



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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From: Lieutenant Colonel Ivan J. Kanapathy, 1013684703/7525
To: Branch Head, International Affairs Branch (PLU)

Subj: FY12 TAIWAN IMMERSION AFTER ACTION TRIP REPORT

1. **Purpose.** This after action reports the results of my Mandarin language sustainment training conducted in Taipei, Taiwan 10-28 September, 2012.
2. **Summary.** The primary objective of this trip was to improve Chinese-Mandarin language proficiency. Speaking proficiency was the main focus. The secondary objective was to sustain regional expertise through liaison with the U.S. country team at the American Institute in Taiwan and immersion in the local cultural environment.
3. **Discussion.**
 - a. **Language.** Language training was conducted through 44 hours of intensive, one-on-one classes with Chinese Associate Academy (CAA) and day-to-day immersion in Taipei. This school was used and recommended by LtCol Scott McDonald for a similar trip just two months prior to my trip. Chinese Associate Academy in Taipei provided me with a teacher who had taught at DLI-Monterey for nearly 20 years and then returned to Taiwan to retire within the past year (Mrs. Hang). She had been a certified OPI Evaluator at DLI and thus served as an excellent resource for OPI preparation. CAA can be contacted via the CEO, Ms. Tanya Yeh at tanya@chineseassociate.com. My last OPI was scored 2+ in February 2008 at the conclusion of my initial DLI course of instruction. I estimated my speaking score prior to this training at level 1+ due to a complete lack of use from May 2009 to September 2012 (FMF tour). OPI score after this training: 2.
 - b. **US Country Team.** Official calls were made to the Marine Liaison Officer (Marine Attache), the Defense Liaison Officer (Defense Attache), and the Senior Defense Official (Security Cooperation). I also attended an official social function hosted by the Liaison Affairs Section (DAO) involving numerous Taiwanese military officers and their families. These interactions greatly increased my understanding of the US Country Team mission and US-Taiwan mil-to-mil relationship.

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c. **Cultural Immersion.** Immersion was conducted daily, including interaction with many locals. All local travel utilized local mass transit (buses and metro rail). Other than breakfast, I took no meals at the hotel itself, ensuring that I was out on the local economy each day visiting eating establishments, transportation hubs, public squares, bookstores, and other commercial venues. This was a large part of the value-added benefit of conducting overseas immersion training.

d. **Expenses.** Projected cost was \$8533. Actual cost was \$7707. All expenses were paid via PLU using funds obtained from the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) for Foreign Area Officer (FAO) language sustainment.

<u>Type Expense</u>	<u>Total</u>
Flight (Washington DC to Taipei)	\$2,012.70
Misc. transportation (airport transfer, subway)	\$ 67.79
Lodging in Taipei (17 nights)	\$3,063.74
Per diem (M&IE) in Taipei (17 days)	\$1,961.00
Language school tuition and book	\$ 601.54
Total	\$7,706.77

e. **Miscellaneous.** This after-action trip report was delayed for the OPI exam results. The OPI was taken on 29 Jan 2013 after an approved delay of three months. This delay was to allow additional speaking practice to occur during a three-month language sustainment evolution during which Mandarin was being used as the language of instruction (the target language was Taiwanese-Hokkien, please see separate language sustainment proposal and report).

4. **Recommendations.**

a. Similar to FAO ICT, this model of language immersion training is an excellent way to sustain and enhance FAO skills. Local cultural immersion is educational and forces the application of everyday language. The benefit of interaction with the US Country Team is also professionally valuable.

b. To improve Chinese speaking skills, I strongly recommend training under the former OPI Evaluator that is now employed by CAA in Taiwan (see Discussion above).

c. My experience is that the biggest challenge for a FAO in the FMF is finding the time to keep up his/her skills, much less take a trip away from one's primary tasks. I recommend that PLU and MMOA establish a policy that (whenever possible) allows and

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encourages qualified FAOs to add a 30-45 day immersion trip (TEMINS/TAD) to PCS/PCA orders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. J. Kanapathy', is positioned above the printed name.

I. J. KANAPATHY