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# THE EAGLE

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## Captain Dinong's LEAP to Chile

“Sometimes you are the liaison with people in different countries, just putting on your uniform.” (Captain Dinong)

Capt. Dinong has completed the ultimate language and culture experience available in the military: LEAP (Language Enabled Airman Program). This program takes Airmen who are learning or already have pre-existing experience with other languages and trains them to further their abilities through eMentor sessions and LITEs (Language Intensive Training Event).



### Joining LEAP

Capt. Dinong discovered LEAP through a member at her last unit. “I have always had a passion for learning languages... I wanted to go visit all these countries and do the touristy thing and travel, but not on my own time, on the military's time”. So, she took the opportunity, applied, and was accepted into the program in April of 2015. Capt. Dinong entered the program for Spanish as she had been learning the language since high school. However, Capt. Dinong explained that, acceptance into the program is based on a combination of factors. “It actually

depends on the language - how proficient you need to be”. Since Captain Dinong was studying a more commonly learned language, she was expected to already be at an advanced level when entering the program.



### **eMentor sessions**

eMentor sessions are online classes of five people across the states or world and an instructor. Such classes are meant to challenge LEAP students, and for Capt. Dinong the sessions were difficult. She explained that each class “is custom tailored to that person’s language level and what they need to know in order to score higher on the DLPT”. Due to her busy schedule, Capt. Dinong’s sessions were scheduled late in the day and classes were just her and the instructor. Captain Dinong found this very beneficial. “It was even better because we just sat there and talked for two hours in that language and learned a whole bunch of things about culture, different countries...it’s a language experience but it’s also a culture experience at the same time”.

### **LITE**

This was Capt. Dinong’s favorite part about LEAP. For her LITE, she went to Santiago, Chile for three weeks. While she was there, she attended full-time University classes five days a week. That is where Capt, Dinong honed her language skills - rather than learning street words, lingo and slang, she developed an advanced vocabulary. Capt. Dinong says that these classes were very difficult because most of the students were native speakers. She said she was the one who “struggled the most in that class, but because of that, I was the one who got the most out of it”. In addition, she had to sign an agreement upon her arrival that even in her off time she would speak Spanish. This turned out not to be a problem because locals in the area did not speak any English. Due to this full immersion, Capt. Dinong really grew in the language, but explained that the whole process was “exhausting. It’s mentally exhausting”. Outside of the classroom she was able to take day trips with her classmates to Valparaiso, Vina del Mar, Pomaire, and Colchagua Valley. When I asked what the most interesting aspect about Chile was, she could not narrow it down to one thing. She explained that the culture there is so different and everything was interesting to her. One thing that was enlightening for her was her discovery that “Chile is more like the U.S in terms of development and economy than the rest of South America”. Chile’s economy is so “bustling” because of the amount of exportation.





Capt. Dinong learned a lot from this program. Not only did it enhance her language abilities, but she discovered a lot about Latin American countries, traditions, economy, and government. In addition to the cultural experience, Capt. Dinong hopes that LEAP will help her career in the Air Force as well. She explained that her long-term goal is “to become a FAO, Foreign Affairs Officer, within the Air Force and to specialize in Latin America.” She added, “and I am hoping that LEAP is my stepping stone to get there”. In addition, she is hoping to get a job in Texas that deals with drug trafficking and monitoring current affairs in Latin America. She hopes that her experience with LEAP will help move her toward her goals.

Article by: C/Dietz

## **Snow in Flagstaff**

Last year in the early winter months, everybody in Flagstaff was most likely asking themselves: where is the snow? They’re not wrong to ask that very question; no significant snowfall has come down on Flagstaff during that time of the year, which was very unusual for the city itself. Being the major city in the state of Arizona known for its yearly winter snowfall, it came as a shock to many Arizona residents, particularly me.

At the turn of the new year, with everybody coming back to NAU to begin the new semester, there were a few patches of snow while driving up to Flagstaff and around campus. That was until the first big snowfall of the entire winter season came along on that very weekend. On the very first weekend of the spring semester, the first major snowfall came down all around the campus and the city. Early in the morning, it began as a gentle snowfall but it eventually progressed into flurries of snow, piling up quickly on the sidewalks, the roads, and wide courtyards all over campus.

The campus came alive with its students and their furry companions coming out to enjoy themselves in the mass of falling snowflakes that engulfed NAU in a matter of several hours. Snowball fights ensued, people made giant snowmen (of which I have no idea how they do that), and man’s best friend tried to catch snowballs as if they were actual tennis balls. Later that day, your Air Force ROTC and Army ROTC cadets near Gabaldon Hall played a few rounds of “capture the flag,” with Air Force reigning victorious over Army 2-1.

More snow fell later in the end of January and into the month of February. The snow that fell in February really, for a lack of better words, helped cadets get a few more extra hours of sleep due to several PT cancellations. Outside, when I saw the campus covered with more snow, I was the most



surprised to see that not many people were that all excited about the very fact that it was snowing outside. Well, in all honesty, it was mostly school days that had snow falling and people didn't have much time to enjoy themselves in the snow again. Only about several weeks ago, I was tempted to step on this one pile of snow to see how deep it really was. Turns out, curiosity killed the cat, and I soon found out that pile of snow happened to go up to my knees! When I think of all the snowfall in February, it really got me thinking: where was all of this back in December? I was sure that the entire Flagstaff community thought the same thing as well.

With the winter season coming to an end here in Flagstaff as the days get longer and warmer, I'm sure cadets will be missing those days when PT gets canceled from the snow and spending time with friends engaging in epic snowball fights. But fear not! The snowy season will be back in the next 8 or 9 months from now! And trust me, time will fly by for all of us, whether you realize it or not.

Article by: C/Park

## **Mustache March**

As a Cadet or Cadre in Det 027 you will see many different faces. Some will have glasses, some will not. Some may decide to grow a mustache and others may not. During the month of March, you are the most likely to see a Cadet who has both, just like C/Capt Bloomfield. I was tasked with interviewing Cadets who had a good mustache and that stood out to me. I personally know C/Bloomfield because of NAU Honor Guard and his history with his haircuts; so naturally he was in my top three Cadets to interview. Here is how the interview went.

Q. What is your personal reason for participating in Mustache March?

A. Peer pressure, camaraderie among the wing as Cadets grow out their mustaches.

Q. Why do you think other people/Cadets take part in Mustache March?

A. Everyone has their own reasons, but I feel that camaraderie is the biggest thing.

Q. What is your definition of a good mustache?

A. Have you seen C/Serventi's mustache? That's probably the best mustache I've seen my entire time here at Det 027.

Q. What is the meaning of mustache March?

A. It's a tradition that started in the Vietnam War by Col Robin Olds.

Q. Can you grow a good mustache in just one month?

A. If you are Serventi you can. Otherwise, have you seen me grow a mustache? Bottom line I probably shouldn't keep the mustache.

Q. Who do you think likes mustaches?

A. It honestly depends on the person.

Q. How do your family/friends/significant others feel about your mustache?

A. My girlfriend doesn't like the mustache. She isn't a fan of facial hair.

Q. Are you going to continue growing your mustache after March?

A. I probably won't keep the mustache past March.

I went on to interview the following Cadets after PT one day. The one was C/Sealy and then C/Rabska. Because C/Sealy is an AS300 who completed Field Training this past summer and is also a member of NAU Honor Guard, I had to find out why he decided to participate in mustache March.

Q. What is your personal reason for participating in Mustache March?

A. To see if I can do it, and to try to have it look like Serventi's.

Q. Why do you think other people/Cadets take part in Mustache March?

A. The uniformity of it, symbolizes us trying our darnedest to do what most of us cannot.

Q. What is your definition of a good mustache?

A. It's got to be full and dark. It cannot be discolored at all, and trimmed. You want it to be nicely groomed.

Q. What is the meaning of Mustache March?

A. I'd have to say bringing the Air Force together to celebrate.

Q. Can you grow a good mustache in just one month?

A. Probably not in one month, no. I would probably need like two years and then we'll see where it goes from there.

Q. Who do you think likes mustaches?

A. Old men, little kids, and nowhere in between.

Q. How do your family/friends/significant others feel about your mustache?

A. Girlfriend hates it; she always asks me to shave and asks if mustache March is mandatory. I responded with "no", but I'll do it anyway.

Q. Are you going to continue growing your mustache after March?

A. Depending on how good it looks, if I can get it to Serventi's level, then oh ya!

The last person I interviewed was C/Rabska, this is his 5<sup>th</sup> year at the detachment and will be commissioning following this semester. C/Rabska is looked up to by many young Cadets because of his experience as a Cadet in our Detachment. His responses show his naturally comical personality.

Q. What is your personal reason for participating in Mustache March?

A. To protest the facial hair regulations of the Air Force, because I want to grow mean handlebars but I cannot do that.

Q. Why do you think other people/Cadets take part in Mustache March?

A. Because it's hilarious and chicks dig it.

Q. What is your definition of a good mustache?

A. Nice and full, not too thick and not discolored. Mine is going to be dark as night by the end of the month and it's going to be a good mustache.

Q. What is the meaning of Mustache March?

A. Having pride in uniformity and standardization among men who all cherish what that mustache means of protesting facial hair regulations of the Air Force.

Q. Can you grow a good mustache in just one month?

A. No I cannot, but I can do my darnedest.

Q. Who do you think likes mustaches?

A. Everybody.

In this next question that I asked C/Rabska, I received a response that was a little creepy but 100% Rabska's personality.

Q. How do your family/friends/significant others feel about your mustache?

A. Let's just say that they keep asking me if I am going to buy a van and spray paint "candy" on the side of it... So, not good.

Q. Are you going to continue growing your mustache after March?

A. Probably not, no.

After interviewing these Cadets, it's great to see how they contribute to the morale of our detachment and put a smile (or mustache) on everyone's face. For C/Bloomfield and C/Sealy we will get to enjoy their mustaches and their personalities for at least another year. For C/Rabska, his cheer and enthusiasm will be sorely missed when he goes to the Dakotas after he commissions. Hopefully we can convince C/Rabska to keep his mustache throughout his commissioning ceremony.

Article by: C/Sottile



*C/Bloomfield*



*C/Sealy*



*C/Rabska*