



Command Sgt. Maj. Jeremiah Inman, U.S. Army Africa senior enlisted leader, briefs senior noncommissioned officers from 13 African nations during a breakout session as part of the African Land Forces Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, April 16, 2018. ALFS 18 is a week-long seminar that brings together land forces chiefs from across Africa to discuss and develop cooperative solutions to improve transregional security and stability. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Tverberg)

US Army Africa encourages enlisted education

By Staff Sgt. Mark A. Moore II

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U.S. Army Africa in Vicenza, Italy provides mission command, employs forces to set the theater, conducts security force assistance, and provides support to joint and international partners to achieve U.S. Army Africa Command theater campaign plan objectives (U.S. Army Africa, 2018). Nested within their campaign objectives, lies a responsibility to foster relationships between U.S. Army and African military leaders, and facilitate open “dialogue to discuss and develop solutions to regional and transregional challenges and threats,” (Behringer, 2017). These efforts enhance

military educational programs in Africa based on each nation’s wants, resource sustainability, and noncommissioned officer developmental needs as they pertain to the region, said Command Sgt. Maj. Jeremiah E. Inman, U.S. Army Africa senior enlisted leader, (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Three organizations play a significant role in encouraging educational growth within the continent to encourage the development of a regional NCO education system; the African Land Forces Summit, Malawian Sergeants Major Course, and U.S. Army National Guard State partnerships.

African Land Forces Summit

The African Land Forces Summit “is designed to bring together land force chiefs from nations across Africa to discuss and develop cooperative solutions and improve transregional security and stability,” (Garza, 2018).

“There have been six land force summits since 2010,” Inman said. “Initially we held the summit in the District of Columbia and brought the African land forces chiefs there,” (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Since 2010, the summit was held in five different African countries. It incorporated senior NCOs in 2016 and increased African participation by nearly 50 percent since 2017. Inman said the number will grow as the summit continues to develop and education is emphasized, (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018). Inman explained there are three focal points of the annual week-long seminar: getting the U.S. Army in front of African partners; building U.S. and African relationships; and, encouraging communication between African countries.

However, a universal “language” was needed to encourage constructive dialogue between the 53 diverse African nations partnered with USARAF. Many senior leaders on all sides discussed enhancing African enlisted education systems.

“I think education builds a shared understanding for whoever attends that development session,” Inman explained. “Once this is achieved you automatically understand the strengths and weaknesses of your peers,” (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

During the 2018 African Land Forces Summit Senior Enlisted Leaders Program, Inman introduced the U.S. Army’s Select, Train, Educate, and Promote, or STEP model as a way of investing in Soldiers’ professional military education through a deliberate, continuous, and progressive process.

Related Article: [TRADOC CSM and NCOs discuss a constantly changing environment.](#)



Malawi Defence Forces Lt. Linda Chikondi, commander of the sergeant major course at Malawi Armed Forces College, and U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Jerryn D. McCarroll, security cooperation division sergeant major with U.S. Army Africa, stand in front of MAFCO headquarters August 8, 2016 in Salima, Malawi. McCarroll helped establish the Malawi sergeant major course at MAFCO in 2014 and revisited the academy while supporting Southern Accord 16. SA16 is a USARAF-led annual, combined military exercise that brings together U.S. military personnel with African partner nations to improve readiness, promote interoperability, build capacity and strengthen partner relationships. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Candace Mundt)

“STEP is a good tool for us that easily lays out the requirements for Soldiers to become NCOs and continue to develop,” Inman explained. “This is a way that we do it, figure out what your country needs, then we will help build that requirement,” (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Botswana is scheduled to host the 2019 ALFS.

Related Article: [African Land Forces Summit 2018 Kicks off in Nigeria.](#)

Malawian Sergeants Major Course

“The Malawian Defense Force is not large, but has embraced the core of the noncommissioned officer corps,” (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

According to Inman, 140 institutions on the African continent provide some form of enlisted or warrant officer professional development opportunities. One of the most successful is the Malawian Forces Command Sergeants Major Course, which was established in 2011 and modeled after the U.S. Army’s Sergeants Major Academy, in Fort Bliss, Texas, now known as the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence.

The 14-16 week course held at the Malawian Armed Forces College recently graduated their 17th class of 45 senior NCOs, including 18 international students from nine different African countries. Six of the graduates were women, (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Brig. Gen. Vincent Nundwe, chief of operations for the Malawian Defense Forces and guest speaker for the graduating class, thanked his first NCO for helping him develop and stressed the importance of educating NCOs to assist officers and strengthen their army, (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

“What it comes down to is basic trust. The U.S. [Army] NCO Corps is so strong because our officers trust us, they empower us,” (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Also present was the commandant of Malawi Armed Forces College, Brig. Gen. Swithun Mchungula, who hopes to add additional courses each year due to the increased interest, requests for seats from international partners, and the impact the class made across the continent, (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Related Article: [Graduates Of Africa’s First NCO Academy Become Leaders of Change for Malawi](#)

MAFCO’s contributions across the continent manifest as train-the-trainer leadership opportunities for graduating students who assist other African nations with course development and instructor certification.

Once students complete the year-long course, they accrue a three-year instructor obligation, according to Inman.

Future educational developments include a junior and senior NCO course to bridge the gap between junior sergeants and platoon sergeants, and platoon sergeants and sergeants major.

“For comparison, add an advanced and master leader type course,” (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

Additionally, MAFCO plans to increase the number of yearly courses, add case studies and vignettes to classes, include international instructors from the 11 countries, pursue U.S. instructor certification, and continue to develop course content with the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence.

State Partnerships

The state partnership program is a vital U.S. security cooperation tool that facilitates cooperation across all aspects of international civil-military affairs and encourages people-to-people ties at the state level, (United States Africa Command, 2018).

There are currently 13 state partnerships between the U.S. and African nations: California and Nigeria; New York and South Africa; North Carolina and Botswana; North Dakota partnered with three countries, Ghana, Togo and Benin; Michigan and Liberia; Utah and Morocco; Vermont and Senegal; Wyoming and Tunisia; Kentucky and Djibouti; Massachusetts and Kenya; Indiana and Niger, (United States Africa Command, 2018).

According to Inman, each state has the authority to quickly deploy and assess the educational needs of partnered nations, coordinate with NCOL CoE to develop programs of instruction, instructor certifications, and are committed to assisting until the U.S. and the host country are as comfortable and self-reliant as Malawi is now, (J. Inman, personal communication, 2018).

State Partnership Information: <http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/security-cooperation/national-guard-state-partnership-program>

Conclusion

Through the combined efforts of the U.S. and African senior leaders who oversee the African Land Forces Summit, Malawian Sergeants Major Course, and U.S. Army National Guard State partnerships, the U.S. and participating African countries can achieve the constructive dialogue and engagement necessary to foster educational growth across the African continent. ■



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