



Sgt. Dariusz Krzywonos, a field artillery surveyor/meteorological crewmember with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Stryker), 2nd Infantry Division, works on a Structured Self-Development Course in September 2012. (Photo by Sgt. Mark Cloutier)

# Toolkit: Structured Self-Development

*By Jennifer Mattson*

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**S**ince April 1, Soldiers reporting to the Warrior Leader Course were required to have completed Structured Self-Development 1. Those who have not will be turned away from school.

“SSD-1 is now a prerequisite, so you must show up fully qualified to get into a class,” said Sgt. Maj. Jerry Bailey, director of Structured Self-Development at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Beginning Oct. 10, 2010, Soldiers have been automatically enrolled in SSD-1 after they complete

Advanced Individual Training or One-Station Unit Training. They then have 2½ years to complete SSD-1; they will need to re-register if they haven’t completed it during that time.

Soldiers are introduced to squad drills in Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, but aren’t required to lead them. They will be required to lead those drills at WLC, Bailey said, and the online SSD-1 course helps them learn what they need to know before arriving at WLC.

“We did a crosswalk (an analysis of other NCO Education System and distance learning courses) and saw where the gaps were,” Bailey said. “We found that to be a true prerequisite, we had to get out some other basic things so when Soldiers arrive at WLC, it won’t be the first time they saw those particular classes.”

Last November, four hours of map reading were added to SSD-1 to give Soldiers experience in land navigation, Bailey said.

“In January, when land navigation became part of WLC, [SSD-1 graduates] had already had some experience in seeing that particular lesson,” Bailey said. “They weren’t starting from scratch; it wasn’t a new task for them.”

Each level of Structured Self-Development requires about 80 hours of distance learning. The various levels are meant to guide Soldiers throughout their entire Army career, Bailey said.

“I think any Soldier who goes back and looks at SSD — whether they’re a sergeant major or a sergeant — they will find something that they need to re-familiarize themselves with, something they haven’t seen in years or something that they’ll learn new,” Bailey said. “As regulatory guidance continues to change, there will always be something that the Army is doing different and new. As the development team, we’re required to keep those SSD lessons up-to-date.”

Soldiers who have already graduated from WLC are not required to take SSD-1 but are encouraged to familiarize themselves with it. NCOs who want to help their Soldiers through SSD-1 should sit with their Soldiers as they complete the work, Bailey said.

“For me, to be a true coach, teacher or mentor, I would have to sit down with my Soldier and look at them go through some of those different tasks, and I would provide some information and feedback to assist that Soldier,” Bailey said. “It is the individual Soldier’s responsibility. But as coaches, teachers and mentors — because not every Soldier passes it the first time — I need to know if my Soldier didn’t pass. If my Soldier is having trouble, I need for them to know that I’m there to provide that feedback.”

### SSD enrollment and access

Soldiers will be automatically enrolled in Structured Self-Development at various stages in their Army careers. In addition to receiving an email from U.S. Army Human Resources Command notifying them, Soldiers can check their enrollment status on the Army Learning Management System (details are below).

- Soldiers are automatically enrolled in SSD-1 after completing Advanced Individual Training or One-Station Unit Training. SSD-1 is now a prerequisite for attending the Warrior Leader Course.
- There is no SSD-2. Instead, Human Resources Command will enroll Soldiers in the Advanced Leader

Course-Common Core when they complete WLC and are promoted to sergeant. However, because there is currently a backlog of around 6,000 students who need to take the course, prospective students are being added to an order of merit list. ALC-CC must be completed before being promoted to sergeant first class.

- NCOs are automatically enrolled in SSD-3 after graduating from ALC. SSD-3 is now a prerequisite for attending the Senior Leader Course.
- NCOs are automatically enrolled in SSD-4 after graduating from SLC. SSD-4 is now a prerequisite for attending the Sergeants Major Course. UP-DATE: As of Jan. 1, 2014 completion of SSD-4 will be a requirement for promotion to master sergeant. See Army Directive 2013-15 for more information. Army Directive 2013-15 can be found here: <http://ncojournal.dodlive.mil/2013/07/11/nco-promotions-will-be-linked-to-ssd/>
- NCOs are automatically enrolled in SSD-5 after graduating from the Sergeants Major Course. SSD-5 is currently being tested and is expected to launch Armywide before October. Past and future SMC (resident and non-resident) graduates will be required to complete SSD-5.

Once enrolled, Soldiers can access and complete the distance learning-delivered material via Army Knowledge Online:

1. Visit <https://www.us.army.mil/>.
2. In the menu bar, select “Self Service,” then “My Training”
3. Click the ALMS (Army Learning Management System) logo in the box in the upper left corner of the page.
4. Click on the course title to access the course.

Source: USASMA

### What you’ll learn

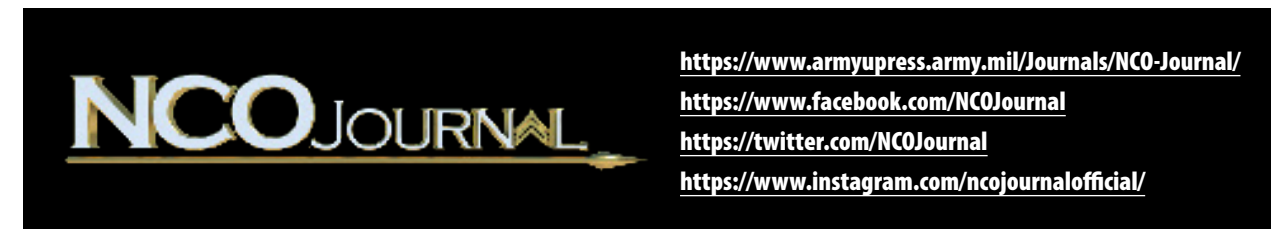
The lessons covered in Structured Self-Development 1:

- Army writing style
- Combat operations report
- Composite risk management
- Detainee operations
- Fratricide
- Mild traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress
- History of the NCO
- Personnel recovery
- Self-directed learning principles
- Counterinsurgency principles
- Cultural effects on military operations
- Customs, courtesies and traditions of the service
- How war and multiple deployments impact subordinates
- Leadership

- Military problem-solving process
- Personal habits to increase health and fitness
- Troop-leading procedures
- Supply activities in a unit
- Primary roles and functions of the military services
- Types of rehearsals
- Preparing a brief
- Conflict management
- Principles of effective management
- The NCO role in the Casualty Assistance Program
- The NCO roles in recruiting and retention

- Lean Six Sigma fundamentals
- Army ethics
- Task organization of squad for mission
- Communicate the history of the U.S. Army
- Identify financial readiness actions
- After-action review
- Conduct squad drill
- Host-nation, federal, state and local laws
- Environmental laws and regulations
- Time management

Source: USASMA ■



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