

# DRIVER'S SEAT

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## Armor/Cavalry ANCOC Shaping Future Platoon Sergeants

The Army exists to deter war or, if deterrence fails, to win in combat. Only a platoon that is well trained, effectively led, and highly motivated will survive and win in battle. The Armor Advanced Noncommissioned Officer's Course (ANCOC) at the Armor Center, Fort Knox, is charged with, and committed to, producing platoon sergeants who will mold, lead, train, and motivate the soldiers who will man those platoons.

This is the fourth and final article in a series highlighting the institutional training provided at the Armor Center and Noncommissioned Officer's Academy. The purpose of this article is to provide you an overview of the training your future platoon sergeant receives and inform you of what you can expect from this ANCOC graduate once he reports for duty.

I believe it's important you understand the type of individual responsible for training our future platoon sergeants, and what it takes to become an ANCOC instructor. Many factors are considered before selecting an ANCOC instructor. First, there is a thorough records screening. Foremost and above all, an NCO must have served successfully as a platoon sergeant and be a graduate of the ANCOC course. We want quality NCOs who have distinguished themselves as platoon sergeants to train our future leaders. Once accepted, an NCO will go through a

minimum of three months of intensive train-up as an instructor before he gets the opportunity to hang up his shingle. During those three months he will learn training techniques on how to conduct small group training sessions, Video-Tele-Teach conferences, and will also learn the Systems Approach to Training. All Armor ANCOC instructors are thoroughly prepared to teach doctrine and are up-to-date on the use of modern technology. They understand where the Army and the armor force are headed, and have the focus and ability to prepare students for their entry into the twenty-first century. Rest assured that our new, potential platoon sergeants are being trained by some of the best and brightest senior NCOs.

Now, let's look at today's ANCOC student. Considering the select-train-promote philosophy of the Army's personnel management system, the average armor ANCOC student of today is a staff sergeant in his mid-to-late twenties. He has been in the force for approximately 12 years and his time in grade varies between four and six years. He has been a successful tank commander or scout section leader and has demonstrated the potential to become an effective tank or cavalry platoon sergeant. The majority of students come directly from TOE units; however, a small percentage are just coming off recruiter or drill sergeant assignments and look forward to learning

new warfighting skills. This is the average student.

Now, let's look at the course. ANCOC is the third level of the Noncommissioned Officer's Education System (NCOES). The skills trained here build on those learned in previous NCOES courses and the students' personal experiences. The course is varied and in-depth, but primarily focuses on supervisory, management, and administrative skills. The MOS 19K ANCOC course is 12 weeks and the MOS 19D course is 14 weeks. Both courses follow the same curriculum when it comes to some instructional areas. An example is Common Leader Training, where some of the same subjects (NCOERs, awards, counseling, etc.) taught at lower level courses are revisited, but with more of an emphasis and focus on the supervisory level. Later in the course, the MOSs diverge into their own specialties.

Part of the course is devoted to weapons training. A portion of this instruction focuses on the student's ability to plan, design, and conduct live-fire ranges. This includes the set-up and conduct of live-fire preparatory requirements such as the Tank Crew Gunnery Skills Test and Bradley Gunnery Skills Test. Another facet of this instruction trains Unit Conduct of Fire Trainer

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(UCOFT) management skills to ensure students can get their platoons to make adequate progression through the matrix and be able to identify potential problem areas. The student also spends considerable time in the Platoon Gunnery Trainer simulator (PGT).

Being able to operate weapons systems is important, but equally important is maintaining them. The maintenance portion of the course trains those skills necessary for the new platoon sergeant to supervise proper maintenance techniques and procedures, including introduction to the computerized Unit Level Logistics System (ULLS). The student's understanding of ULLS enables him to track the status of his equipment's repair progress and required service schedules, and adequately plan for training events based on equipment readiness. Knowing how to operate and maintain the unit's equipment is important, but he must also know how to employ it.

Tactical training is the meat of the course. Doctrinal training in this area includes all aspects of platoon maneuver, tactical road marches, actions on contact; offensive and defensive operations, and passage of lines, just to name a few. Additionally, the scout portion of the course stresses reconnaissance, information gathering, and reporting techniques when conducting mounted and dismounted patrolling missions.

Our new potential platoon sergeants will be attending a course that is both extremely challenging and demanding. When they come to you, you can be sure they will have the warfighting confidence and ability to be successful. They will be an important part of your unit and the armor force as a whole, no matter where an assignment takes them. Indeed, they will also have the knowledge of what it takes to care for their troops and families.

The Armor Center is at the forefront in ensuring our leaders are prepared to make that leap into the twenty-first century and our NCO Academy's Advance Course is the "Hook Up and Shuffle to the Door" point. All that remains is for you, the leaders, to give them the opportunity. I challenge you to put them to the test.