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US ARMY COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS EXPERIMENTATION

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## TOP AVIATION AWARD TO CDEC PILOT

Story & Photo by  
Sergeant First Class John Craig

USACDEC, Ft. Ord, Calif. -- Chief Warrant Officer (CW2) Randy F. Dyer, 155th Aviation Company (Attack Helicopter), has been named the Army Aviator of the Year for 1976 by the Army Aviation Association of America.

The coveted award is given annually to the pilot who has made outstanding individual contributions to Army Aviation. CW2 Dyer became the second aviator in 155th Aviation Co., history to earn the award.

He began his flying career in May 1970 after graduating from the Warrant Officers' Flight School, Fort Rucker, Ala., as the Honor Graduate of his class.

During a twelve-month tour in Vietnam, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star, and the Air Medal with 36 Oak Leaf Clusters.

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Returning to the States, Dyer was assigned to the United States Army Combat Developments Experimentation Command's 155th Aviation Co., Fort Ord, Calif., where he became a member of the unique Night Owl Team, flying aviation field experiments at Ft. Hunter Liggett. He was instrumental in developing the Army's night Nap-of-the-Earth (NOE) program, now being used by Army aviators throughout the free world.

In early 1976, the 155th Aviation Co. traveled to China Lake Naval Weapons Center, Calif., to fire aerial rockets. CW2 Dyer discovered that certain key portions of the gunnery manual required modifications. Subsequent testing further validated some inaccuracies and now the gunnery manual is being written to incorporate some of Dyer's changes.

In July, CW2 Dyer again put forth an outstanding effort during the HONEST I experiment (Helicopter Operation in a Night Environment against a Simulated Threat--Phase I). He played a key role in the development of a training program which enable units, Army-wide, to train for night combat, both with the unaided eye and with Night Vision Goggles.

He was instrumental in developing an initial training program which progressed from learning how to fly at

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night through Nap-of-the-Earth pilotage and navigation. His program also included night NOE multi-ship operations and night NOE simulated combat operations. He then applied the program to the Night Vision Goggles.

CW2 Dyer trained three other instructor pilots, using the initial training program as a guideline. During this training, he refined the program as necessary so that by September he and the other newly trained instructors were ready to begin training inexperienced aviators under a new improved night flying program.

In November, Dyer was assigned as an Operational Characteristics Evaluator on the Advanced Attack Helicopter Target Acquisition Designation System/Pilots Night Vision System Source Selection Evaluation Board where his expertise contributed materially to the effective and timely completion of the evaluation.

CW2 Dyer has been in Army Aviation for seven years and has accumulated more than 2,400 accident-free flying hours. Currently enrolled in off-duty college courses, he plans to stay in Army Aviation and hopes to become a test pilot for the military.