

U.S. Army's National Training Center Preparing Soldiers For World Conflicts

(NAPSA)—To train America's soldiers for escalating global conflicts throughout the world, the U.S. Army operates extensive war game training exercises to simulate real world combat and ensure U.S. military preparedness in the 21st century. Although these exercises take place throughout the world, the Army operates a first-class warfare training facility in California, designed to prepare Army units for desert warfare conflict.

Based in California's Mojave Desert at Ft. Irwin, the National Training Center (NTC) is the Army's premier combat training installation in the world, providing a realistic, desert warfare environment. This training environment, complete with a lethal and dedicated opposing force and significant maneuver space (over 300,000 acres), allows Army units to sharpen their skills and focus by fighting the resident NTC Opposing Force (OPFOR).

The OPFOR, one of the world's elite military training units, prepares the visiting brigades by simulating the tactics, appearance and strategies of America's enemies. Their sole mission is to prepare Army units in advance of deployment to hostile situations by exposing them to every element that would be present in a combat situation. Soldiers face the stresses of strategic and logistical management of an Army brigade while confronting guerilla warfare, chemical threats, air attacks and civilians on the battlefield.

"OPFOR's mission is to make



sure that every soldier is prepared for every possible combat situation, whether it be dealing with terrorist activities or biological warfare. We make sure that they're prepped and ready," said Col. Joe Moore, commander of the OPFOR. "The NTC and OPFOR are the standard that everybody measures their own success and combat capability against."

In addition to the actual exercise, real-time instruction is another crucial aspect of the exercise. A vast cadre of professional coaches observes and guides the exercises to maximize the learning and training. Called "observer controllers," these soldiers observe unit performance and combat effectiveness while teaching and advising the unit leaders. In addition to this real-time instruction, NTC leaders also conduct daily After Action Reviews, which help the unit break down the specific exercise of the day to identify strengths and weaknesses.

"The most important goal for these rotations is that every soldier can improve upon their fundamental soldier skills and learn from their time spent at the NTC," added Moore. "The object of

the battles out here is not winning or losing so much as it is learning from the battle. The real point is to train the visiting unit since they will be the one deployed into forward combat."

Another important aspect is the use of the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES). The MILES system provides tactical engagement simulation for force-on-force training using eye-safe laser "bullets." Each individual and vehicle in the exercise has a detection system to sense hits and perform casualty assessment in order to provide for the most realistic environment. Laser transmitters are attached to each soldier and vehicle weapon system and accurately replicate actual ranges and lethality of the specific weapon systems. MILES training has been proven to dramatically increase the combat readiness and fighting effectiveness of military forces.

NTC war game exercises operate ten times a year and reemphasize the central principle that the U.S. Army, built on the strength of well-trained soldiers and state-of-the-art technology, is the most successful and powerful army in the world.

"It makes me proud to know that I'm helping train the Army," said Capt. Josh Ekis, military intelligence officer, NTC. "Our role here is to make sure that no soldier goes into harm's way untrained."

For more information about the National Training Center, visit www.Irwin.Army.Mil.