

# GLOBE



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# GLOBE



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FRONT COVER: Tech. Sgt. Joshua Miller and Cryptologic Technician (interpretive) 3rd Class Ruben Rivera are the first recipients of the Bachelor of Arts degree in foreign language on April 7, 2002 (Photo by Leonardo Carrillo, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

BACK COVER: Master Sgt. Shannon Lawson, commander of troops, salutes at the change of responsibility ceremony on Soldier Field Dec. 13, 2023 (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

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## FROM THE TOP

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In the ever-evolving landscape of global communication and international relations, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center stands at the forefront, spearheading initiatives to enhance organizational agility, proficiency, and global leadership in foreign language acquisition.

DLIFLC has implemented innovative programs to develop and empower the Institute's talent. By fostering a culture of adaptability and continuous learning, DLIFLC is ensuring that its educators are not only proficient in languages but are also equipped to lead effectively in the dynamic landscape of education and military language training.

Our leadership ensures that the Institute remains ahead of the curve in understanding and addressing emerging linguistic challenges. Whether it's staying abreast of geopolitical shifts or anticipating language needs in strategic regions, DLIFLC is committed to being proactive as a leader in global foreign language acquisition.

Elevating outcomes through a commitment to rigorous standards and continuous evaluation is a hallmark of DLIFLC's approach. Our emphasis on standardization ensures that language education at DLIFLC is of the highest quality, meeting and exceeding the expectations of military and intelligence agencies.

The Institute has embraced cutting-edge technologies to enhance language education, making it more dynamic and adaptive. The integration of data analytics allows the Institute to gain insights into individual and collective learning patterns, enabling personalized and effective language training.

By forging strategic partnerships with other like organizations, agencies, and allies, DLIFLC ensures a holistic and collaborative approach to language education. Fostering alliances enhances the Institute's ability to access diverse resources, expertise, and support networks.

DLIFLC is not just a foreign language institute; it is a driving force in global language excellence. Through a commitment to agility, proactive leadership, rigorous standards, technological integration, and strategic collaboration, DLIFLC is shaping the future of language proficiency in the military and intelligence sectors.

We head into the future as "One DLIFLC" where linguistic prowess is a force multiplier, ensuring that our armed forces are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

I am proud of our faculty, staff and students and humbled to have been a part of this incredible Institution over the past three years.

Colonel James A. Kievit



COLONEL JAMES A. KIEVIT

## COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR CORNER

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**COMMAND SGT. MAJ.  
THEO DEHOYOS**

I am truly excited and honored to be back in Monterey at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, this time to serve as the DLIFLC Command Sergeant Major.

I still carry the same excitement I felt when I graduated from the Korean Basic Course in 2002. I am honored to be a part of this great institution and community, and I want to express my sincere gratitude for the unwavering dedication and commitment the entire DLIFLC team demonstrates daily in advancing the vital work of foreign language education within the military. This team's efforts play a crucial role in ensuring our armed forces possess the linguistic skills necessary for success wherever their military careers take them.

As we embrace the evolution of technology and how it enhances our ability to educate and learn, it is important to never lose sight of the pursuit of foreign language proficiency, which is not solely based on our academic efforts, but the efforts of the entire DLIFLC team.

It is vital to understand that our grasp of foreign language provides valuable capability to our armed forces and partner nations. Our commitment to excellence demands that we constantly strive to enhance our skills, broaden our understanding, and foster an environment that promotes intellectual growth.

Whether you are a student at DLIFLC or a staff member, remember that we are part of a community dedicated to shaping the future of our armed forces.

I encourage each one of you to embrace the spirit of continuous improvement and lifelong learning. Every lesson taught, every language learned, and every milestone achieved contributes to our collective success. Warrior-linguists who graduate from DLIFLC will be highly competent in their language capability and ready to jump into the fight.

Let us remain united in our purpose, supporting one another as we face the challenges and celebrate the victories that lie ahead. Together, we can overcome any obstacle and continue to set the standard for excellence in foreign language education.

Thank you for your hard work, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the DLIFLC mission. I am honored to serve alongside each of you.

Command Sgt. Maj. Theo DeHoyos

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theo DeHoyos".

# BOARD OF VISITORS OFFERS RECOMMENDATIONS

DLIFLC Public Affairs

**D**istinguished members of the Board of Visitors, who are entrusted with the crucial responsibility of providing strategic counsel on matters central to the mission of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, convened at the Presidio of Monterey for a two-day visit Dec. 11-12, 2023.

“This time we are asked to take a look at just one piece [of DLIFLC’s mission] ... Continuing Education is one of the more dynamic aspects of the Institute. A lot is going on, moving at lightning speed,” said Dr. William Whobrey, a distinguished scholar holding a Ph.D. in Medieval and German Studies from Stanford University and currently serving as the chair for the BoV.

The BoV, an assembly comprised of both distinguished men and women from diverse professional backgrounds, including academia, business leadership, military expertise, government service and professional

domains, is necessary for DLIFLC accreditation.

“The December visit gave Board members an opportunity to provide substantive observations on DLIFLC’s forthcoming multi-year strategic plan and dialog on Continuing Education’s dynamic training mission,” said Dr. Erin O’Reilly, the accreditation and quality assurance officer for DLIFLC.

In August of 2023, DLIFLC Commandant, Col. James Kievit, ordered the realignment of the intermediate and advanced programs under Continuing Education to consolidate those programs which are geared toward teaching higher levels of proficiency.

“We really appreciate the opportunity to listen to what CE is doing and have a discussion, [to include] questions and answers and really think about what is going on. It is an amazing aspect of transformation that is continuous. Every time we come

some things has changed. The only thing normal here is change,” said Whobrey.

The realignment was conducted to better nest DLIFLC’s mission with the Defense Foreign Language Program and the Defense Regional Expertise and Culture Roadmap.

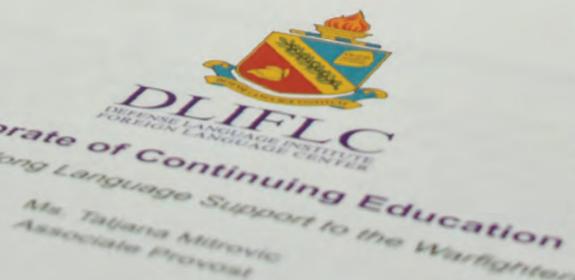
In March 2022, the Institute expanded its accreditation to include a four-year Bachelor of Arts in foreign language degree, in addition to the awarding of an Associate of Arts degree in foreign language which began in 2002 and now touts 20,000 graduates.

To receive a bachelor’s degree from DLIFLC students must have completed the DLIFLC Basic Course and an intermediate or advanced course in residence at Monterey or at one of the accredited language training detachments, as well as transfer a number of units from other accredited institutions to meet the Institute’s requirements.

After an intensive two-day conference marked by deliberations and presentations from a multifaceted cohort of DLIFLC program managers, the members of the BoV delivered their out brief remarks by applauding DLIFLC’s efforts to standardize faculty and curriculum development, testing and the implementation of the use of strategic metrics for assessing language proficiency, adapting to emerging Department of Defense requirements.



DLIFLC Provost Dr. Robert Savukinas and BoV Coordinator Detlev Kesten joined Dr. Christine Campbell, Dr. Dan Davidson, Dr. Roby Barrett, Dr. Ray Clifford, Dr. Beth Mackey, Dr. Gunther Muller, Mr. Scott Allen and Dr. William Whobrey for the Board of Visitors visit (Photo by M. Zachary Sherman, DLIFLC Public Affairs)



# LANGUAGE IS A LIVING THING

## KEY TO MILITARY READINESS

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs



USASOC Command Sgt. Maj. JoAnn Naumann giving her keynote address (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

When Spc. JoAnn Naumann enlisted in the Army, she just wanted to be a linguist, learn the Arabic language, get her clearance, and get out. Her story turned out to be much more interesting.

“The person you see here today is the result of a failed plan – but in an uncertain and changing world, success will often be the result of the ability to adapt,” said now U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Command Sgt. Maj. Naumann, to a full room of attendees at an annual workshop held by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center Sept 12-14, 2023.

Every year, the Advanced Command Language Program Managers workshop is held at the Presidio of Monterey, to exchange lessons learned by each of the services on

how to maintain military language analyst readiness and to participate in an award ceremony for the Department of Defense’s best foreign language program and professional of the year.

As keynote speaker, Naumann had good advice to impart upon nearly 300 CLPMs in attendance.

“Language is a perishable skill. It must be practiced frequently for maintenance and trained even more often for improvement,” said Naumann, referring to the CLPM job of managing linguist careers which entails providing regular time for them to study their target language.

“I would argue that your best linguists are equally as important [to complete the mission] ... because we will need them most in a time of crisis,” stated Naumann.

Citing that language is a “living thing,” Naumann said that the most critical skill to understand a people and culture is to speak their language. She gave an example of sometimes not being able to directly translate a sentence but to intuitively understand the significance.

During her career, Naumann went on 14 deployments and spent a lot of time in the Middle East in countries where she

understood the language, but in many more where she did not.

“Everywhere I went, I experienced people. In my opinion, this is why language, regional expertise, and culture – as a trifecta – are so important in the military. Ultimately, conflict is always about people. A linguist can translate. But a linguist can also understand motivations... respect [the] culture and build relationships,” she said. “A linguist can guide strategy. None of these things are about memorizing vocabulary – that is only a foundation.”

Urging CLPMs to convince their leadership to give linguists time to study and therefore have a larger pool of highly competent analysts for future military challenges around the world, Naumann gave some parting advice.

“Language cannot be the first thing to fall off the training calendar. You need to change that culture,” she said, regarding the omission of language training for perceivably more important tasks.



A Command Language Program Manager asks Naumann a question during her keynote address (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

***“As a military it is critical to professionalize the linguist in our force. The one thing the military provided me, that no other organization could have, is purpose. We need to find ways to do that for all our linguists. You are a critical part of that effort,” - Command Sgt. Maj. JoAnn Naumann***



# FROM APPRENTICE TO MASTER

**DLIFLC  
commandant  
implements  
strategic vision  
for Institute**

*By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs*

Col. James Kievit, a former infantry officer and currently a U.S. Army Special Operations Civil Affairs officer with multiple overseas deployments, is no stranger to challenge, on or off the battlefield. Behind his unassuming and quiet demeanor lies a brilliant tactician, concealed by his imposing six-foot three-inch physique that instantly commands respect whether he wears colonel wings or not.

However, when he stepped into the role of commandant at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in the summer of 2021, Kievit knew he was facing a significantly different responsibility unlike any he'd ever undertaken. Leading one of the world's most prestigious foreign language schools was no small feat and he understood the weight of the task at hand.

"DLI looked like nothing I had commanded before...In previous commands, platoon through company through battalion, I knew exactly what I

wanted to do... With DLI, I was coming into a brigade command position that was totally different," said Kievit.

Over the past 20 years since 9/11, DLIFLC has faced ongoing challenges, notably a consistent demand from key stakeholders for improved student graduation rates. In 2002, the National Security Agency, a significant DLIFLC stakeholder, emphasized their requirement for foreign language proficiency at a listening and reading level of 3/3, according to the Interagency Language Roundtable scale.

"Eventually, it became clear to me, that the language proficiency level of 3/3, which the intelligence community wanted and was pushing us to achieve in the Basic Course, was achievable, but not through the Basic Course alone," said Kievit.

In fact, Kievit explained that the immense pressure put on DLIFLC instructors to produce linguists at ever increasing proficiency levels, detracted

from their efforts to graduate students at the level of 2/2/1+.

Surveys of the needs of the services conducted at various junctures over time, confirmed that many linguist job requires the 2/2/1+ proficiency level, but that time on the job and additional training could lead to higher proficiency levels in the force, which is necessary for other missions.

Confronting that challenge, but more so having to dispel the notion to his stakeholders that the sole path to achieving greater proficiency levels for students was exclusively via the Basic Course, was a task in itself. "It just didn't make any sense to me," he said.

"I used [my] technical knowledge of the intelligence realm and applied that to the vision of what I thought the normal job progression was for an apprentice to [become] a master," he explained.

"You can't take an infantryman from Basic Training and send him on the Osama Bin Laden raid. There is a lot

***“You can’t take an infantryman from Basic Training and send him on the Osama Bin Laden raid. There is a lot of development that happens before you get into a unit like that,” - Col. James Kievit, commandant, DLIFLC***

of development that happens before you get into a unit like that.” And it was putting this reality in layman terms that Kievit’s strategy finally hit its mark with leadership in the Department of Defense community.

“Col. Kievit looked at the Marine Corps and the Foreign Area Officer Program graduates and concluded that their graduation rates of 80% achieving 2/2, 40% achieving 2+/2+ and 10% reaching a 3/3, should be a goal applied to all,” said DLIFLC Chief of Staff Steve Collins.

In Kievit’s analysis, Collins said, the Marine Corps and Foreign Area Officers, with their small numbers, had the best preparation for success in the language classroom and historically were achieving the best results.

“It is quite necessary to look up and out,” Kievit said, who explained that the “80/40/10 model” was the first solution offered to DoD stakeholders, a conditions-based approach, rather than a time-based dramatic change in the graduation standard that may leave service linguist requirements unfilled.

His second solution was to socialize and implement an apprentice to master strategy, whereby DLIFLC would graduate apprentices with global language knowledge and gradually, through work experience and additional training, become journeymen and eventually masters of their language and trade.

“I know that Lieutenant Kievit would have been a pretty bad commandant, I will be very upfront there. But after following a model of professional development specified by the Army, Colonel Kievit is not too bad as commandant,” he chuckled.

In March 2022, the Institute achieved a significant milestone by enhancing its accreditation process that now, incorporates a 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree program. While more than 300 BA degrees have been awarded since then, the Institute conferred its 20,000th AA degree in foreign language in December 2023.

As intermediate and advanced courses have been taught at DLIFLC in residence and at some Language Training Detachments since 2008, the services have often been reluctant to allow linguists to take significant time away from the mission to attend. The introduction of a BA degree is expected to dramatically increase the number of attendees as well as to serve as motivation for individuals to get their degree and stay in the military.

Consequently, in his command guidance, Kievit has set forth a detailed plan on how to increase organizational agility and rigorously pursue standardized curricula and evaluation in the basic, intermediate and advanced courses. This, along with a focusing on the integration of technology and basing decisions on utilizing data analytics, will set DLIFLC up for success.

“Standardization gives us a mean from which to deviate,” explained Kievit. “If they [services] have confidence that attending the intermediate course will return a 2+ linguist to them, or the advanced course returns a 3 linguist, then they will send [students].”

Kievit recognized that ensuring student success was only one part of the equation; he also understood the importance of supporting faculty success. As a result, he instructed his staff to conduct research and establish

an apprentice-to-master program tailored to faculty members.

Much like the guidance provided to officers in the AR 600-3 manual, which outlines expectations at each grade level, Kievit envisions a similar model being created to help guide and empower faculty members in their professional development journey.

“There are a number of educational [pathways] for our faculty. I would like to create ... a deliberate approach that is backed by our hiring and selection processes, because they have to be incentivized to be effective. This could mitigate some of the anxiety the faculty feel as term employees, said Kievit.

“If James Kievit were to be hired as an assistant professor at DLI, I would want to know how I could potentially stay here for a longer career, with multiple pathways clearly defined. If I wanted to stay in the classroom, I may need more education. If I had plans to move into leadership positions, I would also have to have the education and skills necessary to be the best DLI leader and faculty member possible,” he explained.

With just over six months left of his assignment, Kievit urges leadership, faculty and staff to open channels of communication, both inside and outside DLIFLC. “This is a long-term plan. We have to do what we know best and inspire higher ups,” by providing information about the mission that showcases DLIFLC’s excellence in foreign language teaching as a unique learning institution.

*DLIFLC Commandant Col. James Kievit converses with a staff member in his office Dec. 8, 2023 (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



# TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE OF STANDARDIZATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

One of the leading efforts within the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center’s five-year strategic plan is the standardization of curriculum and evaluation that will drive consistency in student outcomes across all language programs offered by the Institute.

“I think we have a great opportunity here ... Now that we can grant a bachelor’s degree in foreign language... there are certain expectations that our accreditation members must see, and this is our chance to implement changes that are perhaps long overdue,” said Dr. Natalia Barley, director of the Curriculum Development Support division.

Currently, the efforts of CDS are concentrated on the standardization of the Basic Course curricula.

“We have two lines of effort. First, we are looking at improving the core instructional materials and the second line of effort is standardizing in-course assessments,” said Barley, who holds two master’s degrees in second language acquisition and teaching

***“We have two lines of effort. First, we are looking at improving the core instructional materials and the second line of effort is standardizing in-course assessments,” - Dr. Natalia Barley***

and an Ed.D. in Learning Design and Leadership.

“It was definitely a big step for us,” said Barley, referring to a renewed push for standardization of both curriculum and assessment processes.

To accomplish this complex task, CDS

partnered with external consultants in applied linguistics and language assessment from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies and Michigan State University, explained Barley. “We started working on this about two years ago by conducting a gap analysis study of existing core instructional materials.”

“The new standardized outcomes and objectives for all Basic Course programs were finalized in September of last year,” said Barley proudly. “They will guide all Basic Course syllabus design, curriculum and assessment development, and the analysis and evaluation processes.”

“Learning outcomes and objectives provide a clear picture of what learners should know or be able to do by the end of an instructional period, enabling



curriculum developers to create instructional content and assessment methods that target those specific goals,” explained DLIFLC Provost Dr. Robert Savukinas in a separate interview.

The next step for Barley’s team was to develop in-course test master plans for the Basic Course programs that define the test types, the frequency of tests administered, and the weight of each test toward an overall student GPA.

“The idea is to be able to look at a student’s GPA from any program, from Arabic to Chinese, and know that it is built out of the same components,” Barley explained.

To reach this end goal, and to be in step with the Command Guidance that states the desired outcome of what has become known as the 80/40/10 metric [80% of the students need to achieve 2/2/1+, 40% need to reach

2+/2+/1+, and 10% 3/3/1+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable scale], a number of steps needed to be completed.

Barley’s team conducted a needs analysis of current assessment practices in the Basic Course programs, which in turn informed the next step; the development of a tailored master test plan for each language category.

During the process, the team worked closely with schoolhouse stakeholders to ensure feedback was captured and that buy-in was received by the instructors and academic leadership.

“Thus far, we have finalized a test master plan for the 64-week and the 36-week programs, and right now we are finalizing the test master plan for the 48-week programs. This way, every program in each language category would follow the same test master plan,” said Barley.

In tackling these rather complex issues, Barley’s team had an opportunity to reach out to the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence, at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona, which provides professional training to military intelligence personnel and is one of the locations where some DLIFLC students complete their follow-on training.

“USAICoE was extremely supportive and willing to share information with us,” said Barley.

“We talked about the challenges they faced during that process which are similar to ours. It felt comforting to know that we are not alone in this,” she said.

*(Left to right) DLIFLC Provost Dr. Robert Savukinas participates in a meeting about the standardization of curricula. Curriculum Development Support director, Dr. Natalia Barley (center), leads the charge on this effort (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



# TEACHING THE ‘DLI WAY’

## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

To uphold the highest standards in foreign language teaching, all new instructors at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center must undergo two rigorous courses before they set step in the classroom, regardless of their prior experience.

“We call that the DLI-way,” said Dr. Jamil Al Thawahrih, the director of Faculty Development Support. “Regardless of the starting point, new instructors are all trained to meet both the Army and DLIFLC teaching standards.”

Upon arrival, new instructors first attend a two-week Common Faculty Development Instructor Course, mandated by the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command, after which they immediately continue their training with a three-week DLIFLC Instructor Certification Course.

“In the beginning, it can be overwhelming, but instructors understand that they have to be the best to teach the best students the military has to offer,” said Al Thawahrih.

***“We want all of our new faculty to take these courses, no matter where they are located. Only this way can we provide the consistency in training needed to maintain our high teaching standards” - Dr. Jamil Al Thawahrih***

Teaching at DLIFLC requires a deep understanding of teaching methodology, especially because the Institute instructs a specific foreign language, five days a week, six to seven hours a day, with special assistance, homework correction,

grading and classroom preparation, all wrapped into their eight-hour day.

“The CFD-IC is a competency-based course aligned with internationally recognized instructor competencies published by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction. It introduces faculty to their role and responsibilities as DLIFLC instructors and federal employees,” explained Al Thawahrih, adding that the course covers classroom instruction in a broad sense, while the DLIFLC-instructed ICC course

is very specific.

“The ICC program is a local course, offering more flexibility with content. Our focus in this course is how to teach language and tailor instruction to the DLIFLC student,” he said.



*Dr. Jamil Al Thawahrih, director of Faculty Development Support, speaks to the Provost Sergeant Maj. Rebecca Ann, about training programs for faculty (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs.)*

The goal is to teach instructors a variety of classroom techniques, including student-centered, project-based, and tasked-based instruction, and how to teach reading and listening efficiently. Teachers learn classroom management strategies, lesson planning, and various methods like creating a flipped classroom and how to offer students more autonomy in their learning.

“I enjoyed the ICC course because it was more focused on what we are doing now [in the classroom]. We had an opportunity to apply what we learned in four demo classroom hours where we used the target language,” said Xinran Wang, who started teaching Chinese Mandarin at DLIFLC in 2022 and holds a PhD. in Curriculum and Instructional Design.

The FDS division also provides in-service certification courses, such as the Instructor Recertification Course, designed for those who have completed five years of teaching in the classroom in the Basic Course. FDS offers certification courses for Post Basic Course instructors as well.

“In the Post Basic Instructor Certification Program, we had several [participating] teachers from different locations like Germany and the Russian program. It was important for me to hear from them about their best practices,” said Augar Khoshaba, who holds a master’s degree in teaching English as a foreign language from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey and was a Fulbright scholar in upstate New York before coming to teach at DLIFLC.

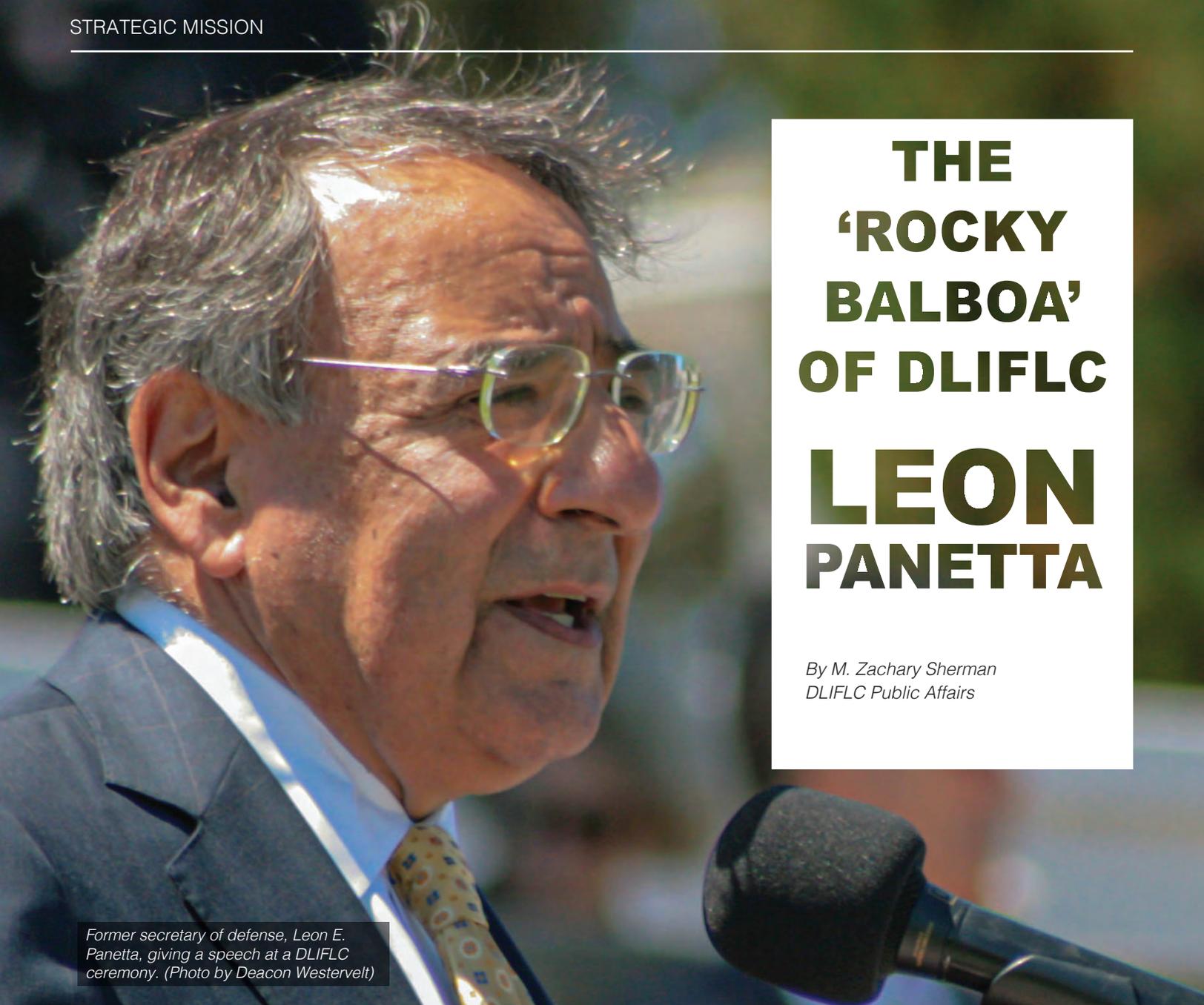
In response to certain programs offered through Continuing Education, where instructors reside at one of the satellite locations, FDS has designed

an Online Certification Course to ensure that teachers who teach online are equipped with the tools needed for efficiency and success.

“We need instructors to keep up with the changing needs of the Institute regardless of where they live and work,” said Al Thawahrih.

Currently, FDS offers certification courses and a wide range of short workshops to faculty on the Presidio. With the adoption of the Canvas learning management system at DLIFLC in 2022, future plans include moving all certification courses to this system to allow new instructors time to experience the platform before they start teaching.

“We want all of our new faculty to take these courses, no matter where they are located. Only this way can we provide the consistency in training needed to maintain our high teaching standards,” said Al Thawahrih.



Former secretary of defense, Leon E. Panetta, giving a speech at a DLIFLC ceremony. (Photo by Deacon Westervelt)

# THE 'ROCKY BALBOA' OF DLIFLC LEON PANETTA

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

If there was ever a championship fighter, a true Rocky Balboa, for the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, you wouldn't need to look any further than Leon E. Panetta.

"The Defense Language Institute [Foreign Language Center] is critical for our national security," said Panetta, while attending a seminar organized by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency on the DLIFLC Monterey campus.

In a dual capacity, DTRA takes on a strategic role by reducing global weapons of mass destruction and emerging threats through deterrence,

while simultaneously supporting key Department of Defense priorities by leveraging unique capabilities. The focus of the training on Oct. 2, 2023, was "Translation Unveils the Many Faces of Humanity."

"As somebody who was born and raised in Monterey, I used to wander these grounds as a boy," Panetta reminisced. "But it was when I was defense secretary and went to Iraq that I finally understood why the language training we give our Soldiers is so important."

While in Iraq, Panetta worked with a Soldier who was interpreting for military units in-country and

mentioned he'd been trained at DLIFLC.

"I suddenly realized this individual, in combat, who was interpreting for our benefit, was here so we could succeed in a military mission," Panetta stated. "And that's what DLIFLC is all about."

Highlighting the pivotal role DLIFLC plays in national security, Panetta consistently championed the importance of language training to his colleagues. He underscored the necessity for the U.S. to comprehend the world and its place as a global leader and partner and the need to

lead through communication and understanding.

Panetta commended DLIFLC for its ongoing enhancements in language instruction techniques, faculty development and integration of technology. In his view, this unwavering commitment to excellence in language education has significantly bolstered the effectiveness of DLIFLC's programs on the world stage. However, language training wasn't always seen as such an asset.

"I was really worried," Panetta admitted. "The problem in Washington is that when you look at priorities, education often gets a lower priority. There was this attitude if it's not a tank, if it's not a plane, if it's not a ship, that somehow it could be sacrificed. And that's just not true. DLIFLC performs a very important function. I have to tell you, we had to go through an education process in Washington to make them understand how important DLIFLC was to our ability to be able to fight a war."

Foreign language, often described as a form of "soft power" (referring to the ability to influence others without resorting to force or sanctions), has gained recognition for its profound impact on the inherent mission of the warfighter. It extends beyond mere translation, encompassing a profound comprehension of another nation's culture, allowing troops to be more effective in the fields of cybersecurity, cryptography and interpretation.

Panetta emphasized the vital role of interpreters in international diplomacy, highlighting their ability to bridge language barriers and foster understanding among leaders from diverse nations. Drawing from his

personal experiences as chief of staff for President Bill Clinton and as secretary of defense, he emphasized the critical importance of skilled interpreters in the realm of successful diplomacy.

"The United States is a world leader. But what that means is that you've got to understand the world," Panetta explained. "When the president of the United States or the secretary of state sit down with the leaders of other countries or their counterparts in other countries, you have to understand where they're coming from. You have to understand what their needs are, what their concerns are, and having interpreters with the ability to convey those concerns can help develop a better relationship with that country."



Panetta played a key role in protecting and professionalizing DLIFLC's faculty. He drafted legislation to provide job security and training for instructors, ensuring that they could better serve the Institute's mission.

"When I got elected, one of my priorities was to make sure that the military installations in the [Monterey] area were protected," he explained. "The best way to do that was to make sure they had the facilities they needed to do the job, that we had the housing – that was important, to house the Soldiers."

Enhancing the facilities at DLIFLC, including housing, gym facilities, classrooms and technology infrastructure, was a top priority for Panetta. This underscores the significant impact these investments

have had on creating a superior learning environment and advancing education.

Panetta boasts a remarkable career spanning decades of dedicated service. He began as a U.S. representative from California and ascended to key positions, including director of the CIA and the White House chief of staff during Clinton's tenure. Notably, he orchestrated the operation that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden while leading the CIA and subsequently served as secretary of defense under President Barack Obama.

But it wasn't until he hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Pentagon and had a chance to sit down and really

talk with him about very important and sensitive issues that Panetta really grasped the impact DLIFLC has made in the world.

"How do we deal with North Korea? How do we deal with trade? How do we deal with cyber issues?" Panetta questioned the Chinese leader. "How do we deal with other

areas where we can work together to try to resolve these issues? The [Jinping] President said something I've never forgotten, which was 'You're right. If we could do that, we could advance peace and prosperity in the Pacific.'"

It was the event's interpreters that made that pivotal conversation possible, explained Panetta.

"I really felt, for the first time in dealing with President Jinping, that I could see the human side coming out. And it was the very good interpreters who were able to explain... the nuances of what was [being] said that helped a lot."

*Attendees of the 2023 Defense Threat Reduction Agency seminar gather for a photo with former secretary of defense, Leon E. Panetta (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*





# STUDENT LIFE

**O**ur student's training journey is unmatched in its rigor. Graduation marks a transformative milestone, instilling a deep confidence and a belief in their unparalleled capabilities. Navigating through DLIFLC is one of the military's toughest educational challenges and it equips them for success anywhere their future may take them. Many emerge feeling as though they've gained a second soul, highlighting the profound impact of their experience.



*Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexandra Kocurek attends an Air Force change of command ceremony on Soldier Field (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*

## JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION: AN AIRMAN'S LINGUISTIC ODYSSEY

*By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs*

**L**ocated in the heart of the American Southwest, where the desert winds carry tales of valor and resilience, Alexandra Kocurek has forged her path with unwavering dedication, faith and a relentless commitment to aiding those in need.

United States Air Force Staff Sgt. Alexandra Kocurek's journey is a shining example of dedication and brilliance that comes from the American Southwest. Born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Kocurek's Christian upbringing ingrained in her the values of discipline and faith, which seamlessly translated to her service in the Air Force.

"I had a very good upbringing," she

begins with a warm smile. "I grew up in a Christian household, so discipline and strictness were no issue for me [when I joined] the military, fortunately. I wouldn't say we were sheltered, but it instilled a lot of values in me - discipline, strictness and knowing the difference between right and wrong. I'm definitely fortunate and thankful for all of those opportunities."

In high school, Kocurek's participation in academics, part-time work and sports underscored the importance of teamwork and self-discipline. She noted, "Sports really made a difference in my life, particularly in understanding the value of being part of a team."

It was a singular transformative mission

to Ecuador during her high school senior year that Kocurek's unknowing journey into military service would begin. Her love for the Spanish language and a deep connection with a fellow traveler ignited a profound calling.

"There was a girl who'd had cancer growing up," she recalled. "And after she'd beaten it, she wrote a book about self-healing. I thought it would be beneficial to the people we were there to help, so I wanted to translate it into Spanish."

This is when Kocurek experienced a desire to become a conduit for helping people from every corner of the globe.

“That was the moment I felt called to be a translator. To help people communicate better with one another. So, that is initially what started all of this,” she explained.

While Kocurek originally planned to attend Grand Canyon University for a business degree, her interests shifted when her aunt mentioned a friend’s career in either “intelligence or translation” within the Air Force, which led Kocurek to consider the military as a gateway to her aspirations. She was particularly keen to learn Russian, considering the ease of learning multiple Slavic languages once one is mastered.

Narrowly missing the cut by one point on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery test, Kocurek had to wait for another chance, leading her to be assigned to the Air Force Specialty Code of General Maintenance. Her determination unwavering, Kocurek excelled as a crew chief and then a maintenance training instructor on the B1-B Lancer aircraft. “I absolutely loved that job and was committed to being the best I could be,” she affirmed.

But when the opportunity arose, Kocurek immediately applied to cross-train and was accepted into the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. “I believe DLI is exceptional,” she stated.

While recognizing that graduating from DLIFLC is just the first step, Kocurek understands that much of the practical knowledge needed to master her skills will come from “doing her job” out in the field. She looks forward to advanced training in the future, aiming to attain the profound cultural understanding and language skills required to become the best in her trade and subsequently a master linguist.

Kocurek’s dedication has also seen her complete a degree in International Relations preparing her for the possibility of working her dream job with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

“With DTRA, you utilize those language skills to make sure everybody’s following the rules of certain treaties, keeping people safe, and that’s what I want to do,” she explained.

As Kocurek’s Air Force tenure progresses, she remains open to the possibilities

ahead, whether continuing in service or transitioning into a civilian job. Her language proficiency could lead her to diverse career paths, including the State Department or a number of intelligence agencies. “Who wouldn’t want to be Jack Ryan?” Kocurek smirked.

However, she remains committed to her current duty as an Airman. No matter who she’ll end up working with, Kocurek proudly states “Our ultimate oath is to safeguard our nation, addressing any

threats in line with the constitution. That’s what I’ve dedicated myself to do.”

Kocurek’s path from a disciplined upbringing to her transformative role as a linguist in the Air Force is a testament to her unwavering dedication and quest for knowledge. An exceptional Airman and linguist, she stands ready to use her skills as a diplomatic tool for a promising future, embodying DLIFLC’s commitment and the power of language in diplomacy.

**“That was the moment I felt called to be a translator. To help people communicate better with one another. So, that is initially what started all of this,” - Staff Sgt. Alexandra Kocurek**



*Kocurek in the cockpit of her bird; a B-1B Lancer variable-sweep wing heavy bomber (Photo courtesy of Ashley Perry)*

# EMBRACING FAMILIAL HEROES AND ENDURING LEGACIES

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

The graduation ceremony for the Chinese Russian school at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center Dec. 14, wasn't just about academic achievements; it was also a poignant family story for one Airman.

Airman 1st Class Corey Case, the distinguished Commandant's Award winner, requested a special honor: to have his speech delivered by his uncle, retired Air Force Chief Master Sgt. George Carrol. This request, stemming from Case's deep personal connections and current life challenges, turned this graduation into a memorable event that transcended the usual pomp and circumstance.

"My uncle always represented an inspiration to me; the only change was how this inspiration was delivered," Case said with admiration.

Carrol, an influential figure during Case's entire life, played a pivotal role in his initial decision to join the Air Force and pursue a career as a linguist.

"As I grew up, he was a symbol of strength and wisdom," Case reminisced. "But as I considered the armed forces, he became a symbol of guidance and a true warrior spirit."

His mentorship extending beyond family ties, Carrol introduced young Case to the cohesive community of the Air Force through multiple venues, like the Air Force Sergeants Association, where Case's aspirations took flight. These ambitions were further fueled by encounters with notable figures such as Space Force Chief Master Sgt. Roger Towberman, also a DLIFLC graduate, who gave Case his first challenge coin.



Remembering that moment fondly, Case added, "He showed me the culture of the service, what it meant to be an Airman, and I was convinced."

This unique honor of having his uncle not just in the audience, but an active participant on the dais, was not just about recognizing academic excellence, but about honoring a familial bond, a shared legacy of service and the profound impact of mentorship.

"The stories of his experiences and the honor he felt as a member of the Security Forces was truly overwhelming," said Chase, "Solidifying my commitment to serve."

However, Case felt language was his calling and was elated to find that he would have the opportunity to make his



***“The pride I feel today and ever since I joined is indescribable. I will be disappointed on the day the Air Force removes me for exceeding age regulations,” - Airman 1st Class Corey Case***

own name by becoming an Air Force linguist. Drawing from a lifelong passion for language, Chase identified how language serves as both a medium for expressing a society’s heritage and a portal to its cultural intricacies.

“It is through these perspectives that my appreciation for language deepened, fostering a profound and genuine affection for the opportunities it affords. In contrast to more ostentatious roles such as a pilot, I personally felt it lacked the capacity to bridge those cultural and civilizational barriers in the same way linguists can,” Chase explained.

Senior Master Sgt. Chris Loftus, who met with Case in preparation for the speech, supported this heartfelt request regarding his uncle from the onset, recognizing the unique circumstances surrounding it.

The concurrence from the commandant’s office not only fulfilled Case’s wish but also underscored the values of family and mentorship within the military community.

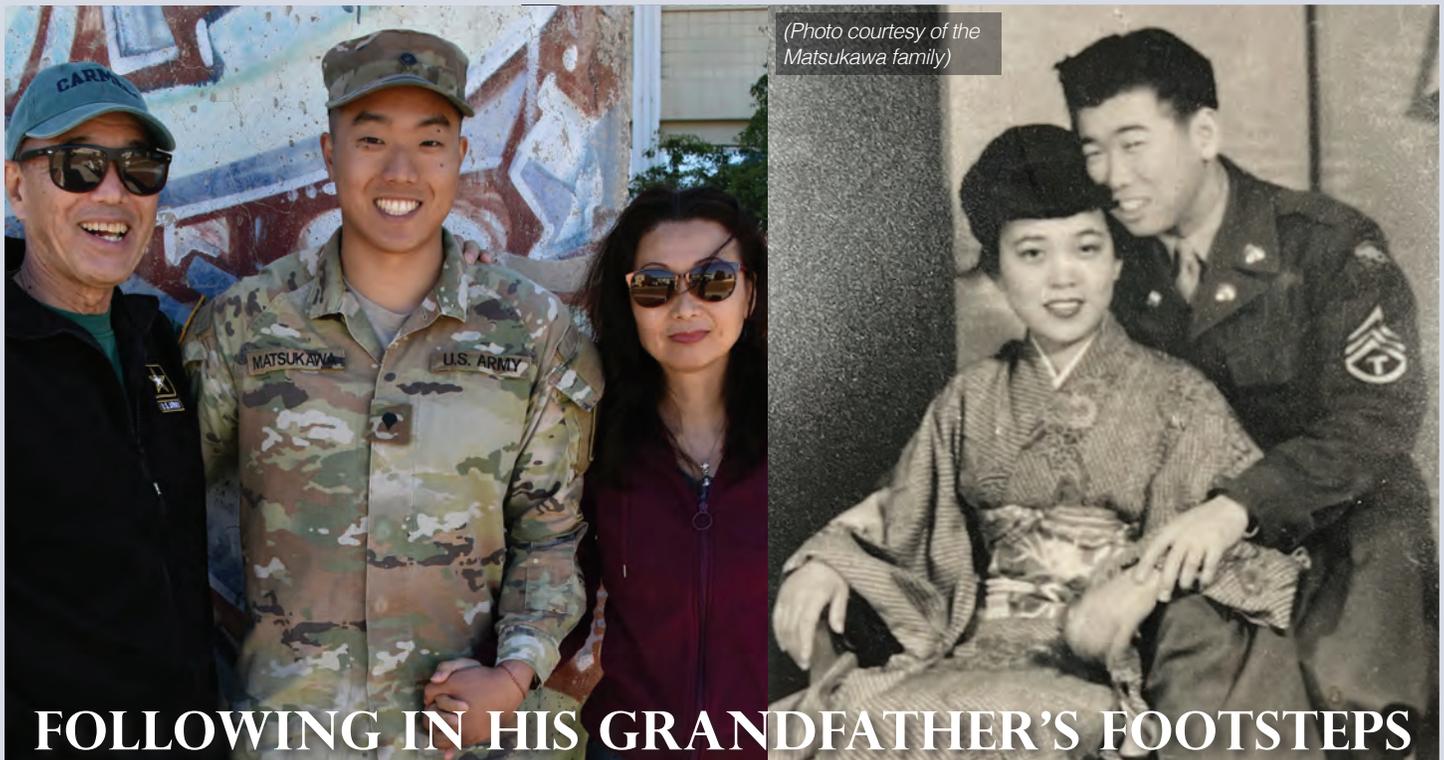
As DLIFLC celebrates its graduates, Case’s story stands out as a testament to the enduring bonds and influences that shape our service members. His academic achievement, combined with the deep personal narrative of his relationship with his uncle, offers a stirring reminder of the human stories behind people in uniform.

“I was undeniably honored, yet, more significantly, profoundly humbled by the recognition,” Chase remarked. “During my time here, I have witnessed numerous individuals whom I deeply admire receive the same award and subsequently effect transformative changes across the armed services.

The graduation ceremony, attended by distinguished guests and fellow service members, was an event of not just academic commendation but of emotional resonance, as one young Airman honored the legacy of his mentor and hero.

“The pride I feel today and ever since I joined is indescribable. I will be disappointed at the day the Air Force removes me for exceeding age regulations,” he said.

*Air Force Lt. Col. Daniel Bashaw awards Airman 1st Class Corey Chase the coveted Commandant’s Award during graduation Dec. 14, 2023, on Soldier Field at the Presidio of Monterey (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



(Photo courtesy of the Matsukawa family)

## FOLLOWING IN HIS GRANDFATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

Spc. Dwight Matsukawa knew that his grandfather served in the military, but he didn't pay much attention to the details. All of that changed when Matsukawa graduated from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center with honors on Sept. 7, 2023.

"Spc. Matsukawa, the growth, mindset, grit and determination you demonstrated over the last 63 weeks, and the fact that you did it all humbly, confidently and to such an expert degree is awe-inspiring," said DLIFLC Chief Military Language Instructor, Master Sgt. Andy Hernick.

"It was pretty hard," admitted Matsukawa in an interview. "We had to get up at 4 a.m. for PT, then shower, eat and go to class, then to the gym, dinner and homework again," he described.

"But my pronunciation was good from the start, and I knew I was going to be able to help my fellow classmates with tutoring."

For Matsukawa, whose father is of Japanese descent and mother is from mainland China, the combination gave him a bit of an advantage, more culturally than linguistically. "I was very excited to be able to speak to my mother in Chinese," he explained.

Matsukawa's grandfather volunteered to serve in the military right after the end of World War II, during a time when those who spoke even kitchen Japanese were encouraged to assist with the reconstruction of Japan.

The Army Language School was created just weeks before Pearl Harbor, its creation hinging on the participation of second-generation Japanese Americans called Nisei. It is said that these Soldiers shortened the war by two years with their dedicated service.

"Dwight's grandfather, volunteered after the war to join the military and ended up working in Japan for several years," explained Dwight's father David Matsukawa. Records for Kihachi Matsukawa exist as having attended the Military Language School, a precursor of DLIFLC, but the exact dates are unknown.

As a fourth generation Japanese American with a Chinese background on his mother's side, it is no wonder that Matsukawa feels at ease with the Chinese culture and subsequently spent much of his time bridging the gap for his classmates, jumping in when needed during immersions when students felt overwhelmed with the target language.

Matsukawa spent tens of hours helping his fellow students with their homework, volunteered for various extracurricular activities, and participated in an open house annual festivity called Language Day by performing in a Dragon Dance for thousands of visitors.

"My instructors were great and I really felt that I was growing and grasping the cultural background of the language," he said.

Speaking about the future, Matsukawa said that he would like to return to DLIFLC for another Asian language, perhaps Korean or Japanese and to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Institute.

As of March 2022, DLIFLC was granted the authority to confer Bachelor of Arts degrees in seven foreign languages. Thus far, more than 300 BA degrees have been awarded to students who completed the advanced, intermediate or Defense Threat Reduction Agency programs.

(Left) Spc. Dwight Matsukawa poses with his parents in front of the Berlin Wall monument at the Presidio of Monterey

(Right) A family photo of Spc. Dwight Matsukawa's grandfather, Kihachi Matsukawa, with his spouse, in Japan

# A FAMILY OF DLIFLC LANGUAGE GRADUATES

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

**I**t's not every day that you come across a family of Chinese language graduates from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. This is precisely the case with the Helmen family.

On Sept. 7, 2023, Cpl. Caleb Helmen graduated from the Chinese Mandarin 64-week-long language program and received the Commandant's Award, presented to those students who achieved outstanding scores and have significantly contributed to the local, academic and military community.

"It takes focus, determination and grit to have the level of self-discipline Cpl. Helman displayed as a student, but more importantly as a Marine and leader during his time at DLIFLC," said Marine Corps Commander Lt. Col. Anna Voyne.

While studying Chinese five days a week, six to seven hours per day with several hours of homework, Helmen was responsible for the overall readiness of 50 Marines, tutored students for more than 100 hours in Chinese and French and volunteered 200 hours in the local community.

"The Marine standing in front of you today did all of this with good attitude and professionalism. While holding different types of leadership billets, and earning an overall GPA of 3.8, he scored 2+/3/2 on his listening, reading and speaking [exam] respectively," said Voyne. "For those of you who are unfamiliar with what those scores mean, think of Cpl. Helmen as outsmarting, outmaneuvering and obliterating the adversary," she explained.

Helmen's parents, Tanya and Ben, also graduates from the Chinese Basic Course, were present at the graduation.

"We graduated in 2001 from this program and got married," said Tanya, adding that their son was born in Monterey.

"It's a hard course and the most rigorous academic challenge in the military you can do," admitted Helmen, "It's like college on steroids," he said with a triumphant smile.

When asked what helped him achieve such high scores on his final exam, Helmen said that a definite advantage was being housed with students of the same language within the Marine barracks.

"I was always able to ask people who were my senior, about certain things I didn't understand."

Another bonus was having instructors from all different parts of China with only one native English speaker on the teaching team. "Their attitude was that we had to cram, cram and cram, and if you were doing poorly, it was your fault, and you got more homework!" he said laughing.

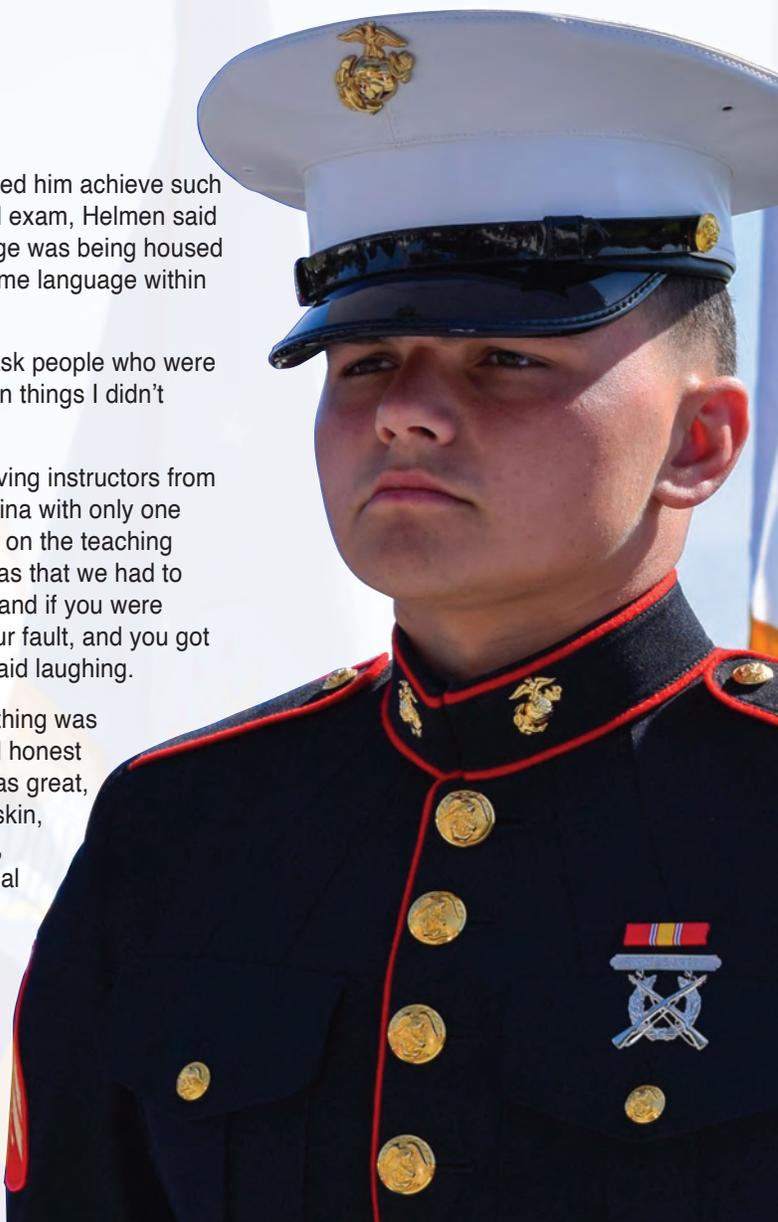
"I liked the fact that nothing was sugar coated, they had honest feedback. For me, it was great, but for those with thin skin, I am not sure," he said, adding that an additional advantage was being able to speak to his parents about Chinese culture and customs.

"Mom and Dad relayed their experiences and told me to not take anything personally. It was nice to be prepared," he said.

In the end, it was the persistence and caring of the instructors that motivated Helman and pushed him to excel.

"The teachers were great. Even when they were short of teachers, we never felt it in the classroom."

"To learn another language is to learn another culture," said Helmen, a lesson he learned from his instructors.



Cpl. Caleb Helmen takes a photo with his parents Tanya and Ben Helmen after graduation on the upper Presidio of Monterey (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

# DLIFLC AWARDS 20,000<sup>TH</sup> ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

In an historic milestone, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center awarded its 20,000th Associate of Arts Degree in Chinese Mandarin to Airman 1st Class Keenon Bryant Currier, marking a significant achievement for Currier, but also the Institute and its enduring mission.

“The honor of being a part of DLI’s history is truly remarkable. To me, this represents a milestone for myself,” said Currier.

Established in 1941 as the West Coast Army Language School, DLIFLC has evolved into the Department of Defense’s premier foreign language school.

Originally focused on supporting World War II efforts, it has expanded its curriculum over the decades to include, at times, more than 40 languages critical to national security.

The Institute gained accreditation in 2002, solidifying its status as a stronghold of foreign language education. Its rigorous programs include teaching culture, history, geography and more, while the overseas immersion language program affords students the ability to apply and perfect their skills in-country.

As the 20,000th graduate, Currier embodies DLIFLC’s mission of fostering linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding, essential elements in today’s interconnected world.

“Conferring 20,000 degrees with the credibility and prestige attributed to DLI has enriched the lives of many service members and created endless opportunities for them to achieve success in life,” Currier explained.

DLIFLC’s alumni have served in various capacities, from intelligence specialties to

diplomatic roles, showcasing the versatility and necessity of language skills in contemporary security landscapes.

Currier is excited about what the future with a foreign language degree could vet him, but he has his sights locked onto his military service.

“After graduation, I will continue my career as a linguist and an Airman, regardless of where I find myself in the future. I am grateful to the Chinese program for enriching my life with priceless cultural and communicative skills,” he affirmed proudly.

The Institute, while celebrating this landmark achievement, remains focused on its vital role in preparing the next generation of language professionals for the challenges ahead.



DLIFLC Provost Dr. Robert Savukinas, awards the 20,000 AA Degree in Chinese Mandarin to Airman 1st Class Keenon Bryant Currier on Dec. 14, 2024 (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

# HAVING A SECOND SOUL: A LINGUIST'S PASSAGE FROM APPRENTICE TO MASTER

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

**N**ever underestimate the power of human ingenuity, drive and purpose, even if the road ahead appears fraught with insurmountable challenges.

"I was a high school drop-out and a teen parent and tired of working multiple jobs, so I decided to enlist. I had a job in munitions but took the DLAB [Defense Language Aptitude Battery] and the rest is history," said Air Force Master Sgt. Devin Snell, currently stationed in South Korea.

"Korean has changed my life in a million amazing ways," stated Snell, who was initially wary about his unfinished high school education affecting his capacity to match his peers. "I was definitely right...Half the things we learned in Korean were foreign to me conceptually, even in English. Concepts about economy, climate, racism, etc.," Snell explained.

At the core of Snell's story are not only the trials and tribulations of becoming a professional linguist, but also a narrative of how his career developed from being, what Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center Commandant Col. James Kievit describes as "an apprentice to master," journey in the cryptologic analyst field.

From graduating with a "shaky" 2/2/1+ more than a decade ago, today Snell is a 3/3/2+ in reading, listening and speaking respectively, while managing a multitude of Air Force Korean linguists with various skillsets working the mission to protect 51 million South Koreans.

Snell, drawing on his experience, concurs with Kievit on a linguist's

career path: starting as a DLIFLC Basic Course graduate and apprentice, advancing through follow-on training as a journeyman and ultimately mastering the language.

"If the standard [2/2/1+] had been different, we wouldn't be having this conversation right now because I would be a munitions troop," explained Snell. "The people who graduate with a 3/3 and show up on my operational doorstep aren't much more valuable to me than the 2/2s, except maybe for the confidence boost the 3/3s get by achieving that mark so early."

But this success can be a "double edged sword" says Snell. Achieving a 3/3 on the Defense Language Proficiency Test from the Basic Course can give linguists a false sense of security that they've learned all there is to know.

"It took me about eight years to get my 3/3... I was held to a standard to do the job and I did it very well. Bottom line, if [DLIFLC] gets them to a 2/2/1+, I can use them to defend and protect the nation," he said. "It is also my job to inspire and guide them to continue improving, and if the standard raises, I will have less of an opportunity to mold people who would have otherwise become great linguists in time."

Much of the molding of linguists initially takes place at DLIFLC but also continues throughout a linguist's career, at one of the 16 Language Training Detachments for sustainment and enhancement or attending the intermediate or advanced course, which can eventually lead to receiving a bachelor's degree in a foreign language.

"It's been 15 years since I've been there [DLIFLC] and I still think about my teaching team often. Korean society values teachers very highly and that year I learned why. They teach, they lead, and they live that experience with you with a wholesome compassion and a genuine drive to drag you through it if they must," explained Snell of his DLIFLC days.

Snell says that he will be forever thankful to his teaching team in Monterey and the instructors at Osan Air Force base, Korea, for his education, but also the life lessons and mentorship.

"They are all phenomenal instructors and people who without fail would always be there to share not just their Korean language skills, but their life wisdom as well. I have learned so much from them and now I see them as not just educators, but safe spaces to receive feedback, life advice, and ultimately guidance toward being a better linguist and a better human," he said.

As for advice to future linguists embarking on their careers, Snell says, "Don't boil this experience down to boxes to check, language classes to begrudgingly attend and DLPTs to barely pass."

"[Emperor] Charlemagne famously said, 'To have another language is to possess a second soul.' With all my heart I can attest to this being true. No other specialty in the military issues you a second soul, so don't waste it," he said.

***“Emperor Charlemagne famously said, “To have another language is to possess a second soul ... No other specialty in the military issues you a second soul, so don’t waste it,” - Air Force Master Sgt. Devin Snell***

*Air Force Master Sgt. Devin Snell, on the small island of Ulleungdo some 75 miles off the coast of the Korean Peninsula, headed to the historical site of Dodko (Photo courtesy of Master Sgt. Devin Snell)*



**D**LIFLC thrives thanks to our dedicated instructors who are the cornerstone of our mission. Their passion for teaching and cultural exchange enriches the learning experience, making DLIFLC a beacon of global language education. Hailing from 93 countries, our multifaceted faculty and staff, comprised of educators, polyglots, musicians and even engineers, imbue students with the essential skills for intelligence missions which are critical to national security.



*Dr. Hui-Chu Hsu leads the combined Chinese Russian choir with faculty and students during a 4th of July celebration in their school (Photo by M. Zachary Sherman, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*

# THE SINGING SIFU

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs



Language is not merely a form of communication; it is a distinctive cultural element that imparts uniqueness and identity, and Dr. Hui-Chu Hsu's narrative is a celebration of this philosophy.

As a Chinese language instructor at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Hsu has intertwined her passion for music with language education, creating a singular and impactful teaching methodology.

Her establishment of a school choir for the combined Chinese Russian school is a practical application of her belief that music is not just an art form, but a dynamic and potent tool for learning, communication and cultural expression.

"Language is music," smiled Hsu. Though a language instructor by profession, Hsu has dedicated her life to the art of choral conducting and song and how those two skills translate into mastering a language.

Recognized early for her musical talents, Hsu began singing in her

native Taiwan with no formal training when she was just a child. Her inspiration was Professor Kao Chu-Hsiang, the first Taiwanese woman to earn a master's degree in music in the United States.

Chu-Hsiang's success helped to encourage Hsu and laid the foundation for her musical expedition.

"She brought back a lot of American folk songs," she gleefully reminisced. "Those songs, like Simon & Garfunkel, John Denver and The Carpenters helped me to learn English."

By 11-years-old, Hsu's rapidly developing skills won her a trio championship in a regional competition in Taiwan. She continued to excel, securing solo titles in both her junior and senior high school years.

Her life's direction was further shaped by meeting Tien-Hui Hsu, a choral conductor and her future husband, in the Taiwan Kaohsiung Teachers Choir. Tien-Hui's return from San Francisco with a master's degree in music and choral conducting from San Francisco State University coincided with the

start of their lifelong personal and professional partnership for over 34 years.

"He became the first choral conductor of the National Taiwan University, the most prestigious university in all of Taiwan. He held that position for almost six years," Hsu said.

With Tien-Hui's support, Hsu joined the National Taiwan University's professional choir, despite not being a music major. Tien-Hui's expertise and Hsu's natural aptitude for music proved to be a harmonious blend.

Her husband's knowledge paved the way for Hsu to join his professional choir, despite being the only non-music major in the entire troupe. He recognized that her passion and musical background made her an invaluable addition to the ensemble.

"His soul and sense of interpretation of music was so beautiful. He was also a very talented tenor, so he could judge the quality of a singing voice," she said.

In 2007, after her husband's retirement as a college music professor in

Taiwan, Hsu and her family embarked on a new chapter in the United States.

Hsu pursued a Ph.D. in teaching English as a second language, focusing on incorporating rhythmic music language into the classroom. Despite her academic pursuits, music remained an integral part of her life. She began developing her curriculum to incorporate music as a learning tool, the same way she had learned English as a girl. Her innovative teaching techniques led to the development of a curriculum that incorporated music as a foundational learning tool.

Despite challenges, Hsu’s journey was adorned with significant accomplishments as a singer.

As a member of the Chan Gung Chamber Choir, she achieved international recognition when the CGCC won the championship at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in North Wales in 1991.

“This was the first time a choir from the Far East had ever won the top trophy in that international competition’s 47-year history,” she gleamed. After winning such a momentous accolade, Taiwanese President Lee Deng-Hui received all the members of CGCC in the presidential office in Taipei, Taiwan, in September 1991, to celebrate their magnificent achievement.

Hsu’s numerous travels and competitions across Europe culminated in a memorable encounter with the legendary tenor Luciano Pavarotti. Her choir’s excellence was acknowledged by Pavarotti himself at an international competition held in 1995 in Northern Wales.

“[Pavarotti] received [us] and took a group photo with us to honor the CGCC’s outstanding performance,” she gushed.

With immense amounts of practice

and determination, it was Hsu’s own ability to transform complex music by using a movable scale method that allowed her to sing with exceptional accuracy. This innovative approach enabled her to surpass the expectations of many music majors and achieve remarkable success, winning six gold medals in international competitions, surpassing many trained musicians.

Her success, she believes, is due to the choir’s purity of voice, accuracy in pitch, rhythmic precision and interpretative beauty. These elements, along with a deep-seated love for music and teaching, fueled her doctoral research on teaching methodologies.



*In a rare opportunity in 1995, DLIFLC instructor Dr. Hui-Chu Hsu and her late husband Prof. Tien-Hui Hsu, had a chance to meet Luciano Pavarotti after a performance in North Wales. Pavarotti, a world renowned tenor, took a photo with the Taiwanese Chang Gung Chamber Choir, directed at the time by Prof. Hsu (Photo courtesy of Dr. Hui-Chu Hsu)*

“I also did the research for my dissertation on how applying songs to language [translates to] teaching in the classroom,” she explained.

Hsu’s educational philosophy is simple yet profound: language and music are intrinsically connected, sharing the same fundamental principles of communication. In the Chinese language, this connection is even more pronounced, with pitch playing a crucial role in meaning.

“We commonly talk about mathematics as music. But language is also music, which is the same science of communication,” said Hsu who

has motivated her students to learn about how song, not just language, can change one’s absorption of knowledge.

“The Chinese language has four tones,” she explained. “Four tones, with four different pronunciations, which have four different meanings. How we use pitch to match [that specific tone] is from music.”

The word “ma” in Chinese can denote vastly different concepts depending on its tonal pronunciation, something that Hsu illustrates as inherently musical.

“Chinese is pitch,” explains Hsu. “The Chinese language pitch comes from music.”

Russian students learned the song “Edelweiss,” as did Chinese students, but in their respective languages. Then they sang it together, taking turns, performing a solo in each language.

The result? A remarkable infusion of language in a lyrical mashup of harmonious melodies that blended perfectly together.

In a world where music transcends boundaries and touches the deepest parts of our souls, Hsu has tapped into a part of herself and shared that spark with her students, helping to brighten up

not only their futures, but their smiles as well.

By fostering a learning environment that celebrates song as a means to language acquisition, Hsu has shown how the joy of music can elevate and transform the educational experience.

“My passion motivates me to be happy and that, in turn, motivates my students,” she beamed.

*(Far left) Dr. Hui-Chu Hsu performs at the 4th of July celebration on June 29, 2023 (Photo by M. Zachary Sherman, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*

# CROSS-CULTURAL RUSSIAN EDUCATOR TEACHES CHINESE TO MILITARY

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

In the halls of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California, you'll find an unassuming figure whose passion for languages has shaped an extraordinary journey.

"I learned English as my first foreign language in kindergarten and continued it with my studies at school," said Dr. Nikita Kuzmin, a Russian-born national raised in Moscow amidst the twilight of the Soviet Union.

His story, marked by personal challenges and academic triumphs, offers a vivid tableau of the power of language in connecting worlds apart. Raised by a mother who had served in administrative roles for the Russian Army, Kuzmin's childhood bore little indication of his future linguistic prowess.

"Despite my education in English, my family has only Russian [in our] background. We don't have any foreign heritage," he said.

What began as child's subject continued throughout his schooling as Kuzmin, admittedly not a "math whiz," gravitated towards the humanities. However, he understood the value of a challenge.

"I liked setting goals and achieving them," he recalled. But his childhood fascination with history and an innate love for challenges converged in an unexpected way. He built a self-curated museum, crafted out of his

family's old possessions, feeding an insatiable curiosity about the past, even going as far as giving lectures on the "antiquities" he'd displayed.

Kuzmin's admiration for history and quest for new challenges led him to the Chinese language; one as complex as it is rich in historical significance. Reaching the end of his high school career, he saw mastering a foreign language as not just a communication tool, but a marketable skillset as well.

"In Russia, if you master a foreign language, it is very much a skill. You can be a teacher or a translator," he said. "And I wanted to do something practical, something real."

It was this pragmatic approach to education that led Kuzmin to a crossroads in his late teens. Western languages like English, German and French presented little allure; they lacked the challenge he craved.

"Russian and Chinese relations were strong, with student exchanges common. I thought why not Chinese?" His choice was timely; the mayor of Moscow had just introduced East Asian languages into the school system and Kuzmin found a program that combined linguistic rigor with informative training.

Shrouded in its deep cultural traditions and steeped in intertwining history, Chinese both fed his love of history and his passion for learning.

Navigating a succession of academic challenges, his quest commenced in Moscow where he earned an undergraduate degree in the theory and methods of teaching foreign languages. He continued his scholarly pursuit, dedicating three years of study in literature and linguistics in China. Afterwards, Kuzmin relocated to Germany to embark on a graduate degree in Sinology, culminating in a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

"I wanted to become a professor," Kuzmin affirmed. "With the field being so competitive, though, I needed to go where the best Ph.D. programs were and that's how I came to the United States."

His postgraduate job search led him to DLIFLC, where he now teaches Chinese to U.S. service members. "It's my first job as a teacher," he says with a hint of pride. "I use my knowledge and my background to benefit them and this is how I can contribute [to their education]."

Though the path to this role was unorthodox, seeing a Russian national teaching Chinese to American Soldiers, Kuzmin says it is a fitting testament to his belief in the unifying power of learning the complexities of not just the technicalities of a language, but also unearthing its culture.

"I [try to] educate them on how a foreigner would look at certain things in China, having been there for three years myself. I didn't stay with expats, I wanted to explore, speak with people. You need to be fearless, take in the hustle and bustle," he explains. "And though we are not Chinese, only then can we respect the culture and truly learn."

Kuzmin's journey underscores the importance of language education, particularly in the realm of national security and international relations. He dispels the upcoming notion that artificial intelligence or technology could ever replace the nuance and depth of human language acquisition.

"The goal is to prevent something terrible from happening," he asserts. "Understanding this cultural component can be the key to stopping terrible things from happening. And a computer can't do that."

As for the future, Kuzmin envisions continuing his role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and is loving his position at DLIFLC.

"Language learning is about enjoyment and connection. It's about understanding that, at our core, all human beings are the same," he beamed.

*Dr. Nikita Kuzmin teaching students Chinese in the classroom (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*

# FROM THE KHYBER PASS TO THE PACIFIC COAST

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs



In the heart of the Khyber Valley, where the mountains stand as a silent witness to centuries of history, Lutfullah Fareedzai's story began amidst the turmoil of war.

"My birth, occurring under challenging circumstances, became a tale of survival," Fareedzai recalled, reflecting on his early years of life without access to even basic medical care. "My mom recounts that I was so sick when I was born that hope seemed lost."

His birthplace, Landi Kotal, located in the Khyber Pass is a valley between

Afghanistan and Pakistan famous for its resistance fighters against the Soviets who invaded Afghanistan in 1979. His family, like many, sought refuge in Pakistan during the harrowing times of the Soviet occupation.

"In a time when the focus was on the war, with many casualties and injured individuals brought to Pakistan, caring for my well-being was not a top priority," he said with remorse. His survival, he described, was "nothing short of a miracle," a narrative that precluded the resilience he would need throughout his life.

The ebb and flow of conflict shaped Fareedzai's youth, with his family repatriating to post-Soviet Afghanistan, only to be forced into exodus again by civil unrest and the Taliban's rise to power.

It was during these times the transformative events of 9/11 unfolded, drawing the world's attention once again to Afghanistan. Amidst the subsequent "War on Terror," his homeland experienced a fleeting period of hope, embracing democracy and education.



development assistance, in Kabul that Fareedzai’s passion for higher education ignited.

“I set my sights on achieving this goal and applied for scholarships overseas,” he said, knowing this was a way to break the oppressive cycle of a life marred by conflict.

Despite multiple hurdles, he secured

began my language career at DLI as a teacher and team leader,” he stated, “working hard to develop my mastery in the field.”

His achievements culminated in receiving a 10th service anniversary certificate and pin, marking a significant milestone in his career. But Fareedzai’s aspirations extend beyond personal accolades.

“My parents instilled a strong desire for education,” he shared, crediting his father’s decision to break away from an entire lineage of farmers to pursue education and serve others as a professor. This commitment to learning and growth fueled Fareedzai’s simultaneous completion of a master’s degree and a doctorate, further enhancing his contributions to DLIFLC’s mission.

Now, as an assessment specialist and contract representative for the Defense Language Proficiency Test, he is a pivotal figure in the development of high-stakes language assessments vital to national security. His experience, coupled with a comprehensive understanding of multiple languages, has significantly bolstered the success of military linguists.

As Faculty Advisory Council President in his testing division, Fareedzai has championed initiatives to foster resilience and a supportive environment at DLIFLC. He views his role as an opportunity to help others.

“That their voices are heard, and their concerns reach the right place,” he said. His leadership has led to the successful implementation of the inaugural Resiliency Day, nurturing a culture of collaboration and well-being among staff.

Looking to the future, Fareedzai’s goals are firmly aligned with DLIFLC’s growth and success.

“[I want] to promote a vibrant and dynamic learning environment ... to make a positive contribution to the world,” he said with vigor.



*(Left) Lutfullah Fareedzai takes a break at the Khyber Pass while working as a project manager to rebuild schools, roads and bridges for USAID in 2008 (Photo courtesy of Lutfullah Fareedzai)*

*(Right) Fareedzai stands above Fisherman’s Wharf in Monterey, near the Presidio (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*

the prestigious Erasmus Mundus scholarship, which took him to Italy. There he found his true calling when he was particularly struck by his peers’ multilingual capabilities.

“I was truly inspired...to meet so many remarkable individuals who were able to speak at least four to five languages,” he recalled. Languages soon became his passion.

In 2013, Fareedzai’s journey brought him to the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey as a Pashto instructor.

“Being part of an educational institution has always been a priority for me,” he said proudly. “Learning is a cornerstone of my career journey.” His mission at DLIFLC was to enhance the language skills and cultural understanding of military linguists, a role that he believes also helps improve the perception of military personnel in Afghanistan.

Over the years, Fareedzai’s dedication to education and his students has earned him numerous accolades. “I

“The country was changing for the better,” Fareedzai reflected. “It was offering hope and a brighter future.”

The war in Afghanistan led to two decades of progress in education and democracy but in 2021, the U.S. withdrawal raised fears of a return to the country’s pre-war state.

“Who knew this could all end after 20 years...and [that] we would be back to square one,” he said somberly.

It was during his tenure with the United States Agency for International Development, a U.S. government agency that provides foreign aid and



# BLENDING NATIVE AMERICAN ROOTS WITH PATRIOTIC ARTISTRY

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

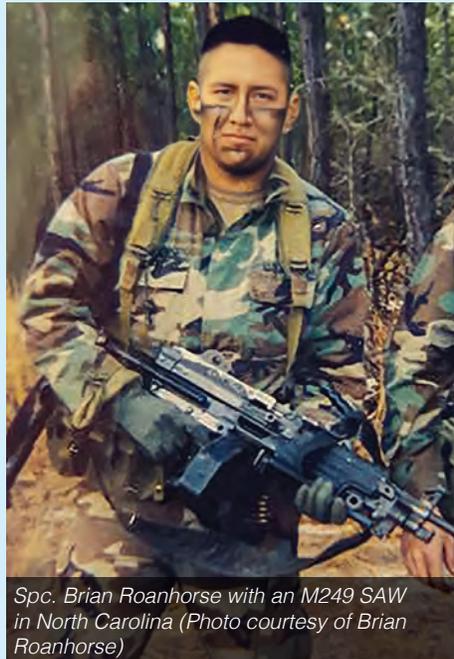
**I**n the heart of the American Southwest where the red sands of Arizona and New Mexico blend into one, Brian Roanhorse has woven a life story that mirrors the rich tapestry of his Native American heritage.

From parachuting out of “perfectly good airplanes” as part of the 82nd Airborne Division to becoming a creative powerhouse of graphic art and computer animation, Roanhorse’s journey from U.S. Army Soldier to government service is a path defined by both deep-rooted tradition and personal transformation.

“I was born on the Navajo reservation,” said Roanhorse, his baritone voice carrying the weight of a legacy that stretches back generations. “My family is part of the Redhouse clan, members of the Navajo Nation. Growing up, my elders used to tell me stories of how hard they’d fought to ensure our continued existence not just as a people, but to hold on to our traditions.”

“I volunteered to be in the same unit [my grandfather] was in, as an Airborne Infantryman for the 82nd Airborne Division. “His choice to join

the military was deeply rooted in his own family history. “I’ve tried to honor their perseverance and fighting spirit and that’s one reason I joined the Army.”



*Spc. Brian Roanhorse with an M249 SAW in North Carolina (Photo courtesy of Brian Roanhorse)*

Roanhorse’s service was not just an act of patriotism or familial obligation, but a tribute to his heritage, feeling not only the weight of the tradition left by his grandfather, but other Navajo heroes: the Navajo Code Talkers.

During WWII, the U.S. Marines enlisted 29 Navajo men who created an unbreakable code based on their

complex and unwritten language. This code, which could be translated into English in just 20 seconds, played a crucial role in Pacific operations, including the battle for Iwo Jima, and remained unbroken even after the war.

“That is a proud legacy among my people and those Marines deserve our admiration,” he stated, acknowledging the complex history and contributions of Native Americans in the armed forces.

“[Those men] grew up in a time when most of America looked away from the plight of Native Americans and kept taking and taking. And even after the WWII, they were told to keep quiet about their contribution to the war effort. So, they went back home as third-class citizens until they declassified files in the 80’s. But now it’s a different time and we celebrate them annually and openly, the way it should be.”

Even his own journey was not without its hurdles. “As I grew up, it was pretty clear joining the military was one of the few ways to advance out of poverty, at least in my case,” Roanhorse admitted. “Living on the reservation for me was a struggle as I grew older.”

And how did growing up in that environment differ from taking the oath to becoming a Soldier?



Brian Roanhorse standing on a Peak at Bryce Point, Bryce Canyon National Park (Photo courtesy of Brian B. Roanhorse)

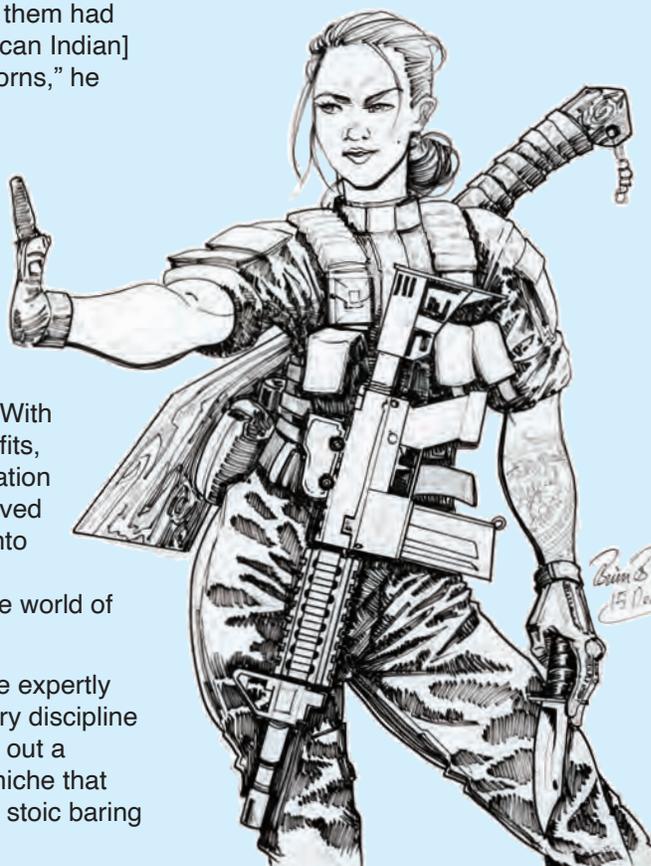
“I had a huge culture shock, going from the reservation to Army life. I was excited about the adventure, the newness, but most of [what I knew] outside of the reservation was from movies and music. But when I finally experienced this collection of people who were like characters from all the different states, I was enthusiastic to get to know them. Most of them had never met a Native [American Indian] and thought we were unicorns,” he laughed.

Upon fulfilling his initial military commitment, Roanhorse shifted to the reserve forces where he served over 20 years in a variety of jobs and on multiple deployments and made a pivotal change in his professional direction. With support from his G.I. benefits, he pursued a higher education in the arts, a move that paved the way for his evolution into a graphic artist and visual information specialist in the world of government service.

In this capacity, Roanhorse expertly merged the rigors of military discipline with artistic vision, carving out a distinctive and rewarding niche that has perfectly balanced his stoic bearing

and military discipline with unchained artistic expression.

“One benefit of being a government service employee is working with military service members. I already know their ‘language,’ their chain of command, how they think and operate. That synergy’s allowed me to



get on the same page very quickly. It really helps me make products that are that much closer to their initial vision. Plus, the benefits don’t hurt either,” he said with a wry smile.

As for his Native American heritage, it continues to play a pivotal role in his life and work. When asked about Native American Heritage Month, Roanhorse offers a thoughtful perspective.

“Every day is a good day to be Indigenous, Native or ‘something else.’ But I won’t lie. When you look back into American history, sometimes it’s hard to stay positive but that we need to keep focused on the fact Native Americans have been fighting for this country, and sometimes against it, since the beginning of our history, before there was a United States. We have always fought for the protection of the land. People, governments, they come and go, but the spirit of the land will always be here.”

Looking towards the future, Roanhorse is optimistic about the representation of Native Americans in the military and the arts. He encourages young Native Americans.

“You can do both. You can be a Soldier and be an artist. The Army gave me that opportunity. And now with YouTube and all the online resources, just absorb as much as you can. Never stop learning. That’s how you grow.”

Today, as Roanhorse reflects on his journey from carrying an M-16A4 to wielding a pen on a tablet, his story is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Native American community: a spirit of resilience, pride and an unwavering commitment to forge new paths while honoring the past.

“I am proud to have served and am still serving. Native culture is in the DNA of this nation.”

Illustration in ink pen and sharpie on butcher block paper by Brian Roanhorse

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE



## OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

**I**n the heart of America’s melting pot, Dr. Irina Anokhin stands as a testament to the power of language and the resilience of the human spirit. Her story, a blend of multiculturalism and dedication, stretches from the bustling streets of Moscow to the academic halls of the United States, where she now serves as a bridge between cultures in her role with the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center.

Born to a father who held the rank of colonel in the Soviet Army, Anokhin’s formative years were laced with the

cadences of different dialects. “I was exposed to foreign languages since I was a very young child,” she recalled. Her father’s military service led them to diverse war-torn regions such as Afghanistan and North Ossetia, where she naturally developed a talent for languages and gained a deep appreciation for the military’s vital contribution to peacekeeping. These experiences profoundly influenced her life and her future.

Even early on in her schooling, the pressures of family expectations nudged Anokhin toward the military

despite having a love for animals which steered her heart towards a veterinary path.

“I respected my dad and I love him, so I kind of agreed [to join the military],” she said.

However, her true calling couldn’t be silenced, and she eventually admitted to her father she’d need to carve out her own way as a veterinarian.

At the age of 17, Anokhin left home in search of her own path, one directed by her heart and not familial obligation.

A farm in Norway became Anokhin's sanctuary, where she worked as a farmhand, mucking stalls and caring for the livestock. Not easy work for a teenage girl, but her passion and love for animals kept her working.

The practicality of communication in her daily tasks with a strong Norwegian woman and her five children made her "almost fluent in Norwegian," Anokhin said. The language became second nature, thanks to full immersion in a foreign environment.

She soon returned to Russia where Anokhin's academic excellence in veterinary studies led her down an unexpected avenue. "I started reading professional veterinary articles in English... and I decided that I would translate some articles for my colleagues," she explained. This venture into translation bridged her two passions, launching her into the realms of language education and interpretation.

Anokhin's journey to the United States, where she'd dedicated herself to language studies, became a safe haven. Here, she was able to both pursue knowledge and escape from a homeland where she often felt

alienated due to her mixed heritage.

"I have 11 different nationalities in my DNA... and because of me being more Asian looking growing up in Russia... I never felt at home there," Anokhin shared. Conversely, the diverse backdrop of America's melting pot offered her an acceptance she'd never known, allowing her a chance to flourish professionally.

Now armed with a master's in teaching English as a foreign language from Kent State University, Anokhin stepped into the role of an educator in Ohio's public schools, predominantly assisting Ukrainian children to assimilate to their new home. Her multilingual abilities were not just a skill but a beacon of hope for many immigrant families trying to navigate their new world.

Anokhin's expertise and unique background eventually caught the attention of DLIFLC when she applied to be a Russian instructor. When asked about the moral complexities of working for the U.S. government, Anokhin responded with the wisdom of someone who's weighed her decisions against the scales of personal convictions and national loyalties.

"I teach the Russian language... not Russia," she asserts, distinguishing her love for her Russian heritage from her disapproval of its current governance.

Shockingly, her father displayed no bitterness towards her career choice in the U.S., even as a veteran of the Soviet army. "He is... the most influential person in my life," she said proudly. His support never wavered, even when her life took turns he hadn't envisioned.

Despite the distance from her family and the bittersweet nature of her expatriate status, Anokhin sees her role as an educator and department chair in the U.S. not merely as a job but as a mission. "At least my life is not boring," she smiled.

Anokhin holds onto the hope that her work today might foster better relations between the U.S. and Russia in the future.

"Contributing to the safety of this country gives me satisfaction and pride," she stated.

*(Far left & below) Irina Anokhin teaching her class (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



# EVENTS

As DLIFLC continues to excel, the Institute hosted several significant events; honoring those who have contributed to the foreign language intelligence mission in a Hall of Fame induction ceremony, hosting Veterans Day with a World War II hero and passing the mantle of leadership to a new cadre of commanders. Our students continue to soar, impressing senior Army leadership with their amazing skills. These events reflect our legacy and future promise to ensure the security of the nation.





The Commanding General of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle, walks with DLIFLC Commandant Col. James Kievit after having observed a Korean language course July 17, 2023 (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

# HALL OF FAME

**D**LIFLC inducted four new members to its Hall of Fame on Nov. 3, 2023. The Honorable Ronald S. Moultrie, retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Eric P. Wendt, Mr. Craig L. Wilson and U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ronald Thorpe were all inducted during a ceremony at the Weckerling Center at the Presidio of Monterey. These distinguished inductees have indelibly influenced foreign language training, military linguists and have impacted international diplomacy with their notable professional achievements within the Department of Defense.

*By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs*

**W**hile fame may be fleeting for most, at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, the Hall of Fame pays homage to those individuals who have indelibly influenced foreign language training, military linguists, public service and international diplomacy with notable professional achievements.

“There are linguists every day who are providing information to President [Joe] Biden,” stated Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, the Honorable Ronald S. Moultrie, one of the four inductees being honored at the ceremony Nov. 3, 2023. “That’s really making a difference.”

Moultrie rose from a U.S. Air Force Russian linguist to become the

undersecretary of defense for intelligence and security where he advocates for foreign language proficiency, diversity and equity in the Intelligence Community’s language cadre.

Emphasizing the vital role of language in national security and its significance in providing information and intelligence in both peacetime and conflict, Moultrie recalled the events of last year regarding Russia and Ukraine, as well as current hostilities between Israel and Hamas.

“Our goal as intelligence professionals is to prevent conflicts. Intel only makes a difference because of language and that all starts here with DLIFLC.”

Moultrie was joined by three other distinguished inductees in this esteemed recognition.

“It’s an honor and a joy as a two-time student and advocate of DLI for many years in the past, and it will continue to be my honor to do so,” said retired Army Lt. Gen. Eric P. Wendt. Throughout his 34-year military career, Wendt consistently championed foreign language proficiency, cultural awareness and innovative education as vital components of military readiness and success.

Mr. Craig L. Wilson, a stalwart guardian of DLIFLC for over two decades, played a pivotal role in safeguarding and expanding the language program, securing substantial funding increases and



Inductees of the DLIFLC Hall of Fame (Left to right): Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, the Honorable Ronald S. Moultrie, retired Lt. Gen. Eric P. Wendt, U.S. Army, Mr. Craig L. Wilson and Mr. Ronald Thorp, great nephew of Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe. (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)

ensuring its longevity during critical junctures, while also co-authoring key directives and legislation to enhance its effectiveness.

“You give me the cost of one tank for intelligence training [and] I’ll show you the benefit,” Wilson had promised one of the Capitol Hill naysayers. “I feel the same way about foreign language. If your tank doesn’t know where to go or who it’s fighting, what good is the tank?”

Ronald Thorp accepted on behalf of his late great-uncle, Army Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe, a distinguished military figure known for his remarkable legacy as an intelligence operative and foreign language advocate. Thorpe’s early warning about Japan’s Pearl Harbor attack plans in 1941 were substantiated

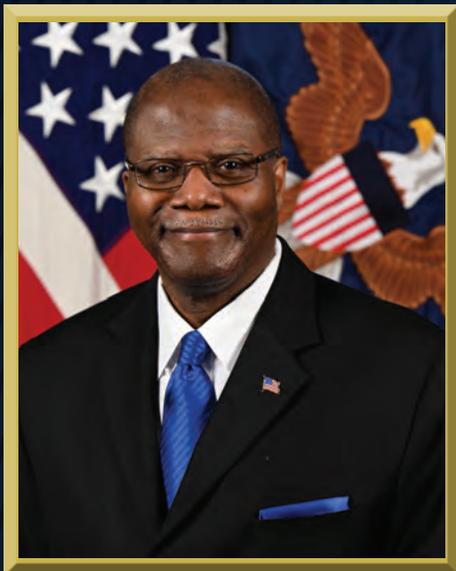
only after the event. Thorpe’s farsightedness as the third school commandant to introduce multi-language training into the Military Intelligence Service Language School after the events of WWII still impact DLIFLC to this day.

“General Thorpe was part of the era when men and women sacrificed to do their part serving our nation,” recanted Thorp. “They were the greatest generation. And I salute all members of this staff for making [DLIFLC] a model program.”

The distinguished inductees, whose exceptional achievements consistently set them apart, credit their success to prioritizing foreign language as a cornerstone of military and civil service training. Their steadfast commitment to

linguistic excellence underscores the crucial role of foreign language in shaping accomplishments in these fields, which extends beyond personal successes to benefit their organizations and institutions, ultimately contributing to the security of the nation.

“And what I always say is probably the most successful conflict that we have ever seen are the ones that never happened,” Moultrie said. “That’s the greatest success that we can have. We have those successes every day.”



*Honorable Ronald S. Moultrie - DoD*

**M**r. Ronald S. (Ron) Moultrie's distinguished government and public service began in 1979 when he served as a U.S. Air Force linguist studying Russian at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. Upon graduation he was assigned to Misawa, Japan where he

served as a lead flight linguist.

In his subsequent assignment at the National Security Agency/Central Security Service in 1983, Moultrie began a multi-decade career that would see him rise to the position of the Agency's director of operations. There, he was entrusted with its language program, the Agency's collection, processing, and analytic businesses, for more than 20,000 personnel and an almost \$6 billion dollar budget.

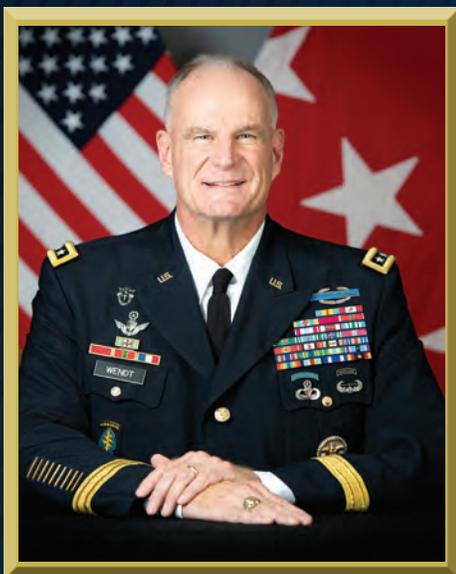
Leading many of the Agency's key operational elements, Moultrie championed greater language proficiency and foreign language proficiency pay in all languages to include Russian, Chinese, Farsi, Urdu and North Korean. During this period, he also served as a CIA Senior Intelligence Service officer and the director of one of the Intelligence Community's premier joint organizations leading, arguably, one of our nation's most talented cadre of

linguists.

In 2021, Moultrie was presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed as the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security where he leads the Military Intelligence Program and is accountable for over 120,000 military and civilian personnel and for an almost \$30 billion-dollar annual budget.

As in past assignments, Moultrie has been a tireless advocate for the language community, pioneering the Department of Defense's and Intelligence Community's comprehensive efforts to better resource and enable DLIFLC to increase language proficiency in support of current and future critical mission requirements.

As a mission imperative, Moultrie is at the forefront of increasing diversity, equity and inclusion within the U.S. Intelligence Community's language cadre.



*Lt. Gen. Eric P. Wendt - U.S. Army*

**T**hroughout his over 34-year active duty military career, retired Lt. Gen. Eric Wendt consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, profound vision, advocacy and a deep understanding of the pivotal role that foreign language proficiency plays in the success and readiness of our armed forces.

During his uniformed active-duty military tenure, Wendt served over four years in the Infantry, and then for 30 years as a Special Forces Green Beret. He successfully completed the Arabic and Korean language programs at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. His language efforts centered on the crucial importance of linguistic skills and cultural awareness as force multipliers in an increasingly interconnected global environment.

Wendt has championed innovative DLIFLC language learning methodologies and cutting-edge technologies that transcend conventional approaches to language education.

He successfully built numerous programs across the Department of the Defense and NATO which reflected DLIFLC's methodologies while reinforcing language proficiency and cultural awareness platforms. Wendt was able to implement these programs while serving during 55 months of combat deployments and in positions such as Commander, 1st Bn,

1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Torri Station, Okinawa, Japan; Commander, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne); Commanding General, United States Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School; United States Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority; and Commander, NATO Special Operations Headquarters, to name a few.

In post-uniformed retirement, Wendt works as a professor of practice at the Naval Postgraduate School and as one of two DoD senior mentors for Korea. In these positions, Wendt continues to be a passionate advocate for DLIFLC, exemplifying his commitment by bringing key senior military leaders and government officials to witness the Institute's transformative capabilities and impacts firsthand.

Through his continued support and advocacy for DLIFLC, Wendt has helped the Institute garner essential support for the continued development and advancement of DLIFLC foreign language programs.

**M**r. Craig L. Wilson spearheaded the Defense Foreign Language Program at the Office of Secretary of Defense level for more than 20 years and was considered the “Godfather” and protector of the program during multiple critical periods when the existence of the Presidio of Monterey and the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center were threatened.

Directly supporting the (then) assistant secretary of defense (intelligence), Wilson co-authored and updated the Department of Defense policy on foreign language training, assigning oversight responsibility to the Office of the Assistant Secretary.

In 1978, Wilson’s move of the DLIFLC budget into the new Military Intelligence Program made him the principal presenter to Congress, leading to a five-fold increase in funding.

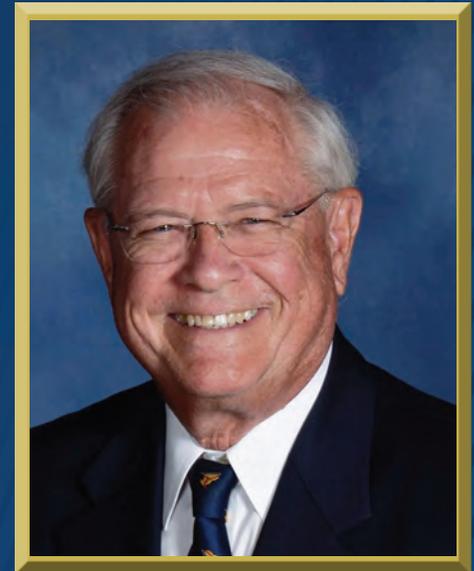
Wilson was instrumental in establishing the first and successive General Officer Steering Committee meetings in Monterey. All services, OSD, the Defense Intelligence Agency,

NSA and other key stakeholder agencies participated, consolidating requirements to substantiate the defense wide program direction and budgets.

In the early 1980s, the Army was challenged to find military construction funds required for new facilities at DLIFLC. Wilson succeeded in moving the military construction budget for DLIFLC from the Army to the Defense Agencies’ account, assuring more than \$100 million in construction funding over the next five years (1981-1985).

Wilson was the principal author of legislation that would transfer DLIFLC civilian employees from the traditional Civil Service System (USC Title 5) to the Armed Forces (Title 10), creating a more flexible Faculty Personnel System.

In 1993, the Army placed the Presidio of Monterey on the Base Realignment and Closure list. The secretary of defense directed a joint study, led by Wilson, to review the Army’s proposition. The Presidio was subsequently removed from the BRAC list.



*Mr. Craig L. Wilson*

In 2015, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta appointed Wilson to the DLIFLC distinguished Board of Visitors, where he served for another four years.

**B**rig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe’s military career from 1916 until his retirement in 1949 placed him often in events that were instrumental to the security of the United States. Thorpe gained lasting fame as the operative whom the War Department ignored when he correctly advised, based upon his intercepted intelligence, that Japan planned to attack the U.S. at Pearl Harbor in late 1941.

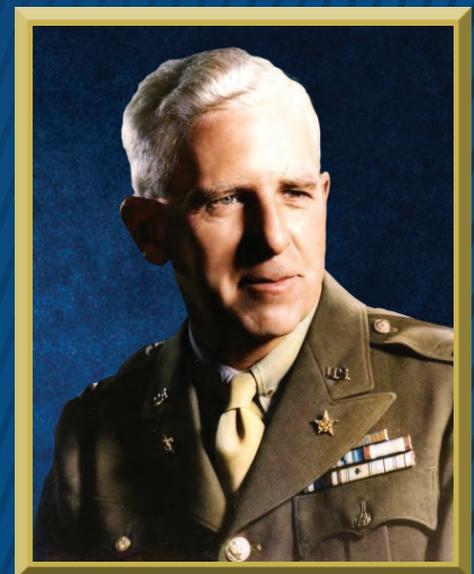
Thorpe’s military career encompassed two world wars, the reconstruction of Japan and a tour of duty in post-war Thailand. As chief of counterintelligence under Gen. Douglas MacArthur during World War II, Thorpe was responsible for some 800 Japanese-speaking counterintelligence linguists trained by the Military Intelligence Service Language School. Thorpe was present aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay for the surrender of the Japanese Empire and was responsible for identifying Japanese war criminals and overseeing Emperor Hirohito during the occupation.

In 1946, Thorpe took command of the Military Intelligence Service Language School in Minnesota where Japanese was taught to U.S. service members who were mainly of Japanese descent.

Upon assuming command, Thorpe rebuffed efforts by the War Department to either close the school or transfer it to Japan. He focused his attention on revitalizing the school, which had languished with demobilization.

More importantly, Thorpe transformed the wartime program into a multilanguage school to meet the military’s ongoing need for skilled linguists in a range of languages. He quickly ascertained that such a school would far outshine other options and succeeded in convincing higher authorities that his path was the way forward. Within a year, the school was teaching 20 languages.

Thorpe also believed that the language school should only hire instructors who were native speakers



*Brig. Gen. Elliott R. Thorpe - U.S. Army*

of the languages they taught. With this move, military students were ensured to learn not only the rudiments of a language but also its nuances, culture, geography, and history. Thorpe’s impact on the Army’s language school and today’s DLIFLC will continue to endure long past his legacy.



# DLIFLC SALUTES VETERANS

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

As the morning sun cast its rays down upon the upper Presidio of Monterey, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center hosted a poignant Veterans Day observance on Nov. 9, 2023.

Distinguished guests, veterans, active-duty military, staff and students were among the diverse gathering of individuals who attended the event.

“You have helped keep our country and its citizens safe, free from terror and harm,” expressed DLIFLC Commandant Col. James Kievit to the attendees. “Veterans have dedicated themselves to the defense of our country and that resolve has made us stronger and more resilient as a nation.”

The guest of honor, retired Army Capt. Roland Martin knows something about

resolve and was pleased to recant his time serving during WWII.

At the tender age of 19, Martin embarked on a remarkable journey into the skies. His ambition transcended the role of a mere pilot; he aspired to be at the helm of a B-17 Flying Fortress, the formidable and infamous bomber. In pursuit of this dream, he piloted his ship, the “Iron Maiden,” on nine triumphant sorties. However, destiny took a very different turn on his 10th mission as flak from German “88” anti-aircraft guns forced his ship to crash deep within enemy territory near Schweinfurt, Germany.

“My plane turned into a glider with all the aspects of a brick,” chuckled Martin.

He and his top turret gunner were on the run; using the landscape for cover as they tried to reach the safety of Switzerland.

However, after two weeks the men were captured by a local family and turned over to the German military. The two men were quickly processed, being segregated into officer and enlisted personnel camps. Martin found himself housed in Stalag Luft 1, a prisoner of war camp on the Baltic Sea, approximately two miles to the northwest of Barth, Germany. There, with fellow officers who had been apprehended during the conflict, he was confined for the duration of the war.

“There were 8,000 prisoners there and only 1,800 of them were British. The rest were Americans. I was there for 20 months,” recalled Martin.

The ceremony took place in the central courtyard of DLIFLC, offering a view of the Berlin Wall memorial, which consists of three distinct sections that had once separated East and West

Attendees bow their heads in a moment of silence to honor the fallen (Photo by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs.)



Berlin during the Cold War.

Among the attendees were prominent members of the local community, service commanders representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard as well as approximately 25 students from Carmel River Elementary School.

“It became a journey I did not complete. I’m one of the fortunate few left who are still able to stand here in front of you,” expressed Martin. “Thank you for having me here today.”

(Left) Capt. Martin recounts his remarkable experience piloting the B-17 bomber during WWII

(Right) Students from Carmel River Elementary School pose for a Veterans day picture with (right) Command Sgt. Maj. Ernesto Cruz, DLIFLC Commandant Col. James Kievit (center), and Lt. Col. Christopher Gin (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)



# LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITION



By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

In a traditional ceremony at Soldier Field within the storied grounds of the Presidio of Monterey, Calif., Command Sgt. Major Ernesto L. Cruz concluded his distinguished three-year tenure as the top enlisted leader of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center.

On Dec. 13, 2023, Cruz handed over the mantle of responsibility to Command Sgt. Maj. Theo DeHoyos, affirming the Institute's enduring

ethos of leadership, continuity, and excellence.

Cruz shared heartfelt sentiments about his time at DLIFLC, "This place is amazing, this place is home and it means the world to me. I will cherish these three years as one of the best [assignments] in my career. It's been an honor."

In turn, DeHoyos affirmed his commitment to building on this legacy, pledging dedication and foresight in his new role, while understanding his predecessor's professional heritage. "Though we're the same size, give or take a few inches..." DeHoyos joked. "I know I have some big shoes to

fill. But I love this mission, to make warrior-linguists and to see them go forward to every corner of the world and serve our nation and its people and destroy our adversaries."

The ceremony was presided over by Col. James Kievit, commandant of DLIFLC. In his remarks, Kievit highlighted the pivotal role of Cruz's leadership, stating, "Ernesto dedicated everything that he had to ensure that our diverse military and civilian team were always taken care of. His strong will and opinion is legendary. Cruz optimizes the concept of selfless service and saves his words for those under his charge by preparing them for what lies ahead."



Kievit's impassioned speech highlighted Cruz's remarkable capacity to instill a collaborative ethos among all military personnel, no matter their branch of service. This principle, deeply resonant with Kievit's own values, is assured to be a cornerstone of his leadership until his tenure concludes in July 2024.

Reflecting on Cruz's impactful service, DLIFLC Chief of Staff Steven Collins stated, "Cruz was key in unifying senior NCOs from various military branches, promoting camaraderie and forging a productive Army-Air Force partnership among the leadership. Additionally, as the constraints of COVID-19 began to lift, he was

instrumental in the smooth transition of returning students and faculty to in-person learning, successfully navigating the post-pandemic challenges of moving away from forced distance education."

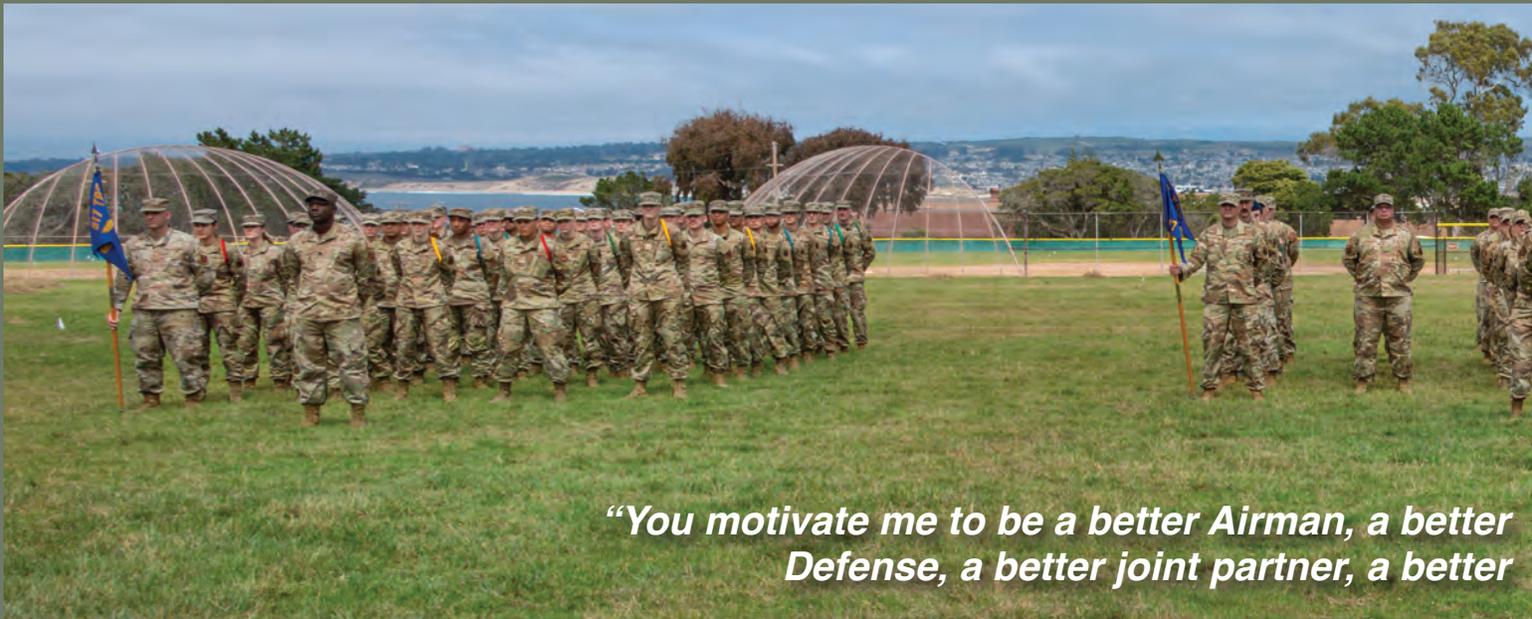
DLIFLC offers resident instruction in 10 languages and has the capability to teach 65 additional languages in Washington, D.C. It proudly educates approximately 2,500 students across all five branches of the military and Coast Guard annually and boasts over 230,000 linguist graduates since its inception in 1941.

Furthermore, the Institute's global reach is extended through multiple

language training detachments worldwide, supporting the U.S. geographic Combatant Commands and the total force with unparalleled language preparedness.

As the Institute transitions leadership, it stands steadfast in its commitment to language excellence and defense readiness needs.

*(Far left) Outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. Cruz gives his parting remarks on Soldier Field, after three years of service. (Lower right) DLIFLC Commandant Col. James Kievit presides over the ceremony of passing the guidon from Cruz to incoming Command Sgt. Maj. Theo DeHoyos. Master Sgt. Shannon Lawson prepares the colors for the transition (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



***“You motivate me to be a better Airman, a better Defense, a better joint partner, a better***

# ASSISTANT COMMANDANT PASSES THE MANTLE

By M. Zachary Sherman  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

**O**n June 14, 2023, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center witnessed a significant change of leadership.

Air Force Col. Jennifer L. Saraceno, commander of the 517th Training Group, passed the mantle of Assistant Commandant to Col. Mark S. Jones in a ceremony brimming with respect and anticipation for the future.

Saraceno, with warmth and sincerity, addressed the assembly of students, faculty and staff on Soldier Field.

“Your remarkable talents never fail to impress me,” she said with a smile. “You motivate me to be a better Airman, a better senior leader in the Department of Defense, a better joint partner, a better person.”

Her speech was a poignant reflection of gratitude, recognizing the steadfast support and priceless wisdom

imparted by the senior leadership during her command.

“It has not been an easy job, but it was the best experience for me personally and professionally. And that’s because of all of you and what you taught me on this journey,” Saraceno remarked.

Saraceno expressed her enthusiasm for Jones’ succession with confidence, underscoring the significance of his expertise and character in leading the Institute forward. Jones, who is both a DLIFLC alumnus and a seasoned foreign area officer, shared this excitement.

“It’s fantastic to return here,” he stated.

As the new commander of the 517th, Jones is set to guide two Air Force squadrons, which include approximately 1,200 Airmen, predominantly cryptologic linguist trainees.

His responsibilities will extend to overseeing the language education of 34,000 Department of Defense personnel each year, in 89 languages across 29 sites globally. He will also manage a dedicated faculty of 1,700

and a joint-service staff of about 250 personnel, responsible for language instruction, proficiency evaluation and curriculum development.

With a distinguished 24-year tenure in the Air Force, primarily in the intelligence domain, and a subsequent transition to a foreign area officer with a focus on the Middle East, Jones brings a wealth of experience.

His past roles have included commanding an intelligence squadron, acting as deputy director of intelligence for the Middle East and contributing to policy-planning for U.S. Central Command.

Eager to begin, Jones stated, “I can’t wait to work with the people who are responsible for training the next generation of linguists,” he said about his new responsibilities

*(Above) Lt. Col. Sean Fellows served as commander of troops for the 311th and 314th Training Squadrons, as well as the 517th Training Group staff*

*(Right, center) Air Force Col. Jennifer L. Saraceno (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



*senior leader in the Department of person,” - Col. Jennifer L. Saraceno*

*“I can’t wait to work with the people who are responsible for training the next generation of linguists,” - Col. Mark S. Jones*



*(Left to right) Air Force Col. Matthew Reilman, 17th Training Wing commander from Goodfellow Air Force Base presents the guidon to Col. Mark Jones, incoming DLIFLC assistant commandant and commander of the 517th Training Group. Chief Master Sgt. Jason Brown (center) and (left) Chief Master Sgt. Shaun Khoenle and outgoing Assistant Commandant Col. Jennifer Saraceno stand at attention*



# CAC GENERAL SAYS COMMUNICATION IS KEY

By Natela Cutter  
DLIFLC Public Affairs

The Commanding General of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle, visited the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey for the first time July 17, 2023.

Beagle observed two Korean language classes and spoke with military leadership and cadre about the foreign language mission.

After visiting a first and third semester class, Beagle was impressed with student fluency, stating that he was stationed in Korea twice and had a good sense for how complicated the

language is to learn.

“Having spent time in Korea, and having watched the Korean language class, I was very impressed. When we go to other countries or other nations... we learn enough to be useful but not helpful...What they are learning will be helpful not only for their unit, but for the larger enterprise in the Army in terms of what they bring to the table...” said Beagle.

Beagle was stationed twice in Korea, once in 2000 and then again from 2008 to 2010. On both occasions



A Korean instructor works on the whiteboard during the visit.

he had the opportunity to learn some Korean and interact with his counterparts.

“The importance of having those linguists in our formations [is useful] for two primary reasons; helping us understand our adversaries, and then helping us build partners and partner capacity because this is the conduit



***“The importance of having those linguists in our formations [is useful] for two primary reasons; helping us understand our adversaries, and then helping us build partners and partner capacity because this is the conduit with which we can do that,”***  
***- Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle***

with which we can do that,” he said.

DLIFLC courses last between 36 and 64 weeks. The Korean course is 64 weeks long, nearly 15 months. Instruction takes place five days a week, six to seven hours per day, with two to three hours of homework each evening. For the military, it is one of the longest training pipelines.

“Even when we speak the same language there is a lot that can be lost in translation, but ... when you are not in your own environment and you have someone that can fill that void, ... you don’t [have to] lose anything. That literally means a lot and shows the importance of having the language

training and skillsets here...” he explained.

When asked what advice he would give students in their future careers, Beagle said, “Whether they are staying in the military or leaving, it is all about repetition. It is not just meeting the standard but exceeding it ... repetition breeds confidence and confidence breeds competence, and competence breeds mastery – so they see that cycle here,” he said.

Beagle heads CAC under the Army Training and Doctrine Command. The organization is the Army’s lead for lessons learned, doctrine, training, education, functional training, fielded

force integration, and manages the Army Leader Development Program, Army Profession Program, and Army Training and Education Management Enterprise, among others.

Following his visit to DLIFLC, Beagle visited the University of Southern California Institute for Creative Technologies to discuss the Department of Defense’s efforts with AI, virtual gaming and training space.

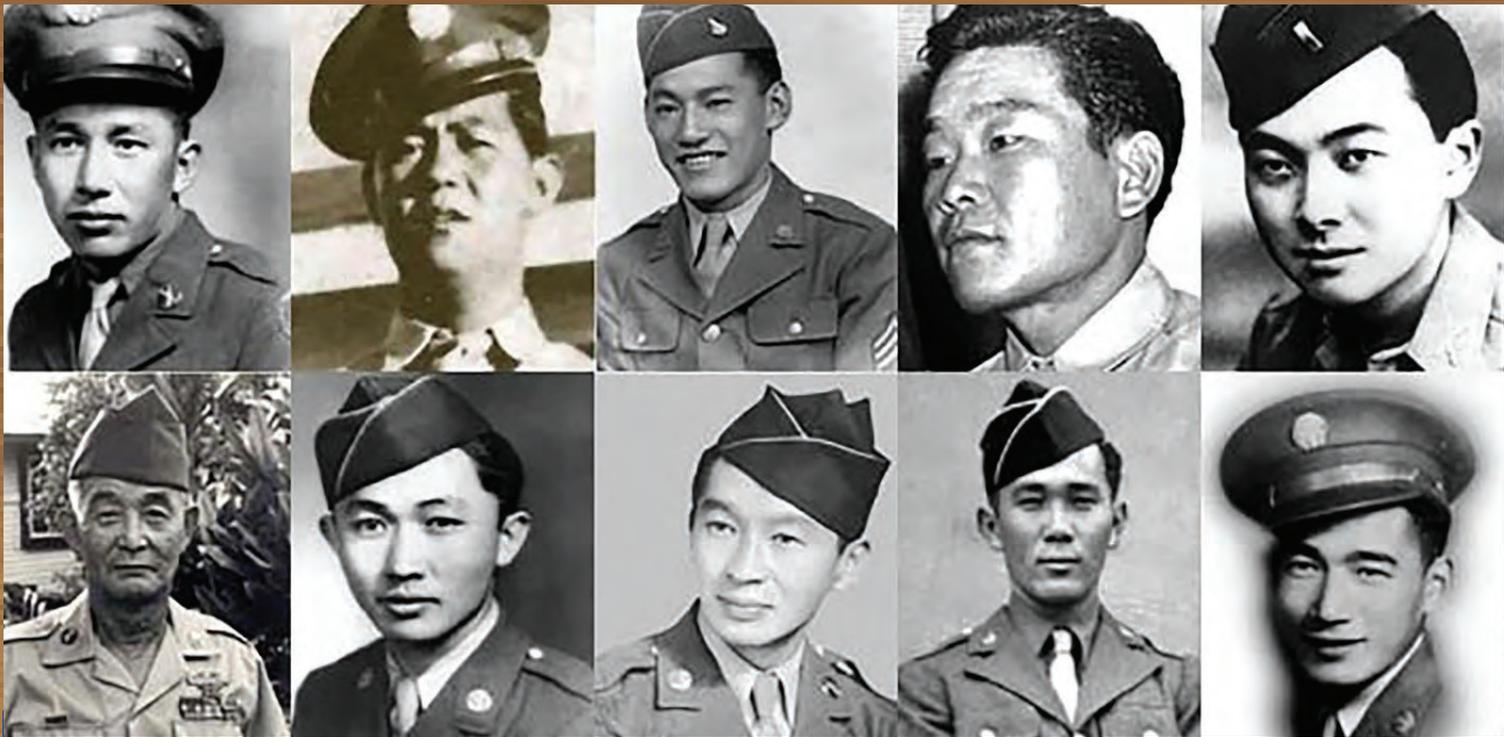
*A student translates from Korean to English for Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle during a class observation (Photos by Natela Cutter, DLIFLC Public Affairs)*



*Few individuals have the distinction of becoming a legend, with even fewer reaching that status based solely on their actions. To even be considered a legend transcends more than just personal greatness; their achievements must embody a profound impact that continues to resonate throughout time. We honor those members of the community who have made such a significant impact by acknowledging their accomplishments.*



(Left) Craig Wilson, breaks ground with the Corps of Engineers staff, Minnie Kenny, deputy director of the National Cryptologic School (center) and DLIFLC Commandant Col. David McNerney (far right) for the building of Nicholson Hall (Photo courtesy of the DLIFLC historian's office)



## DLIFLC AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR PROJECT



**D**uring a White House ceremony on June 21, 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded the Medal of Honor to 22 Asian American Soldiers from World War II. Conferring the nation's highest award to multiple recipients during a large ceremony implies extraordinary circumstances.

These men, known collectively as the Nisei, had endured strong racially based discrimination during the war by the very country for which they were fighting. Nevertheless, proud and determined to prove their patriotism, many had willingly risked or lost their lives through acts of undoubted heroism.

They were even recognized at the time, most with the Army's highest award for valor – the Distinguished

Service Cross. Over time it had become clear, however, that then prevalent racial attitudes may have prevented many of these men from standing as candidates for the Medal of Honor.

When Dr. James McNaughton arrived at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in 1987 as the school's first command historian, he had no inkling of the brewing whirlwind of politics, history, and activism by veteran's groups and social justice advocates that would steer, if not dominate, his work.

Most field historians are typically involved in historical issues of interest only to the local command and community. The Institute's history is tied, however, to the Japanese

language program of WWII and thus is forever linked to the Japanese American experience during that conflict.

For some time prior to McNaughton's arrival in Monterey, veteran's groups in Hawaii and Northern California had actively lobbied Congress, especially Hawaii's two U.S. Senators, Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K. Akaka, both WWII veterans, to award the Medal of Honor to one Richard Sakakida.

Speaking fluent Japanese, Sakakida served as an Army counterintelligence agent in the Philippines prior to the war. He later joined American forces fighting at Corregidor and was captured alongside Gen. Jonathan Wainwright while serving as his interpreter following Japan's surprise



By Cameron Binkley  
DLIFLC Command Historian



attacks against U.S. bases across the Pacific in late 1941.

The Army review determined that Sakakida was ineligible for the Medal of Honor and awarded him the Distinguished Service Medal instead, an important award, but not the one many felt Sakakida deserved.

Disappointed Nisei veterans and their advocates then persuaded Congress to call for an overarching Asian American Medal of Honor review in the 1996 National Defense Authorization Act. As passed, Section 524 of the NDAA charged the Army with carrying out a records review of Asian Americans and Native American Pacific Islanders, including Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and Filipinos who had served with



President Bill Clinton awards Senator Daniel Inouye the Medal of Honor on June 21, 2000  
(Courtesy U.S. Government)



Congressional Medal of Honor and ribbon device (Graphic by M. Zachary Sherman)

American forces. An earlier review for African American holders of the Distinguished Service Medal from WWII had resulted in seven new Medal of Honor awardees.

McNaughton was known to historians at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and to Nisei veterans' groups because he had begun writing papers about the Nisei linguists in WWII. Indeed, he had also just secured a Secretary of the Army Research and Study Fellowship that enabled him to begin writing a book about the Army's WWII-era Japanese language programs.\*

In early 1997, McNaughton assembled a team composed of four historians, a Washington, DC-based contractor, and administrative staff to conduct the

planned two-year project. The plan was to review the Army's existing list of DSC holders to see if these could be upgraded to the Medal of Honor, but the list was not complete and original recommendations and general orders had to be found.

The research strategy included not just a review of archival records and secondary sources but outreach to various veterans' groups, federal and state offices, and ethnic organizations. Once the word about the project got out, it took on a life of its own in Asian American newspapers, magazines, and community organization newsletters. According to McNaughton, the team ultimately received much useful information from its outreach.



*E Company, 2nd Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team stands in formation at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, in May 1943 (Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration)*



*President Bill Clinton presents the Congressional Medal of Honor to members of the U.S. Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team (Photo courtesy of DoD)*

The team faced a difficult challenge - to find "incontestable evidence" to present to the Senior Army Decorations Board whose flag officers would independently decide on whether to approve the team's evaluations.

Unfortunately, many personnel records were destroyed during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines while many more were wiped out by the St. Louis military records center fire in 1973. Without hard evidence, referrals could not be made for many who might have qualified.

The board was also apparently rigorous in making decisions based upon whether the case at hand contained original DSC recommendations, a huge roadblock to approval.

In the end, the board approved 22 Medal of Honor nominations, all but two for Soldiers who had served with the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442d Regimental Combat Team, units composed almost entirely of Nisei Soldiers who had seen hard fighting in Europe. The 442d was already recognized as the most highly decorated military unit of its size in Army history, so the new accolade seemed entirely appropriate.

In fulfilling its mission, McNaughton's team had not sought to evaluate prejudicial practices or norms of the past or even the present. It had also not sought to reevaluate yesterday's Soldiers by today's standards. Indeed, criteria for the Medal of Honor are no more precise than that an individual

has displayed conspicuous gallantry in combat beyond the call of duty. The team believed its only goal was to apply rigor and historical acumen in obtaining sufficient documentation to allow a review board to judge a group of men by the timeless standards for heroic accomplishment that the Medal of Honor symbolizes. The team's efforts allowed 22 Soldiers to pass that high bar, an accomplishment that did bring greater focus to how much Japanese Americans gave to help the United States win WWII.

*\*(CMH published his book, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II*, in 2006.)*



*(Left to right) Barney Hajiro, Shizuya Hayashi and Ed Ichiyama pose in front of a C-17 Globemaster III named "The Spirit of 'Go for Broke'" during an arrival ceremony at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, June 14, 2006. The aircraft was named in honor of their unit, the 442nd Combat Regimental Team. Hajiro and Hayashi were among 22 Japanese American Soldiers to receive the Medal of Honor after a Defense Language Institute command historian review (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo)*



# SAYING GOODBYE TO A DLIFLC LEGEND

*By Steven Collins,  
DLIFLC Chief of Staff*

**I**t is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Col. David A. McNerney on Jan. 12, 2023. McNerney was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on May 15, 2023, in the presence of family members, friends, and veterans he served with.

After a Catholic Mass at the Old Post Chapel at Arlington and songs by the West Point Glee Club, McNerney was interred with full military honors, at Section 35, Grave 4957.

McNerney was the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center's Commandant from 1981 to 1985.

During his tenure, the student population doubled, with 10,000 service members having gone through the Basic Course, studying more than 40 foreign languages.

He is credited with fighting for and procuring the funding for the construction of 25 new buildings at DLIFLC, including two large general instruction facilities, 13 modern barracks buildings, the Price Fitness Center, Bela's Dining Facility, and Nicholson Hall, to name just a few.

He completely reorganized the Troop Command structure, replacing all leadership positions with language-specific personnel and significantly reducing company size by activating additional companies to better support the academic program.

McNerney initiated a professional development program for all assigned military linguists, which included language proficiency development and the use of Military Language Instructors. He also instituted myriad

academic and testing initiatives, doubled the size of the permanent civilian faculty, instituted the Faculty Personnel System and created performance pay for instructors.

Even more important to military linguists, McNerney developed the system of Foreign Language Proficiency Pay that was later enacted by Congress. His accomplishments in just four years had a remarkable impact on language training and linguist retention for the Department of Defense.

Because of his accomplishments, in 2006 he was inducted into the DLIFLC Hall of Fame. A 1955 graduate of West Point, McNerney will be remembered as a truly legendary figure in the history of DLIFLC.

