



# THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Webcams

## THE LEARNING CONTINUES



1 - [Somera, Jedhel S SFC USARMY TRADOC (USA)] Presentation: DL B112 Followership and Servant Leadership Fundamentals Student §... □



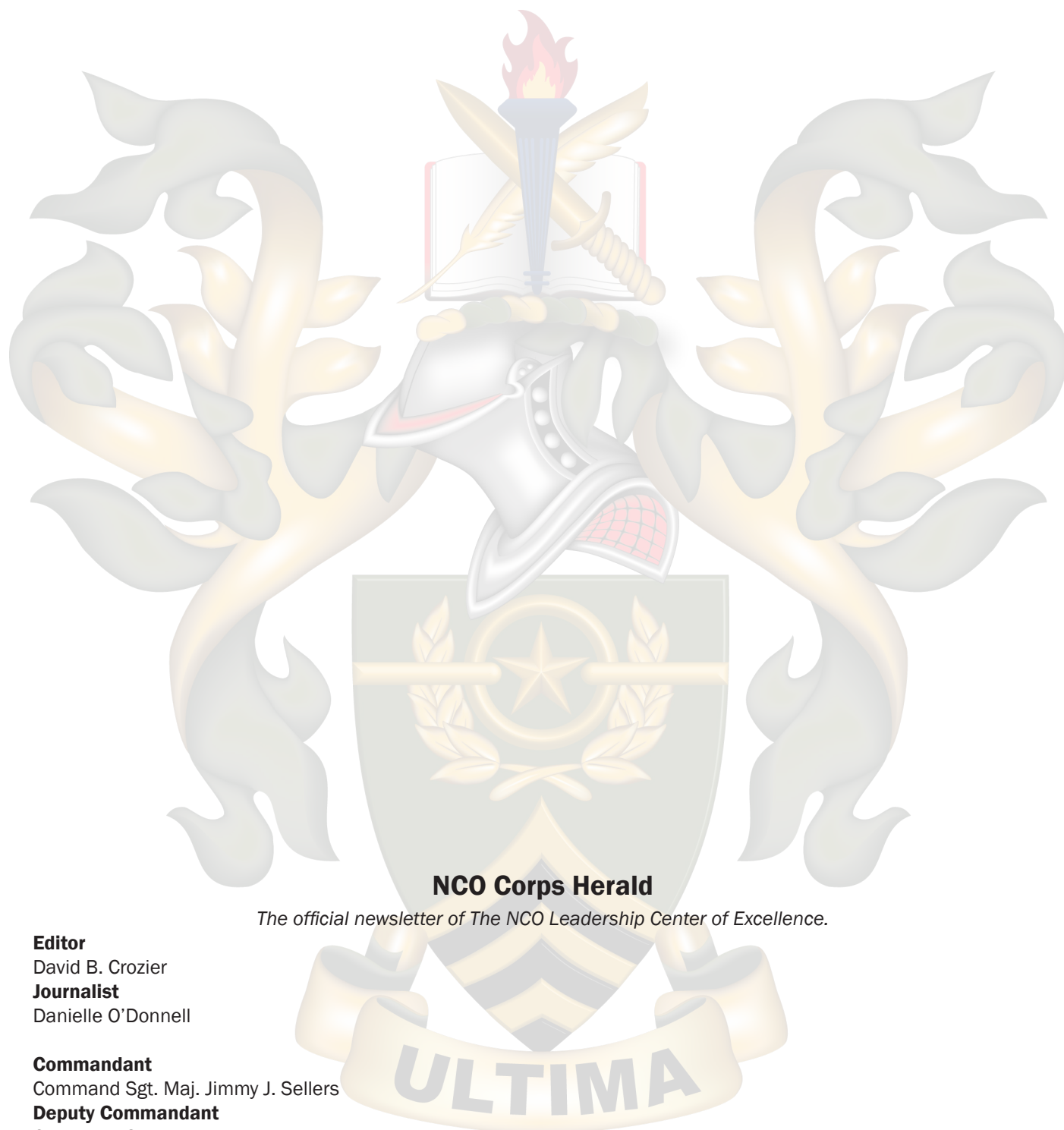
**Curriculum Developers adapt NCOPDS  
to overcome COVID-19 restrictions**



## NCO CORPS HERALD



MAY 2020



## **NCO Corps Herald**

*The official newsletter of The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence.*

### **Editor**

David B. Crozier

### **Journalist**

Danielle O'Donnell

### **Commandant**

Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers

### **Deputy Commandant**

Command Sgt. Maj. David J. Lee Jr.

### **Chief of Staff**

Mr. Jesse W. McKinney

Send Correspondence to:

*NCO Leadership Center of Excellence*

11291 SGT E Churchill St., Fort Bliss Texas, 79918-8002

PH: (915) 744-8009

DSN: 621-8009

Front Cover: Snapshot an e-BLC Class at the 101st NCOA.



# THE NCO LEADERSHIP CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

*“LEADERS BUILD LETHALITY, WE DEVELOP LEADERS”*

“TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION  
THAT DEVELOPS ENLISTED LEADERS INTO HOLISTICALLY  
FIT, DISCIPLINED, WELL-EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS CAPABLE  
OF MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF LARGE-SCALE COMBAT  
OPERATIONS IN A MULTI-DOMAIN ENVIRONMENT.”







*Photo by David Crozier, Command Communications*



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# A NOTE FROM THE COMMANDANT

Greetings from the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence! I believe everyone can agree, these are particularly challenging times what with the COVID-19 pandemic happening across the world and our great nation. Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Michael A. Grinston, recently said, “Leadership is mission essential, period. Even if you are not physically going to work every day, your leadership matters in the U.S. Army.”

As I always tell the team, we have to be immediately responsive to the point of need. With that, we used our leadership teams to ensure that our Soldiers did not miss a beat when it came to NCO Professional Development. As soon as the orders came down from headquarters to implement social distancing and telework activities, we immediately went into action to modify our instruction in the Sergeants Major Academy, Master Leader Course and the Basic Leader Course. While the Curriculum Development, and Sergeants Major Academy teams, revamped the method of instruction to a blended environment, our Policy and Governance team led the way to rescheduling students into the distributed learning courses. At the same time, our NCO Professional Development Team worked with all the commandants at the various NCO Academies to ensure they were ready to educate our Soldiers using the new method of instruction.

As far as the Army was concerned, there has been little impact on the courses we are responsible for due to COVID-19; thanks to the team at the NCOLCoE. They made it happen and they did all of this while not being physically present at work. I cannot say enough about the team; they are simply the best. Kudos also to all of the NCO Academy commandants and their teams for making it happen where the rubber meets the road.



**Command Sgt. Maj.  
Jimmy J. Sellers**







I'm very proud of the fact that our students and cadre in the Sergeants Major Academy also understand that, as evidenced in the article by Danielle O'Donnell, "NCOLCoE class 70 students - learners, leaders, mentors." These outstanding Soldiers continue to mentor and lend support to the "Littles" in the Boys and Girls Club of El Paso despite the pandemic. That is what it is all about, adapt, overcome, continue the mission!

There was one casualty in all of this, which was the Battle Staff NCO Course. But it is not a bad thing. We are in the

process of revamping and validating the course to make it more relevant for today's Army. The new course challenges the learner to plan missions, execute the duties, and fulfill the responsibilities of a Staff NCO working in a battalion or higher. In addition, we included lessons on land, ammunition, training and schools management. Each class also completes a Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR) at the end of the course. We are excited to get this course to full operational capability by June 2020.

As my time in this remarkable organization comes to a close, I want to take a moment to tell everyone thanks for what you do, and for all the support provided throughout the past 36 months. It's been an honor and absolute pleasure being able to make substantial contributions to the NCO Corps. The entire experience has been extremely rewarding and humbling to say the very least. During my tenure we've started and completed many amazing initiatives. Too many to list them all individually, but the one I'm most proud of is the accreditation of the Sergeants Major Academy. The accreditation was the tip of the iceberg which led to many other things, most notable was the award of over 369 Bachelor Degrees in Leadership and Workforce Development. Being recognized by the Higher Learning Commission as an accredited institution under the Command and Staff General College means a lot for the NCO Corp and enabled us to redesign our education system and literally transform it into a professional development system that remains the envy of many other armies. As a NCO, you should be very proud of our professional development system and seek to learn more about how it makes each NCO more prepared to train, lead and develop Soldiers to face the challenges of in ever increasingly complex world.

Ultima Strong!

*Jimmy J. Seller*



**Picture perfect!**



Photo taken from 101st NCOA Facebook page March 17.  
March is national women's history month — These BLC  
students continue to make strides in their roles as warfighters  
of our great Army.



# E=EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

By Danielle O'Donnell,  
NCOLCoE Public Affairs

This article is brought to the NCO Corps by the letter “e.”

Due to the current precautions in place for the COVID-19 pandemic, the Basic Leader Course, the Master Leader Course, and the Sergeants Major Academy moved to distributed learning platforms.

Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Sellers, commandant, NCO Leadership Center of Excellence, explains the importance of delivering professional military education through distributed learning platforms.

“We refined methods to ensure we continue to develop and deliver world-class professional military education to the enlisted force,” he said, adding while the effects on each installation and location will vary, the NCOLCoE continues to focus on a healthy, ready, and lethal combat force.

“It is imperative that we maintain a safe and healthy environment to train and educate NCOs and Soldiers to the standards codified in our course management plans,” Sellers said adding the Army is a learning institution which remains in a constant state of improvement.

“As our NCOA Commandants and their teams experience challenges associated with delivering the first online BLC, we will codify their lessons learned and share them throughout the entire enterprise,” he said.

Reducing the risk of unnecessary COVID-19 exposure, the e-BLC consists of a combination of limited face-to-face training, and online training via Blackboard.mil, William Ogletree, director of Curriculum Development Directorate, said.

“NCOAs will facilitate the blended learning environment by reducing the number of Soldiers per classroom down from 16 to 8 Soldiers,” Ogletree said. “Soldiers are able to spread out, exaggerating the social distancing requirements. This also makes up for the lost time in the classrooms.”

This method of training and lessons, he said, will be advanced and reinforced online via blackboard once the class is over for the day, he said. The other e-BLC option is full online.

“NCOA Commandants are fully prepared to facilitate BLC completely online based on Senior Mis-



*Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jedhel Somera*

Sgt. 1st class Jerry Dickerson, a facilitator assigned to the 101st NCO Academy, at Fort Campbell, KY, uses the defense collaboration services (DCS) website to meet with other facilitators in preparation of the daily face to face time between the facilitators and BLC students. This tool provides consistent engagement, interaction and discussion to meet all learning outcomes for the students, without sacrificing the integrity of the course assigned to the academy.

sion Commander and CSM Guidance,” Ogletree said. “Think of this option as a traditional online college course.”

The upcoming BLC Class 6-20 will go as scheduled, and no student will be cancelled out in ATRRS and will utilize the blackboard.mil website. The MLC students transitioning from resident to the distributed learning platform will first encounter a dis-enrolled from the Resident course and re-enrollment into the MLC DL course.

“At this time, no actions need to be taken by the sergeants first class scheduled, or planning, to attend MLC,” Ogletree said. “The quota source managers and the registrar at the NCOLCoE are processing the transfer enrollments from resident to non-resident.”

NCO Academies will cease delivery of Master Leader Course-Resident conducted from Apr 1 through June 18.

Ogletree confirmed, “the cancelled MLC-R courses entered into the Army Training Requirements and Resources System are coded as ‘Non-conduct’ utilizing reason code 6 [COVID-19].”

Once the cancellations are complete, the re-enrollment occurs by their Army components.

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*“By effectively protecting the force, protecting our families and protecting the mission we will be highly successful in the battle against COVID 19 and be able to resume resident PME once it’s deemed safe to do so.”*

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**Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy J. Sellers**  
**Commandant, NCOLCoE**

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“The active duty Soldiers are enrolled through the Human Resources Command, while the Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers receive re-enrollment through their quota managers,” Ogletree said.

Sgt. Maj. Jamie Halchishick, director of the Sergeants Major Academy, said, on March 23, the Sergeants Major Course implemented the virtual classroom using Blackboard.com to enable faculty to hold class in a collaborative online environment.

“We will continue in this modality as long as required, based on the current operational environment,” he said.

“The NCOLCoE is adapting to the ever-changing situation on Fort Bliss and in the El Paso community related to COVID-19 restrictions and health updates,” Sellers said. “Class 70 is conducting DL for the immediate future.”

This effort includes the ability to use Blackboard.com to host collaborative classroom sessions and provide synchronous learning environments.

The NCOLCoE created measures to mitigate the risk of exposure by utilizing DL platforms, Sellers exclaimed.

“In keeping with the messages from our Army’s senior leaders it’s imperative that we adhere to the safety guidance disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control”, Sellers said. “By effectively protecting the force, protecting our families and protecting the mission we will be highly successful in the battle against COVID 19 and be able to resume resident PME once it’s deemed safe to do so.”

Sellers added, “In the end, I think we are going to see marked improvements as a result of the current operating environment. The lessons learned will enable us to develop more ways to increase training capacity and opportunities for our Soldiers and NCOs to attend professional military education courses.”

For more information on the courses provided by the NCOLCoE visit <https://www.ncoworldwide.army.mil/>



# NCOLCoE CREATES FIT, DISCIPLINED SENIOR ENLISTED LEADERS



*By Danielle O'Donnell, NCOLCoE Public Affairs*

A Sergeants Major Course Class 70 Student performs the hand release pushup during a diagnostic Army Combat Fitness Test conducted in early January, 2020.

**By Danielle O'Donnell**  
**NCOLCoE Public Affairs**

A part of the mission of the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence is to provide the force with holistically fit, disciplined, and well-educated senior enlisted leaders. Within the institution, two NCOs epitomize this, Sgt. Maj. Billy Atkinson, a student with the Sergeants Major Academy Fellowship Program, and Master Sgt. David Zeek, a Sergeants Major Course Class 70 student.

Atkinson won the El Paso Marathon, held in February, with a run time of 3:01:51. While Zeek is the first senior enlisted leader at the NCOLCoE to achieve an Army Combat Fitness Test score of over 590. Both Soldiers said they created small goals to attain these achievements, and continue to do so today.

Zeek establishes several goals each day and it all starts with getting out of bed early.

"Fundamentally, if a person completes several tasks early in the morning, whether physical or mental, your productivity level throughout the day will be higher," he said.

Atkinson, who won the third marathon he participated in, created short-term goals to break the three-hour mark.

"I specifically trained and set my pace for this time," he said. "I was on target to achieve my goal [during the race]. but slowed down the last three miles even more. It was a difficult race, and even though I did not achieve my goal this year, I am still proud of my time."

Atkinson may not have wholly reached his goal, but he attained a new title as the winner of the El Paso 2020 Marathon and is preparing for the 2021 race next year.

"I have already registered, and my goal for that race is not only to break the 3-hour mark but improve my time to 2 hours and 45 minutes," he said.

Though their processes are different, each have one sizeable trait in common – discipline.

Zeek, who served the last 10 years in the 75th Ranger Regiment, trains cardio in the morning, runs 3 to 5 miles per day, and lift weights, or conducts bodyweight exercises, in the evening relating to the ACFT events.

"I would not say I prepared for the ACFT. Rather, I built a mindset and a discipline over the years that helped me achieve, and overcome, physical obstacles," he said.

Atkinson, who started running for sport over five years ago, considers his experience life changing.

"My first marathon was the El Paso 2019 Marathon where I placed 15th and finished with a time of 3:34:40," he said. "My second was the 2019 Bataan Death March."

Atkinson added, "(it takes) commitment, dedication, and the desire to excel. By never giving up, goals are achieved, and obstacles overcome."

Despite the COVID-19 environment, they both continue to train.

"The quarantine has not changed my training," Atkinson said. "I still run early in the mornings [six days a week], and conduct my strength and flexibility training here in my home gym."

Zeek adds, "You do not need a gym membership to run, do push-ups, sit-ups, and throw on a ruck to go for a long walk. During this unprecedented time, eating well-balanced meals will make you feel good, will help prevent sickness, and will enable performance, whether in a physical or mental form."

Being holistically fit and disciplined is only a part of the NCOLCoE mission. They must also be well-educated professionals capable of meeting challenges.

"Continue to train smart, and never give up on your goals and desires," Atkinson said.

"Being disciplined is a part of wearing stripes," Zeeks explains. "If senior leaders start to relax, then the force will start to relax, and then our national security is at risk."

Zeek added, failure to achieve your fitness goals is part of the learning process.

"Of course, failure will happen," Zeek said. "Learning from failure will produce a more agile, lethal, and resilient force, which is what we need to suppress our enemies in future wars."

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence is the premier institution driving innovative development for enlisted leaders, constantly focused on readiness.

For more information on the NCOLCoE visit <https://www.ncolcoe.army.mil/>



*By David Crozier*

During the quarterly distinguished service and recognition ceremony at the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence Master Sgt. David Zeek (left) is presented a coin by Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Sellers (right) for receiving the highest Army Combat Fitness Test score at the NCOLCoE to date, March 6.



# NCOLCoE CLASS 70 STUDENTS - LEARNERS, LEADERS, MENTORS



*By Danielle O'Donnell*

Master Sgt. Harrison Helms a student with the Sergeants Major Academy Class 70 and a Big Brother Big Sister mentor stands with his mentee Cole at the Globo Rojo Auto Club Museum in El Paso, February 23.

**By Danielle O'Donnell**  
**NCOLCoE Public Affairs**

Five students from the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence and Sergeants Major Academy “Lead the Change” by volunteering with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso.

Artez Lamar, an instructor for the Sergeants Major Course, organized the opportunity for the Class 70 students to volunteer by having the BBBS program provide a 15-minute informational brief for his class at the beginning of each semester.

“As an Instructor at the Academy, the goal is to provide the military and civilian communities with enlisted leaders of character and competence,” he said. “Children are our future and for this reason, I asked the students of Class 70 to extend the influence of our Academy into the El Paso community.”

Lamar, an active volunteer with the BBBS program, started when he was a student at the SMC.

“It’s been almost 20 years since I volunteered with the program,” Lamar said. “Though I was first introduced to the Big Brothers Big Sisters program as a child, and then again as a student of Class 51.”

“When I was a little boy my mentor’s name was Mr. Nathaniel Williams,” Lamar said. “He helped me when I needed it most and told me, ‘All I needed to do to be successful was to help other people every day,’ (HOPE).”

Through his volunteer efforts, Lamar found a way to give back to the community that gave to him.

“Over the years this translated to me helping my Soldiers, students, and the communities I became



*By Danielle O'Donnell*

Master Sgt. Stormy Graham Jr. a student with the Sergeants Major Academy Class 70 and a Big Brother Big Sister mentor experiences the Fred Loya light show in El Paso with his Little, Jo'elle, December 2019.

a part of," he said. "The students of Class 70 rose to the occasion with five becoming mentors, 'Bigs', for children, 'Littles', in the El Paso Big Brother Big Sister Program," he said. "Their willingness to serve in this way helps their Littles meet the challenges they face in this complex world."

Master Sgt. Harrison Helms, a geographic bachelor, explains his experience as an SMC Big, matched to a Little named Cole.

"My interactions with Cole helped me to have a better understanding of his age group, which is the same as my children. Since Cole and I have been matched, we have tried to do something every weekend together," Helms said. "We have gone bowling, visited a museum, and we escaped from a Red Door escape room down at the Fountains."

Outings with the Littles builds trust, develops bonds and promotes growth, Helms said.

"Cole and I have had a few outings helping us to form the bond that will enable Cole to trust that I will be available when he needs to talk to someone and does not want the parental judgment," he said. "The intention for each new activity we engage in is to provide Cole another method of learning and growing as he transitions through adolescence."

Though BBBS is a program to benefit the children, it also creates opportunities of growth for the Bigs.

"Another aspect is my growth in these activities," Helms said. "With all of the studying, I spend a lot of time closed up in a room by myself, isolated from the world. By participating in the BBBS program, I am able to break free of my routine and experience activities I otherwise would forego."

Even through the current times of social distancing Helms continues many forms of contact with Cole.

"I have been talking to my little through an online gaming chat program that has text, picture, and voice capabilities," Helms said. "In addition to our regular chats I run a 'Dungeons and Dragons' game for my kids who are still in Florida."



Helms and the rest of the SMC Bigs provide a few hours every month to give back to the community by interacting with their Littles. Enrollment into the program is always open.

"It is a great honor to be a positive addition to a young kid's life," Stormy Graham Jr. an SMC Big exclaims. "I am having the time of my life being able to take part in the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program and I recommend more people participate. We can change the world."

Rebecca Romero, Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso development director, explains new Bigs and Littles are always welcomed, especially during a pandemic.

"As we all adjust to our temporary new normal it's important to remember that many El Paso families are no stranger to hard times even outside this COVID-19 crisis time," she said. "Those are the families Big Brothers Big Sisters continues to serve while the world is on hold."

Romero said BBBS practices social distancing and leveraging digital platforms for Bigs and Littles to get enrolled and matched.

"The agency has adapted to make mentoring possible from the online enrollment, to the virtual mentor/mentee hangouts," she said. "While Bigs and Littles can't see each other in person for the time being, there are still plenty of ways to connect, from calls and texts, to social media and online gaming."

Romero added, "Of course, real world experiences will be back on the menu as soon as the world goes back to normal, but in the meantime, our Littles need the support now more than ever."

BBBS also provides a little extra support to military families through Operation Bigs.

"The agency has funding specifically to serve military youth," she said. "The one-to-one mentoring with a screened, trained, and caring adult mentor does wonders for a child's self-confidence and ability to avoid risky behaviours; not to mention expose them to amazing new experiences."

The Big Brothers Big Sisters mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

For more information on enrolling to be Big or Little visit <http://www.bbbsep.org/military/>

# Congratulations Class 70-006

**SLDC Class 70-006 graduated on March 4. This was the last class to graduate before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. For spouses who cannot attend the course in person, the SLDC has a new handbook filled with great reasources and information at <https://www.ncoworldwide.army.mil/Academics/Spouse-Leadership-Development-Course/>**





# SLDC HANDBOOK RELEASED

By Danielle O'Donnell  
NCOLCoE Public Affairs

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence and the Sergeants Major Academy has created a new way for senior spouses to receive resources through the Spouse Leadership Development Course. On April 14, the NCOLCoE released a Spouse Leadership Development Course Handbook.

"This book is designed for senior spouses who cannot attend the resident SLDC," Michelle Mebane, the SLDC director, said. "It does not replace the resident Spouse Leadership Development Course at Fort Bliss, Texas," she said.

Mebane also added that spouses would not receive a certificate of completion for reading the handbook. The book, she said, is for information purposes only. Senior spouses using the handbook are encouraged to check what programs are provided at their installations since the handbook only covers programs and services on Fort Bliss.

"In addition to just providing information on community organizations, the handbook ensures spouses continue to have access to important information. Information that assists them with the security of their finances, social media, and operational security," Darren LaVersa, the instructional design specialist who developed the SLDC Handbook, said.

Not to be considered as a go-to guide or quick reference, the 76 pages of engaging graphics immerse the user into the content, LaVersa said.

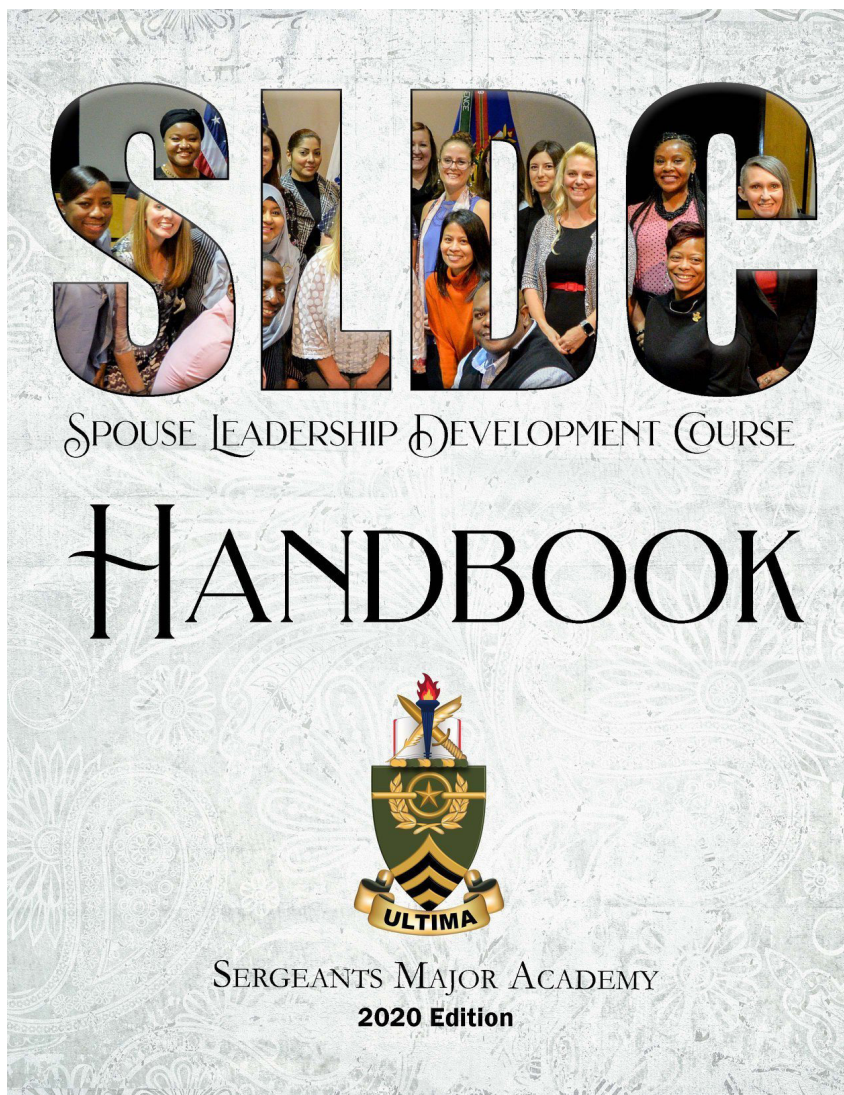
"I was looking to develop a tool that allowed the user to feel as if they were taking a mini-course on the subject," he said. "My idea was to create a single-source document that had both the breadth and depth needed to assist anyone who had access to the document. (A book) that is also centered on any Army spouse, and the Solider and Family Readiness Group."

The handbook is broken down into nine categories, instead of indexes, for the user to know where to find information, LaVersa explained.

"I used broader concepts and ideas to engage the user in a personal way," he said. "Where possible, I created places for the user to reflect on the material and see how, and where, they could apply this to their life in their way."

The handbook gives the user the ability to receive a clear understanding of the programs and services available.

"Each user will develop a baseline of information on what services and programs each community part-





ner provides and trust me; there are a lot of them,” he said. “This handbook is a guide to assist, and inform, people of services available, but the true experts are at the Army Community Service, Army Emergency Relief, the American Red Cross, and the Public Affairs Office, to name a few.”

LaVersa describes the differences between the resident SLDC and the SLDC Handbook.

“During the resident SLDC, the students have many guest speakers that comprise most of the course,” LaVersa said, adding the guest speakers are experts in their functional areas from across the installation and provide valuable information during their block of instruction.

The resident Spouse Leadership Development Course is a 40-hour course delivered over eight days to senior enlisted spouses in the rank of Master Sergeant and above. This course also includes sister service equivalents and spouses of the International Military Students attending the Sergeants Major Course.

“It was essential for me that the handbook provided the same level of detail and expertise as the classroom presenter so the user (can) have the information he or she requires to guide their decisions and potentially add value to their spouse’s organization or themselves,” he said.

The handbook not only provides valuable information and resources; it also provides spouses with a holistic understanding of their role as senior mentors.

“The handbook provides insight into many areas that could assist in spousal employment, cyber security, and even understanding the Army, not just as an organization, but as a network and a larger family,” LaVersa said.

LaVersa commends the leadership of the NCOLCoE for finding a way to bridge the divide senior spouses were feeling with the inability to attend the resident SLDC course.

“I contribute any success of this handbook going forward to the leadership at NCOLCoE because without their foresight to fill informational gaps that exist with our military spouses, this handbook would not have been created,” he said.

For more information on the SLDC Handbook, or the resident SLDC, visit <https://www.ncoworldwide.army.mil/Academics/Spouse-Leadership-Development-Course/>



**THE NCO LEADERSHIP  
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

**U.S. Army Sergeants  
Major Academy  
Spouse Leadership  
Development Course**

***“Resource, Not Rescue”***

U.S. ARMY

THE ARMY UNIVERSITY



# NCOs - THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



*Photo by Danielle O'Donnell*

A student of Sergeants Major Course Class 70 provides a brief to fellow students during a Department of Professional Studies staff ride to Columbus, New Mexico, Nov. 20, 2019. The staff ride allows the students to walk the terrain of Pancho Villa's March 1916 raid on the small town while reviewing some of the lessons learned from the event.

**By Danielle O'Donnell**  
**NCOLCoE Public Affairs**

As the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence and the U.S. Army deal with times of uncertainty, the NCO Corps continues to remain steadfast. Built from the experience, and lessons learned, from NCO professionals across history to create the NCO professional of today is the backbone of the Army.

The NCOLCoE believes the knowledge garnered from NCO history is vital to the Corps and created an NCO History website through the Office of the Historian to capture it. The website, <https://www.ncoworld-wide.army.mil/NCO-Corps-History/>, was created to receive written, or recorded, contributions from all service members, past and present, to tell their NCO story, Dr. Everett Dague, Command Historian, NCOLCoE, said.

"History is dynamic, whether we believe it or not," he said. "History is the study of the past, but it is also the backbone of all academic and intellectual activities. History is ultimately about who we are and what our identity is."

Dague said, the website helps create the linkage to see the NCO as a professional.

"The idea that NCOs are professionals, or that being a NCO is a profession by itself, is a comparatively new one," he said. "A professional NCO is educated to lead and to act as an asset in understanding, communicating, and executing mission objectives and the commander's intent."



*Photo by Danielle O'Donnell*

Command Sgt. Maj. Benjamin Jones, U.S. Army Pacific Command, command sergeant major, speaks to the Class 70 students of the Sergeants Major Academy, Jan. 29. Jones spoke to the importance of readiness by ensuring a combat credible force and shared words of advice to the students.

“Lastly, it provides an archival record for researchers looking to develop scholarship on the NCO profession a collection of primary sources and material, which in turn supports the understanding of the NCOs identity, role, function, and profession.”

Dr. Dague said he is documenting the changes in the NCO educational system, and the evolution of the NCO Corps.

“I am currently working on a project comparing the NCO Corps of the Korean War, Vietnam, and the first Gulf War,” he said. “There are several profound differences between all three, but the major one – and the one I am most interested in looking at – is education and the concept of the NCO as a professional.”

Dague said the Gulf War NCO is the product of decades of the NCOES and rethinking what an NCO was, and what they did.

“The result,” he said, “the Gulf War NCO was much better prepared and a much stronger asset on the battlefield, which affected overall Army performance on and off the battlefield.”

The website creates a path for NCOs to know where they came from and the nature of their profession, Dague said.

“Providing professionals – any professional, NCO, officer or otherwise - with a critical, systematic, academically sound examination of their past lays the foundation for understanding who these professionals are”, he said.

The NCOLCoE presents the experiences of the past to help create holistically fit, disciplined, well-educated professionals capable of meeting the challenges of large-scale combat operations in a multi-domain environment. Dague added, “the mission of the historian in the age of the NCOLCoE is to show the NCO as less ‘Sgt. Rock’ and more Command Sgt. Major Sellers [the NCOLCoE commandant] and how they got that way.”

Soldiers who submit their experience to the website will have their entry scanned for operational security, and upon approval, posted to the site.

“One thing we do is maintain a record of what and how the information is submitted,” Dague said. “For example, we can accept videos, and it does not have to be a written submission. We also look for trends in thought and issues, which could suggest future research venues.”

Dague explains, “ideally, the contributor has a best practices story, a unique take on the NCO experience, or an account of something that prompted a better understanding of themselves as an NCO professional.”

If you have an experience you think will contribute to the identity, mission, or professional development of your peers, or if you want to give back to the NCO Corps, visit <https://www.ncoworldwide.army.mil/NCO-Corps-History/> or email [usarmy.bliss.usasma.mbx.usasma-nco-history@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.bliss.usasma.mbx.usasma-nco-history@mail.mil).

Future NCOs will learn valuable lessons obtained from experience that goes beyond the Military Occupation Specialty, through this website, Dague said adding there are three objectives for the NCO Corps History website.

“First, it provides a platform for NCOs to record their experiences, challenges, and solutions as NCOs, rather than as a member of a unit or as a MOS,” he said. “Second, it provides a place for NCOs and other Soldiers to see how the NCO Corps career path advances, which creates a better universal understanding of what the NCO profession is all about throughout the entire Army.



# BSNCOC REDESIGN, VALIDATION UNDERWAY

By Danielle O'Donnell  
NCOLCoE Public Affairs

The NCO Leadership Center of Excellence is amid redesigning and validating the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course. The course is a branch-immaterial functional course for NCOs selected for staff assignments, providing them with the tools necessary to learn specific staff duties and become familiar with the duties of other staff sections.

"The update to the course is considered to be a total redesign. Until now, Battle Staff has never been through a complete overhaul to address gaps identified by our customer," Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Sellers, commandant of the NCOLCoE, said.

The Curriculum Development Directorate team redesigned course due to input from stakeholders, such as previous course graduates and leaders, throughout the Operational Army.

"We were able to effectively redesign Battle Staff," Sellers said. "The course uniquely prepares NCOs selected to serve in a staff position to perform their duties and responsibilities while in combat or in garrison environment.

Sgt. Maj. Quentin Washington, director of the BSNCOC said, the new curriculum focuses on holistic operations across all Army activities.

"The redesigned BSNCOC introduces lessons and activities that engage learners through real-world Multi-Domain Operations, Large Scale Combat Operations, and Joint operations," he said adding the new course consists of 30 lessons within the foundations, mission command, military decision-making process, and combined arms rehearsal modules. "The course is now 22 days and 175 hours versus the 159 hours the legacy course provided."

Washington explained that students will undergo a series of vigorous lessons and learning step activities that doctrinally educate staff NCOs to conduct in-depth mission analysis on collaborative projects through each warfighting function.

"These projects challenge the learner to plan missions, execute the duties, and fulfill the responsibilities of a Staff NCO working in a battalion or higher," Washington said.

The redesigned course is collaborative and engages the learners in real-world staff activities and is now an adult learner-centric educational product, Master Sgt. Paul Caswell, course manager explained.



Staff Sgt. David Clifton provides his classmates from the BSNCOC 10-20 with a briefing of movement and maneuver elements. Students of the course graduated March 21.







# READINESS: Do Your “MATH”



*(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lynnwood Thomas taken Oct. 19, 2019)*

U.S. Army Spc. Daniel Strickland, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter mechanic with Task Force Aviation, removes a UH-60 Black Hawk engine during a phase maintenance inspection at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Oct. 19, 2019.

**By Sgt. Maj. Sean M. Horval**  
**Sergeants Major Academy**

Since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, the United States Army has served in a wide range of missions placing significant demands on Soldiers and leaders. These demanding military environments require reviewing measures in place to assure Soldiers and leaders have the skills and attributes needed to meet the U. S. Army’s top priority: Readiness (McCarthy, 2019).

To achieve Readiness, leaders must first be able to define what Readiness means. Organizational leadership needs to articulate exactly what the unit is required to focus on in order to be combat ready. If they fail to do so, small unit leaders will attempt to define readiness on their own, which could create an ambiguous and confusing environment. This article offers a way to define Readiness using the four Readiness domains shared amongst all military forces: Maintenance, Administrative, Tactical, and Hardware (MATH). If units do their “MATH,” they will be combat ready for the future fight.

## **Maintenance Domain**

The dictionary defines maintenance as “the process of maintaining or preserving someone or something, or the state of being maintained” (Maintenance, n.d). Therefore, it is practical to view the Maintenance readiness domain as one that requires maintenance of self, family, and equipment.

## **Self**

Leaders must prepare Soldiers for the physical challenges of fulfilling the mission (Department of the

Army, 2019c). Therefore, physical readiness training plans need to be rigorous and incorporate appropriate skill level tasks to maximize efficiency and combat readiness. Furthermore, the hardships of everyday life in the military can be mentally exhausting; hence, leaders must emphasize Soldier recovery programs to sustain mission focus and effectiveness (Department of the Army, 2016). With the help of behavioral health experts, and an environment that fosters emotionally intelligent leadership (Horval, 2020), units will be able to minimize combat and operational stress and maximize the return of Soldiers who may be temporarily medically impaired with diagnosed stress-related or behavioral disorders. Additionally, both Soldiers and leaders should work toward becoming more self-aware and self-regulated.

Self-awareness is a candid understanding of one's needs, principles, thought patterns, goals, motivations, emotional reactions, ambitions, strengths, and limitations, and how these issues affect other people. This consciousness takes an extended period to develop, requires commitment, and is accompanied by feedback from others (Department of the Army, 2019a). Once developed and regularly practiced, self-awareness allows people to manage their conduct, enhance interactions and relationships, and intensify or gain a desired effect (Issah, 2018). Self-regulation follows self-awareness, and through one's thoughts, feelings, and actions, emotions can be regulated, creating a positive environment (Department of the Army, 2019a).

## Family

One of the most critical needs of a Soldier is family time. However, sometimes this is not an option due to deployments or training cycles. When family issues such as financial trouble or marital disputes arise, they can affect Readiness and create problems at the unit or organizational level. Educating Soldiers and spouses on available resources, like financial planning through Financial Readiness Programs, can provide the skills needed to cope with stressful life events (Department of the Army, 2020). Additionally, investing in building an active family readiness group (FRG) can help build organizational family cohesion, manage family-related stress, and serve as a communication link between deployed Soldiers and their family (Department of the Army, 2016).



*(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Ramelb taken Nov. 17, 2019)*  
U.S. Army Soldiers with the 224th Sustainment Brigade and family members are served a meal during the unit's fall festival at American Legion Hall 496 in Lakewood, Calif., Nov. 17, 2019.

## Equipment

Commanders are ultimately responsible for ensuring both individual and organizational equipment are properly maintained; however, noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are the primary stewards of achieving maintenance standards. Equipment maintenance provides us the ability to shoot, move, and communicate, and is a combat multiplier central to operational success. Soldiers must be able to engage the enemy with impeccably maintained weapons. If weapons fail to shoot, our enemies will survive. Also, tactical movement is inherent to our profession. If vehicles cannot move, then warfighters cannot maneuver, reinforce, or supply. Furthermore, if communication systems are unable to communicate, leaders cannot provide accurate and timely information to units. Without critical information, it will be impossible to execute combat operations successfully. (Department of the Army, 2019d)

## Administrative Domain

Many administrative requirements are demanded of Army leaders every day. Evaluations, awards,



counselings, legal actions, medical processing, online training, and many others. These tasks must be adequately managed so they don't become distractions or negatively impact combat readiness. Leaders that effectively manage administrative systems know their people, show their higher headquarters accurate information, and foster collaboration and innovation, demonstrating the mission command philosophy.

Effective administrative management systems not only maximize training opportunities and allow freedom of maneuver for both NCOs and officers, but they also create an environment of efficiency allowing leaders to be more effectual with subordinates. For instance, leaders that complete evaluations punctually do not need to play catch up in the office, which allows them to spend more time with their troops. The same goes for award submissions and other administrative necessities. Additionally, being "green" demonstrates care for Soldiers, thus, building trust and respect, which are values that correlate with Army retention and readiness (Lopez, 2018).

## Tactical Domain

Army publication ADP 7-0: Training, asserts that tactical training must occur continuously, including while in garrison, at a training center, or in a combat environment (Department of the Army, 2019b). Both Army doctrine and decades of combat experience dictate that the tactical domain, at a minimum, must consist of five fundamental categories: shoot, move, communicate, medicate, and survive (Department of the Army, 2019d). Each fundamental area is essential and must be mastered if units and individuals are to be considered ready for combat. The tactical domain is a requisite for all Soldiers, regardless of military occupational specialty.

Every Soldier must qualify with their assigned weapon systems. However, combat arms units broaden the shoot category by mastering both direct and indirect fire weapon systems, basic and advanced marksmanship, long-range precision fires, call for fire, close air support and close combat attack training, and maneuver live-fire exercises.

Additionally, every Soldier must move, either by foot or by a land, sea, or air platform. Therefore, land navigation, licensing and certification training, driver training, motorpool operations, packing lists, pre-combat checks and inspections, and troop leading procedures all require attention. Furthermore, every Soldier must communicate, either verbally or nonverbally, through the use of digital platforms, radio systems, dialogue and interaction, or hand-and-arm signals. Organizations cannot lead, fight, develop, counsel, team-build, or fully support the priorities of their leaders without the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

Every Soldier must also be capable of performing tactical combat casualty care (TC3). They must know how to medicate themselves and others, especially if a 68W (combat medic) is not present to prevent one or more of the three leading causes of battlefield death: hemorrhage, tension pneumothorax, and airway problems (Department of the Army, 2014).

Finally, to survive austere environments and complex operations, all Soldiers must be physically fit, trained, educated, and capable of donning a protective mask in 9-seconds or less (Department of the Army, 2019d).



*(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Justin Navin taken Jan. 28, 2020)*

U.S. Army Staff Sgts. Jonathan Jones (left) and Christopher Nakatani, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conduct an inventory of Army Combat Fitness Test equipment at Fort Campbell, Ky., Jan. 28, 2020.

# Hardware Domain

Hardware is defined as “major items of equipment or their components used for a particular purpose” (Hardware, n.d). Having the major items of equipment necessary to defeat our adversaries is paramount; however, the components for each are equally important. Imagine going to the field without basic issue items or components of end items for your vehicles, weapons, and night vision devices. Similarly, a unit would find it difficult to operate a tactical operations center (TOC) without pens, markers, paper, desks, maps, and so on. Therefore, it is wise to regularly conduct preventative maintenance checks and services, manage equipment shortage lists, monitor classes of supply, and maintain platoon, company, and TOC readiness kits that are stocked with essential items (Department of the Army, 2017). Unless organizations obtain and maintain all the necessary hardware to perform mission essential tasks, Soldiers will not be able to properly train or fight.

## Conclusion

The Army Chief of Staff Gen. McConville has made it clear that winning matters. And in order to win, you have to be ready. Readiness means taking care of your people, equipment, logistics, and tactics. Achieving Readiness is not easy, so do your “MATH.”

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*(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Timothy Hamlin taken April 1, 2020)*

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jesse Remington, an infantry squad leader with Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 2d Cavalry Regiment, secures a simulated casualty as part of the testing phase for the Expert Infantryman Badge and the Expert Soldier Badge in Bemowo Piskie, Poland, April 1, 2020.



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*Note: This article originally appeared in the NCO Journal online on April 17, 2020. Sgt. Maj. Sean M. Horval is a former infantry brigade command sergeant major and is now currently serving as an instructor for the department of command leadership at the Sergeant Major Academy (SGM-A). Horval is a SGM-A class 65 graduate, and holds an Associate of Arts degree from the University of Maryland University College, Bachelor of Science degree from Excelsior College, and a Master of Education in lifelong learning and adult education from Penn State University.*

**“I truly believe we have to be experts as Soldiers, no matter what your military occupational specialty is.”**

**SGT MAJ OF THE ARMY  
MICHAEL E. GRINSTON**



# RESTRUCTURING NCO PME



*Photo by David Crozier*

A U.S. Army Soldier conducts online distance learning as part of the Distributed Leader Course IV in preparation for the Master Leader Course at Fort Bliss, Texas, July 30, 2018.

**\Sgt. Maj. Charles L. Burrow**  
**Sergeant Major Academy**

The modern noncommissioned officer (NCO) in the United States Army is better equipped, educated, and trained than ever before. The NCO professional military education (PME) system includes both resident and distance learning courses, producing well-rounded and ready leaders at all levels. This article examines streamlining the NCO Professional Development System process by aligning training and educational goals to achieve a more efficient education system.

## Current State

### BLC

The Basic Leader Course (BLC) is the foundation of the Army's institutional education system for NCOs. BLC prepares Soldiers transitioning from the junior ranks into direct-level leadership roles within their organizations ("Basic Leader Course," 2020). The BLC curriculum is four weeks in length, branch immaterial, and standardized across the Army. According to the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence (NCOLCoE), BLC "prepares corporals and specialists to execute the duties of a team leader" (NCO Leadership Center of



Excellence [NCOLCoE], n.d.a., para. 1). In addition to BLC, the Army maintains five other levels of PME, all preceded by a distance learning requirement designed to prepare NCOs for the associated resident course.

## ALC

After BLC is the Advanced Leader Course (ALC), which develops junior leaders' direct-level leadership skills within their career management field (CMF). ALC focuses on leadership and technical skills so NCOs will effectively lead squad and platoon-sized units ("Advanced leader course," 2018, para. 1). This course is CMF-specific and as such, the proponent centers of excellence develop the program of instruction.

## SLC

The Senior Leader Course (SLC) is branch-specific and prepares NCOs to become sergeants first class. It provides an opportunity "to acquire the leader, technical, and tactical skills, knowledge, and experience needed to lead platoon and company-size units" ("Senior Leader Course," n.d., para. 1).

## MLC

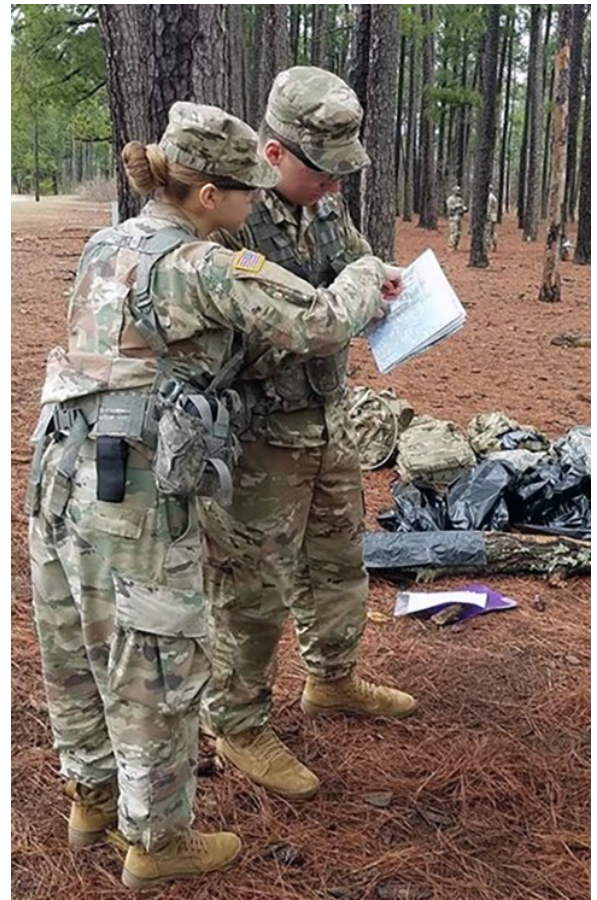
The Master Leader Course (MLC) and Sergeant Major Course (SMC) revert to a branch immaterial structure, focusing on NCO education instead of training. According to the NCOLCoE, the MLC is "designed to challenge and educate selected Sergeants First Class in the areas of professional writing, communication skills, public speaking, critical thinking, organizational and command leadership, management skills" (NCOLCoE, n.d.b., para. 1).

## SMC

The Sergeant Major Course (SMC) consists of a common core curriculum and prepares students for entry-level sergeants major positions. In 2019, the U.S. Army Sergeant Major Academy received accreditation and students are now able to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree after completing the course. Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Sellers, commandant of the NCOLCoE, stated, "This accreditation is paving the way for our NCO Corps to focus in on taking care of, and leading Soldiers. It allows them to focus on leadership, to develop individually, and spend less time in college classes," (NCOLCoE, 2019, para. 5).

## NLC

The capstone of NCO PME is the Nominative Leader Course (NLC). Structured as a two-week development course, the NLC focuses on educational curriculum preparing senior NCOs for strategic-level leadership. According to the U.S. Army War College, "the course content is based on critical knowledge gaps derived from analysis of surveys and interviews of Army Senior Officers and NCO Leaders, along with SMA guidance and NLC student feedback" ("Nominative Leader Course," n.d., para. 6).



*U.S. Army photo courtesy of XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg NCO Academy taken Feb. 25, 2020*

U.S. Army Soldiers conduct individual training on land navigation as part of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Basic Leader Course, North Carolina, Feb. 25, 2020.

## Levels of Leadership

In Army Doctrine Publications 6-22: Army Leadership and the Profession, leadership can be divided into three categories: direct, organizational, and strategic (Department of the Army, 2019). Leadership develop-

ment can be divided into training and educational experiences.

For the purpose of this article, sergeants, staff sergeants, and sergeants first class are categorized at the direct leadership level. For first sergeants and master sergeants, this is generally the first rank they are utilized at the organizational leadership level. For that reason, master sergeants, first sergeants, battalion and brigade sergeants major, and command sergeants major are categorized at the organizational level of leadership. Beyond the brigade level, sergeants major and command sergeants major are brought into strategic-level leadership roles.

For NCOs in the direct level of leadership category, training is most important. Junior-level leaders need to be experts in their fields, as most of their leadership responsibilities relate directly to their military occupational specialty (MOS). As leaders move into the organizational level of leadership, responsibilities expand, and their decisions impact Soldiers beyond their command. Often, this is the first time they will be a part of a staff, so knowledge beyond their MOS is critical.

Finally, as NCOs move into strategic roles, their original MOS matters even less. Their knowledge and experience shapes their ability to transmit strategic messages and make large-scale decisions and recommendations that affect the entire Army (Department of the Army, 2019).



*U.S. Army photo courtesy of Fort Leonard Wood MCCoE NCO Academy taken June 11, 2019*

A U.S. Army Soldier conducts an in-ranks inspection during Mission Command Center of Excellence NCO Academy's Advanced Leader Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, June 11, 2019.

## Desired End State

There is a solution that could structure PME efficiently to meet the demands of today's leadership requirements. Currently, BLC is branch immaterial, but grouping BLC and ALC under a CMF-specific curriculum would better address the challenges of direct-level leadership and develop the skills to operate effectively within an NCO's organization. This would allow SLC, MLC, SMC, and NLC to all be branch immaterial and educationally driven. Under this strategy, the NCOLCoE would primarily focus on NCO education instead of training. Essentially, this strategy would switch the current roles of BLC and SLC in order to thoroughly train junior NCOs in their MOS, and prepare senior leaders for organizational and strategic-level leadership demands.

## Conclusion

Under the proposed strategy, junior-level leaders would develop their direct-level leadership CMF-specific skills at the lower tiers of NCO PME. Thus, educating senior NCOs outside their respective fields and preparing them for organizational and strategic levels of leadership. This strategy supports the Army's continuous adaptive learning model and focuses on the needs of the NCO.

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***"WE'RE NOT CHANGING. WE'RE ADJUSTING, AND  
CONTINUALLY ADAPTING IN THE ENVIRONMENT NO  
MATTER WHERE WE ARE, BECAUSE WE NEED TO  
TRAIN, FIGHT, AND WIN."***

**Gen. Paul E. Funk II  
Training and Doctrine Command**





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