



DLNSEO DISPATCH... THIS MONTH IN LANGUAGE & CULTURE

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STAVRIDIS PRESSES TO CLOSE LANGUAGE, CULTURE SKILLS GAP

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(Defense.gov)...Donna Miles
Despite “the widest imaginable set of skills” among the Defense Department’s 3.2 million military and civilian members, the Defense Department has an “obvious capability gap” in its lack of foreign language skills that affect its global missions, the supreme allied commander for Europe and commander of U.S. European Command lamented in his command blog.

Navy Adm. James G. Stavridis quoted Charlemagne, who observed that “to know another language is to have a second soul.” “In this rapidly globalizing 21st century world, that simple statement summarizes the gift of regional expertise, cultural understanding and the ability to communicate directly in the language of an ally, partner or colleague,” Stavridis wrote. Yet, he noted, fewer than 10 percent of DOD members speak a second language.

That leaves a gap that goes beyond mere linguists, he said. “In order to operate in a world that relies more and more on coalition action to succeed,” the admiral said, “we must develop the attendant skills of regional expertise and cultural understanding.” Yet, Stavridis said, he has seen “a mixed bag” of forces arriving at their combatant command assignments: some highly skilled in language, culture and history of their region, some with just a “dusting” of exposure, and others totally inexperienced.

“We can do better,” he said. “I’ve learned that the shipmates who truly have the language, culture, and regional skills are often ‘silver bullets’ that can transform a difficult challenge into a success.”

Stavridis said he regularly sees the fruits of these abilities as he oversees NATO’s global operations. It’s evident in Afghanistan, where 50 troop-contributing nations are operating in a nation with complex language, culture and historical challenges as they conduct supporting the “largest single security mission in the world today,” he noted. But it’s equally important elsewhere in the world where nations with diverse histories, traditions and beliefs come together to support common missions, he said, noting peacekeeping in Kosovo and counterpiracy off the Horn of Africa as examples.

“As opposed to many of our European partners, who effortlessly speak four or five languages and have a deep knowledge of each other’s background and culture, we in the U.S. are failing to fully train and prepare for this kind of international work,” Stavridis said. “This is an area in which we have much work to do.”

As a linguist himself, Stavridis said, these skills

have paid off during his seven years as a combatant commander at U.S. Southern Command and Eucom. He learned French as a child living in Europe, and uses that ability in his NATO role. He studied Spanish to the point that he could use it to conduct meetings, improving his ability to work with his Latin-American counterparts. Reading Russian literature and history and learning the culture improved his ability to work with his Russian colleagues, he noted.

So to promote language and cultural skills more widely across the Defense Department, he offered three recommendations:

- Strengthen language programs, while considering mandatory second-language skills at least among officers, and more incentives and training militarywide;
- Boost the foreign affairs officer field by providing better promotion opportunities, recruiting top-quality candidates into the field and ensuring continued growth through appropriate grade education; and
- Build on the “Afghan-Pakistan Hands” model to establish similar programs in other parts of the world, including the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, Africa and other regions.

NC NATIONAL GUARD MP'S TRAIN ON LANGUAGE, CULTURE

(dvids)

Six soldiers from the North Carolina National Guard's 210th Military Police Company are in the final phase of an intense six-week Dari language and Afghan cultural training course here.

The 210th Military Police Company, based in Franklin, N.C., is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan this spring and was selected to provide soldiers to this pilot program. The program is designed to establish and build enduring partnerships between the North Carolina National Guard, North Carolina State University and other state agencies and businesses in order to provide future opportunities for civilian and military collaboration.

"Collaboration and partnerships between the military and North Carolina civilian organizations and businesses is what N.C. Military Foundation is all about," said Meg O'Donnell, a public relations consultant for the Raleigh-based foundation.

N.C. Military Foundation's organizational webpage states that their purpose is "to forge meaningful relationships with institutions and decision makers for the benefit of the state."

"They [N.C. Military Foundation] made partnering N.C. State and the N.C. National Guard effortless, and

allowed everyone involved the ability to develop working relationships that will surely benefit all parties," said Dr. Dwight Stephens, the program director for NCSU's Language Training Center—an initiative sponsored by the Defense Language and National Security Education Office.

For more information about Language Training Centers, see <http://nsep.gov/initiatives/training/>

"This new partnership with the N.C. National Guard is part of a larger joint endeavor connecting the University of North Carolina system and the military across the state."

"The course has been hard, but is outstanding," said Army Staff Sgt. Curvis Brook, a 210th soldier and Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, from Shelby, N.C. "As a squad leader, I will bring this knowledge back to the unit and teach my team basic language phrases and Afghan cultural do's and don'ts." Brooks, along with the rest of the 210th students, had nothing but positive things to say about this experience.

"Our instructor, Taza Hussein, is incredibly patient with us. Being an Afghan who lived there for half his life has brought realism, knowledge and experience to this course," said Brooks.

Tazagul Hussein, the Dari language



Soldiers from the 210th Military Police Company scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan this spring

instructor, was born in Konduz, Afghanistan. He worked for the Afghan government in the 80s, but when the Taliban took control of the country in the early 1990s and ignited a brutal civil war, Hussein and his family left Afghanistan and now live in Virginia.

"Language and cultural understanding, when used properly, can be a powerful thing," said Hussein. "I want to help teach these men a skill that vastly increases their potential to succeed." Hussein explained, "I gave each student an Afghan name, and from that time forward in the class, I spoke as little English as possible, in order to make the Dari language a part of their everyday life here." Stephens described this language program as "functional language training that teaches students real-life situational communication skills with less focus on grammar and the conventional academic outline."

BOREN PARTICIPATION AT NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

On February 28, Stuart Karaffa, DLNSEO, spoke to a group of over 60 high school students interested in careers in national security.

The presentation focused on how having foreign language and international skills will not only impact the students' future success, but is also crucial to the future of our nation's security.

The Forum identified the importance of language skills and intercultural competency, provided an overview of current study abroad trends, and

examined federal initiatives designed to encourage U.S. students to have overseas experiences, including opportunities available through the Defense Language and National Security Education Office.



DLNSEO's Stuart Karaffa (right) with three high school students at the National Youth Leadership Forum on February 28 in Chevy Chase, MD

RECRUITING EVENT EXPOSES 'QUALIFIED, DIVERSE' APPLICANTS TO NGA

(NGA)...Kathi Ghannam

Nearly 50 National Security Education Program graduates attended a recruiting event at NGA's East campus on February 19. Would-be employees — including linguists, international studies professionals, computer scientists and engineers — were impressed by NCE and the NGA speakers who gave them insights into the agency's mission, its role in the intelligence community, and its incorporation of emerging technologies, said Paula Phillips, NGA senior recruiter and NSEP program manager. "NGA conducts a lot of recruiting events throughout the year, to include welcoming associations and school groups," said Phillips. "However, this is the first NGA recruiting event specifically aimed at NSEP graduates, which provides an opportunity to introduce NGA's mission and career opportunities to highly qualified and diverse applicants who have a strong desire to keep America safe and strong." NSEP's objectives, which include developing proficiencies in languages and cultures critical to national security, strengthening U.S. economic competitiveness, and enhancing international cooperation and security, align well with NGA's recruiting efforts, said Phillips. Speakers included Ellen McCarthy,

NGA's chief operating officer, Bruce Heilein, director of NGA's human geography program, and Guillermo Hernandez, an imagery analyst with the Office of Warning. In an afternoon networking session, participants met with NGA recruiters, personnel security specialists and NGA volunteer deployment specialists. Participant Miriam Rayward, who has a Master of Arts in international policies and speaks French, Arabic and Spanish, said she found the event useful. "Before this event, I had heard about NGA through friends and had visited the website, but being here gives you a totally different perspective on the agency," said Rayward. "I studied in Jerusalem, so I found the human geography presentation to be fascinating and very applicable to me," said Rayward. U.S. citizens with specific foreign language skills who wish to study in foreign countries in support of the national security mission compete annually for NSEP scholarship and fellowships, according to the program's website, nsep.gov. Administered by the Secretary of Defense who has delegated program administration to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, NSEP came into existence



NGA Chief Operating Officer Ellen McCarthy speaks with NSEP graduates during a recruiting event

with the passage of the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 as a means of developing and sustaining a cadre of professional U.S. citizens with expertise in critical languages and cultures. The program funds a student's language and cultural studies in exchange for a commitment to work in a national security-related position within the federal government, e.g. DoD, DHS, State, or any other federal agency or office identified by the Secretary of Defense as having national security responsibilities. About 4,500 scholarships have been awarded through the program, said Roy Savoy, NSEP senior executive liaison officer. There are 16 NSEP scholarship recipients working at NGA, said Phillips.

DEFENSE MEDICAL LANGUAGE INITIATIVE

The Defense Medical Language Initiative (DMLI) is a partnership between the Defense Language and National Security Education Office, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine. The Initiative focuses on enhancing the DoD's health-education curricula by identifying and developing mission critical language and cultural skills for health providers. Partnerships have been built with

U.S. Central Command, NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan, Air Force Culture and Language Center, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, University of Montana, and the Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute. Additionally, input was sought, via survey, from thousands of individuals that are the targeted beneficiaries of the proposed training. The feedback received from these surveys shaped the

content of the training.

DMLI has provided training to the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, Afghan American Medical Providers Association, Center for Languages of the Central Asia Region, and Center for Global Health. The DMLI team is in the process of curriculum and product development with the goal of creating a General Health and Culture Course and a course in the optimal utilization of Medical Interpreters.

UTAH GUARD LINGUISTS CONTRIBUTE UNIQUE SKILLS DURING AFRICAN EXERCISES

(Army.mil)...Staff Sgt. Amy Wieser Willson

Sweat rolls down Sgt. Chason Parker's face as he speaks in French to an attentive audience of Cameroon Army paratroopers. There's barely any air movement in the steamy basement classroom at the Regiment du Genie Headquarters outside of Douala, Cameroon. Parker, a Soldier with the Utah Army National Guard's 300th Military Intelligence Brigade, isn't the teacher, but the eager students perceive him as such.

"Being a linguist isn't just being an interpreter or a translator, but learning the material -- the trick being to learn it, and being a teacher, too," Parker says.

Staff Sgt. Ray Novak, with the 560th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, teaches in English, Parker listens, translates the message into French, and mimics the instructor's motions while varying his tone to maintain the audience's interest.

It's part of an eight-hour block of instruction for Central Accord 2013, which is enhancing Central African

militaries' abilities to conduct aerial resupply and provide patient treatment and evacuation. Simply repeating the message in French for the class would have the warm students nodding off quickly. "You have to learn to control the crowd, not just translate," Parker says.

Parker and his fellow Utah Guardsmen -- six French linguists and one Portuguese linguist -- find themselves almost constantly at work in this environment. The 10-day U.S. Army Africa exercise brings together 160 U.S. service members with about 600 Central African soldiers and airmen, primarily from Cameroon. Even the Cameroonians who speak English find occasional challenges in communicating with the Americans. "The pronunciation is a bit different," said Staff Sgt. Julius Mkong, a Cameroon army paratrooper.

Beyond the actual words, the linguists need to understand the concepts since military terms and training concepts can vary broadly. When the discussion concerns



Staff Sgt. Novak leads a class on drop zone operations for Cameroon army paratroopers

dropping supplies from airplanes and loading patients onto helicopters, there's little room for errors in communication.

"Not knowing what they're asking, and how the interpreter is interpreting what they're asking, is confusing. But, at the end of the day, everyone goes away with the concept," said Staff Sgt. Michael Quinn, 560th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

http://prhome.defense.gov/RFM/READINESS/DLNSEO/media_updates.aspx

CALENDAR

Defense Language Action Panel	Mar 12
Defense Language Steering Committee	Apr 11



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