Completed Events

Faculty and Cadet Participation in Cultural and Academic Events:

On 21 April, Russian speaking Cadet Ellen Chamberlin '14 took first place overall at the Tenth Annual Spoken Russian Olympiada at Hamilton College, Clinton, NY. Twenty four first-year Russian language students from five New York colleges participated and all four USMA cadets finished in the top half. Other team members: James Burkman '14, Andrew Slade '14, Philip Bailey '15. Congratulations to the team and their OIC, Dr. Olga Dobrunoff.

In this photo: Cadets Chamberlin, Burkman, Slade and Bailey at the Tenth Annual Spoken Russian Olympiada in Clinton, NY.

CDT Ivan Ivashchenko '14 took first place for Second Level Heritage Learners for his essay "Who is a true friend?" in the Thirteenth Annual ACTR National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest. 1,057 students at all levels of Russian ability from 48 US universities, colleges, and institutions submitted essays. Each essay was ranked by three judges in Russia.

DFL said goodbye to LT Aida Borambayeva of Kazakhstan on 22 Apr. LT Borambayeva returned to Kazakhstan after spending 40 days with DFL teaching Beginning Russian (LR204) and Military Speaking/Reading – Russian (LR476). LT Borambayeva integrated herself fully into DFL and cadet life, participating in several meetings of the Russian Language Club and helping to prepare our cadet participants in the Russian Olympiada (see above). She also reached out beyond DFL, giving lectures in classes in the Geography and Sociology Departments as well. LT Borambayeva left a lasting impression with the cadets that she taught and with all members of the Russian faculty. Her visit, sponsored by USCENTCOM as part of its Regional
Engagement Plan, will no doubt help to further improve the already close relationship between the US and Kazakh militaries.

Three senior officers assigned to USMA traveled to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to brief about 75 officers attending the Uzbek General Staff Academy from 9-12 Apr. The trip, sponsored by USCENTCOM as part of its Regional Engagement Plan, was a tremendous success and significantly advanced US efforts to move relations between the United States and Uzbekistan. Feedback from the US Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Ambassador George A. Krol, his deputy, Philip S. Kosnett, and the Defense Attaché, LTC Tracy Roou, was all extremely positive. COL David Wallace of the Department of Law briefed on “Exercise of command IAW the law of warfare in armed conflicts.” COL Scot Ransbottom of the Department of Electronics and Computer Science briefed on “Forms, types and methods of information and psychological warfare in modern military conflicts.” COL Kevin Farrell of the Department of History briefed on “Intelligence in modern local wars (US concept for intelligence and subversive operations)” and “Establishment of command and control systems for US Armed Forces during combat operations.”

In this photo: COLs Wallace, Farrel and Ransbottom in front of the Amir Timur “Tamerlane” museum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

On Saturday, 21 April, 4 DFL faculty members conducted presentations at the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), held this year in Baltimore, MD. Dr. Raja Chouairi and COL John Baskerville presented on demystifying the Arabic language in order to make it accessible to beginning learners and positively influence their attitudes toward what may be perceived as an exceptionally ‘difficult’ language. Also, on Saturday, Dr. Hannes Vazulik and Ms. Sherri Bellinger presented research on various predictors of language learner success (data points available in students’ records) and how they correlate with student ‘success’ in the Arabic, Chinese, and Russian programs at West Point. Both sessions were well attended
and garnered enthusiastic and fruitful discussion among the professionals in the field who grapple with these issues on a regular basis.

**Semester Abroad:**

From 16-20 April, spring break at L’Université Catholique de Lyon, French speaking Cadets Jon Bangert (2013, F4), Noah Currie (2013, F1) and Phil Savoie (2013, G2) participated in a week of training and language/cultural immersion with the French Foreign Legion. The cadets learned about the composition, equipment, mission, and history of the 1st Cavalry Regiment of the Foreign Legion, based in Orange, France, and the 1st Engineer Regiment of the Foreign Legion, based in Laudun, France. The cadets had a wonderful experience, as articulated by CDT Noah Currie after the week of immersion:

“My experience with the Foreign Legion was eye opening, unforgettable and nothing short of amazing. I couldn't be more happy at having this opportunity or more proud for getting to represent the US Army in this fashion. In a week's time we were able to experience training with EOD, tanks along with various other armored vehicles, land and water obstacle courses, combat and reconnaissance mounted patrols, vehicle maintenance, we drove engineering vehicles used for FOB construction, participated in a night-time land navigation course, learned of the history and long-standing traditions of the Foreign Legion and their officer corps, tested our international weapon and vehicle recognition, observed checkpoint operations and village elder negotiations. However, my personal favorite was our training with the FAMAS (French assault rifle) integrated with the FELIN system (equivalent to the Land Warrior system), which was incredibly impressive with the capabilities they brought. Outside of the training it was great to experience a different military culture, certainly closer than the American Army, and gave me some ideas to try to emulate with my future units. Finally, the Legion is a great place to work on the French language as everyone has the clearest and most enunciated French of anywhere in France that I've visited thus far. If I could go through this experience again, I would sign up in a heartbeat.”
On 14 April, the Arabic section had the pleasure of hosting a delegation from Qatar’s Ahmad Bin Mohammad Military College. Major Mark Whiteman, Arabic Desk Chief, escorted Brigadier General Fahad, Director of Training, and three other staff members during their visit to West Point. The delegation observed the Sandhurst competition with the interest of sending a team in the future and potentially hosting its own competition amongst its sister nations in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

From 19 – 22 April 2012, Major Matthew Radik of the Chinese section hosted Senior Colonel ZHANG Xiaoning, Deputy Superintendent of the People’s Republic of China’s People’s Liberation Army University of Science and Technology (PLAUST), and other faculty members who came to West Point to support their team participating in the 2012 Sandhurst Competition. Cadet Company G-2 and other Chinese speaking cadets selflessly supported the team from China before, during, and after the competition. This historic visit demonstrated the goodwill and relationships that can be built between members of both countries’ armed forces. Not only was this even a success for West Point, the team from PLAUST was able to return home with its head held up high. In only their first attendance at this event, PLAUST finished 5th overall behind Australia, England (2 x teams), and Canada. PLAUST also finished first in the Obstacle Course and Weapons & Grenade events, as well as second and forth in the DMI Challenge and Rope Bridge events respectively.
In this Photo: Major Matthew Radik and Dr. Yuanman Liu, visiting professor from Peking University, at the finish line of the Sandurst Competition with Deputy Superintendent Senior Colonel ZHANG Xiaoning and the coaches of the PLAUST team.

Future Events
On 3 May, 82 of DFL’s majors, across seven languages, are presenting projects as part of West Point’s Projects Day. The presentations will take place on the fourth floor of Washington Hall and will showcase the cadets’ abilities to integrate their knowledge of language and culture with other aspects of the curriculum and their 47-month experience at the Academy. With topics ranging from U.S. efforts to partner with Central Asian allies to counter the narcotics trade in the region to U.S. options for political and military engagement in post-revolution Egypt, DFL’s cadets have analyzed complex real-world issues and will use these briefs to lay out the complexity of the issues, discuss anticipated challenges and opportunities, and propose viable responses. DFL expects the following visitors, who will observe the projects and interact with the cadets:
- German: LTC (R) Holger Bernhardt (German Army), Former German Army Liaison to the Superintendent;
- Portuguese: GEN Ítalo Fortes Avena (Brazilian Army); COL Valdomiro Alves Fagundes (Brazilian Air Force); LTC Carlos André Coronha Macedo (Brazilian Navy)
- Russian: SES Ms. Morgan, Director for International Affairs, Missile Defense Agency;
- COL Gregory Wright, Chief, START/Nuclear Division, On-Site Inspection, Defense Threat Reduction Agency
- Spanish: Mr. Enrique Gil, Spanish Consular Official and International Security Expert

DFL has also extended an invitation to: BG (Ret.) Kevin Ryan, Executive Director for Research, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs