

# "FORGING DREAMS INTO REALITY"

## MY EXPERIENCE IN OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY :

JAI HIND,

I, Sgt M S CHANDRIKA of 1 KAR ARTY BTY, NCC, MYSORE, from Karnataka and Goa Directorate, is going to take you through my memorable journey and astonishing experience in OTA, i.e., "Officer Training Academy, Chennai".

To begin with let me give you a glimpse of OTA and its history.

Firstly OTA - Chennai, Tamilnadu was established in the year 1963. It was established to train the officers with high excellence and diligence and was initially called as "Officers Training School".

Earlier only gentlemen cadets were the part of this academy but as the trend changed, it opened its gate for women cadets as well. Overcoming all the barriers in this patriarchal society now both gentlemen and women cadets are trained together under the integrated course for technical, non-technical and other entries.

Coming back to my journey, the OTA ARMY ATT Camp was not an easy bite. As the motto of OTA itself says, "SERVE WITH HONOR", it is a dream of defense aspirants to get trained in this academy and especially for women cadets as they don't have an opportunity at IMA, Dehradun.

Being a NCC cadet, it was a great opportunity for me to be a part of this wonderful training program. But the way to OTA as not as simple as any other camps. The cadets from length and breadth of our Nation were selected for this camp with the vacancy of one hundred cadets (100). Almost thousands of cadets were supposed to go through different selection processes physically, mentally, and also theoretical tests and interviews at various levels. And today I stand proud in front for getting selected for this prestigious camp and witnessing it along with other cadets from various directorates of India.

I remember entering the academy with my eyes filled of hopes, my mind

filled with confidence and my soul urging to fulfill my dreams. The moment I saw the main gate of OTA it was really a breathtaking moment and eyes were filled with tiny pearls at corner. With that great level of satisfaction, I said to myself, 'Yes, I finally made it', and it was an epic and unforgettable day of my life.

**"An Army is Team; it lives, eats, sleeps and fights as a Team. This individuality stuff is a bunch of bullshit".** This quote motivated and taught us the values of team work and as well as team spirit. We had activities as per the schedule of the academy. It was almost relatable to the schedule of those cadets who were getting trained there but not as tight and tough as theirs. We had PT and Drill sessions, the special lecturing programs on various topics and inspiring stories of 'History of Indian Armed Forces', the major wars like Indo-Pak wars 1948, 65, 71 and the Kargil war - 1991. We also had classes on Leadership and its Traits, Officer like Qualities and lecturette on SSB and its selection procedures. This literally made us feel that **"we have started our journey to be an Officer"**.

Amidst of weather conditions, we never let ourselves down and kept our morale high, actively participated in the course of 'Obstacle and Weapon training' which gave us a glimpse of the tough way to join Defence. People think that the training at OTA is a bit easier, as women cadets are also a part of it. Well, that's not the case at all, not as much as IMA but surely nevertheless much behind too.

Our visit to museum, Weapon and Equipment Display Area, Gaur Indoor Training Complex, Model room, CBRN and IED room gave us a vast knowledge on how the technically our Indian Armed Forces work. The 'Parameshwaran drill square', named after Maj. Ramswamy Parameshwaran, the early morning drill chilled and the energetic commands of the instructors are still buzzing over my ears. We were taken to "BALWAN BAFFLE RANGE" for firing. It was ultimately great to experience the exercises carried out at the time of firing and also to learn about the weapon handling and modern equipments used in our armed forces.

**" THE LIGHT AND SOUND SHOW "** was held, where many Ex - Service Mens and Womens with their families were gathered. And yes it was

the **"THE WHITE HOUSE TALKS"**, which narrated the prestigious history of OTA.

Sunday is a holiday as usual. We were scheduled with an outing for Marina Beach and a fort Museum. We also visited the Gurudwara, which is just outside the OTA. This was both fun and spiritual respectively. Every cadet's dream at OTA is to have fine dine at 'The Yodha Cadet Mess'. We were truly lucky to visit and have an essence of it. Our evening sessions were scheduled with sports and games in 'Acharya Training Academy'. We were provided bicycles to move around. We also got a chance to visit the women cadets accommodation i.e., **'Capt. Lakshmi block'** and their gymnasium area. Nearby, we visited a 'P - Hill', which means Punishment hills for the cadets and its also called the 'Treasure Hill', since it has a Bird - View Point of entire OTA campus. Later we got into 'Swimming Training Area' and 'Horse - Riding Training Area'. We interacted with the officers incharge of these areas, interacted and learnt various aspects of it.

The memories and friendship we made is really unforgettable. Quotes written over the walls of academy kept us motivated and made us believe that **"We're Omnipotent"**. The officers and the cadets over there kept us inspiring and built a great level of confidence through a spark in their behavior and humbleness in their words as well as actions. They made us know about the social etiquities and moral values. And yes, Its the **'Cradle of Leadership'**.

A journey has to end one or the other day as its starts. Finally our last day had a closing address and photo session in Chanakya Hall. We also had a tea party with the officers and it was great interacting with them. And the other best part of the camp was FOOD - healthy and delicious. Ten days of training and long lasting memories, all of us had to depart, back to our respective places.

To sum up, I'm really honoured and glad to be a part of the camp .I'm proud to be a NCC cadet, aspiring to join the same OTA and be an officer soon. All these training, fun and memories , and good buddies enhanced the essence and values to my life. Nevertheless, **"OTA is not just a camp, but a lifestyle."**

REGARDS,

- Sgt M S CHANDRIKA