



“WRAIR Forward”

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COMMANDER’S CORNER

Science is the art of pulling together small pieces of evidence to build a theory. Years ago, following the first deployment to Kosovo, USAMRU-E scientists observed that Soldiers’ post-deployment anger-related behaviors were a function of deployment experiences – the more intense the experiences, the more anger problems Soldiers reported. This quarter, we added an important piece of evidence to our theory of how Soldiers adapt. In July, we looked at anger-related problems reported by Soldiers returning from Iraq. We compared anger problems at reintegration with problems at 120 days post reintegration, and observed a three-fold increase in anger problems over time. These results provide evidence to the theory that anger is a common and expected post-combat response. Nonetheless, because anger-related behavior can be problematic, much of our current research is focusing on finding ways to identify and manage this response among returning Soldiers.

-MAJ(P) Paul D. Bliese

Post-Deployment Screening

Timing matters

In research focused on understanding Soldiers’ recovery from combat, we examined Soldiers’ reports of psychological problems at 120 days post-deployment, and compared their responses to responses collected immediately during reintegration. This work was done as a follow-up to reintegration screening of over 1,000 Southern European Task Force (SETAF) Soldiers in Vicenza following their return from a year in Iraq. The results showed that Soldiers reported higher rates of traumatic stress, depression, marital concerns and anger when surveyed several months after returning from Iraq than when surveyed at reintegration. These results underscore trends reported by COL Hoge and colleagues at the Division of Neurosciences, WRAIR, that also point to elevated mental health concerns three and six months post-deployment.

These results suggest that there is utility in conducting psychological screening several months after returning from combat rather than only at reintegration. Psychological screening provides Soldiers an opportunity to identify themselves as needing follow-up behavioral health care and can occur at pre-deployment, post-deployment, or other times in the deployment cycle. In addition to assessing the impact of time on soldier self-reports of psychological problems, USAMRU-E has been developing a short validated screening instrument for use Army-wide.

Short Screen Fielded

USAMRU-E fielded its first psychological screening short form with SETAF in July. Through analyzing sensitivity and specificity of survey results from an earlier study and comparing them with results of structured clinical interviews conducted blind to the survey results, a small number of items were selected for inclusion in the short form and cut-off scores identified. USAMRU-E research report 2004-002

describing these analyses was prepared by MAJ Bliese, Dr. Wright, Dr. Adler, and CPT Thomas: *Validation of the 90 to 120 Day Short Form Psychological Screen.*

Based on these analyses, a psychological screen short form was delivered to the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) in September in response to their request to support 90 to 120 day post-deployment screening in USAREUR. Since August, the unit has been coordinating with LTC Mosley, Director, Soldier and Family Support Services, ERMC, MAJ Hughes, EFMP, ERMC, and MAJ Stover, Chief, Wellness Branch, representing the USAREUR G-1, to support screening plans. At the end of September, COL Besser, Deputy Surgeon, V Corps, and LTC Dominguez, Division Surgeon, 1st Armored Division, were briefed on the unit’s research plans that will complement psychological screening plans and further validate the short form. (WRAIR Protocol #889 and #1026).



The July data collection was conducted by Dr. Wright (project lead), CPT Thomas, SGT Carr, Ms. Prayner, Ms. Rice, and Ms. Salvi from 11 to 24 July. The project concluded with a briefing (conducted by CPT Thomas and Dr. Wright) to BG Kamiya, Commanding General, SETAF (21 JUL 04). (Addendum to WRAIR Protocol #889 approved 7 May 2004).

At the USAREUR EXPO



GEN Bell, Commanding General, US Army, Europe and 7th Army, discusses the Expo with Mackenzie Carr, daughter of USAMRU-E’s NCOIC, SGT Carr, inside USAMRU-E’s booth.

USAMRU-E’s booth at the 2004 US Army, Europe Expo was its most successful to date. Activities included projection of the Medical Research and Materiel Command’s informational video, three posters depicting selected MRMC achievements, and

fact-or-fiction quizzes about USAMRU-E research. Through these interactive and entertaining devices, USAMRU-E showcased its research to more than 2,000 interested Expo visitors (28-30 SEP 04).



SPC Sinclair and MAJ Bliese test a Soldier’s knowledge of USAMRU-E research with a quick quiz followed by a prize at the Expo.

Showcasing WRAIR at APA



USAMRU-E presented four posters in a Military Psychology (Division 19) session at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Honolulu, Hawaii. The posters highlighted the unit's work in psychological screening and in identifying moderating variables in the stressor-strain relationship. CPT Thomas and Ms. Ippolito attended the conference (29 JUL 03 AUG 04).

Bliese, P.D., Thomas, J.T., & Wright, K.M. (2004, August). *Self-efficacy and the stress-health relationship: A temporal investigation*.

Ippolito, J., Adler, A.B., Thomas, J.L., Litz, B.T., & Hoelzl, R. (2004, August). *Extending and applying the demand-control model: peacekeeping soldiers' coping*.

Thomas, J.L., Wright, K.M., Bliese, P.D., Adler, A.B., & Prayner, R.D. (2004, August). *Differentiating personal and group risk factors predicting soldiers' psychological distress*.

Thomas, J.L., Wright, K.M., Bliese, P.D., & Salvi, A. (2004, August). *Values that matter: Implications for occupational stress and leadership*.

Distinguished Guests at USAMRU-E

□ MG Martinez-Lopez, Commanding General, Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC), and CSM Costa, MRMC's Command Sergeant Major, visited the unit, received briefings, and discussed screening priorities (12 JUL 04).

□ MAJ Franco, Chief, Clinical Health Psychology Service, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, visited the unit to discuss research projects (17 SEP 04).

□ MAJ Yarvis, Chief, Mental Health Operations, 30th MED BDE, discussed research projects (16 SEP 04).

Collaborating with WRAIR

• Dr. Adler met with LTC Castro at the WRAIR 1-3 SEP 04 to complete work on an upcoming special issue of *Military Psychology* that they are guest editing

• CPT Thomas worked with LTC Castro at the WRAIR 15-17 SEP 04 to complete a new writing project.

• SGT Carr traveled to WRAIR 13-20 AUG 04 for WMIS training and to coordinate unit budget issues.

Collaborating with Universities



Education development agreements were signed between WRAIR and two universities, San Jose University and Portland State University, to support collaborative work and exchange.



Conference Blows Over

With hurricane winds nipping at their heels, a Cognitive Performance Workshop was held in St. Petersburg, FL (10-13 AUG 04). MAJ Bliese attended the conference, which supports the Army's research program to develop systems to monitor cognitive performance.

Staff Assistance Visits

• SFC Eisenman, EO advisor, MRMC, visited the unit (19 JUL 04).

• WRAIR personnel Ms. Mills, Chief of Personnel, and CPT Palmore, S-1, visited the unit (21-23 SEP 04).

New Publications

□ Balkin, T. J., Bliese, P. D., Belenky, G., Sing, H., Thorne, D. R., Thomas, M., Redmond, D. P., Russo, M. & Wesensten, N. J. (2004). Comparative utility of instruments for monitoring sleepiness-related performance decrements in the operational environment. *Journal of Sleep Research*, 13, 219-227.

□ Bliese, P. D. & Hanges, P. J. (2004). Being both too liberal and too conservative: The perils of treating grouped data as though they were independent. *Organizational Research Methods*, 7, 400-417.

□ Britt, T. W., Davison, J. Bliese, P. D., & Castro, C. A. (2004). How leaders can influence the impact that stressors have on soldiers. *Military Medicine*, 169, 541-545.

□ Chen, G., Mathieu, M. J. & Bliese, P. D. (2004). A framework for conducting multilevel construct validation. In F. Dansereau & F. J. Yammarino (Eds.), *Research in Multi-Level Issues, Volume 3: Multi-level Issues in Organizational Behavior and Processes* (pp. 273-303). Oxford: Elsevier Science.

□ Thomas, J.L., Adler, A.B., Wittels, P., Enne, R., & Johannes, B. (2004). Comparing Elite Soldiers' Perceptions of Psychological and Physical Demands during Military Training. *Military Medicine*, 169, 526-530.

New Presentations on Screening

• Bliese, P.D., Wright, K.M., Adler, A.B., Thomas, J.L., & Hoge, C.A. (2004, August). *Psychological screening: Validation studies, key findings and future directions*. Presented at the Hungarian-American Military Medicine Conference, Budapest, Hungary.

• Bliese, P.D. (2004, September). *Psychological Screening: Validation Studies, Key Findings and Future Directions*. Plenary Session, Primary Care/Pharmacy/Physical Therapy Conference, Willigen, Germany.

• Hoge, C.A., Wright, K.M., Bliese, P.D., Adler, A.B., Thomas, J.L., Castro, C.A., Milliken, C. (2004, August). *Benefits, risks and validation of mental health screening efforts at pre- and post-deployment*. Presented at the Force Health Protection Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

• Dr. Ployhart completed the final report on validation data collected in Vilseck in October 2002. (*Examination of the Pre-Deployment Rotation 4B Psychological Screening Survey Final Report: Review and Recommendations*).

Personnel Updates

• CPT Oscar Cabrera joined the unit on 10 SEP 04 from the Department of Neurosciences at the WRAIR.

• Dr. Adler was promoted to GS-14 effective 5 SEP 04.

• MAJ Bliese was selected for promotion to LTC. (27 JUL 04)

• Several scientists completed their contracts this quarter including Ms. Gonzales-Morales (24 SEP 04), Ms. Ippolito (8 SEP 04), and Dr. Schwertner (30 SEP 04).

• New contracts were awarded to MAJ (ret.) Michael Grojean, Ph.D. (12 JUL 04), Dr. Ployhart (2 JUL 04), and Ms. Evans (1 SEP 04).

• Dr. Dolan, a contractor scientist with the unit since 2000, moved to Spain where she will continue to teach for the University of Maryland (30 JUL 04).

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