

COURSE OPENING – SLC 2013 AND PSC 2013 ON TUE 01ST OCT, 2013

Deputy COS/Col GS, Col AQ, Comds 1 and 2 Inf Bns, BComd BC(S), Commanding Officers, SO 1s, Offrs, FSM, RSMs WOs, Snr and Jnr NCOs, Civs, all Other Ranks. All protocols observed.

As your newest COS, I have decided that among the to help you understand my focus and my senior leadership approaches to command and leadership in the GDF for the period Sept 2013 – Oct 2016, all things being equal (ceteris paribus) must be course opening and closing addresses.

Today, as I reflect on the Terminal Objectives of both the (1) Senior Leaders Course – train and administer a sub-unit as a Sergeant Major in peacetime and combat, (2) Platoon Sergeants Course – train and administer an Infantry platoon in peacetime or combat. There are some immediate directions that I must give to my Deputy COS and the Commanding Officer Training Corps:

Directives

1. The All Arms Courses training year wef 2014 must conform to the existing University Semester system 01st Sept to mid Dec and 01st Mar to 30th Jun.
2. If a course is indeed modular then the student must remain on the course to complete **ALL** the modules and cannot/must not be sent off for failing a module. It means that only on completion of the failed modules within 2 years, thereafter that student can be deemed as passed the entire course. Example, I know of an officer who had to re-do the English Language module in order to pass a JCSC and another officer who will not progress promotion wise until he complete an outstanding research paper for him to be deemed as having passed the JCSC.
3. Less prominence be placed on physical fitness on course and greater prominence on knowledge transfer and the development/enhancement/improvement of competency/proficiency on the use of kit and equipment – wpns handling, MRN, use of GPS, Find me – training for role activities.

4. No more monthly Capts Runs, Subby Derby and Sergeants run. This activity must be replaced with a proficiency/competency development related training exercise to be developed and designed by the Snr Management of the GDF and will be done over a one-two day period every quarter instead of the runs. However, the AFT and IRT remains important activities in determining individual fitness standards.

5. If you are attending Base Muster and Drill Parades, conducting monthly shooting/range practices, then the Drill and Skill-at-Arms modules on the PSC should in effect conform to the first component of both the SLC and PSC that is to train (a sub-unit) and to train a (platoon) respectively. My argument being that these modules should really be the Instructor version of the Drill and Skill courses and not the Basic version of these courses. So in effect

6. A Paradigm shift is now necessary – instead of spending most of the time on these courses on subjects/activities that we are comfortable with let us devote more course time/at the start of these courses to Academic training, Communication skills training and the Administration related subject matters of the course syllabuses. You cannot give a student his final paper topic in week 10 or 11 of a 14 weeks course. He must (like I did at IADC) be exposed to the lessons/lectures, standards/conventions and requirements for the course writing assignments and develop and have approved his/her topic for the final research paper before week # 4 of the SLC, JCSC and SCSC.

7. Change from Re-Engagement to Contract. You cannot do a five months course and have to re-engage for 3 years. It should be a contract for one year if my memory serves me right. SO 1 G1 will check and publish for emphasis.

As you approach your studies on both the SLC and PSC you must be clear in your understanding of the *raison d'être* – reason for existence – of the Guyana Defence Force.

One of the preconditions for formal independence of the new Anglophone Caribbean states as imposed by Britain was the establishment of a defence force – Dion Phillips – Defence in the Anglophone Caribbean

In Guyana, the reality is that the affordability consideration has always been a constant in defence and security policy formulation from the entire existence of the GDF, from its establishment in Nov 1965 to present. The general trend therefore is that notwithstanding how generous our political leaders hope to be to the GDF, alleviating the social conditions of our people remains a foremost priority area of action and the defence and security budgets must compete with allocations for social sector spending like, education, health, housing and infrastructure development projects.

Therefore, as the organization tasked with the delivery of a public good – Defence and Security – we must not only be **effective** but **efficient** in performing our roles and missions.

There must be emphasis on professionalism and a greater level of Accountability for public funds allocated to us in the national budgets.

The Guyana Defence Force serves Guyana. Our regimental colour has our motto “SERVICE’ Our creed “I am a professional in the GDF Service is my motto”.

Section 5 of the Defence Act Chapter 15:01 of 1977 states “The Force shall be charged with the defence of an maintenance of order in Guyana and with such other duties as may form time to time be defined by the Defence Board”.

Therefore the fundamental characteristic of our profession is our focus on Service.

This focus on service requires expert knowledge at all levels of command and leadership – on the concepts and tools of the trade of soldiering, i.e on being a professional soldier.

As Senior NCOs in leadership role as platoon SGTs and Company Sergeant Majors you have the responsibility of moulding our soldiers – make them professional soldiers.

The most important duty of our military profession is the safety and welfare of the general public.

Therefore as Snr NCOs being trained at this senior level for command and leadership up to the sub-unit level on both the SLC and PSC you need to spend time studying the military profession.

The profession of arms/military profession sets the men and women who embrace it somewhat apart from the rest of society. He/She is a citizen (i.e we have rights and obligations) but is not a civilian. As soldiers we:

- (a) serve/service is our motto
- (b) we are expected to live an ordered life
- (c) we progress by master complex skills
- (d) we are expected to operate at a high level of integrity

Therefore the function of the (our) military profession is the orderly application of Force. Our collective duty is to develop our skills in the management of violence to the utmost and secondly to act as true subordinate of the properly constituted civilian authority, that is:

We subscribe, as a professional military, to civilian control of the GDF – exercised through an elected government – the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the Defence Board.

Additionally, the Contemporary Operating environment for Guyana as we note our national interests and threats to our security as a nation has led to greater involvement of the GDF in support of the civil authority not only in Internal Security Ops but the need for increased readiness to support operations in times of emergencies – flooding, outbreak of epidemics, etc and criminal activities with a potential to affect the stability of the state, etc.

Therefore the measure of our professionalism its success on/in our various missions and operations – DROs, Border Sy Ops, IS, Anti Crime, etc.

Because of how success is measured for us we must do two things everyday:

1. We must train our soldiers and administer them properly
2. We must grow them (our soldiers) into leaders – that is why you are here on course.

Training in the GDF must be to impart to our soldiers the individual and collective skills, knowledge and attributes required to accomplish the role and missions of the GDF.

As leaders we have to inspire our soldiers – offrs, jnr NCOs included to behave professionally and to accomplish missions effectively and efficiently. I therefore urge that you approach the course work with an objective and open mind, do not

submit to your own biases (Idol of the Tribe), do not submit to faulty or unworthy authority (Idol of the Market Place) and finally, avoid the “heard mentality” or “group think” – do not follow the crowd as if the crowd say so it is so. (Idol of the Theatre) Quote: “It is impossible to begin to learn that which one thinks one already know” Epictetus

Do your research and offer recommendations for improvements of the Force.

Problem (1) Lack of proper record keeping – accountability

(2) Lack of care and protection of our kit and eqpt – vehicles, etc

(3) Non-adherence/deviations from SOPs and Force Regulations.

(4) Stealing of everything – personal items and state property

(5) Lack of interest in educational opportunities provided for development – AEP,

Specialist courses – yet requests for promotion abound.

Study the Force’s problems/issues and make recommendations for improvements. With these final words “I hereby declare open the Snr Ldrs Course 2013 and the PI SGTs Course 2013 open.