
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 02 NOVEMBER 2011

Defense language training program needs improvement, GAO says

(Government Executive)...Caitlin Fairchild

The Army and the Marine Corps must better document the results of their language and culture training programs to make them more effective, according to a new [report](#) by the Government Accountability Office. While the Defense Department has stressed within its own documents, such as the Quadrennial Defense Review and the Army and Marine Corps Operating Concepts, that language and culture skills are necessities, GAO found the two services lacked the documentation for improvement.

'Simulating Iraq' At Wadsworth Atheneum

(The Hartford Courant)...Susan Dunne

In California, there are enormous facilities where military recruits are trained before being deployed to the Middle East. The training consists not just of combat drills, but also encounters with costumed role-players — some military, some civilian — simulating life in a typical Iraqi or Afghan town. "They replicate the language, the costumes, the clothes, the architecture, the smells, the sounds. It's an immersion experience," says Claire Beckett. "The military has decided that American soldiers don't know what to expect regarding conditions on the ground, the cultural, human element."

Diving in

(NC State University)

Ten hours a day, studying a foreign language? That's daunting. But it's far less daunting than navigating a foreign country without the ability to communicate. For the last two summers, future army officers at NC State have put in those hours of study to give themselves an advantage in the field. And with funding from US Army, special operations soldiers from Ft. Bragg will soon join them. In 2009, the [Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures](#) received a grant to teach ROTC students five critical languages: Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Russian and Urdu. The grant launched [Project Gold](#), a summer program that includes six hours in the classroom and up to four hours of homework each day. The classes, which are open to ROTC and non-ROTC students, cover two semesters of material in just six weeks.

Female Engagement Team establishes bonds

(ISAF)...1st Lt. Kathleen Argonza-Pangburn

Once the male soldiers had left the room, leaving the women alone, Naseema and her 15-year-old sister-in-law, Leena, pulled the blue burka over their heads, and folded it on the back of the chair. For a moment, this little office was a place for Leena and Naseema to discuss the successes and challenges they face in their daily lives. We are inspired by the fact that, even though Afghanistan is not America, we can see you all here," said Naseema with a flat palm indicating the body armor and M-4s that littered the room. "One day, Afghanistan will be okay with women doing these jobs."

2012 Passat Commercial: Vámonos

(YouTube)

Humorous video. While DLO does not endorse the 2012 Passat, we do, however, endorse language learning!

7 secrets to learning a language fast

(Skyscanner)

1. Studying grammar is for academics – communicating is king. 2. Speak the language from day one. 3. Start with a phrasebook, learn it quickly and use it. 4. For vocabulary get repetition flashcards. 5. Meet up with people before you travel. 6. Don't think so much – just do it! 7. Have fun and enjoy talking!

PREVIOUS NEWS

Language and Culture Training: Opportunities Exist to Improve Visibility and Sustainment of Knowledge and Skills in Army and Marine Corps General Purpose Forces

(GAO)

The Department of Defense (DOD) has emphasized the importance of developing language skills and knowledge of foreign cultures to meet current and future needs and is investing millions of dollars to provide language and culture predeployment training to its general purpose forces. DOD has also noted that such training should be viewed as a long-term investment and that training and personnel systems should better account for the knowledge and skills of service members acquired through training to help manage its forces. The committee report accompanying a proposed bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (H.R. 5136) directed GAO to review language and culture training for Army and Marine Corps general purpose forces. For this report, GAO evaluated the extent to which these services (1) captured information in training and personnel systems on the completion of language and culture predeployment training and proficiency gained from training and (2) developed plans to sustain language skills acquired through predeployment training. GAO analyzed service documents and interviewed cognizant officials.

In a new elite Army unit, women serve alongside Special Forces, but first they must make the cut

(Washington Post)...Kevin Maurer

What Marquez knew for certain was that she wasn't going to quit. And that refusal to give up was what the evaluators, all special operations soldiers, were looking for in the 55 selectees here at Camp Mackall, a former World War II training base near [Fort Bragg](#) tucked into the pine forests of central North Carolina. They were being considered for elite, all-female teams trained to build relationships with Afghan women. Because women and children are often held in a separate room while soldiers search the compound, these teams go into villages in Afghanistan to build rapport with women, as it is culturally inappropriate for male soldiers to talk with them. "We've been missing out on half of the population in Afghanistan because of cultural taboos," said candidate Meghan Curran, a West Point graduate and first lieutenant in the artillery.

Battlefield Gadgets: Troops using more non-lethal technology

(YNN)...Amanda Kelley

Voxtec International Managing Director of Sales Clayton Millis said, "You can really speak freely off the top of your head, what you need to say for that situation. And now we're moving from free speech one way as well into two way. So you can ask that foreign speaker discrete questions and you kind of direct the dialogue. That's what we encourage them to do. They're asking questions like, 'How old are you?', 'Do you live in this village'." The SQ 410 is the first device that allows two way free speech translation, and can make all the difference. US Marine Corps Trainer Daniel Dixon said, "That helps make them understand what we want to do. So it's not putting a weapon in your face, it's getting them to understand what's going on."

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command expands soldier training system with Blackboard Learn 9.1 platform

(Military & Aerospace)...Courtney E. Howard

Officials at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) needed a [soldier training](#) system. They found their solution at Blackboard Inc. in Washington. Army officials are adopting Blackboard Learn 9.1 as its platform to train more than 150,000 soldiers annually through its [Lifelong Learning](#) program. The [online training](#) program--offering more than 35,000 Army, Air Force, foreign language, and cultural courses in roughly 40 schools nationwide--will run on Blackboard's [learning management system](#).

Twitter Is Not the Enemy of the English Language

(The Atlantic Wire)...Rebecca Greenfield

Contrary to all the LOLs, emoticons and hashtags happening in feeds across the Twittersphere, Twitter isn't destroying the English language, it's making it better. The medium only allows for 140 character musings, lending itself to abbreviations that don't exactly follow conventional spelling or grammar rules.

Linguist Noam Chomsky finds the whole thing appalling, [calling](#) it "very shallow communication" in an interview with DC blog Brightest Young Things. "It requires a very brief, concise form of thought and so on that tends toward superficiality and draws people away from real serious communication ... It is not a medium of a serious interchange," he [told](#) Jeff Jetton. But while a few [language snobs](#) are in Chomsky's camp, the rest of the linguistic community doesn't exactly agree. Twitter is all about slang and abbreviations, but it's just not eroding the English language. In fact, University of Pennsylvania linguistics professor Mark Liberman found the exact opposite: It's making it better.

[Korea still has long way to go to be truly multicultural society](#)

(Korean Times)...Kim Jae-won

It's hard to feel at home in a foreign country, even more so when you're trying to raise a family there. I experienced this first-hand, living in Vancouver for three years and having my first child there. Language was the most immediate barrier to overcome. Although I had been confident in my English skills, I quickly found that ordinary Canadians never speak quite as slowly as the language instructors in Seoul do and will mix their daily conversations with words that I had never heard before.

[Translating a lucrative and sometimes scary proposition](#)

(Mercury News)...Robert Jordan

The Army employs two types of linguists, those it recruits and enlists as soldiers -- primarily native Afghans in the U.S. on permanent legal status -- and private civilian contractors, said Lt. Col. Frank Demith, an assistant deputy for foreign language and culture for the Army. Despite the government's need for Dari and Pashto speakers, there are only a few dozen places around the country teaching the two most common languages of Afghanistan. The Bay Area is home to two institutions that have offered courses in Pashto and Dari.

[UTSA Neurosciences Institute hosts bilingual brain research symposium](#)

(UTSA Today)...Christi Fish

Scholars, students, Region 20 educators and members of the [Defense Language Institute](#) gathered at the UTSA Main Campus Oct. 25 for "The Bilingual Brain," a research symposium featuring some of the country's top bilingual brain scholars. The symposium was hosted by the [UTSA Neurosciences Institute](#). A panel of some of the country's leading bilingual brain researchers discussed their research and fielded questions from scholars and others.

[Lawmakers eye possible foreign language requirement for scholarships](#)

(Arkansas News)...John Lyon

Studying a foreign language helps prepare students to compete for jobs in the global marketplace, witnesses testified today before a legislative committee studying the possibility of attaching a foreign language requirement to lottery-funded college scholarships. The Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Interim Committee on Education is conducting an interim study on a proposal by Rep. Randy Stewart, D-Kirby, to create the requirement. It heard testimony Friday from several witnesses in support of the idea, including John Miller, an executive with Dassault Falcon Jet, which operates a plant in Little Rock. "It is clear that without foreign language skills our graduates are at a distinct disadvantage in today's global market."