

CHRONOLOGY OF THE U.S. ARMY NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER EDUCATION SYSTEM



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NCOES Chronology

Pre WWII

NCO Academies were almost nonexistent. Most training was conducted in units by unit officers. The Army had suffered without skilled technicians since the Revolution and many, including Gen's Washington and Henry Knox, had recommended the development of a military school. In 1802 personnel from the newly created Corps of Engineers were assigned to West Point to serve as the staff for a U.S. Military Academy to teach military science to select officers and formal military training was introduced to the Army. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun proposed the first specialist school in 1824, in that a "school of practice" is established, from which the Artillery School at Fortress Monroe was developed. Unlike modern schools, which taught individuals, this school taught entire units, including enlisted men. It was closed 11 years later in 1835 when the students were sent to Florida in response to the Seminole threat and reopened in 1858. By the mid 1870's the school was training noncommissioned officers in the history of the United States, geography, reading, writing, and mathematics.

Around the time of the Civil War Maj. Gen. Silas Casey called for NCO training in his book on tactics, insisting that NCOs be formally trained to give commands on the battlefield. But he had to overcome the opposition of company grade officers. They argued that company commanders knew their men's capabilities and limitations best and were in a better position to provide them on-the-job training. A minority of officers doubted that OJT could meet the needs for the combat arms and wanted more post schools. But World War I would begin with NCOs receiving traditional unit instruction, while officers' schools multiplied.

During WWI Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of American Expeditionary Force, wrote:

"...more stress be laid upon the responsibility in the training of sergeants. They will be imbued with the habit of command and will be given schooling and prestige to enable them to replace officers once casualties."

The Secretary of War directed that "their [noncoms'] duties and responsibilities will be thoroughly represented to them, by means of school courses and official [interaction] with their immediate commanding officer." The War Department responded by issuing a directive that required out of each detachment of replacements that a "sufficient number of men be selected, segregated, and especially trained as noncommissioned officers."

Post WWII

Realizing the need to educate soldiers for the specialty duties required of the occupation trooper, the 88th Infantry Division established a training center. The "Blue Devils," on duty in Venezia Giulia, Italy, set out to develop a more professional noncommissioned officer by establishing the Lido Training Center in November 1945. The training center was not a school in the traditional sense, but a model battalion in

which the noncoms lived by the “book” for six weeks. By mid-1947 the Center had trained almost 4,000 students, but the 88th would return to the United States later in that same year and discontinue this highly successful program.

To replace the inactivating divisions on occupation duty, like the 88th Division, the United States European Command organized the United States Constabulary. Heavily armed, lightly armored and highly mobile, the Constabulary were enforcers of law, support to authorities, and would serve as a covering force in the event of renewed hostilities.

In January 1946 the Third U.S. Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Lucian Truscott, gave the task of organizing this force to Maj. Gen. Ernest Harmon. Harmon was given until July to have this force readied to carry out its assigned tasks and would be headquartered in Bamberg. Early in the planning stages the need for a Constabulary school became evident.

In February 1946, the former Adolf Hitler Schule, located at Sonthofen, was selected as the site for the Constabulary school. The 2nd Cavalry Squadron began preparation for the school's early operation.

A theater-wide Noncommissioned Officers Course, designed to train NCOs and potential NCOs in their basic duties, was established at the school on June 30, 1947. This course emphasized basic subjects, supply, and administration.

In early 1949 the Armor School at Fort Knox, KY, developed the Noncommissioned Officers Course. Initially, this four-month course was considered the most comprehensive instruction ever presented to noncommissioned officers. The course was taught by the schools academic groups, employing methods of instruction based on lectures, conferences, demonstrations and practical exercises. The schools Assistant Commandant was Brig. Gen. Bruce C. Clarke.

By late 1949, then commander of the Constabulary Maj. Gen. Isaac D. White decided that special training was needed for the noncommissioned officers of the Constabulary. By then, Gen Clarke had assumed command of the 2d Constabulary Brigade. White gave Clarke the mission of organizing a Noncommissioned Officer Academy in unused buildings at Jensen Barracks in Munich, of which he was to also serve as the Academy's Commandant. White explained what he wanted of the curriculum and stated it would be run on a strict military basis. It was to be purely academic classroom instruction, not hands-on training. Clarke set up a six-week course with White's approval, and in September 1949 the Constabulary Noncommissioned Officer Academy was established.

On October 15, 1949 the first class of 150 students reported to the Constabulary NCO Academy. In later classes the Academy reached their full student load of 320 and by 1951 had graduated almost 4500 students. As part of developing future noncommissioned officer replacements the Academy allowed enlisted soldiers from Grades 4 and 5

(corporal and private first class) to attend, providing they had the appropriate educational background and demonstrated potential to become a noncom.

Sergeant Leon L. Van Autreve of the A Co., 54th Engineers graduated from the Munich NCO Academy mid 1950 as the number one graduate. He would later go on to be the fourth Sergeant Major of the Army.

On 1 Nov 1951 the Seventh Army assumed the Constabulary functions and the Constabulary NCO Academy became the Seventh Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy.

At Clarke's urging, the Army's NCO Academy system was developed on 25 Jun 1957 when the Department of the Army published its first regulation to establish standards for NCO Academies, Army Regulation 350-90, *Noncommissioned Officer Academies*.

In November 1958 the Seventh Army NCO Academy moved to Flint Kaserne in Bad Tölz. Some 45,000 noncoms had graduated from the Munich school by then, with several students from the newly formed West German *Bundeswehr* attending.

NCO Academies like the type developed by Gen Clarke would remain in operation well in to mid-1978. By 1958 there were 17 NCO Academies operating in the US.

A 1963 Fort Dix, NJ NCO Council called for the establishment of an "NCO College." Though considered by the Army, and endorsed by all six Armies, it was not acted on.

December 1964, CONARC presented a plan to establish a Sergeant Major Course at Ft Leavenworth. It was proposed again in early 1965. The idea was cancelled due to a lack of money and qualified instructors.

Pre-NCOES

In order to meet an unprecedented requirement for NCO leaders, the Army developed a solution. Based on the proven Officer Candidate Course where an enlisted man could attend basic and advanced training, and if recommended or applied for, filled out an application and attended OCS, the thought was the same could be done for noncoms. If a carefully selected soldier can be given 23 weeks of intensive training that would qualify him to lead a platoon, then others can be trained to lead squads and fire teams in the same amount of time. From this seed the Noncommissioned Officers Candidate Course (NCOCC) was born.

In August 1967, the Skill Development Base (SDB) program replaced the Continental United States Sustaining Increment concept. The SDB provided accelerated, advanced skill training for selected advanced individuals training graduates so they could perform duties in the grade of E-5 or above.

The NCO Candidate Course (NCOCC) was designed to maximize the two-year tour of the enlisted draftee. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Harold K. Johnson approved the concept on June 22, 1967, and on September 5 the first course at Fort Benning, GA began with Sgt. Maj. Don Wright serving as the first NCOCC Commandant.

Development of NCOES

A 17 Aug 1965 Chief of Staff Memorandum (CSM) 65-388, "Enlisted Grade Structure Study" directed a comprehensive study of the enlisted grade structure be conducted by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER).

CSM 67-275 superceded CSM 65-388 on 3 July 1967 with the publishing of the comprehensive, 10 volume classified report, Enlisted Grade Structure Study.

On Mar 29, 1968 a new version of AR 350-90, Noncommissioned Officer Academies, was published. Some of the changes required additional training time be devoted to leadership

On Oct 26, 1968 the Office of DCSPER published a memorandum outlining the Enlisted Grade Structure Management Project as an "outgrowth of the recommendations of the Enlisted Grade Structure Study." The project was conducted to develop an improved system for central management of the baseline enlisted career force at the Department of Army level.

The long-range project of major significance to the Army was to be accomplished in two phases. Phase I (Nov 68-Mar 69) were to outline a plan and certain tasks be completed, with Phase II (Mar 69-Jun 70) the remaining tasks and final coordination and publication of directives were to be accomplished. From this important study came the official intent to establish a formal education system for Noncommissioned Officers.

Force Renewal Through NCO Educational Development

The NCO Educational Development Concept, as part of Force Renewal Through NCO Educational Development was approved by the DCSPER 2 Jan 1969 and by the VCSA 13 Feb 1969.

It was determined that a three-level developmental system would be implemented during "the post hostility period" (Vietnam) to train NCOs and specialists for the level of responsibility in which they are to serve.

The courses were the Basic Course, designed to produce the basic NCO, the E-5. The Advanced Course was aimed at the middle NCO grades. The Senior Course was to be a management course directed towards qualifying men for enlisted staff positions at the upper levels of Army and joint commands.

A graduate of NCOCC Class 37-68, SGT Lester R. Stone Jr., was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions West of LZ Liz, Republic of Vietnam. Four NCOCC graduates would go on to earn this prestigious award.

The Skill Development Base (NCOCC) was selected for expanding into the first level Basic Course. The middle level (Advanced Course) was to be the last developed and was to also maximize existing systems of NCOCC. The Director for Institutional Training (DIT) was to be responsible for the Senior Course.

In July 1970 during a lull in the NCOCC, the first Basic Course pilot course was taught at Ft Sill, OK, and the first Army-wide courses began in May 1971. In January 1972 the first two advance courses were taught.

By late-1971, NCO Academies began the transition to the Basic Course as part of NCOES. In Nov 1971 the Department of the Army directed that SDB should end after January 1972. Over its 4 1/2 year existence, SDB trained about 33,000 NCOs at the various NCOCC locations.

Leadership for the 1970s

CSA General William Westmoreland directed the Army War College to study the type of leader for the Modern Volunteer Army (VOLAR). The USAWC Study of Leadership for the Professional Soldier, was titled "Leadership for the 1970s." The 18-man research team provided 18 proposed solutions, including "Establish an extensive and progressive program of academic and technical education for career NCOs."

Gen. Westmoreland also called upon Gen. Ralph E. Haines Jr., the Continental Army Command (CONARC) Commander, to improve leadership within the Army. Haines convened the CONARC Leadership Board on 26 Apr 1971, chaired by BG Henry E. Emerson. This became known as the "Emerson Board," and set out to conduct seminars throughout the Army. The board also recommended a long-range program to improve leadership and command instruction through the Army School System, from the Basic Course to the War College. It also recommended that leadership instruction should be designed by levels so that instructional programs could be developed to develop skills equal to gradually increasing responsibilities.

Jan 1972, commandant positions at NCO Academies, which were until then held by field grade officers, were officially designated as a Command Sergeant Major position. CSM Lawrence T. Hickey was the first enlisted commandant, Seventh Army NCO Academy.

NCOES

Established 15 July 1972 by DAGO 98, the US Army Sergeants Major Academy at Ft Bliss, TX on Biggs Field, was developed to teach the Senior Course, designated the Capstone to the NCO Education System. The first Commandant, COL Karl R. Morton and the first Command Sergeant Major CSM William G. Bainbridge.

In January 1972 the first two Advance Courses began, and by 1974 there were forty-two Advance Courses in operation.

On 23 June 1972, Army Circular 351-42, Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), was published. It provided policies and procedures for the operation of NCOES.

Jan 1, 1973, the All-volunteer Army began. The Modern Volunteer Army (VOLAR) was instituted.

On Jan 15 1973, 105 students began US Army Sergeants Major Course, Class #1.

In January 1973 an Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS) Task Force from the Director of Military Personnel Management and US Army Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) was convened to take a fresh look at enlisted personnel management. During the war in Vietnam many independent programs were developed, including NCOES, and the study tied them all together as part of the career management. One effort of the EPMS study was to link NCOES with promotions. The Task Force also recommended a new, primary level course for combat arms soldiers and to be taught in the current NCO Academies. It would become a 3-4 week Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course (PNCOC).

The DA reorganization plan, approved in January 1973, phased out CONARC and established the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). TRADOC was established as a major U.S. Army command on 1 July 1973. The new command, along with the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), was created from the Continental Army Command, located at Fort Monroe, VA.

By mid-1973, forty-one basic courses were in operation Army-wide.

October 15, 1973, the Noncommissioned Officer School of the Infantry (NCOSI) was established at Fort Benning, Georgia. CSM Henry Caro became the first enlisted Commandant of NCOSI.

A new version of AR 350-90, Noncommissioned Officer Academies, was published 30 Oct 1973, effective on 1 Dec 1973. Though NCOAs remained in operation that did not teach NCOES Courses, this regulation forbid graduates of an NCOES course from attending a NCO Academies, along with requiring that NCO Academies not be used as "pre-NCOES" preparation.

In August 1974, US Army personnel stationed in Europe were allowed to attend NCOES Courses in the United States.

Pilot courses of PNCOC were taught in 1975 at Ft Carson and Ft Campbell. Ft Bragg implemented a new POI 12 Mar 1975. Transition from NCO Academy courses to PNCOC and PLC took well into 1978.

First PNCOC/CA began at Ft Campbell in Sep 1975, a 4-week, (208 hours) course.

New EPMS implemented on 1 Oct 1975.

TRADOC directed in 1976 that all basic courses would be designated as the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC).

Also in 1976, TRADOC directed that a Primary Leadership Course (PLC) be developed to train first line leaders in combat support and combat service support, and be taught at NCO Academies. The first PLC for combat support and combat service support taught at Bad Tolz, GE.

A Primary Technical Course (PTC) was to be developed and generally be taught at the service school responsible for the management of the career field for those in the combat support and combat service support. In Sep 1976, the first PTC was conducted at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, MD.

Another action in 1976, Advance Courses were renamed the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC). It would take well into 1979 to complete the change.

Feb 1977, the first redesigned BNCOC was conducted at Ft Campbell.

The Basic Technical Course (BTC) was developed and generally be taught at the service school responsible for the management of the career field for those in the combat support and combat service support and implemented throughout 1978.

The Woman's Army Corps was abolished on Oct 20, 1978.

Established by the Secretary of the Army on Apr 10, 1981 and became effective Aug 1, 1981, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon was awarded to members of the US Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve for successful completion of designated NCO professional development courses.

June 1981, USAMA becomes proponent for common leader training for all Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Course.

Oct 1981, USAMA began teaching the First Sergeant Course. NCOES is now a five-level system, PLC/PNCOC, BNCOC, ANCOC, FSC, SMC. However, attendance was not mandatory or a requirement to attend.

On 23 July 1983, TRADOC directed that PNCOC be combined to form an MOS immaterial Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC), to be implemented January 1984. TRADOC announced that USASMA would be the proponent for its development.

Ft Leonard Wood and Ft Polk conduct the first pilot PLDC course in 1983. July 1983 Seventh Army NCO Academy begins teaching PLDC.

1984 the TRADOC Commander designated the USASMA as the single Army proponent for progressive and sequential development of all NCOES Common Core phases of instruction.. It allowed the merger of PNCOC and the PLC to come up with the new PLDC.

Released in 1984, a revised version of AR 351-1, Individual Military Education and Training required an "Order of Merit List" (OML) system be established at the Battalion level, to decentralize control over which students were selected to attend the primary course.

Dec 1985, all PTCs abolished. PLDC implementation nearly complete and becomes the MOS nonspecific first leadership course for NCOs.

In 1985 the small group instruction method, in use at USASMA since its inception, became standard for all NCOES courses.

Dec 1985, a comprehensive look at NCO Professional Development, the "Soldier's Study," is underway. Of the many far-reaching recommendations, tying NCOES to promotion, makes a major impact on the importance of NCO education.

Jan 1986, establishment of the Operations and Intelligence Course (O&I) at USASMA. This 10-week functional course emphasized the tenants for tactical decision-making. (Functional course, not NCOES)

NCO Professional Development Study (Final Report) published. Of the many adopted recommendations were making NCOES mandatory. It also brought in four levels of NCOES, PLDC, BNCOC, ANCOC and SMC. The First Sergeant Course became a Functional Course.

Jan 1986, renamed BTCs as BNCOC-CA/CSS.

July 1986, PLDC became a prerequisite for promotion to staff sergeant, and a prerequisite for BNCOC attendance that October. MILPO Message 86-65.

Late 1987, a new \$17.5 million, 125,000-square-foot educational complex opened for the USA Sergeants Major Academy. By that time there were two sergeants major course classes per year of about 450 students each class.

Oct 1987, graduation from ANCOC linked to promotion to MSG.

Jan 1988, the Personnel and Logistics Course implemented at USASMA. (Functional Course).

On Oct 8, 1988, TRADOC chartered the NCO Leader Development Special Task Force to develop a strategy and action plan for improving the Army's NCO leader development system.

1989 designated "The Year of the NCO" by SecArmy and CSA.

In 1989, USASMA begins teaching the Command Sergeants Major Course, a one-week course for newly assigned CSMs.

The NCO Leader Development Task Force action plan is published on June 1989 and aligned NCOES attendance to promotion: PLDC to sergeant, BNCOC with Staff Sergeant, ANCOC for sergeants first class, and the sergeants major course for sergeants major.

On Oct 1, 1989, PLDC became a prerequisite for promotion to SGT and the SMC tied to promotion to CSM.

ANCOC graduation linked to promotion to SFC effective Oct 1990.

By 1990 there were nine active duty Noncommissioned Officer Academies in Europe.

Jan 1991, USASMA began instruction for the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officers Course (BSNCOC). It combined the POIs of the former Operations and Intelligence Course (O&I) and the Personnel and Logistics (P&L) courses. (Functional course, not NCOES).

By 1992, 90,000 soldiers had graduated from NCOES courses.

In April 1992 CSA Gen. Gordon Sullivan tasked the TRADOC commander to develop a Total Army School System (TASS) for the Army of the twenty-first century. TRADOC directed the TRADOC Deputy Chief of Staff for Training to organize the Future Army Schools Twenty-one (FAST) task force and assign it the mission of designing the new TASS. FAST's mission was to "establish a cohesive and efficient Total Army School System of accredited and integrated AC/ARNG/USAR Schools that provides standard individual training for soldiers of the Total Army."

Oct 14, 1993, last BNCOC class held in Europe and all BNCOC training was conducted stateside.

In mid-September 1994, the Army Director of Training directed that all soldiers attending NCOES courses receive reading and language testing. Indications were that the majority of soldiers failing NCOES courses had problems in reading and language skills.

Fall 1995, the Sergeants Major Course changed from six-months to nine-months. First class graduates Summer 1996. USASMA then conducted one class annually.

In 1996 a pilot course was conducted to teach PLDC electronically through a video feed to the Sinai.

1997 the common leader portion of ANCOC was first taught electronically through video to the 49th Armored Division.

Expansion to USASMA, new wing added to building, dedicated by SMA(R) Bainbridge in June 1997.

Apr-May 1997, Chartered by TRADOC, USASMA and RAND Arroyo Center hold the "Future Development of the NCO Corps Workshop," This forum set the stage for improvements to NCOES

On April 18, 2001, the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (NCO Study). The Panel released its report April 2, 2002, and of its many recommendations was transformation of NCOES.

Oct 15, 2005, PLDC renamed as the Warrior Leader Course (WLC). The Army announced that its Primary Leadership Development Course was renamed the Warrior Leader Course, beginning Oct. 15, and officials said the new name reflects changes made to PLDC curriculum over the past year.

179 graduating soldiers from the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer's Academy first class of the Warrior Leader Course walked across the stage at the Tower Theatre in Grafenwoehr, Germany, on Nov 4, 2005.

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