



# The Army Logistics University Leverages Expertise Through Cross-Cohort Training

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*Basic Officer Leader Course students conduct an operation order brief for a training mission in order to synchronize all convoy leaders on the plan before mission execution. (Photo by Adam Gramarossa)*

# BOLC

## FEATURES

The Army Logistics University provides Basic Officer Leader Course students with the opportunity to work directly with noncommissioned officers and warrant officers as part of their training.

The Army Logistics University's Basic Officer Leader Department (BOLD) is constantly seeking ways to improve the outcome-based learning of its junior leaders. The department seeks and receives feedback from students, instructors, field commanders, and combat training centers to improve its courses.

In 2014, the Training and Doctrine Command surveyed more than 2,100 lieutenants at their first assignments and 13,000 officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) to solicit feedback about the content, adequacy, and relevance of Army institutional training in the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC).

The survey covered the five domains of officership and professional development, values and ethics, leadership, tactical and technical skills, and warrior tasks and battle drills. Lieutenants in their first assignments after completing BOLC were asked to indicate the extent to which they were prepared to execute their duties within those domains. Leaders were asked to evaluate the lieutenants' performance and prioritize the importance of the five domains.

The Training and Doctrine Command's Research and Analysis Directorate analyzed the survey and determined that counseling subordinates was the number one training deficiency out of 55 training areas. Furthermore, new lieutenants were deemed as generally lacking in confidence in understanding and relating to NCOs.

### Addressing Deficiencies

As a result of this survey and analysis, ALU's BOLD has implemented new initiatives to ensure junior leaders are prepared to operate and win in a complex world. The BOLCs offered at Fort Lee, Virginia, provide 15 to 17 weeks of training for Quartermaster, Ordnance, and Transportation lieutenants. This training is the final phase of initial military training for second lieutenants before they report to their first assignments.

To better prepare the lieutenants

for these assignments, BOLD has capitalized on the expertise of NCO instructors from the Logistics NCO Academy and warrant officer instructors from the Technical Logistics College at ALU by integrating them into the BOLC learning plan. The lesson plans and practical exercises implemented in the BOLC classes provide a better understanding of the importance and impact of quality counseling.

### NCO Counseling Forums

NCO-led counseling training forums are conducted twice a month. During each 90-minute session, students conduct three iterations: initial counseling, quarterly counseling, and on-the-spot counseling on a Department of the Army Form 2166-8-1, NCOER Counseling and Support Form. Previously, students received information on counseling subordinates and completing the proper forms, but no practical exercises were conducted.

Integrating NCO counseling into the BOLCs has decreased students' anxieties and increased their confidence in their ability to counsel NCOs. The forum affords both the student and the NCO the opportunity to execute a realistic counseling session, significantly reducing the initial apprehension junior officers often experience when counseling an NCO for the first time.

BOLC students enjoy the practical exercises and absorb the mentoring provided by the NCOs. Although the teacher advisor counselors primarily implement and provide instruction for the counseling, the students appreciate the open dialogue with the NCOs.

The students also gain valuable insights from the good and bad counseling experiences shared by NCOs. The counseling forum undoubtedly exposes students to best practices that will increase their overall competency and confidence.

### Integrating Warrant Officers

Warrant officers also play a key role



*Second Lt. Isaac Brunson practices conducting noncommissioned officer counseling with Staff Sgt. Devon Perry, a student attending the Logistics Noncommissioned Officer Academy at the Army Logistics University. (Photo by Adam Gramarossa)*

in the development of the lieutenants during BOLC. As technical experts, the warrant officers can provide direct feedback to the lieutenants during their core training modules. The warrant officers also discuss their roles and responsibilities and the relationships between the platoon leaders and chief warrant officers within a battalion or brigade.

An excellent example of warrant officer integration in BOLC is the Ordnance Munitions Management Module. Munitions management is one of two core competencies for area of concentration 91A (materiel maintenance and munitions management officer).

For each Ordnance BOLC class, several military occupational specialty 890A (ammunition warrant officer) Soldiers from the Technical Logistics College conduct a leader professional development (LPD)

session on the relationship between warrant officers and platoon leaders. The LPD typically takes the form of a discussion in which the lieutenants can ask questions.

During the LPD, lieutenants whose first assignment will be in a unit in which the warrant officer has served begin to ask more specific and insightful questions. These questions may be about characteristics of the installation and the chain of command, expectations of an incoming officer, near- and long-term training objectives, and the sponsorship program prior to arrival.

Following the LPD, the warrant officers receive the Ordnance BOLC students' final briefing on the practical exercise. Ordnance BOLC students plan and develop ammunition storage points on a sand table. Warrant officers in the munitions management field then provide experience-based

feedback on the students' ammunition storage points.

### **Warrant Officer Mentors**

In addition to the lieutenants achieving their learning goals while attending BOLC, warrant officers also use this mentoring experience to achieve one of their key learning objectives. Warrant officers are responsible for educating their lieutenants as they enter the field. The integration of the warrant officers into BOLC provides the opportunity for junior warrant officers to sharpen their leadership skills.

One of the key points that BOLD wants to convey to lieutenants is that warrant officers are not in competition with them. Instead, they are there to mentor and work with them as team members. The success of the platoon leader is often a reflection of the competency of the warrant officer. Thus, the warrant officers work



*A noncommissioned officer instructor trains a Basic Officer Leader Course student in properly attaching a sling load to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. This training teaches students the capabilities of aerial resupply and how it can be used across kinetic operations. (Photo by Adam Gramarossa)*

to ensure their success. Furthermore, warrant officers want the new lieutenants to understand how they can serve as a conduit to assist in critical team building between platoon leaders and their trusted battle buddies, the platoon sergeants.

Providing lieutenants with the opportunity to develop a rapport with warrant officers will hopefully develop the competence, confidence, and conviction of these new officers.

Based on initial student feedback from course pilots, the integration of NCOs and warrant officers into the junior officer education program is a welcome addition. End-of-course

critiques confirm that junior officers appreciate and benefit from practical, hands-on opportunities and immediate feedback. One-on-one interaction has no substitute, especially when developing leadership skills.

The Quartermaster, Ordnance, and Transportation basic courses are currently exploring ways to further integrate NCOs and warrant officers into the curriculum to improve learning.

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