AFCLC Makes History with Release of AU’s First Public Mobile App

The AFCLC’s new culture field guide app, shown running on a Samsung Galaxy Note 3. (AFCLC photo by Brandon M. Bridges)

by Brandon M. Bridges
Air Force Culture and Language Center

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – For years, the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) has produced and maintained a collection of pocket-sized culture field guides, each covering a different country in painstaking detail. This summer, AFCLC took the guides to the next level: making them available via mobile app.

The app’s release represents a major milestone, not just for the AFCLC but for The Air University (AU) as well. Not only does it mark the first time an AFCLC function has been expressed via mobile app, but this is also the first mobile app from AU that has reached the general public.

“A lot of work went into getting this app together,” said Ms. Mary Newbern, AFCLC’s program manager for the mobile app project. “We’ve had help from people all around the country. We’re especially grateful to Hill AFB for helping us get it up onto the Apple store. This really was a team effort.”

Culture Field Guides
Each of the AFCLC’s culture guides is a pocket-sized handbook, which provides an in-depth look at a specific country. The detailed and carefully researched information is organized according to the Air Force’s twelve domains.
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.

The Air Force Research Institute hosts the AFCLC.

AFCLC VISION
The Air Force Culture and Language Center, as the acknowledged experts, will lead the US 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.

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On the Cover

A multinational group of students from the International Officer School (IOS) pose for a photo before a lecture at the Air Command and Staff College (AFSC) at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. The lecture, intended to acculturate foreign officers with American culture, was one of many given by AFCLC faculty at adjacent schools. (AFCLC photo by Brandon M. Bridges)

About the AFCLC

Colleagues,

I’m amazed at how professionally everyone performs here day after day. I’ve been at AFCLC for several months now, and everywhere I turn I see hardworking and exceptionally capable people doing great work as a matter of normal business.

This has been a productive and exciting quarter for the AFCLC. We’ve seen the release of our very first mobile app on both the Android and Apple OS, which is not only a major achievement for the AFCLC, but which is also the first mobile app in all of The Air University made available to the general public. All of us should be proud to be a part of such a cutting-edge innovation.

For the first time, we’re delivering content that Airmen need, in a format they want. In the finest traditions of the Air Force, this app represents the culmination of a true collaborative effort between people from Hill AFB, the SURVIAC team, and the Outreach and Expeditionary Skills teams from the AFCLC.

We’ve also continued to see high levels of interest in our two online courses. Many probably don’t realize the sheer volume of work that goes into making those courses a reality, but I want to express my appreciation to the entire education support team for their dedication. Every phase of our courses, from enrollment to completion, requires hard work and constant attention to detail. To their credit, these courses always run smoothly.

I’d also like to recognize the tireless members of our Language Division for their hard work, now under the leadership of Lt. Col. Eric Graham. In particular, our language learning program facilitators support 88 different language venues. Like our online courses, every piece of what the Language team does requires consistency, attention to detail, and a great deal of hard work and long hours. But, instead of backing down from these increasing demands, I see everyone stepping up and meeting the challenges as they come, no matter how difficult those challenges might be.

As we continue to move forward, I know I can count on all of you to continue to give your best, and to continue to make the AFCLC the Air Force’s center of excellence for all things culture. Every leader believes the team they have is the very best; I say that with certainty.

For me, the Air Force Culture and Language Center team consists of consummate professionals delivering superior products and services as a matter of daily business. I’m honored to represent such an exceptional team of experts.

Sincerely,

David W. Ronan, Ph.D.
Director, Air Force Culture and Language Center

People Matter

Follow us on Twitter @AFCLC or Facebook at: http://www.facebook.com/airforcecultureandlanguagecenter
Subscribe on DVIDS: http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/AFCLC/
Public Web site: http://culture.af.mil/
LEAP Supports State Partnership Program SMEE for First Time, Provides Key International Disaster-Relief Training

By Brandon M. Bridges

Air Force Culture and Language Center

WEST VIRGINIA - The Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) has long served as a lunchpail in fostering relationships between the United States and its allies. In June 2015, however, that support has taken on an entirely new significance, as LEAP began supporting the US National Guard’s (Army and Air Force) State Partnership Program (SPP).

History

The SPP traces its origins to the early 1990s, around the time of the fall of the Iron Curtain. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, many countries in the eastern bloc began requesting state partners. Eventually, requests began coming in from all over the world. One such country is Peru.

In 1996, at the request of the Peruvian government, the West Virginia Air National Guard (WVANG) began providing its assistance through the SPP. WVANG was chosen specifically because the two share a number of geographical traits: mountainous terrain that makes some areas and population pockets difficult to reach, along with a predominance of the mining sector in the local economy.

In response, the US sent Soldiers from the National Guard with relevant experience in the civilian world; such as attorneys, police officers, firefighters, and more. The support they provided was so well-received and so successful that eventually other countries started requesting state partners. Eventually, the Peruvians came to West Virginia as part of the State Partnership Program, to receive training on disaster-relief operations. The joint training was supported by participants of the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP).

A group of Soldiers and Airmen from the West Virginia National Guard speak with members of a visiting group of Peruvian engineers. The Peruvians came to West Virginia as part of the State Partnership Program, to receive training on disaster-relief operations. The joint training was supported by participants of the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP). (Photo courtesy West Virginia National Guard)

The Peruvians had also expressed an interest in learning about Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. For that, they visited several dedicated training centers in WV to include the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center and the nearby SAR Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Training Center. Both sites provided ample opportunity for the Peruvians to observe firsthand the materials, structures, and safety protocols used.

The LEAP Connection

LEAP’s participation in joint events like this is critical in part because they complement existing, scarce language assets. Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs) are based not only on the language capability and cultural understanding, but also on the technical issues or military terminology that can be difficult for general-purpose translators to interpret.

That, according to MAJ Willis, is where LEAP adds value.

Bilateral Engagement

According to MAJ Thomas E. Willis, SPP coordinator for Peru: “In the area of Disaster Response, West Virginia is one of our nation’s best at handling interagency operations to confront a natural disaster, and so the Peruvians frequently request our expertise in preparing for natural disasters.”

The SMEE, which took place from June 6-12, involved nine Peruvian engineers, including NCOs, and officers as highly ranked as warrant officers and O-6 colonels. The group represented engineering units from all across Peru.

Joining the training mission from LEAP were Capt Miguel Gaytan, a development engineer stationed at Maxwell AFB, and SSgt George Hernandez Rodriguez, an Electrical Power Production Craftman stationed at RAF Alconbury in England.

Capt Miguel Gaytan (left), a participant of the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) speaks to a visiting Peruvian Soldier during a joint training operation in West Virginia. (Photo courtesy West Virginia National Guard)

That, according to Capt Gaytan, was remaining flexible in his approach to the subject matter. While he did acknowledge that he forgot several words along the way, “I still didn’t focus on getting the exact words translated, but focused on the process.”

The key, according to Capt Gaytan, was knowing that he forgot several words along the way. “I just described the process and got the message across that way,” said Gaytan. “I didn’t focus on getting the exact words translated, but focused on the process.”

That, according to MAJ Willis, is where LEAP adds value.

A Spanish speaker himself, Willis explained that after only a few hours’ worth of translation work, most interpreters need a break. Having two interpreters allowed each the needed respite, while the other took over, thus allowing the mission to continue without interruption.

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A Spanish speaker himself, Willis explained that after only a few hours’ worth of translation work, most interpreters need a break. Having two interpreters allowed each the needed respite, while the other took over, thus allowing the mission to continue without interruption. MAJ Willis also said that the support from LEAP was more than a simple boost of manpower; the participants had prepared themselves well, read all the briefings, familiarized themselves with terminology, knew exactly what to support.

“They went the extra mile,” added Willis. “They weren’t simply interpreting during the hounded events. They also built relationships during meals, during rides to the next location, during the walk to the airfields. It makes too much sense since we’re all military, the LEAP participants share a brother-in-arms link with the Peruvians.”

Indeed, engagement between the LEAP trainers and the Peruvian delegation wasn’t limited to duty-related exchanges. “We also took them shopping after they were done with briefings,” said SSgt Hernandez Rodriguez. “and we did a cultural trip to Washington, DC. That trip to DC really opened their eyes to the difference in culture, especially how we take care of our fallen heroes.”

Path Ahead

For his part, Capt Gaytan credited his long-time membership in LEAP as a major contributing factor. “The success of our mission was built upon all the different experiences and training that the LEAP office has provided,” he said. “At the end of 2013, LEAP sent me to Ecuador for a one-month training session. I learned a lot about their culture, customs, likes and dislikes. Since Peru is a neighboring country, a lot of those things are the same, and because of what I learned in Ecuador I was able to connect with the Peruvian delegation.”

While the June SMEE was one of LEAP’s first opportunities to support the State Partnership Program, by no means was it the last. “We have another event with six Peruvians coming up in July,” said MAJ Willis. “This time we’re going to be working on a joint interagency operations center SMEE. We have two more LEAP interpreters coming out for that, and we’re certainly looking forward to working with LEAP again.”
**CLTR201: Introduction to Culture (ITC)**

ITC is a lower-level college course for enlisted Airmen, that presents students with basic concepts and skills to build cross-cultural competence. The course explores the many aspects of human life influenced by culture, including family relationships, religion and belief systems, sports, health practices, history and myth, and more.

Since its inception in 2009, ITC has received 17,866 applications. Don’t miss your chance—save these dates!

Next enrollment window:
15-28 Sep 2015

Next course date:
8 Oct 2015 - 13 Jan 2016

Interested in ITC? To learn more, call (334) 953-9292 or e-mail afclc.enroll@us.af.mil

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**CLTR202: Introduction to Cross-Cultural Communication (CCC)**

CCC is the second course offered by the AFCLC. Like ITC, it helps develop cross-cultural competence among Airmen, by helping Airmen better understand the process of communicating across cultural boundaries. The course includes learning units devoted to nonverbal communication, paralanguage, cross-cultural conflict styles, active listening, interaction skills, and more.

Since its inception in 2011, CCC has received 6,044 applications. Don’t miss your chance—save these dates!

Next enrollment window:
13-26 Oct 2015

Next course date:
5 Nov 2015 - 10 Feb 2016

Interested in CCC? To learn more, call (334) 953-9292 or e-mail afclc.enroll@us.af.mil

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*All statistics on this page current as of 13 Aug 2015*
News & Updates

Getting Started with the AFCLC’s New Mobile App*

Download the app. On an Apple or Android device, visit your app marketplace and search "Culture Guide." In the search results, look for the Air Force's "Downloaded Countries." Tap the cloud icon alongside the country name to download that country's field guide. (Download speeds vary by network and device.)

Select desired guides. Using the interactive map, locate and tap the country whose guide you want. Countries with available guides are marked with location icons.

Download content. Tap the cloud icon next to the country name to download that country's field guide. (Download speeds vary by network and device.)

Open guide. To open a downloaded guide, tap the country name under "Downloaded Countries." Tap a tile to access related content.

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App, continued from p.1

of culture for easy reference, and includes full-color photos as well as text.

By mid-August 2015, AFCLC will have created a total of 33 field guides, and delivered copies to deploying forces heading to locations in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific region, and Latin America.

The guides themselves have long been available in hardcopy format from the AFCLC. While they were later made available in PDF format via the Center's public Web site, the app makes them available directly to the Airmen who need them the most, in near real-time and almost anywhere in the world—without the need for separate files or third-party software.

How it Works

The app is available to users of devices powered by Apple’s iOS and Google’s Android operating systems. To get it, users need only visit their respective provider’s online marketplace—the App Store for iOS users, and the Google Play Store for Android users—and search for the app by name, “Culture Guide.” At that point, it can be installed and used just like any other mobile app.

“The notion of making our culture guides available through a mobile app like this is, in part, an effort to make them useful to the people who are going to need them most, in the way they most expect,” said Dr. David W. Ronan, Director of the AFCLC. “Who among us doesn’t have an iPhone or an Android device? How many of us use mobile apps for everything from banking to online shopping to managing our social media?”

“Air Force in providing modern, practical innovations. Simultaneously, the app illustrates outreach, portability, and a practical application of technology,” said Dr. Ronan, “all of which are cornerstones of the Air University’s innovation.”

As a function of outreach and a practical use of technology in particular, the app represents an excellent opportunity to reach the younger echelons of the Air Force, by providing content in a manner familiar to them.

“Today we have people using mobile apps for just about everything,” said Ms. Newbern. “We’re leading the way for Air University to get our culture out there like never before.”

*The visuals presented on this page depict the Android version only, and were generated from an early version of the app. Actual experience may vary depending upon your device and operating system.
Colleagues,

After two days at the Culture in Conflict symposium at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom (UK), I felt like I had found my “tribe” in the world of military PME. All the attendees and presenters were people who either teach about culture at military education institutions or are interested in the influence of culture on military planning and operations.

Unlike the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces, a North American conference on the PME-academia nexus that I was lucky enough to attend last fall, the Culture in Conflict symposium focuses solely on culture. The twenty presentations of the symposium included topics such as protecting culture education and training for military personnel, and students who specialize in measuring intercultural competence and with relationship building.

Through the presentations, I found that many PME institutions in the US and Europe are taking similar approaches to language, region, and culture education. We also share similar struggles in measuring intercultural competence and with creating PME that meets the needs of military personnel who must constantly balance security concerns with relationship building.

One surprise was that the AFCLC offers the only self-paced online course for enlisted Airmen; another was the NATO plan solely on culture. The twenty presentations of the symposium included topics such as protecting culture education and training for military personnel, and students who specialize in measuring intercultural competence and with relationship building.

Finally, since the Culture in Conflict symposium was held in the UK, I learned a lot about British culture! In general, I found the Brits and the other Europeans in general to be more reserved than most Americans are. However, once I started chatting with people and found common ground, most became quite animated and shared their thoughts on matters ranging from soccer (since I watch the Premier League) to where they like to go on holiday (vacation, to Americans), to even what culture! In general, I found the Brits and the other Europeans in general to be more reserved than most Americans are. However, once I started chatting with people and found common ground, most became quite animated and shared their thoughts on matters ranging from soccer (since I watch the Premier League) to where they like to go on holiday (vacation, to Americans), to even what they think of the future of the European Union.

In all, I had a great academic and intercultural experience!

Very Respectfully,

Dr. Patricia L. Fogarty
Assistant Professor, Cross-Cultural Relations
Air Force Culture and Language Center

In the Spotlight

AFCLC Takes Part in Culture in Conflict Symposium

by Brandon M. Bridges
Air Force Culture and Language Center

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – An important aspect of the mission of the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) is to build relationships and partnerships with its peers from around the world. In pursuit of that objective, faculty from the AFCLC regularly attend international conferences, such as the recent Culture in Conflict Symposium at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. Held annually, the conference provides a venue to share knowledge and experience for scholars, military personnel, and students who specialize in culture education and training for military organizations.

“The symposium offered an excellent and unique forum for exchange with colleagues who are also working in professional military education (PME) institutions, particularly those in Europe,' said Dr. Patricia Fogarty, Assistant Professor of Cross-Cultural Relations at the AFCLC. She was the sole attendee from the AFCLC at the symposium. "Seven individual countries were represented, along with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and even a group of representatives from Embry-Riddle University in Florida,” Dr. Fogarty added.

The symposium featured presentations from a number of scholars, including Dr. Fogarty, who presented a paper titled "An operational and social scientific approach to cross-cultural competency in 'Train, Advise, Assist' Missions." Dr. Fogarty co-wrote the paper with Dr. Will Dulaney, Professor of International Security Studies, Department of Interdisciplinary Security Studies, Air Command & Staff College.

The paper included the results of the last Air Advisor assessment for Afghanistan, from 2014. With representatives present from defense colleges in Denmark, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the UK, and Poland, there were opportunities to compare methodologies for evaluating Airmen's cultural knowledge and intercultural competence.

"We got good feedback," she said. "We were asked why certain variables were used to measure success, and what they mean. We were basically evaluating the evaluation, and proposing different methods of measurement.”

In addition to her presentation, Dr. Fogarty met with people from the UK Defence Center for Language and Culture. The exchange provided some unanticipated revelations, chiefly that the Defence Center is interested in developing a partnership with the AFCLC, as counterparts. The symposium offered an excellent and unique forum for exchange with colleagues who are also working in professional military education (PME) institutions, particularly those in Europe,' said Dr. Patricia Fogarty, Assistant Professor of Cross-Cultural Relations at the AFCLC. She was the sole attendee from the AFCLC at the symposium. "Seven individual countries were represented, along with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and even a group of representatives from Embry-Riddle University in Florida,” Dr. Fogarty added.

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LEAP Assists Brazilian Police with Prep for 2016 Olympic Games

by Brandon M. Bridges
Air Force Culture and Language Center

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. - The Air Force frequently calls upon participants of the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) to support its real-world training missions, which can include a wide variety of undertakings. Every so often, however, even within the confines of the Air Force mission, unique opportunities arise. In April 2015, just such an opportunity materialized: the call to support preparations for the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Purpose and Scope
The 2016 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXIst Olympiad, will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in August of next year. Commonly referred to as “Rio 2016,” the games have thus far attracted a total of 789 athletes from 118 nations. As with every major public event, security is a significant concern to the host nation; to help address those concerns, Brazilian officials turned to the United States.

Under the auspices of the National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP), the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) partnered with the West Virginia Air National Guard (WVANG) to provide language-enabled support to the Brazilian Federal Police Operational Aviation Division (CAOP), as part of a Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE).

That support took the form of two LEAP participants: Capt David Vilela, an MQ-9 pilot from Creech AFB, NV, and TSgt Fabio Horton, a Finance NCOIC from Hickam AFB, HI. Both are native-born Brazilian Portuguese speakers, and served as interpreters between WVANG and CAOP personnel.

On many occasions, Airmen are selected to support missions on the basis of their language proficiency, while their career fields only occasionally reflect the mission being supported. In the case of Capt Vilela in particular, both his language proficiency and his position were useful. In addition to being an Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) subject matter expert, Capt Vilela also holds one of the highest DLIPT/OPI scores in Portuguese in all of LEAP.

“I’m an Air Force combat pilot,” he said, “but I also speak Portuguese and Spanish, and understand the Latin American culture.”

“This is a perfect example of what we strive to do with LEAP,” said Mr. Chris Chesser, Language Intensive Training Event (LITE) Program Manager at the AFCLC. “These two Airmen are from very different backgrounds, neither of which deals with language capability, and neither was stationed anywhere close to West Virginia. LEAP was able to identify their language proficiency, and when this need came up, we were able to set up a LITE and get them to where they were needed.”

Security Cooperation
The initial request from the Brazilian officials was for ISR training expertise, through the International Affairs Office in the US Embassy in Brasilia. The WVANG was chosen to supply that expertise because their mission is similar to that of the CAOP: to conduct airborne ISR in cooperation with various law enforcement agencies, to conduct counter-narcotics operations.

While both LEAP participants provided support to the ISR training, TSgt Horton also supported chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) instruction. Both efforts were aimed to foster US-Brazilian interoperability and regional security during the 2016 Olympics, for which CAOP will provide airborne security.

The collaboration is notable not only because it involved international cooperation, but also because it marks the first time the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) has provided support to the State Partnership Program.

A Security Success
The work performed by Capt Vilela and TSgt Horton will, according to Lt Col W. Todd Miller, Director of the State Partnership Program-West Virginia, help increase the security of an entire ally nation, and increase its capabilities to fight crime and combat the international drug trade. Afterwards, mission organizers on all sides appeared very pleased with the outcome.

“The interpreters were extremely useful,” said Lt Col Miller. “They were a key factor to the huge success of the SMEE by translating the PowerPoint presentations and interpreting briefings, discussions, and conversations.”

Moreover, added Miller, involvement by the LEAP participants points a way forward for future foreign collaboration of this sort.

“This LITE set a great precedent, and was a successful proof of concept of the use of LITEs for international exchanges involving National Guard units,” he said. “Future meetings are being planned to continue what we’ve started.”

As for the LEAP participants themselves, Miller said they had positive feedback about the experience as well.

“They’ve never felt more useful than they did here,” he said. “They had such a great strategic, nation-wide impact, and further improved their technological language vocabulary, more so than they’d expected in their entire careers.”

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April 2015

While lending its support via the State Partnership Program (SPP) to Brazilian partners seeking assistance with security preparations for the 2016 Olympic Games, the West Virginia National Guard enlisted the assistance of participants of the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) to provide translation support. Capt David Vilela (MQ-9 pilot, Creech AFB, NV) and TSgt Fabio Horton (Finance NCOIC, Hickam AFB, HI), both native-born Brazilian Portuguese speakers, each played a pivotal role in making the SMEE a success.
Are you in LEAP? These important changes could affect you!

1. Updated SEI Policy

We are pleased to announce a new feature in the LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI) award process. Traditionally, participants must have participated in either a LITE or an eMentor course to qualify for a LEAP SEI. Now participants may request training credit for foreign language experiences equivalent to LEAP-funded training. Examples of qualifying experiences may include foreign language courses, a Language Designated Position (LDP), International PME, or language-use Deployment or TDY. LEAP participants are encouraged to enroll in eMentor courses and update their availability for LITEs. FY16 training opportunities are available now.

2. Publication of AFI 36-4002

A new AFI pertaining to Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) has been released, and is the first of its kind to deal only with language pay. Look for AFI 36-4002, Air Force Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus Program, dated 16 Jun 2015. The new instruction provides information on obtaining FLPB, and applies to all LEAP participants.

3. USAF Strategic Language List (SLL)

A new Air Force Strategic Language List (SLL) is out, dated 1 July 2015. This document is FOUO, and is not available on the AFCCLC public Web site, or on any public venue. Airmen interested in obtaining a copy should contact the Test Control Officer (TCO) at their installation.

Questions? E-mail: afclc.language@us.af.mil

Going abroad? Don’t leave home without a guide!

AFCLC maintains a collection of culture field guides spanning a total of 30 countries, with more on the way! Each guide is a pocket-sized cultural sourcebook designed to help familiarize you with the culture, history, and geography of a specific country, with content broken down along the USAF’s 12 cultural domains.

So before you travel, visit:

http://culture.af.mil/

and see if we have a guide for you!


Are you in LEAP? Are you on Facebook?

Be sure to join* our Facebook group! Learn about all things LEAP, share your experiences, connect with your fellow group members, ask questions and get answers.

http://www.facebook.com/groups/AFLEAP/

*Closed group; memberships are subject to verification by LEAP staff.
“Their presence among the Arabic students was unprecedented,” said Mr. Jason Durst, speaking on behalf of the 82d TRW. “The LEAP translators brought such unique credibility to the program by representing the United States Air Force in uniform while speaking to the students in their native language. The credibility displayed by these two Airmen is unlike anything we have seen in the past.”

According to Mr. Durst, the 82d TRW’s Country Liaison Officer (CLO) personnel speak Arabic, but don’t fully understand Air Force standards. Complicating the problem, contract personnel do not wear the uniform, and Air Force personnel lack Arabic language skills.

Filling that critical gap fell to the two LEAP participants. The support they provided has improved the 82d TRW’s ability to smoothly carry out the mission, in ways big and small.

“Tsgt El Bouab provided translation support to 11 RSAF ELT students for medical and dental appointments, and also helped ELT instructors more than once,” recalled Mr. Durst. “His daily translation duties ranged from explanation of standard, discipline, personal, health, wellness, safety, security and other random day-to-day issues.”

Lt Samhat’s support played an equally important role.

“He has managed to get our RSAF CLO to fully engage with their RSAF students, and the rest of our RSAF team,” said Mr. Durst. “Prior to his arrival, most of the interaction occurred at meetings. Now the RSAF CLO are out and about, looking for opportunities to assist any way they can.”

Altogether, the two Airmen from LEAP provided translation support to over 250 students. According to Mr. Durst, 82d TRW credits the work as more than simple translation support.

The key, he said, lies in helping build cross-cultural trust, and lay the foundation for the ELT program itself.

“Ultimately this isn’t simply about communicating the subject matter in a different language,” said Mr. Durst. “Whenever we have opportunities like this, we always try to build relationships. Being able to relate to our international partners in their own language is an excellent way to do that. I can think of no better way to show respect and make someone feel welcome.”

Durst was also quick to offer praise for both participants. “I made sure to pass along my appreciation for the job both officers and enlisted members of the 114th Civil Engineer Group, 7th Civil Engineer Group, and Mountain Recognizance Brigade, from both the Guatemalan Army and National Civil Police.”

While serving as the TOC’s interpreter, Lt Mitchell helped facilitate communication and coordination of a number of operations, including vehicle contracts, safety plans, and meetings with her counterparts from the Guatemalan Army.

She also translated a number of documents for the Guatemalan Army to use in future training exercises. One, a 30-page book entitled “The Defense of Duffer’s Drift,” is considered essential reading by many in the infantry world.

On one occasion, she even organized and served as the mistress of ceremonies during a training graduation.

The experience provided a welcome opportunity for her to practice her Spanish skills.

“I haven’t been immersed in a Spanish-speaking culture in the ten years I’ve been in the military,” she said. “The Air Force has given me a tremendous opportunity, while at the same time taking advantage of my skills as a native speaker to strengthen ties with our partners in Central America.”

TSGT El Bouab, Material Management NCO, stationed at Joint Base San Antonio-Guantanamo, was also quick to offer praise for both participants. “I made sure to pass along my appreciation for the job both officers and enlisted members of the 114th Civil Engineer Group, 7th Civil Engineer Group, and Mountain Recognizance Brigade, from both the Guatemalan Army and National Civil Police.”

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TF Salerno enabled the Guatemalan Army’s mission to Counter Transnational Orga- nized Crime (CTOC) by providing training on how to conduct border control operations, command post activities, gather intelligence to support operations, and perform search and interdiction operations. Training also included medical evacuation (MEDE- VAC) of personnel with injuries too serious to treat in the field.

“Having the opportunity to work with the Army infantry has been a great privilege. It’s not very often that we get to work with our sister services and see what they do in the field,” Mitchell recalled. “I became part of the unit. I did everything with them: eating, sleeping, PT. They took me in as one of their own.”

The mission was not without its challenges, however. While being bilingual did enable her to provide the needed support, Lt Mitchell acknowledged that serving as both a translator and interpreter proved difficult at times.

“Being bilingual, being able to translate, and being able to interpret are different things,” she explained. “Usually a person is either an interpreter or a translator, not both.”

The distinction lies in the particulars of how meaning is carried from one language into another. Maintaining the context of a statement can be challenging even under ideal circumstances; in situations involv-
Robins Med Tech Words, Actions Impactful a World Away

by Jenny Gordon
Robins AFB Public Affairs

ROBINS AFB, GA. – Attention to details, an inquisitive mind and commitment to duty and country – these are just a few words to describe Staff Sgt. Aliaksei Krasouski, a 78th Aerospace Medical Services technician at Robins. After he saw information online about the Air Force Culture and Language Center’s Language Enabled Airman Program, Krasouski felt he had much to contribute not only to an Air Force he serves, but a country that borders his native land of Belarus.

The Air Force selected him for LEAP, and as a fluent Ukrainian speaker, Krasouski was able to quickly meet standards in his selected language.

This past November, the AFCLC selected him to participate in a Language Intensive Training Event to the Ukraine, where he was connected with U.S. Security Cooperation officers. In April, he travelled to the Ukraine where he spent two months.

Due to his fluency in the Ukrainian and Russian languages, he was assigned to the U.S. Embassy’s Office of Defense Cooperation in Kyiv.


He joined the Air Force in 2009 looking for more educational opportunities. After serving at Eglin Air Force Base in the Florida Panhandle, he arrived at Robins where he’s currently the NCOIC of the Medical Standards Management Element in Flight Medicine.

He has since completed a degree through the Community College of the Air Force. And on the family front, he works just a few steps away from his wife, Staff Sgt. Patrice Neath, NCOIC of Women’s Health. The couple is expecting their second child.

Belarus, a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, is bounded by Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and the Ukraine to its south.

Growing up in Belarus, Krasouski spoke the native language of Belarusian. Like nearby Ukraine, Russian is also still widely spoken in a country that was once part of the former Soviet Union.

As an Air Force medical technician, the medical team he was a part of evaluated patients in the field was involved in preparations for a European Command Training Event to the Ukraine build up its military and medical capabilities, every day there was something different,” he said.

A native of Minsk, Belarus, Krasouski was 25 when he immigrated to the United States. While in Belarus, he had graduated with a master’s degree in sports medicine and recreation, working as a coach before arriving in New York City.

He has enjoyed the camaraderie I’ve found in the Air Force,” he said. “It has given me a lot of opportunities I never thought I would have in my life.”

“I was also translating, attending medical conferences, and had an opportunity to work in the Ukrainian Parliament.”

“Working with the ODC in Kyiv helping the Ukraine build up its military and medical capabilities, every day there was something different,” he said.

It was not difficult for me to understand both growing up, especially hearing family conversations spoken in Ukrainian,” he said.

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Belarus, a landlocked country in Eastern Europe, is bounded by Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and the Ukraine to its south. Krasouski is fluent in several languages, including Russian and Polish, part of a group of Slavic languages that are closely related to one another. Belarusian is close to the Ukrainian language, so learning it was a smooth transition.

“My medical background, I was able to visit medical treatment facilities in the Ukraine and assess situations,” said Krasouski. “I was also translating, attending medical conferences, and had an opportunity to work in the Ukrainian Parliament.”

He also supported multiple other meetings and conferences, translating Expeditionary Medical Support information into Ukrainian, and assisting with language interpretations during breaks.

He helped translate the EUCOM speaker’s presentation into Ukrainian and assisting with language interpretations during breaks.

He hopes to continue giving back as a fluent Ukrainian speaker, Krasouski participated in a NATO-organized Medical Rehabilitation Conference, helping translate the EUCOM speaker’s presentation into Ukrainian and assisting with language interpretations during breaks.

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The validation group included a total of 25 individuals from across the country, and blended officers (from 1st Lt to Lt Col) and enlisted Airmen (SSgt to SMSgt). Underscoring the importance of the process, the first day began with a welcome by AFCLC Director Dr. David Ronan.
As part of its ongoing commitment to form lasting, meaningful partnerships, staff and faculty from the AFCLC routinely partner with peer institutions at Maxwell AFB to promote Cross-Cultural Competence (3C).

A major component of those efforts sees professors from AFCLC providing lectures on site at a variety of the neighboring schoolhouses. On 16 June 2015, Dr. Angelle Khachadoorian, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, did just that, lending her expertise to an audience from the International Officer School, on site at the Air Command and Staff College.

On Wednesday, 10 June 2015, Brig Gen Christopher Coffelt, incoming Commander, Spaatz Center, visited the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC). While on site, he toured the Center’s facilities, met staff, and received a comprehensive mission briefing from Dr. David Ronan, Director of the AFCLC.
From 8-10 June, the DLIFLC Language Training Detachment (LTD) at Maxwell AFB joined its sister sites in a first-ever Language Training Summit hosted by the DLI LTD at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

Members from Miami/SOUTHCOM, Tampa/AfPak, Ft. Leavenworth; and Maxwell AFB LTDs gathered for three days to exchange information and trends on topics related to Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, and others.

The three Maxwell LTD members in attendance each gave worthwhile presentations at the summit. Dr. Victor Mbodouma presented on In-Class Assessment tools; Dr. Dongdong Zhang shared her insights into a flashcard program named Anki; and Regional Director, Mr. Rob Miltersen, conducted training on Resiliency Skills and Competencies as part of the Army Fit program.

Overall the Summit was highly successful, likely paving the way for future similar opportunities to share and collaborate on world language issues.

On Wednesday, 27 May 2015, Lt Col Ole Fraehmke, Bundeswehr Geoinformation Service (BGIS) Liaison Command for the USA, visited the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC), escorted by Lt Col Andreas "Pepper" Scharff, German Air Force Advisor to HQ AU.
On Wednesday, 27 May 2015, the Hon. Matthew A. Weiller, US Air Force Foreign Political Advisor, visited the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC). While on site, Mr. Weiller received a mission briefing on the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP).