leader of either a good group or a sorry group. He knows his buddies' attitudes and needs, and they think he's the one who can most probably get something done about them. That's why they put him in charge, informally, of course. Then you come along and put him in charge, formally. You did right, because he's a leader, in your eyes and theirs.

This young man, as an informal leader, is an expert on the needs of his men. But at this stage, there is no way he can do the balancing between mission and men, which is so critical. He knows little about the needs of the mission. When you bring him across that line that separates leaders from followers, the needs of the mission are what he must learn. And then, when he's started learning those, he will begin to understand the price he has to pay to become a leader of men.

Nothing good ever comes for free. What he will learn is that never again, as a leader, can he be one of the boys. He has crossed the line. He has graduated. He is different.

Now that he's different, he's got to find some new buddy groups. He's got to hang around with leaders, and not with the boys. And that's why brand-new sergeants should be reassigned within their units. And that's why, in good units, there are separate areas in the mess halls where sergeants can talk about sergeants' business. And that's why, in good units, there are separate NCO clubs where they can talk about it some more. And that's why there are separate NCO rooms in the barracks and why there are separate NCO get-togethers, meetings, and activities.

All this has nothing to do with NCO prestige. The purpose of all this separating is to teach, to develop, to strengthen, to clarify THE DIFFERENCE between those who are part of the leadership and those who are not. The better the leadership of the unit does this separating, the better the unit will be led.

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ARMY AVIATION
An Insider's View

CAPTAIN KEVIN G. SCHERRER

Despite its growing importance as a member of the combined arms team, Army Aviation is still at times mistreated, misused, and misunderstood by ground commanders at all levels.

An aviation unit's effectiveness on the battlefield depends on the availability of its equipment, the proficiency of its aircrews, and its thorough and complete integration with the ground maneuver and fire support elements. Accordingly, ground commanders and their operations people must thoroughly understand a supporting aviation unit's capabilities, limitations, tactics, and methods of employment if they expect that unit to be of much help to them.

The first thing they must understand is that there will never be enough aircraft available to satisfy everyone's desires. This means that during peacetime training, ground units should request only those missions they would realistically ask for in an active combat situation.

Equipment limitation is something else ground commanders and their principal staff officers are going to have to learn to live with. For example, the cargo hook of a UH-1 helicopter is rated at 4,000 pounds. This does not mean the helicopter can carry two tons of ammunition. A UH-1 aircraft usually has an operating weight, before loading, of some 7,500 pounds. Because its gross operating weight is 9,500 pounds, the UH-1 can carry only 2,000 pounds, or one ton, of cargo. And even that figure might be reduced by such en-

vironmental conditions as temperature, wind, and pressure altitude, all of which significantly affect helicopter performance.

No one is saying that ground commanders must become experts on the technical aspects of their aviation resources. But during their mission planning they do need to understand and carefully consider the limitations of their supporting aircraft. They can and should get the technical assistance they need from the people in their supporting aviation units.

Sadly, coordination between ground and aviation units today is not particularly good, and it is usually conducted only on a case-by-case basis. (In a tactically "hot" situation, this sort of coordination might well be a day late and a dollar short.)

Flight platoon leaders and S3 Air officers must establish and maintain an extremely close working relationship so that the basic principles of employing Army Aviation resources are well understood before an actual mission must be flown. But this is a two-way street, and the flight platoon leaders must also understand the employment concepts and the task organization the ground unit will use.

As with any of the combat arms, the tactics used by aviation units are those that will allow them and their supported units to accomplish their missions and to survive on a mid- to high-intensity battlefield. An aviation unit, therefore, will be chiefly concerned with an opposing force's antiaircraft weapon deployment, because a large number of diversified and highly efficient air defense weapon systems have been developed and deployed by many armies during the past decade or so. In fact, it seems that every altitude and every kilometer of airspace above and around the front lines is covered by at least one such system.

This fact, more than any other, has led Army pilots to develop and refine terrain flight and nap-of-the-earth (NOE) tactics to conceal their positions from the opposing force. No longer can an infantry commander realistically expect to fly convoy cover at 2,000 feet or expect his attached helicopter gunships to orbit the lead elements of his maneuver force.

Today, airmobile assaults should be planned to fly over heavily vegetated terrain at the lowest possible altitude, and the pilots must use draws, valleys, and ridgelines properly to gain the greatest possible tactical advantage. And while attack helicopters should certainly be integrated into the ground commander's plan to supplement or support his available ground firepower, they must be given the freedom to choose their own battle positions as the terrain dictates. In short, effective terrain utilization is the key to survival on the battlefield for Army Aviation.

WEATHER

Perhaps the most misunderstood of all aviation-related phenomena is weather, but the popular notion that pilots take to the snack bar at the sight of a cloud is definitely not true. The minimum meteorological conditions required for flight are somewhat complicated in that they may vary with each command, at each airfield, or for each aircraft. Thus, minimum conditions in the United States differ from those in Europe, and a CH-47 can be flown in conditions that could easily call for grounding an OH-58.

It is also important to know that for flights under visual flight rules (VFR), visibility and ceiling minimums must be met at the point of departure, at the point of landing, and en route, while for flights under instrumented flight rules (IFR), only the origin and destination ceilings and visibility requirements need to be satisfied.

The list of factors that must be considered for each flight, regardless of the type of aircraft, are winds, outside air temperature, dew point, ceiling, visibility, icing, thunderstorms, turbulence, precipitation, humidity, and freezing level. A final thought: roughly one-third of all Army aircraft accidents are "weather-related."

Aviation maintenance is another problem area whose importance, though often overlooked by a ground commander, simply cannot be ignored. A complicated (and perhaps fragile) piece of machinery, the helicopter nonetheless is often subjected to some pretty rough treatment, and it requires the utmost attention if it is to be kept flying.

Aircraft scheduling — to ground commanders a thoroughly illogical business — is normally accomplished by an aviation maintenance officer, who really does have the best interests of the supported units in mind. A ground commander must appreciate

the aviation unit's problems in this regard and should never forget that if his supporting aircraft are not properly maintained, they will be subject to failure in flight, a condition that usually brings with it undesirable results

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Army Aviation devotes more time, effort, and money to safety than does any other agency. Several safety-related items should be particularly noted by all ground units:

- The pilot-in-command is the final authority for the safe operation of the aircraft.
- Every Army flight is controlled and monitored by the use of flight plans It is imperative that unless a flight plan is changed en route the aircraft remain on its intended route as filed on the original flight plan.
- Standards for scheduling crew rest must be adhered to, and ground commanders must acknowledge and support crew rest if they really want to prevent aircraft accidents

The organizational changes that are now taking shape in the Army's basic structure will put Army Aviation side-by-side with its combat arms brothers, but aviation and ground units cannot wait for all of the TOE changes to take effect before they start working together more closely. They should be taking specific steps now toward tighter integration if their mutual potential is to be fully realized

Education is the key to this integration; greater combat power is its inevitable result.

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Attack Helicopters

LIEUTENANT RONALD M. BUFFKIN

In recent issues of INFANTRY Magazine, Major General Sam Wetzel has concluded his Commandant's Note with "Practice Combined Arms."

While many infantry commanders, fortunately, know the full meaning of these words, there are still others who do not. Too often, commanders fail to integrate and use all the elements that make up the combined arms team, and one of these neglected elements is the attack helicopter (AH), the Cobra. It is highly maneuverable, has great firepower, and can be used in a number of different ways.

The infantry commanders who may not be aware of the attack helicopter's value to the combined arms team should find these guidelines useful.

First, the commander has to decide when helicopters can be used to the best advantage. An Army helicopter company (AHC) performs best when it is part of the commander's overall ground scheme of maneuver, and it should be used when concentrated combat power and mass fires are needed. Its ideal target consists of large mobile armored or mechanized forces. It should not be used against well-fortified, dug-in positions; one tank is never worth one attack helicopter.

In situations where no effort has been made to suppress the enemy's air defense weapons, the AHC aeroscout should be allowed to use the unit's supporting field artillery or tactical air assets to neutralize any air defense threat he encounters when positioning the AHC.

The terrain also must be carefully considered in any decision to use attack helicopters. Cobras are thin-skinned and need terrain that will provide protection, a standoff capability, and covered and concealed routes in and out of the target area.

If the target and the terrain are suitable, if the AHC will be fighting in conjunction with friendly ground forces, if concentrated combat power and mass fire are needed, and if air defense threats have been suppressed, then the situation is ideal for attack helicopter employment. Rarely will all these criteria be met at the same time. But one unique capability of the AHC is that its mobility makes it flexible in dealing with the rapidly changing requirements of the modern battlefield.

Once a commander decides to use