

Romero, team leader, Company B, 16th Engineer Battalion. "We can all learn from each other no matter what sex or color."

Motivation, cooperation, understanding and respect go a long way with Brooks and Rosas.

"One of our Army Values is Selfless Service. Sergeants Brooks and Rosas are great examples of that value. If someone spends time working with me then I will do my best to shine," said Spc. Chester E. Greathouse, field artillery radar fire finder, Battery B, 1-94 Field Artillery Battalion (MLRS).

"When you come to PLDC, come to do your best. Stay motivated. Come to exceed the standards," said Carrigan.

Motivation such as that displayed by Greathouse, Miller, Branum, Carrigan, Romero, Ruiz

and other Iron Soldiers is what Brooks and Rosas like to see.

"What we like to see is motivation and maturity. Come to PLDC with a positive attitude and we will give you our best," said Rosas. Sending soldiers to PLDC unprepared is an injustice to the NCO Corps, explained Rosas. "Weeding out soldiers here is not our job."

"We are here to train leaders for the greatest army in the world," said Brooks with a smile, agreeing with Rosas. "If you aren't motivating your soldiers, you aren't doing your job."

Editor's note: The 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy is the Army's oldest NCO academy. Soldiers from all over U.S. Army Europe attend the school in preparation for promotion to the rank of sergeant.

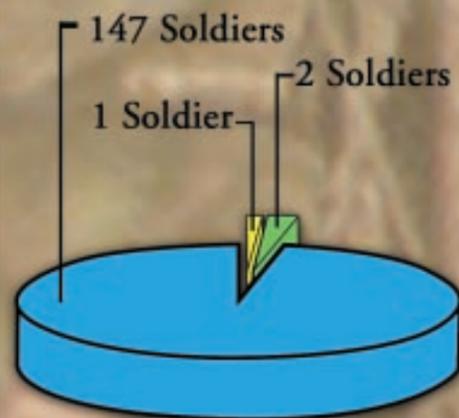
What do I need to do to prepare for PLDC?



Focus on physical training: PLDC enforces strict adherence to FM 21-20 standards.

Check out the PLDC website: www.grafenwoehr.army.mil provides a link to packing lists, academy history and other helpful information.

Sharpen common task skills: PLDC is meant to refine skills such as map reading and land navigation. The majority of PLDC failures occur during the land navigation exam.



- 147 soldiers pass PLDC
- 2 soldiers fail land navigation
- 1 soldier dismissed for other reasons



Inching forward to get a better shot, Sgt. Christopher M. Miller, truck commander, 1st Brigade Recon Team, 1st Armored Division, defends against hostile fire during the PLDC FTX.

Division Command Sgt. Maj. Preston

leaves behind blueprint for building Iron Soldiers



our noncommissioned officers and soldiers," Casey said. "I've made a lot of decisions in almost two years of command, but none better than the one that brought Ken and [his wife] Karen Preston to Old Ironsides."

Preston was assigned to the 1st Armored Division in December 1999 after serving four years at Fort Hood, Texas. "At Fort Hood, we stayed very, very busy. Over here, the pace is just faster than I could have imagined," Preston said.

The division's top NCO arrived just as the division was beginning its train-up for 1st Brigade's deployment to Kosovo, the KFOR 2A rotation. Preston took a back-to-basics approach, reviewing all of the division's policies and standard operating procedures.

"I wanted us to identify what the standards were for every aspect of the operation that we were going to do. By taking it back to basics and establishing the standards, what you do is empower the most junior leader," Preston explained. "You empower them and hold them accountable for enforcing the standards."

In the spring of 2000, with 1AD soldiers preparing to deploy, Preston ensured that the soldiers were trained to standard both during their Individual Readiness Training and during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise. For the soldiers, it was a time of uncertainty. Kosovo was and still is a volatile region. With a six-month deployment on the horizon, many soldiers went into the training not knowing what to expect and uncertain of the mission.

But Preston worked hand-in-hand with the 1st Brigade's NCOs to ensure that 1AD's soldiers did not "rush to failure," as he's known to say.

"As with any [command sergeant major], you get the guidance from the commanding general. That's the direction that [Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr.] wanted to take the division, particularly for the units that were deploying. His focus was standards and discipline," said Preston.

During Preston's farewell ceremony April 24, Casey described Preston as "just the right [command sergeant major] for the only active tank division in the best Army in the world."

"He's a tough, disciplined, compassionate leader, who is a skilled armored warrior ... a great trainer and team builder, who understands soldiers, who lives by the Iron Standards and the NCO Creed and who is an ideal role model for

Story by Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter
Photos by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni
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1st Armored Division PAO

BAD KREUZNACH, Germany — If Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston ever had to write a brief job description for his duties as the 1st Armored Division's command sergeant major, it would simply state "Builder of Iron Soldiers."

During the past 17 months, building Iron Soldiers has been Preston's mission, goal and driving force. It's also the legacy he leaves with the division as he makes his transition to his new job as the V Corps command sergeant major.