

and land navigation. (When you're working with ten-digit grid coordinates, a fat-tipped pencil may make the difference between a right answer and a wrong one.)

- Tabs to use in marking manuals for quick reference. (These will make life much easier for you, especially during the maintenance exam.)

- A good straight-edge.

Probably the most important item, and one that you can't find in any PX or bookstore — is a good attitude. Without it, no matter how many notebooks and pencils you have, you may fail to accept what is presented. Resolve not to be turned off or insulted by the initial briefings in which the rules of the course are laid down. As the course progresses, you'll notice that those few NCOs who either didn't listen or just didn't care will start packing their bags to go home. Resolve, too, to take good notes and stay interested.

On the subject of physical fitness, make sure you can pass the PT test before you sign in, and if you cannot, you need to work on it on your off

time until you can. The cadre at ANCOC will give you every opportunity to pass the test before graduation, but you need to keep in mind that it is a requirement for graduation.

Next, do take advantage of your option to write specific statements about inadequate instructors and send your comments up through the chain of command. If a statement is in writing, most likely, action will be taken. (And don't hesitate to compliment the good instructors.)

For the most part, ANCOC is run by the NCOs in the class, and since the class is made up of senior noncommissioned officers, or those who will be shortly, this is only right. But don't assume from this that formations and inspections do not exist in the course. They do. Be prepared for daily accountability formations and for several in-ranks inspections, in both BDU and class "A" uniform. (If AR 670-1 has become a stranger to you lately, you would be wise to become reacquainted with it before you get to Benning.)

Overall, I was pleased that the

course did not live up to the awful war stories I had heard about it. It was well worth my time, and it opened my eyes in many areas. Granted, not everyone who attends the course comes into it with exactly the same experience level and not everyone will benefit from the course in the same way. But I don't think there was anyone in my class who could honestly say he did not learn anything from the course that he could take back to his unit.

With people like the post sergeant major, the School Brigade sergeant major, and all the NCO Academy cadre trying to make the course the best it can be, it is obvious that the advanced noncommissioned officer course can only get better for those who will attend it in the future — if their attitude is right from the day they sign in.

STAFF SERGEANT MARK S. WAFLER recently graduated from the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course and was on the Commandant's List. He is now assigned as a platoon sergeant in the Benning Ranger Division.

Make the NCODP Work

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR ROY C. OWENS

Many of us in the Army talk about the Noncommissioned Officer Development Program (NCODP), but too few really understand what the program is intended to do.

Depending on who you talk to, an NCODP should do as little as to get a unit's NCOs together once a month for identity's sake, or as much as to plan every minute of training these NCOs need on any given subject.

Unfortunately, many leaders fall into this latter category — they believe their NCODP should be designed to

satisfy all of their NCO training needs. And too often they single out the technical skills their NCOs appear to be weak in. These might include such subjects as MOPP levels, land navigation, or current events.

But the fact that some NCOs have deficiencies in certain basic technical skills does not necessarily mean the NCODP is at fault; neither does it mean the NCODP should be used to try to correct those deficiencies. Unit commanders, as they always have, must simply provide time on their

training schedules for such individual training, just as they do for collective training.

But if the NCODP is not designed to substitute for individual or collective training, what is it designed to do? It is supposed to be used to improve a unit's efforts in teaching and maintaining those skills. It is also intended to support our service schools in their efforts to restore and develop the basic professional qualities historically and routinely found in the Army's noncommissioned officers — qualities

that enable them to BE, KNOW, and DO. To put it simply, NCOs must have a good knowledge of the basic leadership qualities and the necessary skills, devotion, and courage to apply them.

Many of the professional and training problems we have with our non-commissioned officers will disappear if we keep the main objective of our NCODPs focused on those leadership principles. In any NCODP, the subjects selected for discussion and training need to serve primarily as ways to promote the NCOs' understanding of how to BE, KNOW, and DO. But if we aim only at making our NCOs technically competent through task training, we will never get to the program's main objective of training — to make our NCOs more effective and

professional. Besides, the skill tasks that any NCO must be proficient at are too numerous for him to learn during the relatively short time that is provided for most NCO development programs.

If we are to fulfill the intent of the NCODP, then, we must first understand its main objective, which is to help our NCOs understand their roles as leaders. We NCOs, therefore, must understand our responsibilities to our soldiers, our leaders, our units, the Army, and the noncommissioned officer corps. In addition, we must understand our personal responsibilities for self-development and the capability of the NCO support channel. Finally, and most important, we NCO's must understand the need to share our experience and know-how

with each other, and especially with our junior noncommissioned officers.

The NCODP is an excellent solution to the real problem of developing non-commissioned officers, but only if it is properly understood and implemented. If we keep its objective in sight and if we all strive to attain that objective, we will soon see more of the kind of results we can all be proud of.



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR ROY C. OWENS is command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Infantry Center at Fort Benning. He formerly served as command sergeant major of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 87th Infantry, 8th Infantry Division, in Germany.

The Bradley Master Gunner

CAPTAIN JOHN F. D'AGOSTINO

With the introduction of the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle into the Army's inventory, the assets available to the infantry commander in the field have increased dramatically. Mechanized infantry units can now fight from a vehicle and still maintain their traditional role of dismounted combat.

The Bradley's M242 25mm chain gun with its armor piercing and high explosive rounds, coupled with the M240G 7.62mm coaxial machinegun, can cause havoc in the ranks of both mounted and dismounted enemy infantrymen. And the TOW missile launcher mounted on the left side of the turret can defeat any known enemy armored vehicles out to a range of 3,000 meters.

With all of these new systems the Bradley has clearly presented many challenges to the infantrymen in the

field. Never before have these soldiers had a stabilized turret to work with, and never before have they had a weapon such as the 25mm chain gun. In short, to use the BIFV effectively infantrymen now have to be completely reeducated in gunnery techniques and unit training. And the Bradley master gunners assigned to battalions and companies play an important part in that reeducation.

These master gunners are highly motivated, highly trained noncommissioned officers who have successfully completed the 12-week Master Gunner's Course at Fort Benning and have been awarded the ASI (additional skill identifier) of "J3." (In most cases the master gunners at battalion level are sergeants first class while those at company level are staff sergeants who are assigned the master gunner job as an additional duty.)

To attend the course, an NCO should have at least four years of experience in mechanized infantry units, with some time as a mechanized infantry squad leader or platoon sergeant. He should be a volunteer and must be recommended by his battalion commander.

If selected, he will attend the course on a temporary duty (TDY) basis — not enroute to a new unit — and he should be retained in his unit for two years after he completes the course.

There is a good reason for this rule: As a master gunner, he will work hand in hand with either his battalion commander or his company commander, and it is important that he have a good relationship with them from the beginning.

The Bradley Master Gunner's Course at Fort Benning is 12 weeks long and includes a total of 502 hours,