

Army changes PLDC to Warrior Leader Course

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — The Army has announced that its Primary Leadership Development Course will be renamed the Warrior Leader Course, beginning Oct. 15, and officials said the new name reflects changes made to PLDC curriculum over the past year.

The course has been redesigned to better prepare Soldiers for asymmetrical warfare and now includes lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, said Brig. Gen. James M. Milano, the Army's director of Training under G3.

"The new WLC will not only prepare Soldiers for traditional challenges, but irregular challenges as well," Milano said after reviewing all the changes made to the curriculum this past year.

WLC now emphasizes the skills and knowledge small-unit leaders need to excel in a contemporary operational environment, Milano said.

Academy helps revamp course

"We are a nation at war. We have taken the lessons learned from our deployments and incorporated them into our revised leadership course," said Col. David Abramowitz, commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, which played a major role in redesigning the PLDC curriculum.

"These changes add rigor and relevance to the course and improve leadership skills and confidence in our junior leaders," Abramowitz said. "The course is revolutionary and warrants a name change."

Warrior Leader Course is the right name for the new course, Abramowitz said, because it "espouses the tenets of the Warrior Ethos."

PLDC used an instructor-centered, exposure, and feedback system. Instruction consisted of lecture, classroom-based practical exercises, and a cognitive skills test. A short Field Training Exercise was the practical exercise used to evaluate combat leader skills.

The FTX, though, lacked standardization throughout the Army, said retired Sgt. Maj. Ron Schexnayder of the G3 Leader Development Division. He said a different approach was needed to produce a competent, innovative, adaptive and agile combat leader required by the current operational environment.

Changes stem back to ATLDP

The NCO phase of the Army Training and Leader Development Panel, known as ATLDP, was not about "fixing" the NCO Corps; rather, it was an introspection to determine how the Army could make a professional NCO Corps even better, Schexnayder said. He said since ATLDP, the Army has been in the process of transforming the NCO Education System in an effort to design a system that would not dilute the warfighting focus of NCOES.

NCOES must remain focused on NCO core areas of leading, training, maintaining standards, caring for Soldiers, technical competencies and tactical



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

PLDC students at the NCO Academy, Fort Campbell, Ky., go over an inspection checklist.

warrior skills, Schexnayder said, while integrating greater conceptual and interpersonal skills.

Changes in the modular Army and operational environment now require decentralized leadership skills, Schexnayder said. He said a small unit leader is needed who can employ all warfighting functions rapidly.

Modular force needs versatile NCOs

The modular force structure and contemporary operational environment relies heavily on small-unit tactics. The demands of today's battlefield require leaders who can think independently, Schexnayder said.

The Warrior Leader Course is designed to provide the Army with NCOs who can visualize, describe, and execute squad-level operations in varied operational environments, Schexnayder said.

"The WLC places the responsibility of training individual Soldier skills back on the junior leader," said Command Sgt. Maj. James E. Dale of the Sergeants Major Academy. "This course prepares him/her to assume that role."

WLC is battle-focused

Graduates of WLC will have experienced standard-based, performance-oriented and battle-focused training, which supports squad-level operations, Schexnayder said. Every specialist (promotable) and sergeant in an all-volunteer Army require training as combat leaders, he said.

The WLC is now tailored to the environment in which the Army operates today, Schexnayder said. Every student now receives detailed squad-level combat leader training. This learner-centered and outcome-based approach reinforces all small unit

tactics, techniques, and procedures, he said.

The WLC incorporates recent lessons learned, Schexnayder said. As such, he said the course constantly adapts to world threats by incorporating the experience from the battlefield. Combat skills are trained and reinforced upon arrival, "Weapon immersion" is emphasized throughout the new course.

Training and evaluation as a combat leader now applies to every Soldier. Evaluation is centered on the NCO's ability to demonstrate troop-leading procedures in current threat-based scenarios.

New STX is now 96 hours

The combat focus of the course culminates in a 96-hour Situational Training Exercise or STX. Nine battle drills and 39 warrior tasks are the framework driving the planning, preparation, rehearsal and execution of all squad operations. This STX is competency-based, battle-focused, grounded in a combat scenario, driven by troop-leading procedures, officials said.

Instructors must complete certification before leading and evaluating students. The WLC also requires trainers to have squad leader and platoon sergeant experience and to be certified to teach the entire curriculum.

NCOES has been changing since World War II

The post-World War II NCO Academies at division level began a great tradition of NCO education that continues today. The concept was later adopted Army-wide, but it initially provided education only to Combat Arms Soldiers. PLDC integrated Soldiers from all fields, but instructors were not certified.

The Warrior Leader Course is the first course to apply the same combat leader-specific training standard for all Soldiers, regardless of gender or background, Schexnayder said.

G1/G3 set long-term goals

The long-term goal is to train all specialists with promotion potential at the WLC, Schexnayder said. He said the course will teach specialists how to be an NCO and focus on leading, training, caring, maintaining, and warrior skills.

The WLC will prepare Soldiers for promotion to sergeant and for assignments in teams, crews, and squads. Conceptually, graduating Soldiers could be appointed to corporal upon graduation, he said — effectively symbolizing their transition from "follower" to "leader."

Gerald Purcell, a retired sergeant major now serving as a personnel policy integrator for G1 Enlisted Professional Development, said "In concert with this philosophy, and in an effort to ensure all Soldiers are trained before the Army asks them to perform at the next level, only corporals would attain eligibility for recommendation to sergeant."

This is strictly a long-term goal, explained Schexnayder, adding that there is currently no timeline to implement such requirements for promotion to sergeant.

Army launches vehicle safety course

ARMY NEWS SERVICE

ARLINGTON, Va. — Everyone who drives an Army vehicle must now complete a new online course designed to make people think about driving safer.

The Accident Avoidance Course is available through the Army Knowledge Online Learning Management Services. All Soldiers, civilian employees and contractor employees who drive Army-owned or leased vehicles must complete the training when they start working for the Army.

Refresher training must be completed every four years. The course meets the four-year refresher training requirements of Army Regulation 385-55 and Army Regulation 600-55.

Installation Management Agency safety officials worked with the

Combat Readiness Center and the National Traffic Safety Institute to develop a course that explores how values and attitudes affect an individual's driving behavior.

Training will be customized to each person using a risk assessment of driving behavior and habits. Awareness of aggressive driving, defensive driving techniques and avoiding distractions will be emphasized through the course.

Discussion of driving under the influence, substance abuse, child safety and weather factors also have been included in the training program. It takes about an hour to complete the course.

Driving accidents — both in Army motor vehicles and privately-owned vehicles — are the number one killer of Soldiers, Owens said. More Soldiers have died behind the wheel in fiscal 2005 than in each of the previ-

ous 14 years.

"Soldiers are driving more than ever before, and under a wider variety of conditions than they ever previously. Soldiers must drive everything from passenger cars to Humvees," Owens said.

About 25 percent of new Soldiers do not have driver's licenses when they join the Army. Standardized traffic safety courses for everyone who drives in the Army that incorporate awareness, skills and motivation are one of the first steps in reducing accidents and improving combat readiness, Owens said.

IMA also plans to field in the next year instructors who will hold face-to-face Army Traffic Safety Training Program classes at installations, officials said. IMA already is conducting Motorcycle Safety Foundation training at installations.

Development of standardized

Army-wide safety training also is expected to save the Army money.

To enroll for the online course, visit www.us.army.mil.

Click "Training" under the self-service menu, and then register through the Army's Learning Management System. In the welcome window, click on "Training Catalog." This opens a search window, where users should enter "Army" in the product name block. Then register for the Army Traffic Safety Program, Accident Avoidance Course for Army Motor Vehicle Drivers.

Users will receive an e-mail confirming registration. To access the online course, open "Registrations" under the welcome ALMS welcome page. Click on "Transcripts," and then click on "Contents." Open "Army POV 1-3" to complete course.