

DRIVER'S SEAT

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What You Can Expect From a PLDC Graduate

This is the second part in a continuing series of articles highlighting the institutional training provided at the Armor Center. Although the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) is not MOS-specific and is taught at all major commands, it's just as important as the Armor-specific NCOES courses and deserves mention. Why? Because PLDC provides the leadership foundation later courses will build on! Nothing can be built without a solid foundation, and the Army's Noncommissioned Officers Academies are among the best at laying that leadership foundation. The following article will give you an idea of what to expect when your newest NCO shows up in your orderly room thirty days later, motivated, smiling and proud, with a PLDC diploma clutched in his hand. See you on the high ground!

PLDC familiarizes students with the latest in leadership doctrine and concepts. The leadership block of instruction includes what a soldier must BE, KNOW, and DO to become an effective and motivated leader: Leadership Principles, Factors and Styles, the Nine Leadership Competencies, Counseling, Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment, and how to take care of soldiers. Students are required to apply and demonstrate what they learned in the classroom while serving in leadership positions (one in garrison and one in a field environment). Successfully completing both leadership positions is a graduation requirement. While in these positions, student leaders conduct daily formations, inspect soldiers' uniforms and appearance, and conduct the day-to-day operations of the student body. In short, they perform tasks required of first-line leaders in units.

The communications block introduces students to the small group process, the method of instruction he will receive in Armor NCOES courses at Fort Knox. During the communications block of instruction, students learn the communications model, verbal and non-verbal communication, barriers to effective communication, and the essential elements of oral and written communications. The students' ability to effectively communicate is part of their leadership evaluation.

The supply and maintenance block provides training on supervising preventive maintenance, conducting Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services, using the DA Form 2404, and introduces the student to the Unit Level Logistics System (ULLS). The instruction given is not armor- or cavalry-specific; its primary purpose is to train students to use technical manuals to assess equipment. Students train on supply accountability and learn individual responsibilities for the care of government equipment.

Leaders must perform, and PLDC places a premium on the NCO's ability to perform professional skills commensurate with his leadership level. Students must lead a team in physical fitness training and drill and ceremonies without error. Students are trained in the proper wear of the military uniform and appearance. They reinforce this training by planning and conducting inspections. They must also learn the NCO's role in maintaining discipline, how to act and maintain discipline within their team.

Individual training belongs to the NCO, and PLDC teaches the fundamentals and concepts on how to con-

duct individual training. After classroom instruction, students prepare and conduct two individual training sessions. During these sessions students must demonstrate their ability to train soldiers in a field environment. They must also conduct After Action Reviews (AARs), with focus on the AAR as a training tool. Finally, students must learn the risk management process and incorporate the process into their training.

In the military studies block, students receive instruction on field sanitation, combat orders, rifle marksmanship, NBC skills, map reading, and land navigation, and they get an introduction to the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES). During this block, emphasis is placed on troop-leading procedures and decision-making. Students must apply what they learned in the classroom by planning and conducting missions in a field environment under all types of weather or visibility conditions. Cadre evaluate the student's ability to use troop-leading procedures and proper leadership techniques to accomplish their assigned missions.

PLDC, the first Noncommissioned Officers Education System course (NCOES), introduces new leaders to military leadership, communication skills, supply and maintenance, professional skills, training, and military studies. However, understand this: PLDC does not return a fully seasoned trained leader back to the unit. PLDC is a cornerstone of leader development; it provides a foundation on which to build. Combined with leadership assignments and self-development, this training will help soldiers develop into the effective combat leaders of tomorrow.