

DFL Weekly SITREP (21 March 12)

Completed Events

Faculty Participation in Spring Immersion Trips:

From 9-18 March, COL Baskerville and 9 cadets (a mix of Model Arab League and Arabic majors) travelled to Washington, DC and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for a series of visits and discussions on myriad regional political, social, military, and economic issues. The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (the premiere UAE think tank) and the National Council on US-Arab Relations (Model Arab League proponent) co-sponsored the trip that included incredible exposure to and exchanges on regional issues and also provided the cadets with great insight into UAE and US policy-making (and influencing) mechanisms. The trip was beneficial to both the Arabic majors, who had the chance to discuss with policy-makers (on the front lines) issues that they are working on in their integrative course (LN490), as well as to Model Arab League members who will confront the same and similar issues in a regional and national-level competitions later in March and in mid-April.

Cadet Participants: CDT Saylor Barnette (2013); CDT Joel Bassette (2012); CDT Donna Brady (2012) ; CDT Christiana Brunner (2012) ; CDT Kyle Carberry (2012); CDT Jackson Clemens (2013); CDT Peter Coppernoll (2012); CDT Patrick O'Shaughnessy (2012); CDT Walter Prendergast (2013)

Highlights:

-Trip started in Washington, DC on Friday 9 MAR with exchanges with the Dept of State UAE desk officer; UAE Defense Attaché to the US (at UAE Embassy); NDU representatives from Near East South Asia Center; Ms Molly Williamson (former senior advisor to the Secretary of Energy; has held high postings (Deputy Assistant Secretary) in both State Dept and DOD; was Chief of Mission in Jerusalem during Madrid Peace talks).

-In UAE, highlights included visits to:

- US Embassy (meeting and exchange with Deputy Chief of Mission and Defense Attaché);
- Emirati Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of State equivalent; very informative exchange with UAE policy planning staff on current foreign policy issues);
- UAE Military College (West Point-equivalent, with some variation);
- UAE Joint Command and Staff College (CGSC-equivalent);
- Critical National Infrastructure Authority (Joint, Interagency - similar to Homeland Security, but focus on infrastructure);
- National Archives equivalent;
- FEMA equivalent;
- and al-Arabiyya news station

-On Thursday 15 MAR - Cadets met SECDEF Panetta (introduction, handshake, photo op, and received a coin) who was in UAE as part of a trip that included Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and the UAE.

-On Friday, 16 MAR, the delegation attended West Point of the Middle East Founders Day celebration in Dubai.



In this photo: The West Point delegation stops for a photo in front of the UAE Joint Command and Staff College. BG Muhammad al-Sa'adi (6th from the left) is the Commandant of the Staff College. The delegation also included LTC Abbas Dahouk (front row; 5th from the left; DOD liaison to DOS), Ms Elizabeth Wossen (front row; 3rd from the left) and Mr. Patrick Mancino (front row; far right), both from the National Council on US-Arab Relations.



In these photos: Cadets Joel Bassette (Left, Arabic and Spanish major, 2012) and Walter Prendergast (Arabic major (2013) and Model Arab League member) greet Secretary Panetta in Abu Dhabi, UAE

From 9-18 March, Dr. Geri Smith led a group of nine cadets on a French Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip to France and Belgium. After three days of exploring the monuments and museums of Paris, they were hosted by the *Banque Nationale de Paris (BNP)*—whose generous annual donation funds this immersion experience—for an extraordinary French lunch and discussion of France's place in the changing global economy. From there, the cadets took a tour through history by visiting key D-Day sites along the Normandy coast, such as Omaha and Utah beaches, and memorials, museums and cemeteries in Bayeux and Caen. The trip culminated with the discovery of the complex history and linguistic culture of Belgium, first in the medieval canal city of Brugges, and then in Brussels, the modern-day capital of Europe and seat of the European Union. The trip was a wonderful opportunity for cadets of all levels to experience French and Francophone culture and to apply their French skills in real-world settings.

The cadets who participated in the trip were: CDT Dave Wroblicki (E4, 2013), CDT Jesse Bryant (D1, 2014), CDT Rozier Cody (E2, 2014), CDT Savannah Haden (I3, 2014), CDT Karen Haney (C2, 2014), CDT Jamonté Little (G3, 2014), CDT Jarron Lord (H4, 2014), CDT Brian Pozeulos (H3, 2014), and CDT Rebecca Tummers (H1, 2014).



In this photo: Cadets enjoying lunch with BNP, represented by Mr. Talbot Stark, near *L'Opéra* in Paris

From 10-16 March, MAJ Jeff Van Sickle conducted site visits to the 4 French universities where cadets are studying abroad this semester:

- *Sciences-Po* in Paris : CDT Kyle Bleikamp (G4, 2013)
- *L'École des Mines* in Paris: CDT Steve Rogacki (G3, 2013)

- *L'Institut Catholique de Lille*: CDTs Marcus Boswell (H4, 2013) and Will Tucker (G4, 2013)
- *L'Université Catholique de Lyon* : CDTs Jon Bangert (F4, 2013), Noah Currie (F1, 2013), and Phil Savoie (G2, 2013)

MAJ Van Sickle met with university administrators and key points of contact at each university and with all of the cadets over lunch or dinner to discuss their experiences in linguistic and cultural immersion thus far. MAJ Van Sickle was also able to attend French language and culture classes with CDT Bleikamp at *Sciences-Po* and with CDTs Noah Currie and Jon Bangert at *L'Université Catholique de Lyon*. The cadets are all improving their French, experiencing the nuances of French culture, and representing USMA very well in France. Madame Martine Moulin, the International Program Coordinator in Lyon, commented that this group of cadets was the best that West Point has sent to Lyon since the program began!



In this photo: Cadets Steve Rogacki and Kyle Bleikamp after lunch with MAJ Van Sickle in the *Jardin du Luxembourg*, Paris, France

On Friday, 16 March, six cadets studying abroad in France attended the annual Founder's Day dinner hosted by the West Point Society of Paris at *L'École Militaire* in Paris. The cadets enjoyed a formal French dinner and had the opportunity to mingle with West Point alumni and active duty French officers living in the greater Paris metropolitan area. The guest speaker was French Brigadier General Pierre-Olivier Jacquotte, the current Deputy Director of the Acquisition Office in the French Ministry of Defense, who spoke about the importance of the Franco-American relationship on the international scene.

From 10 to 17 March, MAJ Doug Willig and CAPT Nick Moller escorted ten USMA cadets on a Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip to Germany. Intended for cadets in their first year of language study, this trip section enabled cadets to improve their language skills, learn about the German military, and experience life in a different culture. The cadets visited the German Officer School in Hamburg, met with Bundesrat member Elke Hoff (Congresswoman) in Berlin, and toured the Bundeswehr's Helmut Schmidt University in Hamburg. Highlights from the trip included city tours of Dresden, Berlin, and Hamburg, a visit to the Otto von Bismarck Museum and the German Tank Museum, and socializing with German military students.



In this photo: Dr. Martin Nassua, the director of international student and visitor affairs at the Helmut Schmidt University in Hamburg, speaks with the visiting Spring Immersion cadets and officers about Semester Abroad opportunities and the international programs offered through the German Armed Forces.

From 10 to 17 March, MAJ Fagergren and CPT Harrison escorted twelve USMA cadets on a Portuguese Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip to Brazil. Stops included the Brazilian Military Academy, the Military Engineering Institute, and many tourist attractions including the famous Christ Statue in Rio, O Corcovado, and Sugar Loaf Mountain. Additionally, MAJ Fagergren conducted a site visit to cadets studying at the Pontifical Catholic University in São Paulo Brazil. They are in good health, enjoying classes, and taking in the culture of São Paulo, Brazil.



In this photo: Cadets touring the Military Engineering Institute in Rio de Janeiro with the famous Sugar Loaf mountain in the background.



In this photo: Cadets in front of Copacabana Fort in Rio de Janeiro.

From 9 to 18 March, five Cadets and one OIC traveled for a Spanish Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip to the Dominican Republic. The group visited historical sites in Santo Domingo, to include the oldest restaurant in the Americas, the monument and claimed burial site of Christopher Columbus, and the Military Academy of the Dominican Republic. They also visited more the more remote coastal region of Samaná where they interacted with locals by playing the national sport of baseball and dancing to local forms of music. The trip concluded with time in the city of Puerto Plata, where some of the highlights were participating in local sports, trying out the food, and interacting with local music and dance performers.



In this photo: Cadets Corey Watts and Melissa Vargas in the foreground stand at attention before a meal with Dominican Cadets.

From 25 Feb to 3 March, COL McPeak, DFL Department Head, visited the current Russian language SAP sites in Voronezh, Russia and Kiev, Ukraine. The three cadets in Voronezh and two cadets in Kiev are all in good spirits and making the most of this opportunity. COL McPeak also met with administrators and instructors at both locations. Personnel at both programs are happy to host USMA cadets and were responsive to COL McPeak's inquiries and requests regarding the language instruction for the USMA cadets.

From 6 to 18 March, Cadets Derek Bisgard and Vincent Delany participated in a Russian Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip to the Ground Forces Institute (GFI) of Kazakhstan in the former capital of Almaty. The GFI is a rough equivalent to USMA, graduating cadets to be Ground Forces (Army) lieutenants in four years of study. Cadets Bisgard and Delany experienced many aspects of cadet life at the GFI, including firing various small arms weapons and operating different tactical vehicles.



In this photo: Cadet Delany and a group of Kazakh cadets in a typical DFI classroom.

From 10 to 18 March, four cadets and one OIC travelled to different sites of Costa Rica for a Spanish Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip. They started near the capital of San Jose, where they experienced a level of urban living similar to what our cadets are accustomed to in the States. Then they drove to the ecological preserves of Arenal and Monteverde, where they rappelled various waterfalls, had a night walking tour through the Costa Rican Jungle, learned the complete process of production and processing of coffee from seed to the table, experienced the thermal waters from the volcán Arenal, and even had Spanish sessions with the hotel staff, to enhance their mastery of the language and to have a better understanding of the Costa Rican and Latin American culture. They finished the trip with a quick dip in the beautiful beaches of Puertoarenal.



In this photo: Cadets Mark Salinas, Amy Scheumann, Harrison Heath, Danny Garcia and OCI CAPT Rich Hallon during a rappelling excursion in Costa Rica.

From 9 to 18 March, five cadets and one OIC travelled to Puerto Rico for a Spanish Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip. This year the group started off with “eco-tourism”, including zip-lining in the jungle, a visit to El Yunque National Forest, and a tour of the Fajardo Bio-Luminescent Lagoon. The cadets also had a chance to learn about diverse aspects Puerto Rican culture through visits with pastors, teachers, politicians, and educators. They were received by the Lt. Governor, and two senators from the legislature, including the one who is running against the incumbent for the governor’s office. They visited the Arecibo Radiotelescope, where the cadets were given a behind-the-scenes tour with the director, an astrophysicist from Stanford University. The cadets had the opportunity to inspire some young people during a visit to the Politécnico Amigó school for at-risk youth. Several of the students expressed interest in learning more about West Point. They visited the western side of the island where the cadets were able to see UPR-Mayaguez, the A&M University of the Island, and do some body boarding at Playa Rincón. One particularly interesting event was a behind-the-scenes tour of Goya Foods production facility, whose president, Mr. Carlos Unanue, helped make this trip possible through a donation. Finally, they spent some time at the local reserve support command where the cadets met BG Fernando Fernandez and learned support command in PR works. Perhaps the highlight of the week was attending a dinner for Under Secretary of the Army Joseph W. Westphall. Dr.

Westphall is a native of Chile and enjoyed speaking in Spanish with the cadets. It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of our programs among senior Army leadership.



In this photo: Cadets Derrick Hall, John Benson, Nick Czupryn, Kaitlyn Zimmerman, Emily Clemons, and OIC Dr. Jonathan Steigman with Puerto Rico’s Lt. Gov., Fortaleza at the Governor’s Residence.

From 9 to 17 March, four cadets and one OIC travelled to Spain for a Spring Break Cultural Immersion trip. The group visited many historical sites in Madrid, Toledo, Segovia, Granada and Málaga. Highlights included visiting the Roman Aqueducts, several cathedrals, Spain’s Army Museum (Museo del Ejército) and a tour of Spain’s most famous and historical monument, La Alhambra. They also explored works of art by Picasso, Goya, Velazquez, to name just a few, at El Museo del Prado and the Picasso Museum. Cadets immersed in Spanish culture while attending a fútbol match, a flamenco performance and witnessing a Toreo (bullfighting) workshop given by famous bull-fighter Julian López, “El Juli”. They also enjoyed sampling the traditional cuisine and practicing their Spanish with the locals. For more info, check out the trip blog at www.wix.com/soccersis97/spain created by Cadet Alexis Salmon.



In this photo: Cadets Robert Gasser, Alexis Salmon, Djeunie Saint Louis and Daniel Ford out front of Spain’s Military Museum (Museo del Ejército) in Toledo, Spain

Future Events

On Thursday, 22 March, Mr. Enrique Gil, a Spanish consular official, will be the guest of the Spanish section. Mr. Gil is a counter-terrorism expert and will be talking to cadets and faculty about a number of topics, including the Basque separatist movement and the March 11 Madrid train attack. He will also be giving some insight on current approaches to finding and dismantling potential terror threats within Spain. Interested parties can attend. 1300-1345 Lecture to DFL faculty and cadets, “The March 11 Attack and it’s Affect on Anti-terrorism Policy”, Geography Lecture Hall, 5300

On Saturday, 31 March, The West Point Salsa Team hosts the Army Navy Social, the first ever full scale academy ball, with guests from the Naval Academy, the Coast Guard Academy, Harvard University, Yale University, Columbia University, Fashion Institute of Technology, and other universities to unite the future of the nation under one roof for a night full of dancing, class, and memories to last a lifetime. See the event’s website at www.armynavysocial.com