WARRIOR LEADER COURSE—General Information

The Warrior Leader Course is your first training step to becoming a Non Commissioned Officer. It is taught at several different installations. The location of your course will depend on where your home station is at the time you are scheduled to attend the course. Talk to your first line supervisor and other colleagues in your band to learn more about this course, what you can expect and how you can prepare. In the mean time, the links below and the articles that follow will get you started on your journey to becoming an NCO.

Links and related information:

What is Warrior Leader Course? http://www.goarmy.com/soldier-life/being-a-soldier/ongoing-training/leadership-training/warrior-leader-course.html

Preparing for Warrior Leader Course: http://www3.ausa.org/webint/deptncostuff.nsf/byid/KCAT-6D8J2V

WLC builds future leaders

February 24, 2011
By Sgt. Robert Schaffner Jr., Fort Stewart Public Affairs

FORT STEWART, Ga. - The Army placed new curriculum into effect for the Noncommissioned Officer Academy class previously known as the Primary Leadership Development Course, Oct. 2005. Although some studies have changed, the key focus of the course, now called the Warrior Leader Course, still remains: "prepare Soldiers to become leaders."

The mission of the Warrior Leader Course is to prepare Soldiers - senior private first class through junior sergeants with approximately three years of service - for positions of higher responsibility as section leaders. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command redesigned the program of instruction so that Soldiers are able to visualize, describe and execute squad-level operations in varied operational environments. According to the NCO Academy commandant, these changes add rigor and relevance to the course, while improving confidence and leadership skills in the junior leaders of today's Army.

"The new 17-day POI is packed with 136 hours of leadership enhancement tools to better facilitate today's warrior leaders on the battlefield and in garrison," said Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry L. Taylor, 3rd Infantry Division and Fort Stewart NCO Academy commandant.
The WLC is now using a facilitator system wherein small group leaders, or instructors, aid junior leaders in achieving excellence in areas of professional ethics, self discipline, leading, training, maintaining standards, communications, interpersonal skills, planning and tactical warriors skills, said Command Sgt. Maj. Taylor.

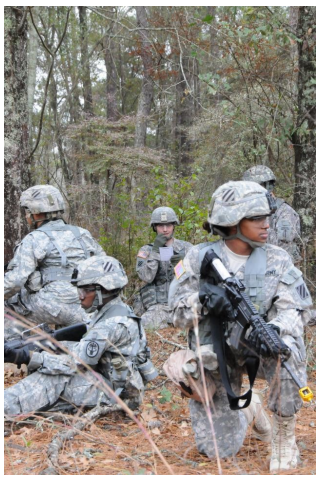
"WLC teaches Soldiers how to become leaders and brush up on their basic level 2 skills that all Soldiers need to possess," said Staff Sgt. Stephanie Sanders, a WLC small group leader. "The biggest hurdle for students at WLC is what we teach the Soldiers to overcome - being able to convert from follower to leader," she said.

With the new POI, drill and ceremonies has returned to the junior leaders' professional development. According to Soldiers at the NCO Academy, the addition of drill and ceremony was needed.
"Bringing back (drill and ceremony) brings about esprit de corps and a higher level of camaraderie," said Staff Sgt. Sanders.

For many, the new changes have been well received.

"I love (drill and ceremony)," said Sgt. Christina Ratisher, a cryptologic linguist, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd ID, and a student at WLC. "I haven't done it since basic training, and I just like doing it."

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Taylor, the combat focus of the course culminates in a 36-hour Situational Training Exercise. The tactical warrior skills emphasize the knowledge small-unit leaders need to excel in a contemporary operational environment.The course constantly adapts to world threats by incorporating the experience and the demands of today's battlefield.



"Every student receives detailed, squad-level combat leader training," he said. "This approach reinforces all small unit tactics, techniques and procedures. It produces competent, innovative, adaptive and agile combat leaders required by the current operational environment."

In order to graduate from WLC, Soldiers are expected to demonstrate their understanding and ability to apply what they were trained.

"Soldiers enter the 3rd Infantry Division and Fort Stewart Noncommissioned Officers Academy to learn," said Command Sgt. Maj. Taylor, "and they must lead in order to leave."

Year of the NCO: WLC instructor learns by teaching tomorrow's NCOs

July 21, 2009
By Staff Sgt. Gina Vaile-Nelson, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Kentucky Army National Guard

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany - Wearing full battle-rattle under a canopy of pine trees, Soldiers attending the Warrior Leader Course (WLC) at the 7th U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA) in Grafenwoehr, Germany, were evaluated July 16, after three weeks of classroom and hands-on instruction in becoming a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the U.S. Army.

"It definitely showed me what my weaknesses are," said Sgt. Carlos A. Lopez, a medic assigned to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center attending WLC.

Lopez said he doesn't get much time to practice and become proficient in tactical field operations. For that reason, his small group leader and WLC instructor, Staff Sgt. Jeremy L. Conn selected him as the first squad leader during the evaluation period.

"Soldiers get put in a leadership position at their units without having learned the basic NCO fundamentals," Conn said. "This school takes that Soldier, puts him back at the beginning and brings him up in a crawl, walk - run phase."

During the month-long course, Lopez, along with approximately 139 other Soldiers, received classroom instruction and hands-on training using the modern training facilities available at the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

The Joint Multinational Training Command (JMTC) manages and operates the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels Training areas, which includes the NCOA.

The knowledge and experiences relayed by the NCOs leading the course, Lopez said, helped him better understand the importance of today's NCOs.

"Before, my leadership style was a little more passive," Lopez said. "Now going through this course, I've become a little more aggressive in certain areas, and also become more knowledgeable about NCO business."

For Conn, instructing the WLC students is just as much of a learning experience for him as it is for his Soldiers.

"Being an instructor is more than just putting out info," Conn said. "You get to put your experiences out there and take in experiences from other Soldiers.

"There are Soldiers out here who are more experienced in some areas than we are, so we take that experience from the Soldier and implement it during training," he said.

Conn said watching Lopez and his other students negotiate the training lanes during their evaluations was instant proof of his effectiveness in the classroom.

"It definitely lets you know if you are a good instructor," he said. "You hope that these guys take from you, what you give them and they present it well in the field."

Conn said the most important take-away is how the Soldiers will present their new leadership skills at their home unit, or downrange in Afghanistan or Iraq.

"At the Joint Multinational Training Command, we train Soldiers to go to war, and it makes all the difference on the battlefield."

Picture: Soldiers carry a "wounded" comrade off of the battlefield during a training exercise at the Joint Multinational Training Command in Grafenwoehr, Germany.