

Pursuing Professional Development Through Long-Term Training

■ By Katie Smith

Working at the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, Logistics Innovation Agency offers many opportunities for new experiences and advancement. Because I joined the agency directly after my training as a Department of the Army (DA) transportation intern, I felt confident in the transportation aspects of my job. As I progressed in my career, I gained experience with technology and the military.

However, because agencies expect logisticians working at the headquarters level to have experience in the basics of each logistics function (supply, maintenance, and transportation), I still felt that I should refine my logistics skill set. That is why I chose to take a long-term training (LTT) assignment.

At first, I was hesitant to apply for a developmental assignment because, at the time, I was heavily engaged in a project that I was passionate about. Then I remembered what a senior logistician had once told me: "There is never a 'good time' for training, so when an opportunity presents itself, go for it!"

So, I applied for an assignment with the Directorate of Logistics (DOL) at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. I chose this LTT because it would give me the "where the rubber meets the road" experience in all logistics functions. I had gone from being an intern to working at the DA headquarters, and I felt that I was at a disadvantage when compared to my coworkers who had spent parts of their careers at field-level assignments. By accepting this LTT, I was able to enhance my project management and logistics analysis skills through developmental assignments in the Transportation, Supply and Services, Maintenance, and Plans and Operations Divisions of the DOL.

In the Plans and Operations Division, I successfully negotiated and executed the post's vehicle utilization review board for nontactical vehicle (NTV) turn-in efforts, which involved all local major commands. My efforts ultimately saved the garrison approximately \$350,000 in annual NTV costs. I also helped stand up the DOL's first government insourced privately-owned vehicle storage program for single deployed Soldiers.

In the transportation division, I participated in multiple unit training exercises and Operation En-

during Freedom deployment operations. I served on deployment and redeployment transportation teams, coordinated air load plans and ground support transportation for personnel and cargo, and helped account for Soldiers as they arrived on chartered flights from theater. I provided tracking information daily using the Global Transportation Network and the Single Mobility System.

I obtained technical transportation of hazardous materials certification through the DOL's deployment training center. I led efforts to train satellite location leaders at Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter. I helped them determine operations, policies, procedures, and the assortment of vehicles needed. I calculated and analyzed the financial commitment for transportation motor pool contracted drivers versus subcontracted drivers. Because of my analysis, the director hired two additional drivers, resulting in a weekly savings of \$6,500.

In the maintenance division, I used my analytical skills to support efforts to cost-track Army Force Generation maintenance programs. While working there, a maintenance mentor explained the various battalion priorities and maintenance shop statuses. He also taught me how to troubleshoot the daily maintenance management reports in order to identify issues.

In the Supply and Services Division, I reviewed and analyzed local DOL policies and suggested efficiency improvements in several facilities.

The training with DOL allowed me to develop leadership skills and a strong connection with DOL culture. I left the assignment appreciative of the mentorship and grateful for the enhanced leader, logistics, and functional skills I had acquired.

For logistics careerists looking to enter developmental long-term assignments funded by the Army Civilian Training, Education, and Development System, I suggest researching the advertised positions first. If a position appears to be a good fit, then go for it. Once selected, you should work with both your current supervisor and the assignment supervisor to develop a training plan and negotiate work-related expectations and training outcomes.

Katie Smith is a Logistics Management Specialist at the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, Logistics Innovation Agency. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Christopher Newport University and an MBA with a specialization in international business from Walden University. She is a graduate of the Transportation Basic Officer Leader Course.