahead with its mission to provide quality language, region and culture education and training products to Total Force Airmen. This more restrictive financial environment has had some positive outcomes. It has forced us to determine which of our efforts hold the highest priorities. It has also made us realize the importance of reaching out to LRC partners to find synergistic endeavors.

At AFCLC, our cooperation with other organizations, both internal and external to the Air Force, has never been stronger. Our Region and Culture Division and Negotiation Center of Excellence not only partner with the Air Advisor Academy and USAF Special Operation School on several teaching events, but have embarked on the co-development of a cross-cultural Air Advisor Field Guide. This will be the first-ever Air Force instrument of its kind designed to enable Airmen to achieve inter-



personal success while engaging in Building Aviation Partnership activities as well as other aviation enterprises. AFCLC also recently partnered with Air University and AFRICOM in facilitating the African Airmen Alumni Symposium. This served as an outstanding example of the value in being able to communicate effectively across varying cultures. I would also be remiss if I didn't mention the partnership between AFCLC, AETC/A3Q, and AF/A1DV in the development of the draft Air Force Language, Region and Culture Learning Strategy and Master Plan, forthcoming soon. The takeaway is that we are stronger through combining our unique talents in the execution of our very important mission set.

Our Language Enabled Airman Program continues to set new records and execute many "firsts", including the first-ever LEAP selection board solely for enlisted Airmen. After careful evaluation from experts across the Service, 199 enlisted Airmen were selected, nearly tripling the number of enlisted Airmen in LEAP.

In the immediate future, AFCLC is looking forward to robust participation in the new academic year at AU, where our faculty will provide instruction and facilitation in 30-plus core and elective courses and select instructional periods throughout the AU Professional Military Education and Professional Continuing Education curriculum.

In closing, I would like to observe that demand for our products and services remains incredibly strong stronger than ever. The USAF, and the Department of Defense as a whole, consider our mission as critical to the success of the force. As always, thank you for the support that you give us in meeting these needs.

Mr. Jay Warwick
AFCLC Director

COMMENTARY

Learning our own lessons at AAAS

By Mr. David O'Meara
United States Air Force
Negotiation Center of Excellence

Editor's Note: Mr. David O'Meara recently worked as a moderator and researcher for the Air Force Culture and Language Center's team supporting the U.S. Air Forces in Europe/Air Forces Africa-sponsored African Airmen Alumni Symposium held at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Simply put - the mission of the Air Force Culture and Language Center is to provide Airmen relevant language,

region, and culture education and to serve, as required, as subject matter experts in these same areas. We were recently provided a "golden opportunity" to do just that, through our work at the African Airman Alumni Symposium.

This week-long gathering brought 39 senior officers from 16 African Air Forces to Alabama's River Region for an opportunity to further relationships, share time, and discuss the regional application of airpower. Uniquely, these officers were all graduates of at least one of Maxwell's Professional Military Education schools. All had attended Air War College or Air

Command and Staff College. As usual in a cross-cultural engagement, much of the teaching came from our guests as we discussed their national and Air Force concerns, challenges, and problems.

Our personal and group engagement quickly validated some of the basic cross-cultural lessons we teach every day. To set the stage for meaningful communications, we had to rapidly assess the environment and examine our personal and group biases. No matter what we do or how we structure a Western-style meeting, our interactions remain founded on multi-

The views expressed in this newsletter are of the authors and not of the U.S. Air Force, Department of Defense, or any other government agency.

Language Enabled Airman Program announces spring 2013 selections

First enlisted-only selection board names 199 Airmen to program

By Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Air Force Culture and Language Center Outreach Team

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. -- The U.S. Air Force Culture and Language Center recently released the results of the first-ever Language Enabled Airman Program selection board solely for enlisted Airmen. After careful evaluation from experts across the Service, 199 enlisted Airmen were selected to participate in LEAP, nearly tripling the number of enlisted Airmen in the program.

The program aims to sustain, enhance and utilize the existing foreign language skills of Airmen. As LEAP participants, these Airmen will receive language learning opportunities throughout their careers.

“The program seeks to develop cross-culturally competent leaders with working-level foreign language proficiency – leaders who can meet Air Force global mission requirements,” said Mr. Zachary Hickman, the AFCLC’s Language Division chief. “We select Airmen from jobs across the Air Force. They stay in their ‘day jobs,’ but they gain a level of language and culture learning that allows them to do their ‘day jobs’ in another language and in another country.”

More than 300 applications were received, and the Airmen selected had skills in 42 different languages. Of those selected, the most common language ability was Spanish, but other languages represented were Arabic, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Punjabi, Swahili and Vietnamese. Airmen were evaluated on not just their language skills, but also their demonstrated ability and potential to be a quality participant.

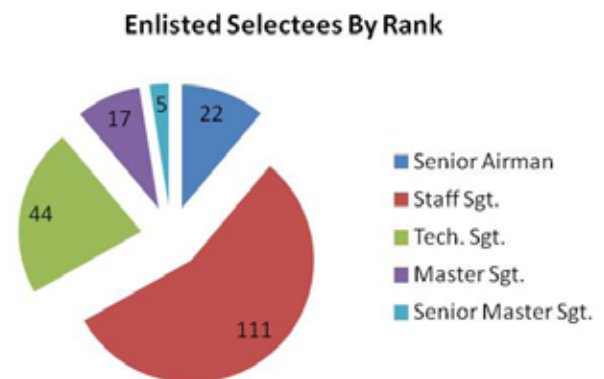
“We look at more than just the ability to speak another language,” Hickman said. “We look at the whole per-

son – their performance reports, their prior education and background, as well as endorsement comments from their supervisors. It all adds up to tell us that a person is not just able, but is also willing, to use their language skills for the Air Force.”

The program administrators and selection board members chose the most qualified candidates by matching the Airmen’s skills with manning guidance from the Air Staff. Additionally, applicants possessing low-density language skills were given special consideration to build the breadth and depth of LEAP resources for future contingencies.

LEAP began as a pilot program in 2009. Until recently, new candidates consisted primarily of officers and officer candidates. The next selection board for officers will be held in fall 2013. The program is accepting applications from officers and officer candidates now through Sept. 5. The next selection board for enlisted candidates will be held in spring 2014. Interested candidates should ensure they have current scores on their Defense Language Proficiency Tests or Oral Proficiency Interviews. For more information, see the AFCLC’s website at www.culture.af.mil/leap.

Spring 2013 LEAP Selection Board



“We select Airmen from jobs across the Air Force. They stay in their ‘day jobs,’ but they gain a level of language and culture learning that allows them to do their ‘day jobs,’ in another language and in another country.”

Mr. Zachary Hickman
AFCLC Language Division chief



Photograph by Mr. Micah Cordes

Mr. David O'Meara (shown far left), Negotiation Center of Excellence, takes notes during the African Airman Alumni Symposium, held at Maxwell Air Force Base in June. O'Meara was one of several Air Force Culture and Language Center staff members who provided research and facilitation support.

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dimensional personal and group relationships. We needed to develop open communications in a trusting environment.

The African officers arrived with a strong skill set. They spoke English and were highly educated. Many were professionally-trained pilots, aircrew, or logistics officers, and they had lived in our region before. They were culturally well prepared to engage. Our ability to quickly build relationships was greatly assisted by a common "Air Force" group identity.

Basic LRC lessons were quickly validated during the symposium interactions. We must take appropriate general and specific cross-cultural steps to encourage and enable relationship building. All parties must first assess the others' individual, group, regional, and continental perspectives. Only with these perspectives can we establish basic cross-cultural relations and adapt Western schedules and objectives.

The symposium's second lesson was the cross-cultural aspect of time. In culture education, we have written volumes on how time is viewed, used, and judged. As we know, time can be an enemy or friend during cross-cultural engagement. How much time we allocate or present to our international partners is a critical question.

Our organizations, structures, and culture drive well-known and clear time management objectives. We set schedules and deadlines, and then move on to our next task,

objective, or event. Often, we turn off our current interpersonal communication process to reflect or respond on a mobile digital device to another task or engagement. This common Western habit devalues our partners. Our culture highly values the ability to quickly multi-task. It is, however, not a wise method in a cross-cultural setting.

Our cultural values must be considered, and even controlled, if we plan to successfully build long-term partners. Time must be wisely considered and allocated to allow open communications and establish foundations for future engagement. Also, our senior leaders must be educated on time's impact on the cross-cultural process and how devoting time now will result in stronger future relationships and partnerships.

We discussed many challenging topics during the symposium including regional engagement; training, equipping, and maintaining aircraft; and the application of airpower in a highly resource-constrained environment. Discussing how the U.S. Air Force can assist African Air Forces identified many difficult challenges, but perhaps also some basic paths,

to success.

The application of airpower cannot be done in our traditional manner. The basic tenets of airpower still apply, but the cost is too high. We can, however, focus and combine lower-cost assets and technologies to target unique airpower capabilities.

Techniques such as flexible and responsive airborne surveillance can help African Air Forces counter problems such as human trafficking, narcotics smuggling or poaching. Establishing an independent U.S. Air Force was a long and tough fight. African airpower leaders need our support to help them show the value, utility, and operational and strategic impact of smartly applied and fiscally realistic airpower capabilities.

The symposium offered an incredible opportunity to engage with and learn from African leaders. We were also reminded of the powerful LRC lessons we teach on cross-cultural engagement. We build trust by engaging in group and personal relationship building; we give the gift of time and attention; we commit to listening and understanding the concerns and interests of all parties; and we share a common commitment to using airpower to address difficult problems.

It was a privilege to take part in this symposium. If we apply its lessons, we can provide lower-cost, highly-flexible air resources that will make a difference for our African partners' national interests.

AFCLC offers free online courses worth CCAF credit

Applications for the Air Force Culture and Language Center's Fall 2013 "Introduction to Culture" course will be accepted Sept. 19 through Oct. 2. The application window may close early if the course is full. The course runs from Oct. 10 through Jan. 15.

This free, online course fulfills three resident hours of either social science or program elective credit required for Community College of the Air Force degrees. Only enlisted active duty, Air Reservists or Air National Guardsmen who are eligible to pursue degrees in the CCAF program may apply.

Additionally, the AFCLC will offer its "Introduction to Cross-Cultural Communication" course this fall, with registration beginning Oct. 17. More information is available at: www.culture.af.mil/courses.

Country guides available via AFCLC secure website

The Air Force Culture and Language Center has 15 different Expeditionary Culture Field Guides on countries in Africa, as well as guides on Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines.

These guides help prepare U.S. forces for deployment to culturally-complex environments by introducing the cross-cultural knowledge necessary to operate in any environment, and then addressing the unique cultural features of particular societies.

ECFGs are available for download via the AFCLC's Common Access Card-enabled website at: <https://wwwmil.maxwell.af.mil/afclc>. This site can only be accessed by CAC-enabled computers on the .gov or .mil domains. For more information, contact afclc.region@us.af.mil.



Photograph by Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Lt. Col. Joanne McDougal, an Air Force flight nurse, recently visited the Air Force Culture and Language Center to help with the Center's Cultural Studies Project. Lt. Col. McDougal has extensive experience in a variety of medical duties and has deployed to Panama, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany and Qatar, as well as traveled to a number of other countries, including China and Greece. McDougal is shown with Dr. Patricia Fogarty, the AFCLC's professor of cross-cultural relations. For more information on the CSP, and how to participate, see www.culture.af.mil/CSP.



Photograph by Ms. Jodi L. Jordan

Language Enabled Airman Program participants (from left) Capt. Eleanor Brown-Dymkoski, 2nd Lt. Paulina Rudolph, and 2nd Lt. Nicole Gilmore, participate in a French language lesson during a Language Intensive Training Event at Maxwell Air Force Base in June. LEAP is accepting applications from officers and officer candidates now through Sept. 5 for the fall 2013 Selection Board. More information is available at www.culture.af.mil/LEAP.

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in cross-cultural communication,” Brown said. “Not just anyone can effectively moderate a discussion with such a diverse group; there was significant potential for diversions, culture clashes and fruitless arguments. I was very pleased with Dr. Dulaney’s willingness to lead the AFCLC’s participation, and I was also very glad to have such a team of experts guiding each seminar.”

If the AFCLC’s participation was important to the symposium, the opportunity was just as much appreciated by the Center participants, Dulaney said. “This effort provided a unique opportunity for AFCLC faculty and staff to engage in real-world cultural engagements with our African partner-nation colleagues,” Dulaney said. “Being there allowed us to further validate many of the concepts we teach in our courseware. For example, we’ve developed Expeditionary Culture Field Guides on several countries in Africa. The symposium was an opportunity to confirm many of the cultural concepts we’ve highlighted in those ECFGs.”

According to Brown, the cross-cultural aspect of the symposium was of “make or break” importance. “The whole point was engagement – strengthening partnerships and communicating U.S. goodwill to these African air forces,” Brown said. “Any sort of condescending tone would have

been fatal to the effort; likewise, failure to listen and understand the issues of these African air forces would have been crippling.”

Sentiments expressed by participants were echoed by the AFCLC researchers, who noted a strong desire for viable communications, both among African Airmen alumni and their U.S. partners. “The alumni want to continue the growth of the important relationships they forged during their U.S. Air Force professional military education,” said Ms. Mary Newbern, the AFCLC’s Region Branch chief and one of the discussion facilitators. “After analyzing the research we collected, we at the AFCLC had some ideas about how to help, including expanding participation in regional African air exercises to include African countries from across the continent, not just those with an active role in the exercise. Another recommendation could be for USAFE/AFAFRICA to establish mobile training teams of stakeholders from across the Air Force to educate and train our African partners on areas of interest to them.”

Data collected by the AFCLC will provide the framework for future AFAFRICA Regional Air Chiefs Conferences and symposia, Newbern added. Additionally, the Center plans to use the After Action Report from the symposium as the foundational instrument for institutionalizing an AFCLC regional-cultural publication series.

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 hosts the AFCLC. The AFCLC’s Language, Region and Culture Departments are staffed with a team of highly-qualified military and civilian experts. Since 2008, the AFCLC has partnered with the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence, which is co-located with the AFCLC, at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

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