



Army corporal explains Standard Army Retail Supply System to Albanian army officers at U.S. Property and Fiscal Office warehouse in Lawrenceville, New Jersey (U.S. Air Force/Mark Olsen)

The Case for the Junior Joint Logistics Officer Training Program

By Wilson T. VornDick

Roughly 1,700 junior officers (O1-O3) matriculate annually into one of five Service-specific logistics officer-training courses. Each course has its own staff, support, curriculum, budget, travel funding, and school. But with reduced resources during the multiple-year Continuing Resolutions,

sequestration, and long-term declining budget horizon, the Department of Defense (DOD) needs to recognize that resources allocated in otherwise redundant processes are a waste. These costly redundancies can drain the overall health of the national security budget environment and create resource imbalances.

DOD already has been on a steady trajectory to become more streamlined, joint, and efficient since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 required more joint doctrine, training, and policy.¹ If the axiom “business is business” applies to DOD, then why does the department allow five distinct business models and curricula to exist where there is currently redundancy of effort? Why is there not combined or joint junior-level logistics training among

Lieutenant Commander Wilson T. VornDick, USNR, is a Supply Corps Officer. He previously served on the Director of the Navy Staff and at the U.S. Naval War College while completing separate advanced degrees at Harvard University and the U.S. Naval War College.

the Services if 1) the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) are logistics *headquarters* with intermediate- and senior-level logisticians completing one or multiple joint tours there, and 2) the current model gears its graduates toward that same professional objective?²

There are significant differences in the ranks, tasks, and courses that each Service assigns its organic logisticians, but there are still *core business fundamentals* and *competencies* that are shared. These include but are not limited to food service operations, contracting, inventory control, supply chain management, environmental procedures, procurement, accounting, and disbursement. Ethics, stewardship, and accountability apply to each logistics professional and should not require distinct instruction—no matter whether the student wears a khaki, blue, or green uniform. At first glance it would seem that each Service is basically operating its own business school even though the graduates eventually end up at the same professional endstate with only different entry-level instruction. DOD has instituted mid-level and senior-level logistics training with varying degrees of success in the past. However, this cross-Service article proposes that DOD should institute a holistic and unified approach to training from the entry level up through the Junior Joint Logistics Officer Training program (J2LOT) instead.³

Status Quo of Logistics

Logistics is no longer a second-rate community or subspecialty. It is not the refuge of last resort for flight school and infantry washouts. Over the last few years, each Service has methodically and purposefully enhanced its logistics community standards by raising the bar of admission. Active and Reserve logistics selection communities currently require previous business coursework, MBAs, a unique logistics skill set, or significant prior business experience among the qualifications for a competitive application package. The Services' positions have only been enhanced by the weakened economy and attractiveness of

skilled veterans in both the private and public sectors.

Logistics Officer Matriculation.

The nearly 1,700 Reserve and Active-duty officers who matriculate annually come more highly qualified than previous entrants. Surprisingly, the Army makes up almost two-thirds of this number with about 900 training at the Army Logistics University in Fort Lee, Virginia.⁴ The Army is unique in that it subdivides logisticians into three main support roles under the Sustainment umbrella: Transportation, Ordnance, and Quartermaster. It is important to point out that the Army dwarfs the other Services precisely because it rolls up the National Guard and Army Reserve into its training progression. Meanwhile, the Navy trains around 380 Supply Corps officers, or “chops” as they are affectionately called, at its education center in Newport, Rhode Island.⁵ After completing the Basic School, nearly 200 Marine officers attend the Basic Logistics Training portion of the Marine Corps Combat Service Support School at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The Air Force's 37th Training Wing, based at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, trains approximately 150 officers for three logistics communities: Logistics Readiness, Financial Management, and Force Support. Finally, the Coast Guard instructs the smallest number of officers (fewer than 40) through its Acquisition and Engineering community.

Duration and Progression of

Training. The length for course completion ranges from 55 days for the Marines to over 5 months for the Navy, with the length of the Army and Air Force programs falling in between. The curriculum duration is completely dependent on each Service's combination of courses, timing of candidate matriculation, and curriculum length.⁶ The Army is very specific in breaking its overall training into various segments throughout the first few years of its officer continuum; the Army's training command has various requirements beyond just logistics training to incorporate in its Army officer corps. The Navy, however, takes a more direct route. Once the initial officer accession/indoctrination

is completed either through the Naval Academy, Officer Candidate School, Reserve Officer Training Corps, or other accession program, an officer is then enrolled in the 5-month Supply Corps Basic Qualification Course. The graduate will then “roll” to the first 2–3 year tour⁷ in the fleet unless that supply officer is filling a more senior or technical position. In that case the officer will receive follow-on training such as the Supply Officer Department Head Course. This situation is rare and only applies to a handful of officer selectees annually. Otherwise, most graduates will go on to complete their first tour and will not receive any additional formal training in Newport.

The Air Force training method echoes the aforementioned Navy process. Once logisticians are accepted into the community, they begin the 5-month Logistics Readiness Officer Orientation Program (LOOP), which incorporates sequential training modules intended to prepare logistics officers for their first tours as well as completion of a core logistics competency. After graduation, Air Force logistics community members will continue with their own unique check-in-the-box, follow-on training, and milestones. These include qualification pins, specialty codes, MBA programs, internships, joint assignments, and placement at DLA, USTRANSCOM, or with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). This progression is replicated in the other Services. Each follows the same general professional and career progression despite their different approaches in training length and placement. This replication and redundancy of effort is also manifested in the training material.

Training Material. The overall training substance among the Services has remained generally the same despite the fact that each Service's publications would seem to hide their similarities behind their distinct formats and styles commensurate with their Service traditions. Food service operations, contracting, inventory control, supply chain management, logistics analysis, environmental procedures, procurement, accounting, fuels management, and disbursement have a place in each Service's

entry-level publications and training material. These materials are synced or piggybacked with the initial training received at the entry-level training center, follow-on training, or hands-on training conducted during the first few assignments. Often these same materials are reincorporated later for more senior and specialized logistics positions at DLA, USTRANSCOM, or JCS.

Most of the training materials are synonymous with other Services concerning the actual logistics job functional areas. To clarify, aviation is a component of each Service. As a result, each Service exposes its logisticians to some form of aviation supply chain management. The actual personal qualification standards (PQS) and approach to training may vary, but aviation supply chain fundamentals are relatively the same. This is also true with food service operations. The *Army Food Program* and the Navy's *Food Service Operation Handbook* and *Food Service Management (P-486)* are cases in point.⁸ There are cosmetic differences such as acronyms usage and military roles and responsibilities, but the guidance and instructions are in line. The various logistics officer communities may have different accession numbers, training locations, uniforms, and PQS, but the job requirements and training material are equivalent. Once again *core business fundamentals* and *competencies* are mirrored in each Service's entry-level training program.

Short-term Gains with Long-term Efficiencies

Millions are spent annually in operating each Service's entry-level logistics officer training pipelines. The most expensive variable is the fixed cost of operating and maintaining the training commands (salaries, installation maintenance, and support). While the disparity in per diem rates and other support costs per student could be significant depending on location, some costs are uniform among the Services such as baseline military salaries. Yet it is almost impossible to capture the full cost of the programs because each Service utilizes its own accounting methodology and informatics to account for its footprint.

Associated Costs for Training. A standardized accounting methodology and informatics would be invaluable for the Services moving forward, and not just in greater ease for assessing J2LOT cost considerations. For example, the Air Force estimated that in fiscal year 2012, a logistics readiness officer costs \$27,514 to train over 22 weeks.⁹ The Naval Center for Cost Analysis uses manpower-per-day/under-instruction formula of \$123 a day.¹⁰ Under this formula, a Navy supply corps officer would cost an estimated \$13,000 to train over 22 weeks. The Army's Analysis Installation and Personnel Costing Division projects that a 2nd lieutenant quartermaster could cost as little as \$1,622.66 for one segment of training.¹¹ But Army statisticians further estimate that if other benefits, pays, initial officer acquisition, and support costs are factored in, a quartermaster jumps to \$124,769.72. The overwhelming conclusion from the data is that there are tremendous short-term and long-term cost considerations in training an entry-level logistician. However, these costs could be dramatically lowered through a unified or partially unified J2LOT approach.

Long-term Cost Savings. The essential financial considerations for DOD to judge in weighing the cost-benefit analysis of implementing J2LOT are the unrealized benefits, efficiencies, and gains that DOD stands to lose if it does *not* act. The personal connections, long-term efficiencies, and "jointness" that J2LOT would spawn are an incredible windfall for the whole government. First, J2LOT would create a *wholeness of logistics* effect at the O1-O3 level by increasing interoperability. This would not only fill the Active-duty forces but spill over into the Reserve forces as well. J2LOT could embolden new personal qualification standards with a pin or certificate that would provide an easily recognized yardstick of logistical expertise for the combatant commanders and Services to measure. Meanwhile, J2LOT could also add valuable Joint Qualification System credit, which is required for future advancement.¹² Second, J2LOT offers the next generation of military logisticians

the opportunity and forum to network and seek efficient solutions in their careers sooner rather than later. Officers today wait as long as a decade into their career to begin this synergy. It is not far-fetched to envision a scenario in the near future in which officers who previously trained together at J2LOT work together in solving a complex logistics problem during a joint humanitarian operation in Africa. Finally, J2LOT would foster further coordination and integration of legacy Service-specific logistical chains, administrative processes, and informatics. Regrettably, most of these intangible benefits cannot be readily quantified or manifested immediately.

Begin the Transformation Now

The time is ripe for J2LOT's synchronization and savings to be realized. This concept is not new. During World War II the Army, Army Air Corps, and Navy all had their logistics officer courses tied to the Harvard Business School.¹³ From 1943 to 1946, thousands of logisticians learned in a hybrid environment of civilian professors and military officers as instructors taught through case-study methodology.¹⁴ This process was disbanded in favor of a Service-specific process that was responsive to the Services' individualized needs after World War II. Now, more than 70 years later, the current model is becoming increasingly unsustainable in a modern warfare environment that makes joint and cost-sensitive requirements of utmost concern for combatant commanders.

Lessons Learned and Efforts Under Way. The Services have seen the writing on the wall and have responded to this demand signal with various approaches. Each Service is in the process of or has just concluded efforts at refining its overall logistics training. The Army reformatted its logistics community training and career progression in 2007, which includes Logistics Officer (MOS #FA 90) mid-level training at the Army Logistics University.¹⁵ The Marine Corps fused its Logistics Officer (MOS #0402) with Motor Transport Officer (MOS #3502). Air Force logisticians are in the process of reviewing and streamlining their logistics



Airmen from 380th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron hold pump under F-15 Eagle aircraft for hot-pit refueling in southwest Asia, March 2012 (U.S. Air Force/Arian Nead)

training with ideas to incorporate interoperability with other Services. While the Navy has not drastically restructured its supply corps officer community in decades, the enlisted ratings have undergone tremendous streamlining and consolidation.¹⁶ The logistics specialist rate is a case in point;¹⁷ it is basically tasked with maintaining the Navy supply system and inventory. It underwent two major consolidations in 2003 and 2009.¹⁸ It is clear from the various logistics personnel transformations and consolidations that the Services are capable of making the switch to the J2LOT approach.

There already is joint training and harmonization of efforts among Service communities such as medical, special operations, and combatant commands. Some Services cross-train their personnel when there is no organic Service-equivalent training available (common between Marine Corps and Army logistics).

Meanwhile, several Services have cut out duplicative training processes in one Service to combine it with a capability in another, resulting in cost savings. This is the current flight training arrangement between Naval Air Training Command and the Air Force's Air Education and Training Command. But a prime example of both joint efforts working in synergy is the Uniformed Services University for Health Services in Bethesda, Maryland. This institution has prepared both military and Uniformed Public Health Service medical officers under one roof using a general program of study since 1972.¹⁹ Upon graduation, medical officers are farmed out to a smorgasbord of government and military entities. In a similar manner, J2LOT would build on these previous synchronization efforts with the critical goal of providing a standardized level of training for the military's emerging business leaders.

Implementation

Government analysts, private sector consultants, and the Services' logistics leaders have already taken a stab at better coordinating joint logistics and training. These efforts were stymied primarily because they focused on a top-down or middle-out approach. DOD might be best served by focusing on the J2LOT bottom-up approach while continuing to advance the top and middle approaches. There are a variety of internal and external options for DOD to institute J2LOT. Within the department there is the option for inter-Service memorandums of agreement, JCS instructions, and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) policy directives. Alternatively, congressional legislative changes to Title 10 or Presidential directives could mandate J2LOT as well.

Title 10 grants the combatant commanders the authority to oversee all

aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics using the forces assigned to them, while the military Service secretaries are generally responsible for recruiting, organizing, supplying, equipping, and training their Service personnel.²⁰ The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Joint Staff are responsible for formulating joint training policy and doctrine.²¹ U.S. Joint Forces Command was DOD's lead in providing joint training until it was disestablished in 2011 and its functions were divvied out to other commands.²² In light of these legal structures, the most realistic approach for implementing J2LOT would be for DOD to identify the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD-P&R) with the overall responsibility as was done in previous joint training initiatives.²³ The example process that follows has worked with some fruitful albeit slowly manifested results.²⁴ Typically, OUSD-P&R eventually assigns one of its principals or deputies to act as the executive agent. To carry out that responsibility, the executive agent would then establish three standing groups: the Executive Steering Group, Senior Advisory Group, and Joint Integrated Process Team. Consisting of Senior Executive Service civilians and senior flag officers, each group would have its own unique set of tasks and responsibilities in order to plan, support, collaborate, and implement J2LOT in a time-phased approach. An initial pilot program would be recommended, and, if successful, it would transition into a rollout period of 2 to 3 years. This hybrid and complex method is preferable for DOD because it allows the Services the opportunity to properly address grievances, assuage concerns, build consensus, and evaluate and execute J2LOT.

Approach to Training

The optimal construct for the J2LOT would be a combined or hybrid training program. The first option would be to create one unified school with a core curriculum in conjunction with follow-on, Service-specific onsite training. A second option would be to mirror the first option and then conduct follow-

on, Service-specific offsite training at each Service's current logistical training command. The final option would incorporate holding both the combined curriculum and the Service-specific follow-on training at the current logistical training commands' education centers. Each option presents its own unique set of obstacles. However, J2LOT's benefits would dwarf any of these initial challenges.

An Inclusive and Viable Construct

It would be feasible, efficient, and fiscally inviting to train other Federal agencies that have similar logistics courses under the J2LOT umbrella. Logisticians from the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, and U.S. Agency for International Development would be ideal candidates because of the increasing amount of interagency responsibilities that are now shared in the hybrid environment of modern conflict and crisis management. It would also be possible for the interagency or one of its members to create its own organic logistics-training program similar to J2LOT. It is conceivable that any entry-level officer or administrator with logistical duties from across the government spectrum could be a candidate. DOD could expand J2LOT enrollment to include international members as well. North Atlantic Treaty Organization members, United Nations, and other partner-nations' military logisticians could all train side by side. The recent logistical cooperation among the U.S. interagency community, nongovernmental organizations, U.S. military, and other nations after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti highlights this possibility.

J2LOT also raises the specter of whether a similar method and model could apply to other military Service-specific support communities where the training and positions are analogous or overlap significantly. The military's various intelligence communities are a case in point since their junior officer training is both resource-intensive and redundant. Could the J2LOT framework be applied

among the military intelligence communities? Could that same joint military intelligence training incorporate entry-level analysts from other intelligence community members such as the Defense Intelligence Agency? Finally, could public affairs, chaplain corps, and the judge advocate general each fashion its own combined training pipeline in the future?

Conclusion

J2LOT is not intended to destroy any Service-specific community or unique logistics ability though it may cause controversy among and between the various Services, OSD staffs, and the Joint Staff. Upon completion of the training, it is not the intention of J2LOT to begin swapping Army 2nd lieutenant transportation officers in a Ranger battalion with Navy supply corps ensigns from the fleet, just as it is not proposed that an Air Force 2nd lieutenant logistics readiness officer replace a Marine Corps 2nd lieutenant logistics officer in a Marine Expeditionary Unit. On the contrary, J2LOT reinforces the different Services' ancillary roles and identities. J2LOT is not a revolution against the various Services or DOD writ large. Instead it is a movement that is part of a gradual evolution of DOD into a more lean, mean, and *purple* force. Simply put, J2LOT seeks a harmonization where redundancy of training effort or curriculum exists. At the same time it carries forward *core business principles* and *competencies*, saves scarce resources, and increases efficiencies.

One of the 1,700 logistics officers in training this year could well be the flag officer in charge of USTRANSCOM or DLA in 2040. DOD's current trajectory indicates that the operating environment in 2040 will be even more "joint" than it is today. There is a window of opportunity for DOD to begin joint logistics training and harmonization efforts. But this window is closing. Waiting for most officers to enter their intermediate and advanced career phases before learning joint logistics is too late. The incentives exist now for DOD to create a curriculum and school at the basic officer level. DOD needs to get its logistics training

more *joint* and *whole* because, as U.S. Navy Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan noted, “Logistics [is] as vital to military success as daily food is to daily work.”²⁵ JFQ

Notes

¹ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, P.L. 99-433, U.S. Code 10, § 151–155.

² U.S. Defense Logistics Agency, available at <www.dla.mil/Pages/default.aspx>; U.S. Transportation Command, available at <www.transcom.mil/>.

³ See U.S. Joint Forces Command and the Joint Staff, *Joint Logistics Education, Training, and Experimentation Transformation (JLETT) Working Group* presentation, August 26, 2009, available at <www.dtic.mil/doctrine/training/conferences/wjts09_2/wjts09_2wg_jlett_readahead.ppt>; *JLETT Way-Ahead Open Forum Discussion*, March 31, 2010, available at <www.dtic.mil/doctrine/training/...1/wjts10_1wgjlett_wayahead.ppt>; Department of Defense (DOD), *Joint Concept for Logistics*, August 6, 2010, available at <www.dtic.mil/futurejointwarfare/concepts/jcl.pdf>; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1800.01D, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)*, September 5, 2012, available at <www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives/cdata/unlimit/1800_01.pdf>; and CJCSI 3500.01G, *Joint Training Policy and Guidance for the Armed Forces of the United States*, March 15, 2012, available at <www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives/cdata/unlimit/3500_01.pdf>.

⁴ Logistics Training Command, Service Web sites, and personal qualification standards (PQS). Matriculation numbers and curricula are based on cursory interviews with each Logistics Training Command as well as consulting their Web sites and PQS. See U.S. Army, available at <www.almc.army.mil/index.asp>; U.S. Marine Corps, available at <www.mccsss.marines.mil/>; U.S. Navy, available at <www.netc.navy.mil/centers/css/nscs/>; and U.S. Air Force (USAF), available at <www.37trw.af.mil>. Because of its small program size, the U.S. Coast Guard does not have a comparable command or Web site.

⁵ The Navy Supply Corps School was moved from Athens, GA, to Newport Naval Station in Newport, RI, in 2011. It is now known as the Wheeler Center.

⁶ Logistics Training Command, Service Web sites, and PQS.

⁷ “Tour” is analogous with assignment or position.

⁸ U.S. Army Regulation 30-22, *Army Food Program* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, July 24, 2012, updated August 24, 2012), available at <www.apd.army.mil/pdf/files/r30_22.pdf>; U.S. Navy, *Food*

Service Operation Handbook, 1st ed. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), January 2010), available at <<http://navybmr.com/study%20material/Food%20Service%20Operation%20Handbook.pdf>>; and NAVSUP, *Food Service Management*, NAVSUP Pub. 486 (Mechanicsburg, PA: NAVSUP, January 2010, updated), available at <www.csldino.com/cstraining/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/P486-Food-Service-Management-JAN-2010.pdf>.

⁹ See USAF Air Education and Training Command, available at <www.aetc.af.mil/>. USAF notes that these estimates should not be used for budgeting purposes.

¹⁰ See Naval Center for Cost Analysis, available at <www.ncca.navy.mil/index.cfm>.

¹¹ U.S. Army’s Analysis Installation and Personnel Costing Division, available at <<http://asafm.army.mil/>>.

¹² John Warner National Defense Authorization Act of 2007, P.L. 109-364, § 516–519.

¹³ “HBS Archives Photograph Collection: Wartime Schools, 1942–1945: A Finding Aid,” Harvard Business School Online Archives, available at <<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~bak00087>>.

¹⁴ Primus V, “Statistics, No Lies,” *Harvard Magazine*, March–April 2013, available at <<http://harvardmagazine.com/2013/03/statistics-no-lies>>. Upon completion, graduates received a Harvard certification. As a side note, Robert McNamara taught courses and supervised the Office of Statistical Control for the Army Air Corps. This office sought to increase the efficiency of aerial bombing through applied statistics.

¹⁵ Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) is used for both Marines and Army. The Air Force uses the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). The AFSC uses 21R1 for a Logistics Readiness Officer. The Navy uses a four-number officer designator starting with 31; therefore, a Supply Officer is designated as a 31XX.

¹⁶ A *rate* or *rating* is the Navy term for MOS.

¹⁷ U.S. Navy, “Navy Logistics Jobs,” available at <www.navy.com/careers/business-legal/purchasing-supply-logistics.html>.

¹⁸ The storekeeper rate absorbed the aviation storekeeper rate in 2003. The new storekeeper and postal clerk rates fused into the logistics specialist rate in 2009.

¹⁹ Uniformed Services University of Health Service, Web site, “About,” available at <www.usuhs.mil/>.

²⁰ Commanders of combatant commands: assignment; powers and duties, U.S. Code 10, § 164. See also Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, November 8, 2010, as amended through December 15, 2013), available at <www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf>.

²¹ U.S. Code 10, §§ 3013(b), 5013(b), and 8013(b).

²² Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3500.01B, *Joint Training Policy for the Armed Forces of the United States*, U.S. Code 10, § 153. See also U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Military Training: Actions Needed to Enhance DOD’s Program to Transform Joint Training*, GAO 05-548 (Washington, DC: GAO, June 21, 2005), 4, available at <www.gao.gov/products/GAO-05-548>.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6. See also GAO, *Military Training: Funding Requests for Joint Urban Operations Training and Facilities Should Be Based on Sound Strategy and Requirements*, GAO 06-193 (Washington, DC: GAO, December 8, 2005), available at <www.gao.gov/products/GAO-06-193>.

²⁴ GAO, *Actions Needed to Enhance DOD’s Program to Transform Joint Training*, GAO-05-548, 7.

²⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Armaments and Arbitration* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912).