Logistics Training at the Joint Readiness Training Center

BY CAPTAIN JULIO J. REYES

Assignment as an “observer, coach, trainer” at the Joint Readiness Training Center provides opportunities to mentor deploying units and receive professional development training.

The Mission of OCTs

The sustainment warfighting function is fully exercised at JRTC as trainers focus on preparing sustainment units for tough logistics missions in Afghanistan and other contingency locations all over the world. OCTs assigned to Fort Polk help to provide this multi-echelon, tough, and realistic training. OCTs have a duty to rotational units and the Army to observe unit performance, control engagements and operations, teach doctrine, coach to improve unit readiness, monitor safety, and conduct professional after-action reviews that enhance a unit’s training experience.

The OCT positions range from senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who provide feedback to the staff NCOs and platoon sergeants to senior captains and field-grade officers who provide support to primary staff and support operations positions, forward support companies (FSCs), and sustainment brigade units. The FSC OCT Team

I was selected to serve as an OCT for an infantry battalion in the Sustainment Division at JRTC. The FSC OCT team consists of logistics captain or area of concentration 90A, multifunctional logistician who has completed a company command, a sergeant first class with the MOS 92A (automated logistical specialist), and a sergeant first class, MOS 91B (wheeled vehicle mechanic). Augmenting the other logistics functions in an infantry battalion is an ALOC OCT team consisting of another logistics captain, an MOS 42A (human resources specialist) sergeant first class, an MOS 92Y (supply specialist) sergeant first class, and an MOS 68W (healthcare specialist) sergeant first class.

Forward support company Soldiers from the 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, exercise medical rules of engagement and treat a civilian casualty during a situational training exercise lane in the town of “Khaista.”

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During each rotation, the OCT teams deploy to the training area to provide real-world training for an infantry battalion of a brigade combat team. The OCTs follow and coach the unit during prerotational training, situational training exercise lanes, and the force-on-force exercise, which is the unit’s culminating event.

Other Sustainment Division Support

Other sections within the Sustainment Division offer OCTs for the brigade support battalion’s companies, including the brigade support medical company, the distribution company, and the field maintenance company. The Sustainment Division also has OCT teams for the brigade support operations section, the brigade S-4, and the brigade support battalion. OCTs for the Sustainment Division also have multiple deployments within the Army and provides cutting-edge feedback and mentorship to the rotational units. Knowing that our team can assist and quite possibly provide guidance that can save a Soldier’s life overseas gives us great satisfaction.

An Opportunity for Growth

I had the opportunity to be assigned to Fort Polk after serving as a company commander and completing the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course. When my branch manager offered the JRTC assignment, my first thoughts were not favorable. However, after discussing the option with my family, I decided to take the assignment because I felt the Army needs quality leaders to serve as OCTs and the assignment would allow me to develop even more as a tactical logistician. The decision to become an OCT has turned out to be one of the best career decisions I have ever made.

Serving as an OCT provides leaders not only the opportunity to support Army units preparing for deployment but also a chance for self professional development. Here is how.

OCTs are responsible for knowing the most current doctrinal practices. This requires professional development, which benefits both JRTC and the individual OCTs.

When not training rotational units, OCTs have the opportunity to attend schools, and OCTs have the opportunity to attend schools. This opportunity lets them return with lessons learned that benefit rotational units at JRTC. OCTs have attended schools.

Since being assigned here, my fellow OCTs and I have had the opportunity to mentor deploying units and receive professional development training. OCTs have the opportunity to travel abroad and train with foreign allied forces. Recently, the Sustainment Division sent two Officers to Germany to support the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team’s full-spectrum operations (FSO) joint exercise, which included an airborne assault exercise into Germany. Other OCTs have had the opportunity to travel to the Canadian Maneuver Training Center near Edmonton, Alberta, to learn about Canadian forces FSO training and joint combat missions.

Since being at JRTC, I have had the opportunity to develop myself as a leader and to gain valuable knowledge that will better prepare me for future assignments as a support operations officer, brigade S-4, or sustainment brigade staff officer.

JRTC is one of the best assignments an officer or NCO can have. The amount of operational and tactical knowledge learned from working with each rotational unit and the ability to build relationships with sustainment leaders throughout the force are invaluable. The training opportunities and chances to travel enhance personal growth of OCTs and may be considered an incentive to seeking an OCT position.

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