

Wednesday May 22, 8:11 am Eastern Time

Press Release

SOURCE: U.S. Army

U.S. Army Introduces 'America's Army' PC Game

Realistic Game Parallels Authentic Army Missions, Values

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 22, 2002--The U.S. Army today unveiled "America's Army," an innovative, realistic computer game providing civilians with an inside perspective and a virtual role in today's premier land force, the U.S. Army. "America's Army" players will experience soldiering in a state-of-the-art new manner.

The "America's Army" game blends two vivid simulations: "Soldiers," a role-playing portion in which players navigate life's challenges to achieve goals, and a first-person action game, called "Operations."

Developed by the U.S. Army and a world-class team of Department of Defense experts in simulations and virtual environments, "America's Army" will be available in August. The Army will distribute "America's Army" for free in response to requests at www.americasarmy.com and www.goarmy.com, through distribution partners that include leading computer game magazines, at Army events and recruiting stations and through Internet download. The game is rated "T" for Teen by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board.

Anticipating large-scale distribution this summer, the Army unveiled the game at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), the computer and video games industry's major convention in Los Angeles.

In the "Soldiers" role-playing portion, players undergo Army training and adventures while encountering tactical, technical and physical challenges - similar to issues soldiers might face in their first tour of duty while on and off duty.

Importantly, players manage their character's goals, values and resources. Each player chooses specific soldier attributes, career, and personal goals to achieve. As each goal is met, another is set. Values are integral to how the player guides a character while they coordinate six resources to determine how fast their character reaches a goal.

Each time a soldier-character encounters a new challenge or life choice, the game uses a revolutionary real-time story engine to generate new screenplays, dialogue, scenes, sounds and actions to carry the character through a personalized story. This link between player's actions and choices results in nearly infinite story possibilities. The game

features text-to-voice technology allowing for personalized simulations while combining animation with photo-realistic background images.

The action-packed "Operations" portion allows up to 32 players to enter into "virtual service" with the U.S. Army on the same unit mission. Players begin their virtual Army experience as a recruit with an anonymous user name to experience challenging Army missions from a first-person perspective. Developed using the latest version of Epic Games' "Unreal Engine®" and optimized for NVIDIA GeForce2(TM) graphics processors, "Operations" features 20 single and multiplayer missions. Training missions build player capabilities -- from navigating Fort Benning's obstacle course to parachute drops in preparation for assignment to the 82nd Airborne Division. Multiplayer missions are played free on a virtual playing field online with web servers hosted by HomeLAN.

Multiplayer missions are organized into assignment tours, such as being part of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) or the 75th Ranger Regiment. To join a multiplayer game, the players must complete the appropriate training. Gamers use realistic equipment and authentic military hardware. Teamwork, leadership and the benefits of training are emphasized. As in any team effort, communication is key: gamers use different speech, whispers, shouts, radio messages and -- in a game industry first -- genuine military hand and arm signals. Borrowing a page from Army force-on-force training methods, players always perceive they always are on the U.S. team.

The two games are interlaced, with experiences and attributes accumulated during gameplay in one game shaping adventures and opportunities in the other. Players can jump from one game to another to find out additional mission and career information and learn hints to help them advance.

"America's Army' is an amazing product and hats off to the U.S. Army for being bold enough to make this project happen," said Jay Wilbur, strategic advisor to Epic Games, a leading game development company. "This game will deliver the public an immersive, realistic, behind-the-scenes Army experience wrapped into a cutting-edge game that raises the bar for computer entertainment products."

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is the proponent for "America's Army." Game development was directed and managed by the U.S. Military Academy's Office of Economic & Manpower Analysis at West Point. The staff of the Modeling, Virtual Environment and Simulation Institute, masters and doctoral students at the military's post-graduate education facility in Monterey, Calif., developed the game's highly realistic simulations and situations. The development team worked with leading firms such as Epic Games, NVIDIA®, THX Division of Lucasfilm Ltd., Dolby Laboratories, Lucasfilm Skywalker Sound, HomeLAN, and GameSpy Industries.

Through the efforts of the more than 1.2 million soldiers in the active Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve the U.S. Army is the world's premier land force. Today, more than 210,000 soldiers stand guard in defense of freedom in over 120 foreign countries. Army soldiers are on the frontline in the ongoing war on terrorism and joint-

service missions for the Department of Defense. The Army will be 227 years old on June 14 and is major part of a Transformation revolution for America's future national defense needs. For more information on the Army, go to www.goarmy.com or www.army.mil .

For more information on the "America's Army" Game, media may contact Paul Boyce, U.S. Army Public Affairs, at (703) 602-3938, or Ms. Lori Mezoff, at 201 792 4991, or visit the www.thearmygame.com website for press materials. This document is also available on Army Link, a World Wide Web site on the Internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/armylink/> .

"Unreal®" is registered trademark of Epic Games, Inc. "GameSpy Arcade®," "GameSpy 3D®" and "Mplayer®" are registered trademarks. "GameSpy Industries" and design are registered service marks of GameSpy Industries, Inc.

Contact:

U.S. Army Public Affairs
Paul Boyce, 703/602-3938
Ms. Lori Mezoff, 201/792-4991
www.thearmygame.com

http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-052202army_story

Army's New Message to Young Recruits: Uncle 'Sim' Wants You

Technology: The service has created video games to woo a media-savvy generation with a simulation of military life.

•America's youth would rather play video games than do push-ups in the mud--a reality the U.S. Army wants to harness to its advantage.

Eager to prove it's not your grandfather's military, the Army is developing video games to recruit and build awareness among Generation Y.

Today at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, the Army will unveil two games designed to appeal to a media-saturated, tech-bombarded generation. One is a sanitized version of "Unreal Tournament," a classic first-person shooting game known for its graphic, nonstop killing. The other is a take on "The Sims," a popular game that mimics life itself.

But instead of dismembering mutants or pursuing romance, players can work on their organizational skills, free hostages and rise to the rank of first sergeant. The games are part of the Army of One marketing campaign, which stresses professionalism and the importance of the individual, themes marketers say resonate with youths.

Though the military has long used realistic video games as training tools, this is the first time the Army has relied on games to reach out to the public. The intent of the free games--which will be distributed starting in July at recruiting stations and on the Army Web site--is to sell the soldiering life.

Although interest in military careers rose after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, enlistments have changed little in recent years. And it's getting tougher to attract and retain soldiers, in part because there

are fewer veterans to regale potential recruits with tales of their military exploits.

"The goal was to give them a synthetic experience of being in the Army in game form," said Michael Zyda, director of the Naval Postgraduate School's Modeling, Virtual Environments and Simulation Institute in Monterey, which developed both games.

"When I registered for the draft during the Vietnam War, I asked veterans of the Korean War what it was like," he said. "They were easy to find. Today, the Army is much smaller. There aren't as many people around today to answer that question."

The game project started two years ago, when the economy was bursting at the seams and dot-coms beckoned young people with the promise of riches and freewheeling offices in which they could skateboard. The Army spent \$5 million to develop video games to show what life would be like in the Army. Like unscripted television shows, the games show mostly action, leaving out the boring parts.

"Soldiers," for example, takes gamers from basic training to career development. Spit-shining shoes and peeling potatoes are not among the list of activities. Players going through sniper training in the more action-oriented "Operations" game don't have to camp out for hours waiting for terrorists to show up.

War may be hell, but that is not the message the Army wants to send. Instead, the games depict an Army that is precise, organized and technically advanced. Tactical missions and advanced weaponry are the focus of the game's missions, not violence.

In a survey this year by Northwestern University of 1,000 college students, the No. 1 concern about joining the military was danger, said Charles Moskos, professor of sociology at Northwestern and an expert on public attitudes toward the military.

"It's something recruiters just don't talk about," Moskos said. "But being in the Army is as dangerous as being a taxicab driver, which is considered to be one of the most hazardous occupations."

Because of such concerns, the armed forces have a difficult time replenishing their ranks. The military spends twice as much recruiting each soldier today--about \$10,000--as it did 10 years ago.

Although the Army met its recruitment targets in three of the last five years--about 80,000 a year--those goals are far lower than in the past, Moskos said.

Given the current global climate, America is "likely going to need more people in the armed forces in the coming years," he said. "That's when the recruitment shortfalls will come."

Although store shelves are bulging with video games that have military themes, some of which are so realistic they are used by the military to train soldiers, commercial games such as "Halo" lack the realism of being in the Army, Zyda said.

Technical realism, in fact, is one of the biggest selling points of the two games.

To make "Operations," developers rode tanks and Blackhawk helicopters, parachuted from airplanes and shot rifles and machine guns. They brought in soldiers from the Army's Special Forces to critique scenes and levels. They scanned images of 12 weapons and programmed their recoils, accuracies and bullet speeds into the game. For "Soldiers," developers videotaped real soldiers and drill sergeants.

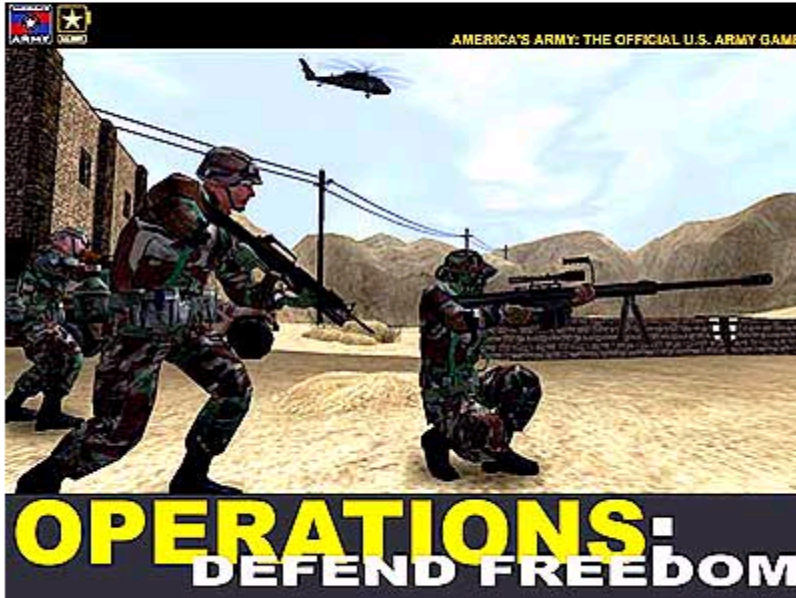
Will that be good enough?

"It can't hurt," Moskos said. "But a video game isn't going to be as good as real personal contact."

Or like doing push-ups in the mud.

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at latimes.com/archives.

The Army's Video Game



Based on a sanitized version of "Unreal Tournament", the military has developed "Operations" as well as other video games to recruit and build awareness among younger people about an army career. Special Forces soldiers critiqued scenes and levels to improve realism. (Naval Postgraduate School, MOVES Institute)

next >>>

1 of 6

>>> photo gallery

The Army's Video Game



"Operations" includes classic video game situations such as this indoor search mission. (Naval Postgraduate School, MOVES Institute)

<<< back next >>>

2 of 6

>>> photo gallery 

The Army's Video Game



The military has long used video games for training purposes, but these new games, somewhat sanitized, are the first attempt to reach out to the public. (Naval Postgraduate School, MOVES Institute)

<<< back next >>>

3 of 6

>>> photo gallery 

The Army's Video Game



The goal of the new games is "to give them a synthetic experience of being in the Army in game form," said Michael Zyda, a director at the Naval Postgraduate School institute that developed the first two games.
(Naval Postgraduate School, MOVES Institute)

back next

4 of 6

photo gallery

The Army's Video Game



Players going through sniper training in "Operations" don't have to camp out for hours waiting for terrorists to show up. (Naval Postgraduate School, MOVES Institute)

<<< back next >>>

5 of 6

>>> photo gallery 

The Army's Video Game



The technical realism of the new games was made possible because the developers rode tanks, helicopters and parachuted during training operations. (Naval Postgraduate School, MOVES Institute)

<<< back

6 of 6

>>> photo gallery

