



► 128th Aviation Brigade Update

Modern Instructional Technology Opportunities in Army Aviation Maintenance Training

By CPT Jacob D. Terlizzi

As we move to the future, how can Army Aviation exploit modern instruction technology to maintain relevancy to 2028 and beyond?

The 128th Aviation Brigade, home of Army Aviation Maintenance Advanced Individual Training (AIT), is confronting this question to help improve Aviation maintenance training for the future. The mission of the 128th Aviation Brigade is to generate disciplined, physically fit, and technically proficient Aviation maintenance Soldiers and leaders who embody the Army Values and embrace the Army as a profession. Encompassed by this mission is the priority to maintain relevance with the operational force to ensure training is realistic, rigorous, and responsive to Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) requirements.

Maintaining relevance is a constant effort. Relevancy is not only tied to the latest tools and techniques used in the field but also available instructional methods to ensure training value is maximized. The goal is to provide the most proficient graduates possible. To do this, the 128th Aviation Brigade will assess how we have taught Aviation maintainers in the past and what our possibilities are for the future.

A factor in realizing the future of Aviation maintenance training is understanding the capabilities that already exist. It is modern instructional technologies; a broad category including virtual reality and augmented reality (VR/AR).

While the idea of virtualized maintenance training may be foreign or uncomfortable for some, it appears more natural to the current generation of Initial Entry Training (IET) Soldier. This is evident



Ssg Stephen Schwander, 1-210th Avn. Regt., uses a Virtual Interactive Environment (VIE) training device to facilitate training for AIT Soldiers.

by the popularity of the Virtual Interactive Environment (VIE) trainer amongst AIT Students, which is a basic-level virtual touch screen procedural trainer that allows students to manipulate the aircraft and components in order to walk through procedures outlined in their manuals.

Couple this observation and the charge to maintain relevancy, the result is an environment with potential for modern instructional capabilities to make a huge impact on the quality of training of our Aviation maintainers. A key byproduct of blending new training capabilities on a cloud-based architecture is the ability to exploit instructional content outside the boundaries of 128th and providing an enhanced training support tool for Soldiers in the field. However, implementation of new instructional technology should be deliberate, driven from the bottom up, based on the training requirement, and firmly assess the applicability and feasibility of implementing such technologies.

In October 2019, the 128th Aviation Brigade hosted an initial planning conference to do just that and begin what is currently known as the Aviation VR/AR Maintenance Training Initiative. The meeting brought together Aviation Maintenance instructors, course man-

agers, training developers and systems integrators, and USAACE's Directorate of Simulation (DOS) to form the initial working group and kick start the effort.

The group focused on how modern instructional technologies such as VR/AR could be specifically implemented to improve training quality. This focus was inspired by a brigade training priority aimed at reducing multi-shift training requirements for all courses. Using the Army Design Methodology as framework (and countless pages of butcher paper), the group built a shared understanding of current conditions, problem sets, and capabilities.

While the implementation of new instructional technologies will be an enterprise effort, the 128th Aviation Brigade gained significant value and insight that will be applied as it continues to generate momentum for this initiative and will continue to focus on the next generation of Combat Aviation Leader, using our knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance the way we train and prepare our Aviation Maintainers in 2028 and beyond.

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