

## INFORMATION PAPER

Subject: Army Professional Military Education

**1. Purpose:** To provide the J-7 with a short overview of the Army's ongoing and future PME initiatives in preparation for the 30 October 2018 Military Education Coordination Council (MECC) meeting.

**2. BLUF:** Over the last three years, the Combined Arms Center and Army University have undertaken an extensive effort to assess and revise the Army's professional military education to achieve the right warfighting outcomes at echelon and by cohort. The key elements of this revision, include: 1) Recasting the Warfighting content from a largely myopic focus on Limited Contingency Operations (COIN and Stability Operations) to a much heavier focus on Large-Scale Ground Combat Operations (LSGO) against peer and near peer threats in highly contested multi-domain environments; 2) Reorienting the "aim point" for PME to ensure a sequential and progressive continuum of learning with increased rigor to prepare leaders for combined arms warfighting at each echelon; 3) Increasing professional educational opportunities for our NCO and warrant officer cohorts; 4) Increasing institutional scholarship to expand the professional body of knowledge and discourse through relevant publications and case studies that enhance warfighting skills; 5) Placing greater emphasis on faculty development and selection to ensure faculty and curriculum developers best enable the use of the adult learning model to drive the necessary combined arms warfighting outcomes, and; 6) Expanding the warfighting content in all PME (without growth) by replacing all non-warfighting related requirements that are not mandated by statute or DOD policy.

**3. Background:** Based on our revised doctrine, conceptual work on the *Multi Domain Operations Concept*, the *National Defense Strategy*, and the CSA's first priority of increasing readiness, the Army's focus in training, education, and leader development is to build leaders of character who can execute mission command with the requisite warfighting skills and knowledge to prevail against peer and near peer threats in highly contested multi-domain environments. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, and the associated new down trace supporting doctrine is driving this change in PME. To enable this shift of focus, the Army is changing a culture shaped by over seventeen years of persistent limited-contingency operations. Although we recognize that the hard-won wisdom and experience gained from years of irregular warfare is critical to sustain, we must also rebuild mastery in LSGCO due to the exponential lethality, hyperactive chaos, and accelerated tempo of multi-domain operations when facing a peer or near-peer threat. This needed change in culture, driven by the evolving operational environment and our updated professional body of knowledge, is the impetus for the way ahead for our Officer, Warrant Officer (WO), and Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Professional Military Education.

#### **4. Greater Warfighting Focus:**

a. **Officer Professional Military Education.** Our progressive officer PME has been revised to eliminate non-warfighting content with a corresponding increase in warfighting content with no course growth. We still have work to do over the next year to fully update all of the content through the depth of PME, but our most critical courses of the Captain's Career Course (CCC), Resident Intermediate Level Education (CGSC), Advanced Military Studies (SAMS and SAMS SSC) and Pre-Command (Battalion, Brigade, and Division) are largely complete and in execution. We will complete the revision of our Basic Officer Leader Course (LT-BOLC) and ILE satellite and distributed learning content for delivery in AY20.

CCC. The Captain Career Course (CCC) underwent a complete review of the common core and branch tactical subject areas to align with FM 3-0 and LSGCO and is no longer centered on counterinsurgency or stability operations. The branch specific portion of the in-residence training received an additional two weeks of tactical and technical content after a reduction and re-evaluation of mandatory training tasks previously directed for implementation in PME. During the branch technical and tactical phases, historical case studies and extensive use of simulations (for applicable maneuver, fires, and effects branches) reinforce the tactical and technical portions of the curriculum. The CCC aim point has been refocused from primarily company command related content to a balanced approach that prepares Captains for both command as well as Battalion and Brigade Staff positions.

CGSC. At the Command and General Staff College, the ILE course aim point for several years was at the Brigade level due to the nature of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. As part of the reorientation to LSGCO, the second trimester's (Advanced Operations Course - AOC) aim point now focuses at the Division and Corps echelons to ensure Majors are prepared not only for XO, S3 and BN and BDE Primary staff, but also Division and Corps staff positions. Throughout the AOC, extensive use is made of instruction and practicums focused on the tactics and operational art associated with large scale combat – expeditionary deployment, forced entry, reconnaissance and security, defense, offense, and consolidation of gains. The elective program is now more focused with mandatory groupings of tactical and technical warfighting electives, based on branch, while offering a balanced number of broadening electives in history, language, culture, joint operations, and interagency. Included in this change in focus in AOC is a modification in how CGSC uses its history curriculum to improve student learning. We replaced the traditional chronological history curriculum with a case study methodology where campaign and battle analyses are used to provide context for the tactical and operational lessons related to the study of division and corps-level operations. We also leverage the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate and Army University Press to develop documentaries that provide tailorable, doctrine-based historical instruction as either additional self-development or for use in the adult learning model small group setting. See para 4 for link.

b. Warrant Officer Professional Military Education. Warrant Officer Professional Military Education also consists of a sequential and progressive series of courses. The Army revitalized warrant officer PME through a comprehensive review and redesign of the programs to ensure a focus on LSGCO while increasing academic rigor and technical competency. Based on extensive use of contractors over the last 17 years, our warrant officer corps' technical competence atrophied in key critical areas necessary for the Army to prevail in LSGCO. To address this issue, the Army reduced mandatory Distance Learning requirements by 50% by eliminating non-warfighting content to a new focus on course entry standards that validate warrant officers enter PME with the required foundational technical and warfighting skills. Additionally, the Warrant Officer Career College modified its approach to assessments with the inclusion of additional written essays that are focused on warfighting and leadership. These changes allow the schools to focus the limited in-residence training days on key warfighting tasks and branch technical requirements while ensuring the warrant officer cohort expands its cognitive development. The Warrant Officer Advanced Course (WOAC) received a complete course design revision to ensure a common core focused on critical warfighting tasks aligned with the revision of FM 3-0 in preparation for service at the tactical levels. For Warrant Officer Intermediate Level Education (WOILE) courses, the Army allocated programmatic funding for an advanced technical phase of education for all branches which previously did not have a branch specific technical phase of instruction. Finally, the Warrant Officer Senior Service Education (WOSSE) is undergoing a complete review of its curriculum to ensure it provides the education for senior CW4s and new CW5s necessary to apply their technical expertise in support of leaders at the division, corps, theater army and enterprise levels.

c. Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Professional Military Education. The Army continues to refine the professional development of our NCOs, preparing them to successfully accomplish their leadership and warfighting roles. The PME system for our NCOs consists of a series of resident schools prefaced with digital coursework to enable the Army to get the most out of the residential instruction. The Army's SPCs prepare for their first PME school by taking Distributed Leader Course (DLC I) before they attend the Basic Leader Course (BLC) which prepares them to become NCOs. As these Soldiers continue to progress in rank they attend the Advanced Leader Course (ALC), Senior Leader Course (SLC), (New) Master Leader Course (MLC), Sergeants Major Course (SMC), and the Nominative Leader Course (NLC), all preceded by the requisite level of DLC. While the BLC is focused on common leader core competency tasks such as leadership, readiness, communications, program management, operations, and training management, the ALC and SLC are branch specific schools focused on the occupational specific tactical, technical, and leadership skills those NCOs need to perform their warfighting responsibilities. The ten-month SMC prepares our most senior NCOs to serve in sergeants major positions throughout the force. Finally, the NLC is for those few NCOs selected for senior nominative assignments and is taught at the Army War College. The Army reexamined each of these courses within the last three years to ensure they produce the best NCO possible at their grade and specialty. Additionally, like Officer and WO education, NCO PME has been stripped of unnecessary or low risk education topics and replaced with technical, tactical and leadership

skills education, and training to ensure our NCOs are prepared for LSGCO.

USASMA. The Army recently restructured the SMC curriculum at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy to focus on not only increasing the technical and tactical skills for our sergeants major, but in the near future to award a Higher Learning Commission accredited Bachelor of Arts in Leadership and Workforce Development to selected graduates. In support of this BA program, the Army is creating the Army Degree Program, which provides Soldiers a framework to take college courses which enhance their performance as an NCO from the earliest parts of their careers. The focus on leadership, communication, program planning, and decision sciences ultimately create a stronger NCO Corps. There is also a shift to ensure that NCOs have greater opportunities for professional credentialing in specific trades and/or cooperative bachelor degree programs with civilian universities in their technical specialties. This initiative enables NCOs to improve their technical skills and receive appropriate professional credentials or education based on critical skills requirements set forth by their respective Branch Commandants. There are currently 22 accredited cooperative degree programs with multiple universities and over 120 of our NCO PME POIs provide funded professional credentialing.

d. Commander / CSM Leader Professional Military Education. The Army also provides training and education for command teams. The School for Command Preparation (SCP) conducts the resident Battalion and Brigade Pre-Command Course, Command Sergeants Major Course (Battalion and Brigade), and Command Team Spouse courses and synchronizes the Army's Command Team Preparation Programs in order to provide formations with competent, committed leaders of character prepared to lead change, win in Unified Land Operations, and meet the Army's 21st century challenges. Recent improvements include an improved LSGCO simulation exercise that provides students the opportunity to drive the operations process (Understand, Visualize, Describe, Direct, Lead, and Assess). PCC is conducted in residence (at CAC and the COEs) for all components (Active, Army National Guard and Army Reserve). Phase I is the two week common core course for all command select teams. Phase II is the two week tactical command combined arms course for commanders of tactical units. Phase III is the two week branch specific tactical command course conducted by branch at the COEs.

Finally, the Combined Arms Center has recently implemented a General Officer 2-star command course. ASEP-CMD is a developmental course for select General Officers to enhance their leadership capabilities and warfighting competencies at the Division, Corps and Theater Army echelons prior to assuming command of tactical 2 star Division (or equivalent) Command or 2 Star Deputy Corps or Theater Army Command positions. The course is designed to complement Army and Joint GO educational courses by focusing on Army doctrine, systems, and capabilities that enhance unit readiness using current operational scenarios to better prepare commanders to conduct Unified Land Operations at echelons above brigade.

## **5. Common Themes in Army Professional Military Education:**

The “four Cs” of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication are essential elements inherent in all Army PME. There are six cross-cutting areas that we continue to emphasize: critical thinking, creative thinking, oral communications, written communications, ethical reasoning, and strategic thinking. These skills and abilities as Army Professionals of character, commitment, and competence, coupled with expert knowledge in the conduct of warfare, remain essential to maintain overmatch of peer and near-peer adversaries.

The use of case studies provide an excellent methodology to pull this all together in PME. In addition to the extensive case studies embedded within the most critical education courses, self-development case studies are provided to the students to expand their breadth of study. Both virtual and traditional writings are provided. The historical doctrine documentaries produced by CADD and AUP, along with the LSCO Book Set are examples of increasing the professional body of knowledge and discourse among students, faculty and the operational force. Both, along with numerous other books, staff rides, professional journals, and other leader development products are available at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/>.

To enhance the rigor of PME, there are a number of actions we are taking to ensure we are training and educating the right Soldiers at the right time on the right content and to the right standard. These actions

include:

- Focusing on direct assessments of student learning against clearly stated outcomes for each level of PME.
- Revising CGSC selection and small group composition to ensure we have the right mix of branches in each small group. This enables greater rigor to challenge students and to increase learning in an adult learning model environment.
- Using pre-tests and comprehensive exams (written and oral) against course outcomes.
- Reviewing curricula on a regular basis with direct involvement of leadership for course purpose, outcomes, and learning objectives.
- Incorporating practical application exercises – maximizing simulations and technology – that employ outcomes-based assessments to drive critical and creative thinking.
- Implementing the new Academic Efficiency Report (DA Form 1059-2) for all PME to increase accountability.
- Implementing a more rigorous and comprehensive faculty development and recognition program, as well as a faculty maturation program, to improve instructional delivery and faculty recognition.

**6. Conclusion.** The main effort for the Army learning enterprise is to continue to develop agile, adaptive, and expert professional Soldiers and leaders for highly capable combined arms formations to successfully conduct Unified Land Operations against peer threats in complex and contested environments. Our way forward is to continue to assess and evolve our warfighting-focused PME to remain relevant to the ever-changing operational environment.

*Ad Bellum Pace Parati – In Peace, Prepare for War*

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