

## **OPENING ADDRESS – 2<sup>ND</sup> LEADER SERGEANTS’ COURSE** **2013**

*“Leadership is what happens when you are not around Senior Business Executive”*

Leadership is **Influencing** people – by providing purpose, direction and motivation – while **Operating** to accomplish the mission and **Improving** the organization.

Therefore, if you accept my definition of leadership you will also accept that **Leadership** is not a natural trait, something inherited like the colour of our eyes or hair..... Leadership is a skill that can be studied, learned and perfected by practice.

It was with approach to train, to grow Leaders at the Sergeant level that the establishment of the Sergeants Academy that graduated its first set of Sergeants in 2013.

This Leader Sergeant Course # 2 is the second of the Flagship course for the Academy. Also, I am directing that training modules for short courses and seminars must now be designed and conducted by Trg Corps to improve the knowledge of other Sergeants who may have been already trained by the traditional courses.

The Leader Sergeant Course is designed to train both civilians and soldiers to become Sergeants in the Guyana Defence Force. The objective is to produce Sergeants who can lead and command at the Platoon Sergeant or equivalent level in the GDF.

Now, what has led to the establishment of the Sergeants' Academy and the delivery of the Leader Sergeants Course?

Before the LSC the entry requirements to the Force were set for the BRC – at the sound primary education level and for the SOC, CXC qualifications but grades one and two only.

Today, secondary schools graduates with mixed CXC qualifications can now enter the Force and be trained to serve at the Senior Non-Commissioned level with the potential for the new 21<sup>st</sup> century Snr NCOs who will now likely to be younger, have a sharper academic input with greater military knowledge, with effective command and supervision of his platoon. The LSGT course over time will produce graduate SGTs who will be better educated in the critical skills now needed to professionalise our Snr NCO Corps – **Leadership**, **Tactics** and **Administration**. Thereby addressing the needs of our fighting Battalions, Training Corps and our operations Snr NCO staff. Also, technically trained personnel being recruited directly to our technical units like 4 Engr Bn, Coast Guard, Air Corps, Medical Corps to name a few can now send the engineer technicians and nurses and pharmacists to become Sergeants imbued in these critical leadership skills, will return to be better leaders and administrators in these technical units.

Our Sergeants regardless how they are trained and developed will remain the 'backbone' of our units, the GDF as a whole. You are the leaders who will be responsible for discipline, for training our soldiers so they are better prepared to execute their tasks and the organisational mission of the GDF.

You will join the body of military professionals – the Snr NCO Corps – who are the primary link between our soldiers and jnr NCOs and we the Commissioned Officers of the Force.

When the US in 1967 started their own Non-Commissioned Officer Candidate Course to alleviate shortages of Sergeants, the then regular SGTs who had received their promotion through traditional methods had used negative terms like “Instant NCOs”.

However, knowledge is only part of the equation. As Aspirants to the rank of Sergeants you need to know early in this course that smart decisions result when you combine professional skills (which you will learn through study on this course) with the experience (which you will gain from doing the job of a Sergeant on your successful completion of this SGT Course), and your ability to reason through a problem based on the information available.

Therefore, this Leader Sergeant Course must focus on producing Leaders who will ultimately work to influence soldiers in your platoon, Sergeants who operate to accomplish the mission, and Sergeants who will act to improve our Guyana Defence Force.

With these remarks, I hereby declare open Ldr SGT Course # 2. Thank you and  
Good Luck in your studies.