

Chief of Armor's Hatch: Leaders Are the Weapon System That Delivers Armored Brigade Combat Team Lethality

"No matter how much technology we develop, Soldiers will always remain the centerpiece of our Army. We equip people, we don't man equipment, and that will never change." -GEN James C. McConville

Armored brigade combat team (ABCT) lethality is achieved by developing confident and competent leaders (commissioned and noncommissioned officers (NCOs)). They drive change and innovation, maintain readiness and develop future leaders. Leader development, through education and training, will ensure ABCTs maintain the lethality necessary to fight and win.

Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3 says commissioned officers "must know how the Army runs and demonstrate confidence, integrity, critical judgment and responsibility while operating in an environment of complexity, ambiguity, and rapid change."

Armor officers must be agile, adaptive, technologically savvy and engaged problem-solvers to lead and plan combined-arms maneuver and cavalry missions during large-scale combat operations. Company-grade officer education and training is focused on building military-occupation specialty (MOS) proficiency. They must be able to accomplish all MOS level tasks to standard under adverse conditions to effectively lead at the platoon and company levels.

As they progress in rank, field-grade officers are expected to master the fundamentals of the aforementioned and be adept at fires synchronization and warfighting-function integration. Their education also focuses on oral and written communication to enable them to lead staffs at the battalion, brigade and division levels, or to function as members of joint- or Army-level staffs. Field-grade officers integrate warfighting functions (WfFs) to ensure that the unit's information collection, fires, protection, communication and sustainment plans enable combined-arms maneuver. At the staff level, field-grade officers serve as planners and action officers for joint- or Army-level actions.

As Armor officers become more senior (commanders or senior staff leads), they build a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge of MOS-specific tasks and work to develop junior leaders.

The professional-development model in Figure 1 depicts the formal education an Armor officer receives throughout his or her career.

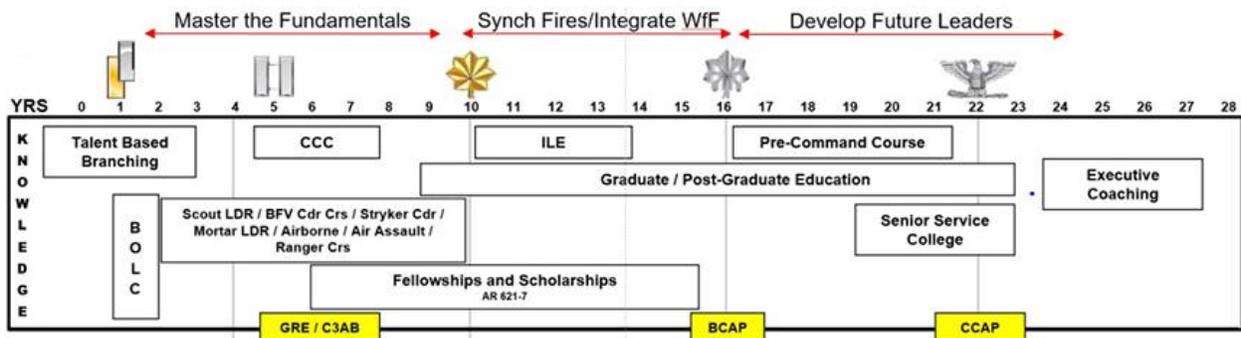


Figure 1. Armor officer professional-development model.

The U.S. Army is renowned globally for its NCO corps. In Training Circular 7-22.7, the 16th Sergeant Major of the Army, Michael A. Grinston said, "Throughout the history of the U.S. Army, the NCO has been its backbone. Our NCO corps is admired by our contemporaries around the world and is an integral part of what has made our Army so successful throughout our 244 years of service to the nation. The NCO corps has made revolutionary changes in the past decade and continues to evolve to meet the emerging threats posed by our enemies. Grounded in our

oath to the nation and our rich history and heritage, the NCO corps is the vanguard for leading and training Soldiers at the crew, team, squad, section and platoon level. Focusing on the basics with tough, realistic combat training will ensure that in the crucible of ground combat, our Soldiers will be victorious.”

NCOs enable ABCTs to function. They enable Soldiers to master the fundamentals of marksmanship, vehicle employment and maintenance, as well as supply and personnel management. Also, they are invaluable assets for planning and training management.

NCO professional military education (PME) is the catalyst for the aforementioned. The NCO Education and Professional-Development System is the foundation to NCO development. Education is included in each of its three lines of effort (development, talent management and stewardship of the profession).

Figure 2 depicts how education is continuous for Armor NCOs as they progress in their careers; education is continuous and ensures NCOs reach MOS proficiency for their current grade.

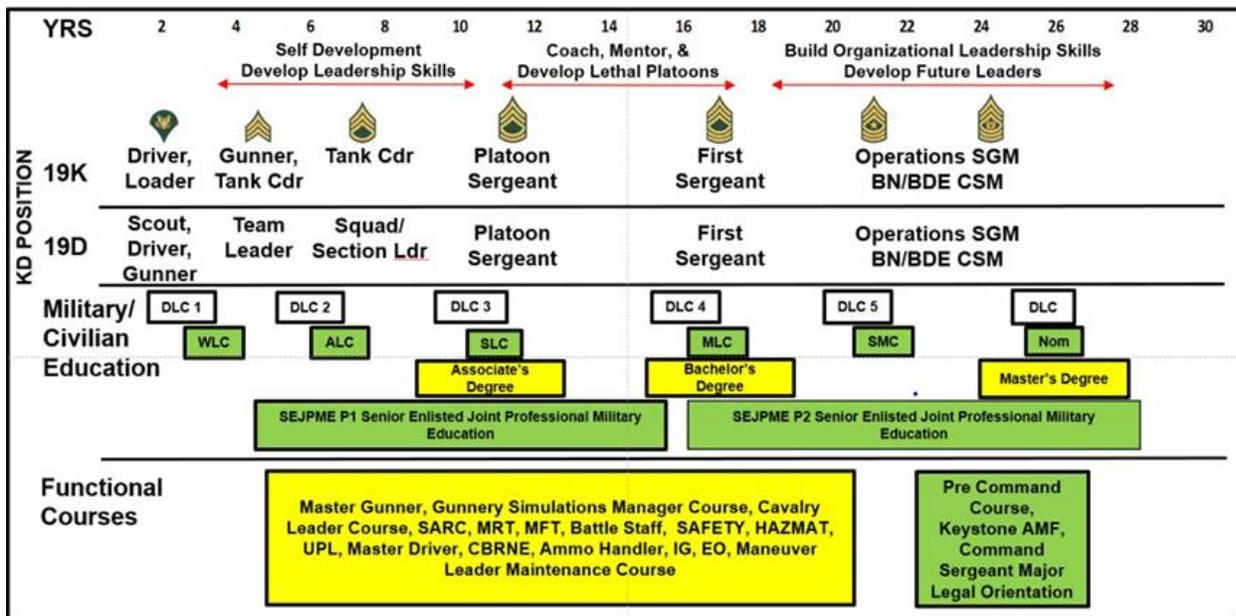


Figure 2. Armor NCO professional-development model.

DA PAM 600-25 details Armor NCO development. Junior NCOs (sergeant/staff sergeant) focus self-development and their mastery of 10-level tasks. This enables them to lead by example and train their younger, less experienced subordinates.

As Armor NCOs become more senior (sergeant first class/master sergeant), they focus on coaching, mentoring and developing lethal platoons. While still important, at this phase in their career, senior NCOs have less focus on individual accomplishments and greater emphasis on building teams and providing value to the organization. Following their key-developmental (KD) assignments, they continue to coach and mentor; they serve as combat-training center observer/coach/trainers and PME or functional-course instructors.

The senior armor NCOs (sergeant major/command sergeant major) have advanced communications and organizational leadership skills. These skills enable them to coach, teach and mentor junior and senior NCOs. They also focus on developing their community and public-relations skills to enable them to represent the command or Army during civic functions.

In addition to PME, ABCTs create confident and competent NCOs by sending them to functional courses. Functional courses make ABCTs more lethal; they create leaders with vehicle, weapons, maneuver, communications and administrative expertise.

Confident and competent leaders are the most casualty-producing weapon system in the ABCT. They drive change, inspire innovation and develop future leaders. Confident, competent leaders are the lifeblood of the ABCT and are quintessential to lethality.

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Acronym Quick-Scan

ABCT – armored brigade combat team
ALC – Advanced Leader’s Course (Figure 2)
AMF – Army Mobilization Forum (Figure 2)
BCAP – Battalion Commander Assessment Program (Figure 1)
BDE – brigade (Figure 2)
BFV – Bradley Fighting Vehicle (Figure 1)
BN – battalion (Figure 1)
BOLC – basic officer leader course (Figure 1)
C3AB – Career Courses’ Cognitive Assessment Battery (Figure 1)
CBRNE – chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and (high-yield) explosives (Figure 2)
CCAP – Colonels’ Command Assessment Program (Figure 1)
CCC – career captain’s course (Figure 1)
Cdr – commander (Figures 1 and 2)
Crs – course (Figure 1)
CSM – command sergeant major (Figure 2)
DA PAM – Department of the Army pamphlet
DLC – Distributed Leader’s Course (Figure 2)
EO – equal opportunity (Figure 2)
GRE – Graduate Record Exam (Figure 1)
HAZMAT – hazardous material (Figure 2)
IG – inspector general (Figure 2)
ILE – intermediate-level education (Figure 1)
KD – key developmental
LDR – leader (Figure 1)
MFT – master fitness trainer (Figure 2)
MLC – Mortar Leader’s Course (Figure 2)
MOS – military-occupation specialty
MRT – master resilience trainer (course) (Figure 2)
NCO – noncommissioned officer
PME – professional military education
SARC – sexual-assault response coordinator (Figure 2)
SEJPME -- Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education (Figure 2)
SGM – sergeant major (Figure 2)
SLC – Senior Leader’s Course (Figure 2)
SMC – Sergeant Major’s Course (Figure 2)
UPL – unit prevention leader (Figure 2)
YRS – years (Figures 1 and 2)
Wff – warfighting function
WLC – Warrior Leader’s Course (Figure 2)