After completing more than 26 years of active duty, Lt. Col. Jonathan B. Nepute, professor of military science of the Army ROTC program at Cal State Fullerton, will be retiring in June, and a retirement ceremony will be held for Nepute May 11.

Nepute has spent a total of seven years in the ROTC field. He first started teaching at Texas Christian University for three years. He then went on to teach at CSUF for four years.

“I think it’s time. I’ve been doing this for a long time. I’ve been doing this for over 30 years with my time in ROTC as a cadet and school and everything,” said Nepute. “I’m ready to move on.”

Nepute said he’s had an enjoyable journey so far and his career has been filled with memorable experiences.

“I just love being around young people. I love seeing them grow, mature, get a sense of direction and move on with their lives,” Nepute said.

The most gratifying reward in working with students for him is being able to see where his students are now.

“Tracking people afterwards to see how they’re doing in life. I still get a lot of students from Texas Christian University, even 10 years later, that I’m still in touch with or they still call me and ask me for personal or professional advice,” Nepute said.

Besides his teaching experience, Nepute has been able to travel around the world and work in various types of environments.

Nepute has been stationed in the Republic of South Korea, which is where he met his wife. He was also assigned to Detroit, Fort Hood, Texas and San Francisco.

Nepute also served five years at the Pentagon and was deployed to Iraq. He spent a year there and worked for the Ministry of Defense.

Despite his successful career that has taken him to places around the world, it is his contact with students that he will miss the most.

“It’s the daily student contact with the students and the faculty,” Nepute said. “I like being in a learning environment and I think I will miss that, and that’s why I’ll probably stay with that afterwards.

Joe Lopez, 22, a fourth-year military science student, said Nepute bonded with the students on more of a personal level.
“He’s more like a mentor than a teacher,” said Lopez. “I feel like a mentor gets more on a personal level than a teacher does, (and) that’s definitely what he did. He uses his life experiences to teach us what to do and what not to do and to avoid some of the mistakes he has made or mistakes he’s seen other people make.”

Along with a more personal level of interaction, Lopez said Nepute also kept his students in check by making sure they met all the necessary standards.

“He’s definitely a hard worker and he definitely kept us to standard and above standard,” Lopez said.

Anthony R. Coates, master sergeant and senior military instructor, said Nepute leads by example.

“We do ruck marches throughout the year; he makes it a point to go out and walk with the cadets. I mean, (after) 26 years of service, you’re not necessarily a spring chicken anymore and we’re dealing with cadets that are at the prime of their physical fitness,” said Coates.

“Whether it is a field training exercise or a ruck march that we do for a part of our physical training program, he makes it a point to be at every single one,” he said.

Coates said Nepute makes it a point to endure the same hardships that the cadets go through.

The one thing that Nepute has stressed to his students is integrity and being value-based.

“I’ve always tried to live that life to make the students understand that being ethical goes a long way in our society,” Nepute said.

Nepute’s plan for life after retirement is to remain in the teaching environment where he can continue to interact with students.

“I think afterwards I’ll probably stay in some type of teaching environment or certain kind of student environment. I’ve also looked at possibly getting into the government system. I’m not ruling anything out,” Nepute said.

In the course of his career, Nepute has made long-standing contributions and friends along the way.

“It is kind of hard to put into words what 20 years of service and sacrifice is … I would just hope that the students and the faculty … will really take the opportunity to maybe say thank you for his service,” Coates said.

Mec Valle has written 39 posts on DailyTitan.com.


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