



America's Defenders

Urban Combat Training at U.S. Army's Joint Readiness Training Center

(NAPSA)—As America's adversaries adopt strategies to create instability and fear, using stealth and surprise to inflict terror in urban settings, the U.S. Army's Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, La., enables American soldiers to train and prepare to meet these threats.

"There is no doubt that the JRTC is the Army's elite training center for urban combat. The lessons learned here were crucial to the mission success in Afghanistan and will continue to be in future missions," says Lt. Col. Cecil Lewis, commander 1st Battalion, (ABN) 509th Infantry Regiment of Fort Polk's Opposing Force (OPFOR). "Any unit coming out of here is better prepared than when they came in."

Lessons learned at the JRTC do not come easy. Training units from around the nation, the JRTC pushes soldiers to their limits in an 85,000-acre area of Fort Polk known as "the box." In mock villages constructed to replicate urban hotspots around the globe, visiting troops must overtake a formidable OPFOR while protecting role-playing civilians amid live explosions, gunfire, booby traps and roadblocks—often in the dead of the night.

The villages create a realistic three-dimensional battle where foes can appear on rooftops, in and around buildings and even



Today's Army prepares to fight terror threats in urban settings.

underground. Nearly 1,000 cameras within the site record every battle and video footage helps to facilitate after-action reviews for each soldier.

"I've re-fought every battle I have ever been in at the JRTC many times in my head. Each time I'm thinking about what I did wrong, how could I have done better. Every soldier appreciates the opportunity to do this kind of training," says Col. Burke Garrett of the visiting 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.

According to the Department of Defense, by the year 2010 approximately 75 percent of the world's population will live in or around urban centers—injecting new

urgency into the critical training soldiers receive during a JRTC rotation. The JRTC's cutting-edge Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) facility, constructed in 1993, consists of three complex sites and teaches soldiers mental agility, warrior skills and preparation for the battlefield of the future.

In addition to force-on-force training, units can perform live-fire exercises, engaging targets in simulated combat settings. Integrating Army, Air Force and other military services' training, the JRTC provides soldiers the highest level of training available to U.S. contingency forces and serves as a power projection platform for the Army, readying troops for deployment anywhere in the world.

The JRTC hosts 10 to 12 rotations each year, training light and heavy infantry brigades from around the country. These rotations, lasting approximately two weeks, focus on providing every soldier—from infantry and combat support to paratroopers, Special Forces and Rangers—the strategy, technology and support to ensure success both on today's battlefields and those of the future.

More information about the Joint Readiness Training Center can be found at www.jrtc-polk.army.mil. For information about careers in the U.S. Army, visit www.GoArmy.com.