



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
COMMANDANT'S RED TEAM
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QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134

29 Aug 12

From: Director, Commandant's Red Team
To: Strategy and Plans Division (PLU), Plans, Policies, and Operations, HQMC
Subj: LANGUAGE TRAINING AFTER ACTION REPORT

1. I executed in-country immersion language training 23-27 July 2012 in Shanghai, PRC under the DLNSEO program administered by PLU, HQMC. I took four hours a day of intensive one-on-one language training with a native speaker for one week in Shanghai, China.

2. Expenses totaling \$5592.53 included:

- a. COM. CARR.-I: \$1,987.75
- b. LODGING: \$1,939.68
- c. M&IE: \$1,007.00
- d. OTHER: \$635.72
- e. REIM EXP: \$22.38
- f. Language Training Tuition: \$869 for 20 hours of one-on-one

3. There are many language schools in Shanghai. They range from formal programs at the universities in the city, to international companies like Berlitz, private companies, and private tutors. Of the language schools that I visited, HWAYI language was the least expensive, at approximately \$715, but would have required extra travel time and costs due to its location. Miracle Mandarin, located in the Sino British College, was the most expensive at approximately \$1000. This was closer than HWAYI, but would still have required extra cab fares. Their facilities, though located within the college campus, were not nearly as updated as Mandarin House.

4. I selected Mandarin House Language School due to its proximity to the People's Square and my preferred hotel, the JW Marriott at Tomorrow Square, their high quality facilities, flexibility with my schedule and requirements, and overall value. Mandarin House contact info is:

- a. Amy Feng 冯丽娜
- b. 86-21-6137-1913
- c. info@mandarinhouse.cn
- d. www.mandarinhouse.cn
- e. 12th Floor, Asia Mansion, 650 Hankou Lu, Shanghai, 200001, China

5. In addition to formal language training, this immersion experience gave me the opportunity to use real-world Mandarin in the course of daily life. I was also able to schedule multiple meetings with academics and think-tanks to discuss issues directly related to my current position and to the overall Sino-American relationship. Some of the topics discussed included: the upcoming change in leadership in China, the U.S. presidential elections and possible outcomes, Chinese views of the global commons, internet security and cooperation issues, and the 'rebalance' or 'pivot' to Asia. This firsthand experience is invaluable and directly contributed to my mission.

6. Upon my return, I took the DLPT-5 for Mandarin Chinese and was able to achieve a 3 in listening thanks in large part to the immersion experience of actually being in China for ten days shortly before my language test. I scored a 2+ in the reading modality, wholly due to the fact that the PRC does not use traditional characters, I was not trained in traditional characters by DLI, and traditional characters vary greatly from the PRC simplified version and there is no standard conversion method. Including traditional characters and simplified characters in no way is a valid assessment of a Mandarin, or any other dialect for that matter, speaker's ability to communicate and function within their target or assigned country. Taiwan only uses traditional characters, thus those assigned to Taiwan have limited or no exposure to simplified characters, are not taught them in school, and have no reason to learn or use them. Thus the test is a poor tool either way. There are 3 versions of Persian- Pashto, Dari, and Farsi; 3 versions of Arabic- Iraqi, Levantine, Modern Standard; and 2 versions of Portuguese- Brazilian and European. Arguably these languages (as tested) have more in common than do traditional and simplified characters of the Chinese language. Defense Language and National Security Education Office should have DLI re-establish separate tests for simplified and traditional characters as was in use prior to January of 2007.

B.S. MULVANEY