

Robert Bouilly
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PRIMARY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE (PLDC)

1974 As the Army planned to implement the Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS), it intended to introduce a new, primary level to the NCOES sometime in 1974. The three to four week course would be for combat arms E-4s. The basic course would be shortened at the same time. This new course would be tied to the skill development program which was also worked out by the EPMS task force. It would be taught in the NCO academies and be branch immaterial as it would be geared to provide small unit leadership training. Projections called for about 11,000 students a year. The course would be open to soldiers in combat arms MOSs. Noncombat arms E-4s would have to get leadership training through on the job training (OJT) or by attending the NCO basic course.

The EPMS task force wanted to tie NCO training to job proficiency -- more than was accomplished through the leadership training provided by the NCO academies. Even so, TRADOC published a revised POI for all NCOAs. Most of the revision was in leadership and military training to reflect changes in the new FM 22-100 and FM 21-6. The Ft. Bragg NCOA implemented the new POI beginning on 12 March 1975.

1975 This new primary course was called the Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course/Combat Arms (PNCOC/CA). Designed to prepare soldiers to perform skill level 2 tasks, it would run four weeks (208 hours) in a field environment. Emphasis would be on the fire team and squad level of leadership.

Pilot courses began in the summer at Ft. Carson and Ft. Campbell. The first regular PNCOC/CA began at Ft. Campbell in September. As NCOAs switched over to teach the new course academies at Ft. Dix, Ft. Leonard Wood and Ft. Jackson closed because they did not train combat arms soldiers. PNCOC/CA started at Ft. Hood and Ft. Knox in October.

1976 TRADOC directed the Army Administration Center to develop a Primary Leadership Course (PLC) in combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) MOSs to train first line supervisors at the E-5 level. This course was to be taught

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at the NCOAs, but it would also be available as nonresident instruction. The pilot PLC was conducted in Europe at the 7th Army NCOA at Bad Tolz, Federal Republic of Germany, and at Ft. Bragg. The technical instruction that complemented the PLC for CS and CSS soldiers was called the Primary Technical Course (PTC). In September the Ordnance School began the first PTC. (See the PNCOOC section for a chronology of PTCs and BTCs.)

1977 In January PNCOOC instruction began in CONUS NCOAs, Alaska, Hawaii and the Canal Zone. The local commander had the discretion of adding a week to the course for training the commander knew needed emphasis.

A private contractor developed a self-paced version of the PLC for the Reserve Component (RC) to be tested by the RC in October and November at Ft. Benjamin Harrison and in the 1978 summer camp program. In October Ft. Knox began the PLC instruction. The three week course was taught in the classroom.

From Oct 75 -- Oct 77 10,341 students received PNCOOC training.

1978 In FY 1978 between 9,200 and 10,000 soldiers were scheduled to attend PNCOOC.

In 1978 15 CONUS installations, four in EUSERAUR and Camp Casey (Korea) taught PNCOOC. TRADOC funded the training. Six more MOSSs were added to the program. Graduates of both PNCOOC and PLC receive 30 promotion points.

PLC began in January. It consisted of three major segments: (1) train to train; (2) train to lead; and (3) train to supervise. Courses started in Hawaii and Ft. Campbell. The self-paced RC version was scheduled to begin in 79 USAR schools during the 1978-79 school year.

1979 Attendance at the PTCs was sparse because of the lack of TDY funds.

PLC expanded in EUSERAUR to over 5,500 capacity per year with several new sites. In Oct 1978 the 8th Inf. Division opened an NCOA. In April 1979 the 32d Air Defense Command, the 3d Inf. Division and the 3d Armored Division also opened academies.

Ft. Polk accepted some outstanding E-3s into the PNCOOC. Ft. Polk's course included a field training exercise (FTX).

1980 FY 1980 attendance at PNCOOCs was 13,807; attendance at PLCs was 21,014. Because of attendance snortialis

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throughout NCOES TRADOC began to revise AR 351-1 "Individual Military Education and Training" to implement regulations designed to alleviate the shortfall. Implementation was scheduled for 1981.

Ft. Leonard Wood established an NCOA to teach PLC and BNCOC.

An in-process review on 5-6 August chose to increase the core instruction from two to three weeks. Since most commanders chose to add a week of instruction at their discretion, the course would become four weeks in length.

In September TRADOC asked for field comments on recommended changes to the PLC. These changes were designed to make the course more field oriented. The changes included:

1. Implementation of the Battle Training Management System (BTMS) into the course in January 1981.
2. Add map reading/land navigation, drill and ceremonies, and physical training during April 1981.
3. Add an FTX in January 1982 if pilot FTXs Ft. Benning and Ft. Bragg worked well.

1981 The USASMA DOES inspects the USERAUR PLC for the first time.

Both the Sergeants Major of the Army Conference and the Army Commanders' Conference hear proposals for a single primary NCO leadership course which would combine PNCOC and PLC.

1982 In January (Aug ?) USAREUR started a six month test of a Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) which was a consolidation of PNCOC and PLC. The test course was offered at the 8th Inf. Division and the 58th Field Artillery Brigade NCOAs.

23 July TRADOC announced that PNCOC and PLC would be joined into a single NCO leadership course. USASMA received proponency for the new combined (PLDC) course. Implementation of the new course was scheduled for January 1984. The six major blocks of instruction would be: leadership, communications, resource management, training management professional skills, and military studies.

1983 USASMA developed plans to have four examinations on major subject areas in the new course.

Validation of PLDC at Ft. Polk and Ft. Leonard Wood was successful. The validation along with the revision of ANCOG gave USASMA a greatly expanded impact on the NCO corps and the Army.

1984 January The new AR 351-1 was issued. It became effective 15 February. The regulation mandated the creation of an order of merit list (OML) at the battalion level for soldiers eligible to take PNCOOC, PLC and PLDC. The intent of the regulation was to force better attendance at the course where the unit commander had decentralized control over selection of students.

Implementation of the PLDC program of instruction (POI) began in eight NCOAs during February. The remaining 21 NCOAs followed over the next few months. A pilot RC version was tested in July. During October TRADOC approved it.

1985 Implementation of PLDC was nearly complete by the end of the year.

December PTCs were eliminated. This made PLDC non-MOS specific. Also in December the Chief of Staff of the Army approved the NCO Professional Development Study Group recommendations that NCOES be mandatory, sequential, progressive, and linked to promotion.

1986 February A PLDC Commandants' Chief Instructor Conference led to a number of course revisions.

MILPRO message 86-65 announced that on 1 July completion of PLDC would become mandatory for promotion to staff sergeant and it would become a prerequisite for BNCOC attendance on 1 October 1986. In order to accommodate the change TRADOC gave promotable sergeants and sergeants priority for class attendance during the period JAN-JUL 1986.

1987 PLDC being taught to 40,000 AC and 38,000 RC soldiers per year. GEN Richardson directed that small group instruction be the principal method of teaching NCOES. TRADOC also began to investigate if more hands-on training could be inserted into the course without lengthening it.

1988 On 8 September DA announced that, effective 1 October 1989, soldiers would have to successfully complete PLDC to be eligible for promotion to SGT.

Course revisions increased the field environment portion of PLDC to 70 percent. Training support packages went out to the field at the end of the year.

1989 Under the revised POI students planned and supervised much of their own training, including physical training and common task skills. At the Ft. Hood NCOA students conducted in ranks inspections, wall locker and billets

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inspections, marched units to class and rotate through leadership positions. Students were regularly evaluated by instructors and had peer evaluations. The course ended with a four day FTX.

1990 Early in the year a TRADOC special study group found overlaps in instruction at all levels of NCOES including PLDC. Elimination of the overlaps began.

In April TRADOC began to staff a draft quota management plan designed to emphasize training sergeants and specialists in a timely manner.

TRADOC indicated it wanted better FTXs in the course.

1991 Common leader training (CLT) revisions, which began in 1988, continued. USASMA sought to integrate CLT wherever possible into MOS technical instruction. Additions to the POI included physical training, marksmanship, and common leader combat skills.