



Photos by Airman 1st Class Vanessa LaBoy

Staff Sgt. Kimberlee Smith (left), Airman 1st Class Nick Alarcon, and Senior Airman Adrian Mask (standing) train using Holloman's new control tower simulator. The simulator gives trainees a 270 degree digital view of Holloman's airfield.



Airman 1st Class Brendt Grier demonstrates what training was like before the simulator. Miniature airplanes and vehicles were arranged in different locations on a table top "airfield" and trainees gave commands as if they were in the tower. Local training for new controllers takes 300 days, but the simulator is expected to cut this time by 25 percent.



The control tower is the tallest structure in Southeastern New Mexico. Tower personnel handle more than 100,000 operations a year.



Left: Airman 1st Class Brendt Grier participates in a table top training session using a mock radar board. Air Force wide, the simulator has replaced this method of training.

Right: Airman 1st Class Brendt Grier adjusts the location of a plane on a mock radar board. The board was used as a training tool before the simulator was put in place.



Staff Sgt. Brian Greenwood points out an aircraft that was coordinated from the radar approach control.

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"We have to work from the basics and make it Holloman specific," said Master Sergeant Leonardo Olarte, 49th Operations Support Squadron Control Tower chief controller. "Four people were trained on how to generate scenarios."

During the training session, the trainee's supervisor controls the scenarios, said Staff Sergeant Erik Peacor, 49th OSS Air Traffic Training chief. He can put a vehicle in the scene, such as the fire department or airfield maintenance, or he can make 10 pilots request to land simultaneously.

"The closer a controller gets to certification, the more they're hit with

busy traffic and emergencies," Sergeant Peacor said.

Holloman's three intersecting runways are Air Combat Command's busiest. The simulator allows the trainees to gradually increase the difficulty level and build up to handling the airfield's 100,000 operations per year.

Before simulators, trainers placed miniature airplanes and vehicles on a table top "airfield" and gave prompts to the controller.

The new simulator is far beyond its previous model. It features instant voice recognition, where the old model required each trainee go through 14 hours of voice recording with the com-

puter for the system to work.

For the towers at most Air Force bases, a 270-degree screen is big enough to view the entire airfield and more. Because the Holloman tower is surrounded on all sides by runways, the program allows controllers to scroll around on the screen to view all angles of the airfield.

Although the system is not officially running yet, some trainees have already shown improvement due to the simulator, Sergeant Peacor said.

According to Sergeants Olarte and Peacor, use of the simulator will reduce local training time, which is currently 300 days, by 25 percent.