

NCO ACADEMY ***FORT MCCOY***

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



FISCAL YEAR 2025
4th Quarter

**ACHIEVEMENTS,
FAREWELLS,
PROMOTIONS,
STATISTICS &
MORE**

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2025



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While cycles, days, months, and seasons have beginning and endings, what doesn't ever stop is "change". Change is inevitable and constant. Change is what keeps us on our toes to not becoming complacent. But how do we view change? Do we get so dug into our daily battle rhythms that we resist change, or get upset when someone moves our cheese (it's a book)? Or do we welcome change? As leaders, we must remain flexible and adaptive to the constant change. Our Army and country depend on it. As we roll up the end of our FY25 cycles and charge directly into the FY26 ARPRINT with our October cycles, there are many changes here at NCOA Fort McCoy. We welcome new instructors at both Basic Leader and Battle Staff. We will begin preparing for upcoming structure changes later in FY26, and even possible changes to curriculum and course lengths. But no matter the change, I have full faith and confidence that this academy of professional Soldiers stands ready to embrace and help shape these upcoming changes. We will use these changes to sharpen our talents as instructors and staff members, and as leaders. I am proud of everyone here at NCOA Fort McCoy and honored to be your CSM.

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CSM Jason D. Kirkman
Commandant



MSG Brian M. Weinberger
Director of Instructions

“

I am honored to join the Fort McCoy NCO Academy team as the new Deputy Commandant. It is a privilege to serve alongside such a dedicated cadre who are shaping the future of our Noncommissioned Officer Corps. Our mission here is vital: developing adaptive, disciplined, and empowered NCOs who will lead Soldiers in complex and demanding environments. As Deputy Commandant, my priority is to support our instructors, staff, and students in achieving excellence in every facet of training and professional development.

I look forward to building on the proud legacy of this Academy while working together to uphold the Army standard of leadership and readiness. Together, we will ensure our graduates leave here confident, capable, and prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow's fight.

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1SG Derek D. Willis
First Sergeant

“

I am excited to take on the role of NCOA Ft. McCoy First Sergeant. Working with the dedicated professionals and experts who are training the backbone of the Army is both an honor and a privilege. Many changes are coming to Ft. McCoy, and I am proud to work alongside the Soldiers and this academy to help shape and move into the future with them. We will strive for excellence in all that we do, remaining focused on our mission to develop and prepare our Soldiers. I am committed to supporting every member of this team, fostering an environment where everyone can grow, adapt, and contribute to maintaining this as the premier training institution.

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I want to thank all members of the NCO Academy Fort McCoy, especially the Basic Leader Course, so much for the incredible honor of being named Instructor of the Year. Your mentorship, support, and unwavering belief in my potential have been instrumental in my success. To my fellow Small Group Leaders (SGLs), I deeply appreciate your collaboration and the countless lessons I've taught and learned, with each of you. To our senior leaders, thank you for creating an environment where I could grow and truly make an impact. This recognition is a reflection of the outstanding team I'm privileged to work with every day, and I am truly grateful for everything.

”



SSG Gerardo Betancourt
Instructor of the Year 2025





Change of Responsibility Ceremony

On September 3, the NCO Academy at Fort McCoy welcomed its new First Sergeant. Incoming 1SG Derek M. Willis assumed responsibility, succeeding SFC Jennifer C. Horvath, who served exceptionally as the interim First Sergeant.

SFC Horvath's leadership and dedication during her time in the role made a significant impact on the Academy. The NCOA expresses its gratitude for her professionalism and commitment to the mission. We now look forward to 1SG Willis bringing his experience and vision to guide the Academy, continue developing our leaders, and uphold the standards of excellence that define Fort McCoy.





Farewells & STORIES



**MSG Michael R. Losacker**

We say farewell to a leader who first served as the S3 NCOIC and later as a Battle Staff Small Group Leader. His professionalism, mentorship, and dedication have left a lasting mark on the Academy, and his presence will truly be missed.

**MSG Brandon S. Wertz**

We bid farewell to a true pillar of the Battle Staff NCO Course, who began as a Small Group Leader, later served as Senior Small Group Leader, and stepped up as Course Manager when needed. His leadership, adaptability, and dedication will be greatly missed.

**SFC William M. Durgin**

We say goodbye to a dedicated leader who began as a Small Group Leader at BLC and later served in Training Management. His professionalism and commitment have left a lasting impact on the Academy.





SFC NATHAN SCOTT

We bid farewell to a great leader whose dedication and guidance left a lasting mark on the Basic Leader Course.

Serving as a Small Group Leader, his commitment to developing future leaders has inspired both students and peers alike.



SSG Michael Sanborn

With gratitude and respect, we recognize a leader who served as the Supply NCO for the NCO Academy. His dedication, professionalism, and behind-the-scenes efforts ensured our mission's success and set the example for others to follow.



Voyageur 50 Mile Trail Ultramarathon

Carlton, Minnesota | July 26, 2025 — Four Noncommissioned Officers from Fort McCoy showcased exceptional resilience by completing the Minnesota Voyageur 50 Mile Trail Ultramarathon — one of the toughest and oldest trail races in the U.S.

MSG Pardonvarde, SFC Levi, SSG Knowles, and SSG Oile tackled the 50-mile course, which features over 5,000 feet of elevation through rugged terrain, forest trails, and steep climbs between Carlton and Duluth.

Their participation highlights the Army's commitment to physical readiness, perseverance, and leading by example both in uniform and in the community.





TACTICAL COMBAT CASUALTY CARE

Fort McCoy, WI | July 21-25, 2025 — Demonstrating the Academy's commitment to readiness and lifesaving proficiency, cadre from the Fort McCoy NCO Academy completed certification in Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC).

Led by senior medic SFC Rafael Sandoval, the training covered Care Under Fire, Tactical Field Care, Tactical Evacuation Care, and Medical Evacuation procedures. Each participant gained hands-on experience under simulated combat conditions, building essential skills for operational environments.





SUPPORTING LEADER DEVELOPMENT IN HAWAII

Hawaii | July–August 2025 — Demonstrating the Army's commitment to leader development and readiness, three Noncommissioned Officers from the Fort McCoy NCO Academy supported two critical training missions in Hawaii this summer.

From July 7 to August 3, SSG Anthony Ransom served as a guest primary facilitator at the 298th Multi-Functional Training Regiment in Waimanalo, Hawaii, where he augmented the cadre instructing Basic Leader Course (BLC) Class 003-25. His support contributed directly to preparing junior NCOs for leadership roles within their units.

Simultaneously, from July 8 to 31, SFC Joshua Caires and SFC Karina Medina led the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course (BSNCOC) Mobile Training Team (MTT) Class 701-25 at Fort Shafter Flats. Instructing 16 Soldiers from the 9th Mission Support Command, they provided in-depth training on mission command, MDMP, command post operations, and staff integration — essential skills for staff-level leadership.

These efforts highlight the NCO Academy's ongoing role in building capable, adaptable leaders across the Army Reserve and active components, while expanding access to professional military education throughout the Pacific region.





FORT MCCOY, WI – On 29 August 2024, NCOA McCoy riders participated in a mandatory motorcycle check-ride at Building 1361 (HQ). The event included a safety briefing, document verification, and motorcycle inspections, followed by a supervised ride along a briefed route.

All riders wore full personal protective equipment in accordance with Army safety standards. The check-ride reinforced safe riding practices and concluded without incident.



On 31 July, staff participated in a training day focused on the new Army Fitness Test (AFT) standards. The session included a Diagnostic Height and Weight test, followed by an AFT class designed to enhance understanding and ensure proficiency in the updated requirements. The training aimed to prepare all personnel to meet the revised fitness expectations effectively.



On August 12, Sonja Farver from the Name Tape Factory visited the NCO Academy at Fort McCoy to provide uniform alterations for the students. In recognition of her outstanding support, CSM Kirkman presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation, highlighting the value of her contributions to the academy's mission.



On September 23, the NCOA team came together for a cadre cookout during lunch. SFC Sandoval took charge as the grill master, serving up meals for everyone. It was a perfect opportunity to step away from the daily routine, enjoy good food, and relax together as a team.

KM Good News Story

NCOA Fort McCoy Knowledge Management (KM) section continues to grow through institutional training! Headquarters' own SFC Zanichkowsky completed the Knowledge Management Qualification course at Fort Leavenworth, KS this June. He is now able to certify additional KM Representatives (KMRs) to sustain our momentum in meeting the Army Enterprise Accreditation Standards and enhancing mission and organizational performance.

We held a KM Working Group (KMWG) in August after a long hiatus, which put us back on the glidepath to implement the KM Program at our unit.

Knowing is half the battle, and now YOU KNOW!





Achievements & PROMOTIONS





**INSTRUCTOR
CERTIFICATION CERTIFICATE**



SFC Medina



SSG Burgos



SSG Gatlin



SFC Diaz



SSG Munoz



SSG Oile



SSG Maldonado



SFC Reaves

BASIC ARMY INSTRUCTOR BADGE



SSG Gatlin



SSG McCary



SSG Torres



SSG Oile



SFC Mendez



SSG Munoz



SSG Burgos



A Landmark Achievement

A huge congratulations to **MSG Brandon Wertz** for receiving the prestigious **Master Army Instructor Badge**, making him the 180th person in Army history to earn this distinction!

From guiding senior Battle Staff instructors to overseeing the course as the course manager, he's consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership while shaping the next generation of Army instructors.





PROMOTIONS

MSG BRANDON WERTZ



SFC WILLIAM DURGIN



SFC ANTHONY WALL



SFC ANDY DIAZ



Congratulations to **SSG Paul Samuelson** for earning the Honorable Order of Saint Martin!

This prestigious recognition, awarded by the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, honors his outstanding contributions, leadership, and dedication to the Quartermaster mission. Named after Saint Martin of Tours, the patron saint of quartermasters, this award highlights his commitment to excellence in sustaining the force.





Honors & STATS





Honors Roll-Up

Basic Leader Course

007-25

Distinguished Honor Graduate

SGT Nathan D. Cheng

Honor Graduate

SPC Jenna M. Hanson

Iron Soldier

SGT Cohen A. Rice

008-25

Distinguished Honor Graduate

SPC Montanah S. Schopieray

Honor Graduate

SGT Tristan R. Koopman

Distinguished Leadership

SPC Briana L. Thomas

Iron Soldier

SGT Cameron A. Newcity

Commandant's Writing Award

SGT Edward A. Mayfield

Battle Staff NCO Course

007-25

Distinguished Honor Graduate

SFC Jessica J. Bartow

Honor Graduate

SSG Jacob C. McIntyre

008-25

Distinguished Honor Graduate

SFC Drew R. Schneider

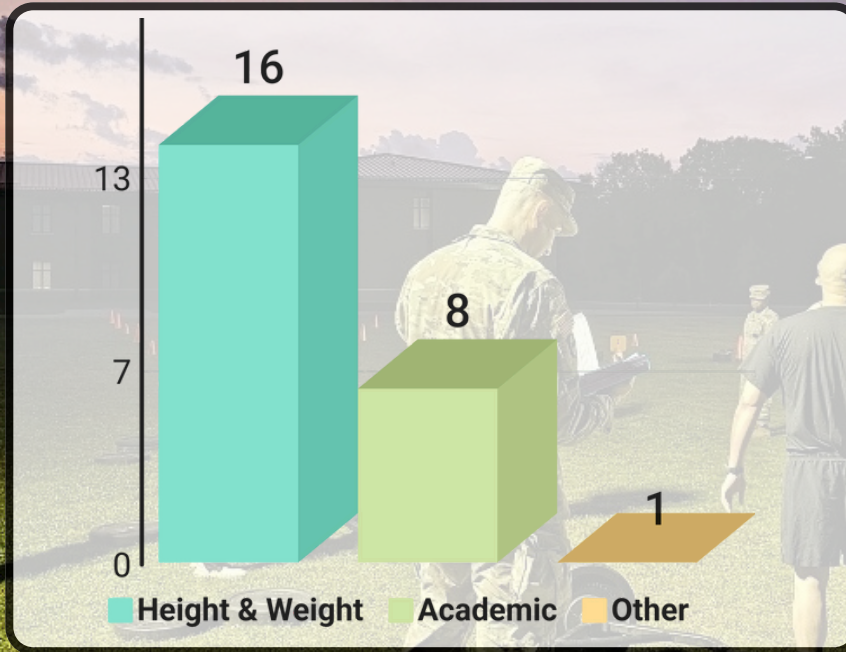
Honor Graduate

SSG Lucas W. Weller

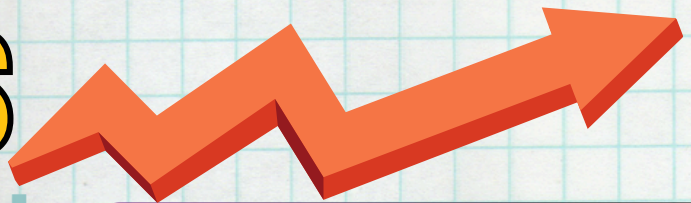




Drops

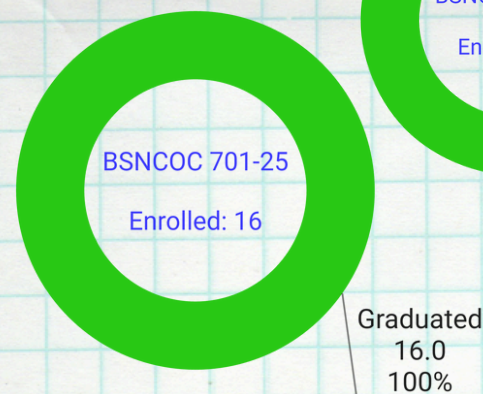
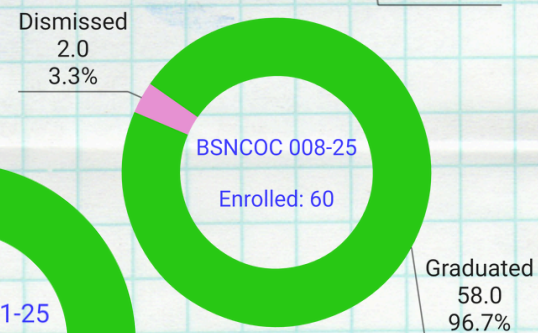
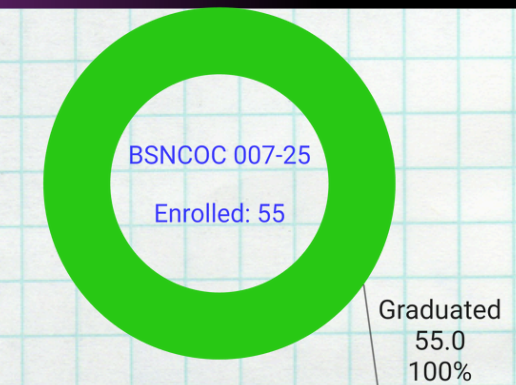
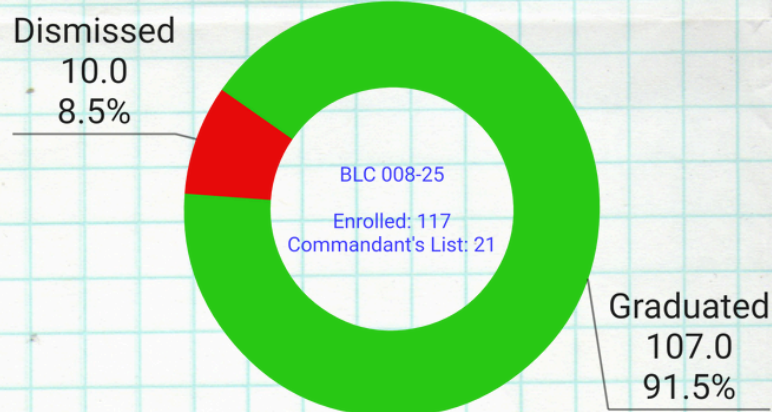
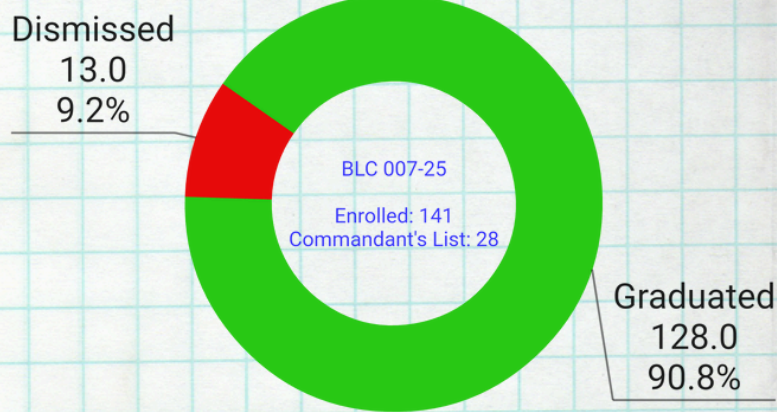


Class Stats



BLC

BSNCOC





BECOME AN INSTRUCTOR

Join the NCO Academy team at Fort McCoy by contacting the point of contact listed below. The NCOA team will arrange a date and time for a follow-up interview to assess your potential as a valuable team member.

PROMOTIONS & SCHOOLS

- 90% Promotion rate from SSG to SFC as a Small Group Leader
- Common Faculty Development – Instructor Course (CFD-C)
- Receive SQI – 8 (Instructor Identifier)
- Instructor Writer Course
- Eligible to earn all three levels of Army Instructor Badges (Basic, Senior, and Master)

REQUIREMENTS

- Possesses mature judgement, military bearing and initiative
- Meets AR 600-9 Standards
- Be able to pass the AFT
- Holds the ranks of SSG-SFC



Contact Us

Commandant

CSM JASON D. KIRKMAN

Phone: (502) 898-3744

Director of Instructions

MSG BRIAN M. WEINBERGER

Phone: (502) 898-3822

First Sergeant

1SG DEREK M. WILLIS

Phone: (502) 898-4601

BLC Course Manager

SFC JAMES WELCH

Phone: (502) 898-3526

BSNCOC Course Manager

MSG JEFFREY A. SAGE

Phone: (502) 898-7648

Staff Duty 24hr Duty

Phone: (804) 873-5964



Facebook



YouTube



NCO Academy Website



Newsletter Point of Contact:

SFC Gabriel Flores- Almenas

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