

## Laptops Are Replacing Paper In Armor Center Training Courses

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The switch from paper course materials to laptop computers is continuing at the Armor Center, offering big advantages to both students and course administrators. For over a year, the Noncommissioned Officers Academy has been issuing laptops to all students attending the 19 Delta and 19 Kilo Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses (ANCOC) Phase I & II, and more courses may soon make this change-over.

Until September 2000, students beginning their attendance at ANCOC were issued piles of paper text materials. They had to lug these texts to and from classes on a daily basis, the Academy had to maintain and account for all of them, and the format made it difficult to rapidly adapt to changes to Army doctrine. In addition, there was the astronomical cost of printing and reprinting text materials and the students' difficulty in acquiring up-to-date references. Finally, we realized the growing need to train soldiers closer to their home stations, and this last point may

be the most important in the days to come.

The laptops are pre-loaded with all needed reference materials, including Army regulations, field manuals, technical manuals, and DA pamphlets, as well as student handouts and practical exercises, making it unnecessary to issue any paper copies of assignments. The laptops are also loaded with *TACOPS* (a tactical game which allows students to train and retrain tactical exercises individually or in unit-size groups).

By using the laptop computers, students also gain the opportunity to build on their computer skills, a growing requirement in all our future systems. ANCOC students have full access to the Internet while connected to a local area network (LAN) in the classroom. Cadre closely monitor the performance of students to ensure there is no degradation in their performance, and step in to lend assistance when needed. To date, the program has been overwhelmingly successful. So far, the NCO Academy



has received great reviews from all students attending ANCOC. Our plan is to build upon this success by linking the computers in the classrooms, allowing students to interact and conduct tactical training on a program such as a virtual sand table.

The proven success of laptop computers in ANCOC has triggered a campaign in the Armor Center to place laptops in the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course and to begin research into placing them in the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC).

The world is changing, but so is the process we use to get leaders prepared to do their jobs. The Armor Center is committed to provide the force with trained and prepared soldiers and leaders. We remain ready to serve and support the force because, "Today is the best day to be a soldier!"