Major General Rudolph Ostovich III
Chief, Army Aviation Branch

Aviation Digest Archived Article September/October, 1990

Tough, Realistic Training

THE DEMOCRATIZATION of Warsaw Pact countries in Eastern Europe fostered the belief that the cold war has ended and the threat to our National security is significantly diminished. Recent events in the Persian Gulf confirm that defending our National interests abroad remains a formidable task.

We are tasked to defend our National interests with smaller armed forces—forces that are tasked to respond rapidly to world crises with an effective global reach. Our Army is such a force: well trained and equipped, ready to deploy, fight and win in combat at any intensity level, anywhere, anytime.

Tough, realistic training is the means by which we develop our warfighting proficiency to exercise the combined arms capability required in battle. Multiechelon, totally integrated, combined arms training is continuously stressed at all levels. Our training philosophy focuses on wartime mission tasks to ensure we train the way we intend to fight.

Army Aviation starts with the individual soldier and builds upon that foundation. Our goal is to produce a technically and tactically proficient soldier. In aviation, resident training is the principal source of initial individual training. The soldier must demonstrate proficiency before graduation. Upon arrival at the new unit, the soldier is trained to attain and sustain proficiency in mission-oriented tasks selected by his commander.

Commanders focus training based on their wartime mission. This focus, which we call "battle focus," is used to develop the unit's mission training plan (MTP). Critical tasks are selected from the MTP to develop a mission essential task list (METL). In the near future, METL will be incorporated into the aviator's aircrew training manual (ATM), which effectively transforms individual aviator tasks into realistic crew and multiship tactical training. The improved ATM training program, coupled with realistic live fire gunnery training established in TC 1140, will enhance our future warfighting effectiveness.

Unit training and assessment are often accomplished collectively with other units at combat training centers (CTCs), such as the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, CA. U.S. forces train in the California desert for the kind of fight we are facing right now in the Persian Gulf. Army Aviation brigade commanders conduct *tough, realistic training* on hot, open, sandy terrain against opposing forces in fast-moving scenarios that could occur for real in the Middle East now. Tactical training against an enemy that fights back is an effective way to ensure combat readiness.

Today, computer-driven simulation technology provides us with another source of opposing forces: automated forces that challenge the best tacticians. Simulation network (SIMNET) is such a system. The SIMNET combines close combat tactical trainers to allow soldiers in simulators to train with or against each other on the same computerized battlefield. The aviation combined arms tactical trainer (AVCATT), an extension of SIMNET, will provide an unrestricted, fully integrated battlefield. AVCATT permits complete interaction with other members of the combined arms team, providing a realistic command and control management scenario to fight the AirLand Battle.

Army Aviation is training tougher and safer than ever before while operating sophisticated aircraft in a high-risk environment. Conducting this kind of training at night under night vision goggles (NVG) further increases our combat effectiveness. Using NVG proved to be the key factor in accident-free combat night operations in Panama—proof that *tough, realistic training* pays off. It was a clear case of picking the force most suited for the mission—the U.S. Army! Success didn't just happen—our soldiers *trained for success*!