

International Airmen & Guardians Newsletter

Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs



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MPEP Officer Shows PM Sunak Around the Typhoon

By: Liam Arne, SAF/IAPA, in conversation with Maj Mark “Volt” Venturino

Q: I saw you met UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. How did that come about?

A: The Prime Minister visit was the formal announcement for the partnership between the UK, Japan, and Italy regarding their latest Tempest fighter, which is a sixth-generation aircraft analogous to the U.S.’s Next Generation Air Dominance program. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak came to RAF Coningsby to make that announcement. He toured the base, then we showed him the Typhoon before it transitioned to the formal press conference announcing the Tempest program. The PM wanted to interview a couple of pilots from my squadron. My squadron is smaller than a traditional U.S. squadron. I put my name forward as one of the first volunteers and they accepted me. It was a phenomenal opportunity to meet a world leader and it shows the value of the International Airmen & Guardians community when opportunities like this arise. A prime minister showed a keen interest in what I do and how I integrate my knowledge and experience into his air force while making a public announcement that doesn’t directly involve the U.S., but still solidifies the ties that exist between the U.S. and the UK. I had to pinch myself that it was happening.

Q: What’s happening in the [cover] photo?

A: PM Sunak is pointing at a Typhoon taking off while I was elaborating on details of the aircraft. It looks like a staged photo, but it’s not! As the aircraft took off, we all faced it. That’s the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Wigston, and a station commander. Behind him is my direct RAF squadron supervisor. The story made the Guardian, the BBC, and Channel 4 as well as the SAF/IA LinkedIn page.

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A Message From the CFM, Col Brett Seiling

I wanted to send out one last message before I head off to retirement. This has been an amazing cap off assignment as the SAF/IAPA division chief. It's been rewarding to help lead the programs that have shaped my career, and we've made big strides in several areas.

The MPEP program continues to be extremely popular with Air and Space Force senior leaders- everyone wants more MPEPs! We are advocating for my support staff to not only to maintain, but to grow, the program. It was awesome to get the weekly updates and to see all the amazing things our MPEPs are doing with our Allies and partners.

As for the attaché and SCO programs, it looks like we will finally get a much-needed review of the allocation of SDO/DATTs amongst the services. There has not been a review since 2009, and now that we have a full time FAO career field, it's our position that we should have more Air Force SDO/DATTs.

We've made some key developments for FAOs over the last two years. We are finally single tracked which allows our FAOs time to develop the skills necessary to be successful in country team, staff, and FAO leadership assignments. The goal is to get our FAOs ready to be successful SDO/DATTs. I'm also pleased we were able to quickly get approval for a FAO AFSC occupational badge. I can't wait to see the finished product and wear them with pride!

As I sign off, I want to thank the IAPA team for everything they've done to support our programs. I know it's easy to think the HQ doesn't get it or is not advocating enough, but I can't tell you enough how much this team deeply cares about each of our programs. If you're not getting the help or support you need, please reach out- we really are here to help. So, after 28 years, 11 months and 17 days, it's time to hang it up and start the next chapter, and if anyone knows what that is, please let me know! If you have any questions or comments for me, please reach out. My email is: bseil94@gmail.com. Ma'a salama!



MPEP Officer Shows UK PM Typhoon (contd. from page 1)

Q: What is the difference between the Typhoon and the Tempest?

A: It is a monumental leap in capability. The Typhoon is a fourth-gen fighter, or 4.5, which is a method to classify the technology that's inside the aircraft in terms of software and the physical airplane itself when it comes to radar observability. Between the Typhoon and the Tempest, there is fifth-gen, which is the F-35 and the F-22. The RAF has those aircraft as well, but the leap between Typhoon and Tempest is greater in capabilities. Open architecture allows easily transferrable capabilities and upgrades combined with loads of agility for a potential future conflict.

Q: How has your experience as an MPEP exchange officer been thus far?

A: I am the only American in my squadron. I had to learn different terminology, procedures, design philosophies, and methods of action. Otherwise, it's been relatively straightforward and a great learning experience in unexpected ways. The Royal Air Force is a smaller force than USAF, and their leadership construct is set up differently. It opened my eyes to how things can be done differently to achieve a similar set of goals. We speak the same language, but there's plenty of nuances flying similar but different airplanes. The whole point of being an exchange officer is to get a new experience. I can take that knowledge wherever I head next and improve my own experiences and the USAF as a whole while also strengthening Allies and the ties between us.

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JFAOC Recap

Foreign Area Officers and other U.S. Air Force International Airmen are the lifeblood of our partnerships — they are the face of the USAF to our allies and partners. Their FAO journey begins at the Joint FAO Course Phase I in Monterey, California. Recently, Assistant SAF/IA Maj. Gen. Julian “Ghost” Cheater served as keynote speaker to end the biannual four-day course and met with Joint Force FAOs and their spouses throughout the event. Cheater highlighted the vital role of FAOs in forging deep, enduring international relationships that provide the United States with an asymmetric advantage in today’s dynamic global security environment. Col. Brett Seiling, chief of SAF/IA’s International Airmen & Guardians division and FAO Career Field Manager, also was in attendance to offer lessons from his experience as an air attaché. 21 FAOs in Training (FiTs) attended January’s JFAOC 23-01.

FY23 Important Dates:

14-16 Mar: FAO Spring Development Team (DT) Meeting, Randolph AFB, TX

3 May: Post-DT Webinar Update to the 16F Career Field

23 June: INDOPACOM AFELM Change of Command, Hickam AFB, HI

26-30 June: Joint FAO Course (JFAOC) Phase 1 23-02, Monterey, CA

6 July: Americas AFELM Change of Command, JB Andrews, MD

8-10 Aug: USAF FAO Orientation Course, JB Andrews, MD

Mid-Aug: CY23 Intermediate and Senior Developmental Education (IDE/SDE) Designation Board Results

TRIVIA: Nepali schools have controversially made studying this foreign language mandatory after another country offered to pay for the resources and teachers. Which language is it?

LGBTQIA+ Considerations

Please consider personal and family impacts of LGBTQIA+ restrictions as they may apply to several host-nation laws. Refer to the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG) for further information on each host nation. The FCG link may be found here: <https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>. Please reach out to the IAS org box at SAF.IAPA.IAS.Program.Workflow@us.af.mil if you have additional questions.

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LEAP to FAO Spotlight: Capt. Rufus Gorkhali

By: AFCLC Outreach Team

My family and I lived in Nepal when I was young. I grew up in a multilingual household and spoke multiple languages as a child. In my school, I primarily communicated in English. Most Nepalis watch Bollywood movies and pick up Hindi easily. At a young age, I was able to communicate in four languages.

I commissioned through AFROTC in 2013 and joined the Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) in 2014. I have attended multiple eMentor classes for Nepali and Hindi. I also participated in one advanced Language Intensive Training Event in Nepal where I was an interpreter for an exchange training exercise between USAF Special Operations Forces and Nepal Army Rangers.

I discovered LEAP while browsing on the Air Force Portal. There was a call for applicants with prior language experience to apply for the program. Although I did not have any formal higher-level education in my languages, I had DLPT and OPI scores on record. When I applied for LEAP, my language level had atrophied, and I needed coaching to improve my capability. I joined LEAP thinking it would be helpful to improve my language, but it has given me so much more. It has been instrumental in my professional growth as an officer and my career trajectory. LEAP (through LITEs and eMentor courses) has improved my cultural understanding in addition to language comprehension.

I learned about the FAO career field after joining LEAP during multiple webinars and mentorship sessions. During a Joint Combined Exchange Training, I briefly had a conversation with the Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché at the U.S. Defense Attaché office Kathmandu. His elevator pitch for the job easily won me over. In my subsequent assignments, I had the opportunity to work at the USDAO Kathmandu and USDAO New Delhi.

I am a recent selectee as an INDOPACOM FAO. I will attend Naval Postgraduate School to complete a graduate degree in International Relations. I would encourage all Airmen to apply to LEAP regardless of their prior language experience. The program provides invaluable opportunities and tools to improve existing or new skills.



CULTURE GUIDE

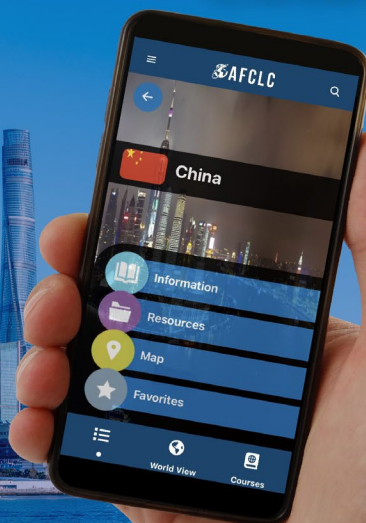
A FREE APP DEVELOPED BY THE AIR FORCE'S GLOBAL CLASSROOM

Over 70 Field Guides accessible for countries around the globe

Certified courses and professional videos to develop cross-cultural awareness



As featured in
The Wall Street Journal



How do you say
“ambassador” in your
target language?

French:
Ambassadeur/drice

Spanish:
Embajador(a)

Chinese:
大使 (dàshǐ)

Arabic:
سفير (safir)



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Maj Anna Jung: The First Woman in the Room

By: Liam Arne, SAF/IAPA



Maj Anna Jung is a FiT with 12 years in the Air Force, including two years as an MPEP in Thailand. She is currently serving as a squadron commander for the 51st Maintenance Squadron at Osan AFB in Korea. Once she finishes her assignment, she will go into FAO pipeline training in July and start at Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government & Public Service (located in the National Capital Region) for a year-long degree program.

Jung has long been drawn to the FAO career field. She stated, “My parents are Korean-American immigrants, and I thought it was excellent that my family could come to America to work hard and succeed. I wanted to do something in public service, something for my country, serve something greater than myself to pay back that benefit.” That drive is what led her to join the United States Air Force. After 10 years of service, Jung sought a career broadening opportunity, so she applied to MPEP to tie her LREC interests to her F-16 maintenance experience in her USAF career thus far.

Jung moved to Thailand in February 2020 to begin her two-year MPEP assignment. After just two weeks in Bangkok, the country locked down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic—which meant she started her role remotely. Jung would be taking over for a male USAF F-16 officer in Thailand who did his best to prepare her to embed in the unit. However, he could not fully prepare her for the reality of being the first-ever woman in a Thai maintenance squadron. “It’s not just a male-dominated career field; it’s a male-dominated society,” she said.

Jung stated that most Thai military officers have very limited experience to engage with female officers. Her squadron struggled to interact with her at first. “I realized I had to be more cognizant of my actions- what I wore, how I spoke, how I acted.” Even using a standing desk caused a stir! Despite that pressure, she claims it offered her an opportunity to “break barriers on what women should and could be doing. In Thailand, the stereotype for women is ‘on air’- they will need oxygen to resuscitate themselves after any physical activity. That’s not me!” Her identity as an Asian-American woman meant even more for her to shatter that stereotype and represent Asian women’s capabilities for physical and professional excellence. By “not having the stereotypical American face” as a Korean-American, she also wanted to showcase the diversity of the American people and military.

To feel closer to her team, she only spoke Thai in the office. Jung soon gained respect as part of the crew, and it aided her fluency too. She used her F-16 expertise to translate technical documents, draft communications and submit projects in Thai on behalf of her squadron, and provide advice on how to learn English to over 200 Royal Thai Air Force airmen. After teaching an intermediate PME course in 2021, Jung recognized that the unexpected lasting impact of her service in Thailand would be serving as an ambassador for American cultural exchange. To this day, she receives a barrage of questions from her students: “What was it like to grow up in Korea? [She grew up in the U.S.] In America, do you have female mechanics? Can women turn wrenches there?” By the end of her assignment, many of her colleagues were in tears as she left who said she was like a sister.

During her MPEP assignment, Jung applied for the FAO career field at the 10-year mark in her career- but she didn’t make it. Even though she knew it was competitive, she was disappointed. However, Jung decided to try again the next year and was accepted. Jung is looking forward to continuing to make rewarding and direct impact at a strategic level as an INDOPACOM FAO and the community is proud to welcome her!