

TJAGLCS Practice Notes

Faculty, The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center & School

Training Developments Practice Note

Judge Advocate Staff Officers Course (JATSOC) Staff Skills Training for the Contemporary Operational Environment

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I. Introduction

The Commander of The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School (TJAGLCS), on behalf of The Judge Advocate General (TJAG), announced at the October 2006 World Wide Continuing Legal Education (WWCLE) Conference, that Active Army and Reserve Component company grade Judge Advocates (JAs) would receive Distributed Learning (DL) staff officer training to replace the Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3) course. In the fall of 2007, the Training Developments Directorate (TDD) at TJAGLCS will launch the Judge Advocate Tactical Staff Officer Course (JATSOC), an online DL course that will serve as the replacement for CAS3. This Note will review the historical underpinnings of Army company grade staff officer training and then provide a detailed explanation of JATSOC.

Until May 2004, the U.S. Army required all officers to attend the resident CAS3 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.¹ Each branch, including the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps, mandated CAS3 attendance either before or immediately following completion of their respective officer advanced course. Judge advocates were required to complete CAS3 before attending the Judge Advocate Officer Graduate Course.² Due to budget constraints, the Secretary of the Army shortened CAS3 from nine to six, then to five weeks, exempted one year group, and finally discontinued the course altogether after the graduation of Class 04-04 on 19 May 2004.³ After the decision to discontinue the course, the Commanding General, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) and Fort Leavenworth announced that branch education institutions would integrate the CAS3 curriculum into their Captain's Career Course (CCC).⁴ The goal of this modified CCC was to integrate the company grade staff officer skill set taught at CAS3 into the branch-specific Officer Education System (OES).

The CAC exempted the JAG Corps and the Army Medical Department from the requirement to integrate CAS3 into their OES.⁵ However, in September 2006, TJAG considered the increasing responsibilities placed on deploying JAs in the

¹ News Release, U.S. Army, Army Public Affairs, *Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3) to Merge with Officer Advanced Course*, Apr. 12, 2004, http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/read.php?story_id_key=5839 [hereinafter CAS3 News Release] (approving the Army's plan to merge the CAS3 curriculum into the Officer Advanced Course).

² Lieutenant Colonel Mike Ryan, *Creating Legal Pentathletes: An Argument in Favor of an Operations Training Course for Judge Advocates (JAs)*, ARMY LAW., Apr. 2007, at 20.

³ Gary Sheftick, *CAS3 to Merge with Officer Advance Course*, ARMY NEWS SERV., Apr. 13, 2004.

⁴ See CAS3 News Release, *supra* note 1.

⁵ HEADQUARTERS, COMBINED ARMS CENTER (CAC) OPERATIONS ORDER 04-176A, OES CAPTAIN'S CAREER COURSE (CCC) REDESIGN (24 June 2004).

contemporary operational environment and determined that company grade JAs should receive training in certain non-legal subjects essential for staff work, such as Army organization and doctrine, joint operations, and, most importantly, the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). The TDD were tasked to develop a distributed learning (formerly distance learning) familiarization course in lieu of CAS3 that would train all judge advocate captains in basic staff officer skills and prepare them to support an Army at war. This resulted in the JATSOC online course.

II. The Judge Advocate Tactical Staff Officer Course

The JATSOC will encompass eight subcourses and total approximately eighteen and one half hours of online instruction. The JATSOC will be mandatory for all JAs with forty-eight months or fewer of service. These JAs will be automatically enrolled when the program is launched. Judge Advocate Officer Basic Course officers will be automatically enrolled upon graduation. All enrolled personnel will have a twenty-four-month completion suspense requirement. Only the most extraordinary of circumstances may apply for waivers. Judge advocates with more than forty-eight months of service, and all other JAG Corps personnel, may also take the course. Those JAs not automatically enrolled will simply log on to the new JAG University (JAGU) and register for the JATSOC.⁶ After eighteen months of enrollment, an officer who has not completed the course will receive an automatic email reminder from JAGU. If the officer has not completed the course after twenty-one months, the officer and his supervisor will receive an email reminder from JAGU indicating that JATSOC must be completed within ninety days.

III. Judge Advocate Tactical Staff Officer Course Content

The JATSOC will contain, in sequence, the following subcourses:

Army Symbology (1.5 hours)—An introduction to Army graphics and the associated acronyms, concepts and vocabulary. After this lesson, JAs will know how to read task organization slides and will understand what Assembly Areas, Forward Arming and Refueling Points, Main Supply Routes, and Traffic Control Post are.

Army Organization (3 hours)—An introduction to the six warfighting functions, as well as the structure, mission, and employment of the BCT, the division, and the corps. Also covers command and support relationships, such as OPCON and TACON, and introduces staff organization.

Staff Structure & Officer Roles in Tactical Units (2 hours)—An overview of basic staff structure and staff officer roles in a BCT. Judge advocates will begin to learn about their roles as special and personal staff officers.

Army Doctrine (3 hours)—An explanation of the fundamentals of Army doctrine and the role of doctrine in operations at the BCT and battalion level. Judge advocates will begin to learn how to use their specialized knowledge and skills to assist commanders and staffs to solve tactical problems.

Fundamentals of Joint Operations (2 hours)—A review of basic background information on the environment in which a Joint Task Force (JTF) conducts operations, as well as the formation and organization of a JTF headquarters. This lesson will also cover legal support to joint operations.

Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) (4 hours)—An explanation of the MDMP in which JAs will begin to learn how to fully participate in and add value to the BCT plans process.

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) (Stability) (1 hour)—A review of the IPB process, as modified in the context of Stability Operations. This lesson will focus on a JA's contribution to the planning and conduct of irregular warfare and peace operations.

Military Briefings (2 hours)—An introduction to the various types of military briefings. This lesson will also cover formats and characteristics of effective briefings.

⁶ The user will log on with Army Knowledge Online credentials at: <https://jag.learn.army.mil>, to access JAGU on the Blackboard Academic Suite. There will be instructions on JATSOC enrollment.

The MDMP subcourse is especially critical, given the consistent deployments of JAs within the contemporary operational environment. In CAS3, all students received extensive hands on instruction in MDMP. Judge advocates no longer receive the benefit of small group CAS3 interaction with peers from all branches. Therefore, in addition to the JATSOC, staff judge advocates should require their junior officers to participate early and often in battalion and brigade level MDMP sessions.

IV. The Way Ahead

The JATSOC is being designed to allow JAG Corps personnel to become familiar with the tactical staff officer skills previously taught in CAS3. An online course cannot replicate a resident, multi-branch, CAS3 classroom environment; but JATSOC will provide JAs with a diverse curriculum encompassing all of the basic staff officer skills necessary for mission success. Because it is a new concept, TDD expects the JATSOC to evolve over time. Staff judge advocates can further promote the purposes of the JATSOC by integrating its concepts into their officer professional development sessions. We also encourage suggestions from the field as to how we might improve the JATSOC to ensure it meets the needs of JAs and the Soldiers, staffs and commanders they serve.