

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.



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# 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,

broken down as shown on the accompanying chart.

Highlights of the course include swimming the BIFV; conducting operator and organizational maintenance; training on all weapon systems, on the simplified test equipment (STE), and on boresighting and range operations; conducting a squad combat qualification exercise; and developing a unit assessment and a unit gunnery training program.

The course is demanding and the standards are high. A student must receive a "GO" in all of the hands-on tasks and must maintain an 80 percent average on all of the written examinations. Each student is allowed one retest for each task or examination on which he has received a "NO-GO." If he fails the retest, his file is forwarded to an academic board, which may recommend his dismissal from the course.

(In the future the Master Gunner's Course at Fort Benning may be revised to include live fire exercises under NBC conditions; reverse cycle training to make the best use of the thermal night sight; and instructions on the Conduct of Fire Trainer (COFT), which is scheduled for fielding early in 1985.)

Once an NCO has completed the course and has become a master gun-

SUBJECT	HOURS
Introduction	3
Hull and turret operations	18
Training management	46
Range operations	50
Strategic deployment/NBC	12
Prefire/preliminary gunnery	42
Target engagement (live fire)	136
Gunner's skill test	16
Student oral presentations	21
Maintenance (vehicle and weapon)	101
Examinations	45
Administration	12
Total	502

ner, he is qualified to serve as the primary advisor to his battalion commander and battalion S-3, or to his company commander for all gunnery training. He will then be knowledgeable in all organizational maintenance aspects of the vehicle and its weapon systems.

It must be pointed out, however, that although he is an accomplished troubleshooter, he is neither a mechanic nor a supervisor of mechanics. His job is to identify maintenance problems in the vehicle and its weapon systems that could adversely affect the mission of the unit.

The master gunner is not a tactician, either. Nowhere in the course is tactics addressed. But he is a gunnery and maintenance subject matter expert who, given tactical guidance by the commander and the S-3, will be able to

develop gunnery techniques that can be integrated into the realistic combat scenarios designed by the operations officers.

The master gunner is also a trainer. He has been taught the rudiments of the battalion training management system (BTMS), and he is fully competent in all aspects of range operations, ammunition management, and target systems. And if, in the performance of his duties, the master gunner encounters a situation that he does not know how to handle, he can write or call the Master Gunner Branch at Fort Benning for up-to-date information concerning the vehicle.

General comments and questions about the master gunner position and the Master Gunner's Course are always welcome. All inquiries should be addressed to Commandant, U.S. Army Infantry School, ATTN: ATSH-W-BFV (MG), Fort Benning, Georgia 31905; or telephone to AUTOVON 784-6201 (Commercial: 404/544-6201).

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## Ranger Desert Phase

**CAPTAIN WILLIAM D. PHILLIPS**

When Ranger School graduates sit around talking, they like to exchange "war stories" about how tough their training was:

"When I went through, we had to walk 50 miles a night on one C-ration a day."

"Oh yeah? When I went through,

we didn't sleep a minute for 60 days."

"That's nothing. When I went through, we each had to swallow a live hand grenade before we could get the tab."

Well, in the future all you old time Ranger graduates will have to be on the lookout for new Ranger graduates

with even better tales to tell — the graduates who have been through the new Desert Phase of the Course, now being conducted near Fort Bliss, Texas.

Previously, the Ranger Course was divided into three phases — the Benning Phase, the Mountain Phase, and