



# “WRAIR Forward”

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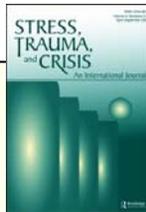
## COMMANDER’S CORNER

This quarter has been dominated by statistical analyses of large data sets. First, the WRAIR component of the MHAT team analyzed, confirmed, and double-checked results based on surveys of Soldiers and providers deployed to Iraq. Second, my participation on a statistically-oriented dissertation led to insights in how we might analyze data from a large study examining the efficacy of critical incident stress debriefing and Battlemind re-integration training. Interestingly, the analyses were partially made possible using a set of routines developed via a three-year MRMC small business grant. Third, a manuscript rejection from a journal (a common occurrence in our line of business) prompted us to find ways to improve our statistical estimation techniques in validation studies. Finally, a beta-version of a set of Item Response Theory (IRT) routines led to insights in how Soldiers respond to traumatic stress items following deployment. Our focus on statistics is a core component of helping us understand what our data tell us about Soldier resilience.

-LTC Paul D. Bliese

## Mental Health Advisory Team: Writing and Analysis for Report

As part of their continued involvement in the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) that deployed to Iraq last quarter, LTC Paul Bliese, Commander, USAMRU-E, and CPT Oscar Cabrera, Chief of Research Operations, USAMRU-E, worked with MHAT-III to complete a report based on data collected from Soldiers, mental health providers, primary care providers, and unit ministry teams. This effort included a team meeting in Washington, D.C. to develop a draft of the report (16-21 January).



### MORE NEW PUBLICATIONS

Norris, R.L., Maguen, S., Litz, B.T., Adler, A.B., & Britt, T.W. (2005). Physical health symptoms in peacekeepers: Has the role of deployment stress been overstated? *Stress Trauma and Crisis: An International Journal*, 8, 251-265.

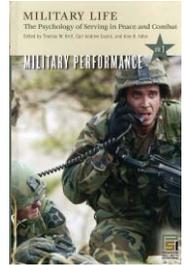
Bliese, P.B., Wright, K.M., Adler, A.B., & Thomas, J.L. (2006). Psychological screening validation with soldiers returning from combat. In M. Roy (Ed.), *Novel Approaches to the Diagnosis and Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* (pp. 78-86). NATO/IOS Press: Amsterdam.

## Book Series Highlights WRAIR

A new four-volume book series published by Praeger Security International in January highlights the issues facing today’s military. These volumes, edited by Dr. Britt, Dr. Adler (USAMRU-E) and LTC Castro (Department of Military Psychiatry, WRAIR), provide a comprehensive examination of the factors affecting the performance, health, and well-being of military personnel and their families.

### Volume 1: Military Performance includes

- Psychology of combat and terrorism
- Psychological operations
- Sleep loss
- Augmented cognition & decision-making
- Morale & cohesion
- Individual differences

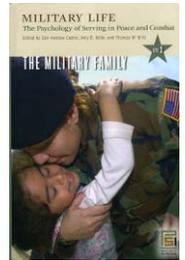


### Volume 2: Operational Stress includes

- Indoctrination
- Scenario-based training & readiness
- Code of conduct training & POWs
- Combat Stress Control & PTSD
- Spirituality
- Leadership & social climates

### Volume 3: The Military Family includes

- Family resiliency
- Relocation
- Coping with fear of injury and death
- Single parents/dual-military marriages
- Military children
- Work-family conflict & partner violence



### Volume 4: Military Culture includes

- The impact of culture
- Values & courage
- Reservists & women in the military
- Sexual orientation & military service
- Quality of life research
- The new media environment
- Attitudes toward the US military

The multi-disciplinary series incorporates contributions from internationally-renowned experts. Each volume begins with a first-person account dramatizing the themes of the volume and is then followed by research, relevant models, and suggestions for application.

The series also showcases WRAIR researchers. Authors include LTC Bliese, Dr. Wright, & Dr. Adler from USAMRU-E, LTC Castro, MAJ McGurk, MAJ Thomas, CPT Cotting, Dr. Balkin, Dr. Wesensten, & Ms. Clark from the Division of Psychiatry and Neuroscience, WRAIR, and former WRAIR scientists COL (ret.) Belenky, Dr. Britt, MAJ Burrell, Dr. Durand, COL (ret.) Gifford, & Dr. Messer.

## WRAIR Command Team

COL Bertram, Commander, WRAIR, and WRAIR command staff COL Gupta, Science Director, COL Carr, Director, Overseas Laboratory Operations, and COL Michael, Division Director, Retrovirology visited the unit and met with unit staff (10 MAR 06).

The visit included a brief by COL Bertram to the unit staff on his priorities, a brief by LTC Bliese on the unit to the Command team, and an office call to COL Jordan, CoS, ERMC (10 MAR 06).

## International Cooperation

- LTC Bliese served on a dissertation committee for Joachim Dejonckheere, a student at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels. Dr. Dejonckheere successfully defended a dissertation examining the use of alternative statistical techniques to model absenteeism data. (15 FEB 06 and 8 MAR 06).
- Matthias Soest, Lieutenant in the Bundeswehr reserves, met with unit staff for a review of deployment-related research projects as part of his preparation for working with German operational units (21 FEB 06).
- Dimitris Rizopoulos, a Ph.D. Student at the Biostatistical Centre in the School of Public Health at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, met with unit staff and Jonas Lang, a science staff member of the University of Aachen, to discuss programming advances in IRT analyses for the statistical language “R” (3 FEB 06).
- Dr. Rene Moelker and graduate student Gabriëlla Poot from the Netherlands Defense Academy met with LTC Bliese, CPT Cabrera, Dr. Wright and Dr. Adler to discuss support for US military families stationed overseas. They are studying the sociology of family support across several nations (29 MAR 06).
- SGT Carr served as a liaison, providing information on 91X training for US Soldiers in response to a request from WO1 Brooker, Defence Force Psychology Organisation of the Australian Defence Force (see TTCP entry, next column).

## Internal Steering Committee Meets

WRAIR scientists COL Hoge, COL Milliken, LTC Castro, LTC Cox, MAJ McGurk, and MAJ Thomas met with USAMRU-E science staff to discuss plans for the research program in both organizations. This meeting reflected the development of the group’s Army Technology Objective (ATO) to a Defense Technology Objective (DTO) (13-17 MAR).

## Post-Combat Early Intervention: Wielding the Pen

The unit continues to develop and refine plans for a new study examining the impact of writing on Soldier adjustment post-combat. This quarter, besides meeting with HURC Chair LTC Thompson, cognitive disclosure expert Dr. James Pennebaker visited the unit to discuss research findings on a study he conducted under contract to the unit to ascertain whether writing sessions condensed across a one-hour time span would be as effective as those spread out over a three-day period. Results revealed that the shorter method was effective and this approach will be integrated into research protocol #1171. Dr. Pennebaker also consulted with unit staff on the development of the protocol (22-24 JAN 05).

## 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting as Technical Panel 13

The first meeting of Technical Panel (TP) 13 (“Psychological Health and Operational Effectiveness”), a 5-nation research group with The Technical and Cooperation Program (TTCP), was held 20-24 MAR 06 in Banff, Alberta. The group developed into a TP after working on joint initiatives and exchanges as part of an Action Group (AG-21). (LTC Castro & Dr. Adler)



## NIOSH/APA

Two presentations at the Work, Stress, and Health Conference of the American Psychological Association/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Miami, FL featured unit projects:

- Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.D., Bellis, A., Rice, K., & Wright, K.M. (2006, March).

Traumatic events recalled: The link between what combat veterans write and mental health symptoms. In D.R. McCreary (Chair), *Stress and mental health in military personnel: Current issues*.

- Tucker, J.S., Sinclair, R.R., Mohr, C.D., Adler, A.B., Thomas, J.L., & Salvi, A.D. (March 2006). The temporal effects of occupational stress on affective strain. In S. Jex (Chair), *Job stress theory and models*.



## 71F Conference

- CPT Cabrera attended the annual Research Psychologist (71F) meeting at Fort Rucker, Alabama (9-10 MAR 06).

## Research Management Site Visit

Five members of WRAIR’s Office of Research Management visited the unit to review the unit’s procedures and progress in maintaining protocols, managing data, and adhering to policies on research management (6–10 FEB).

The WRAIR team included Dr. Rothman, Director, Office of Research Management, Ms. Ference, Deputy Director, Office of Research Management, contractors Ms. Sun and Ms. Ramsey, as well as LTC Thompson, Chair, Human Use Review Committee (HURC). Discussions involved newly developed technological methods for data management, processes for maintaining and archiving records, the correct filing of protocol material, and the development of procedures to track protocol changes and amendments. Ms. Ference and Ms. Sun observed a typical data collection site (SRP), and Dr. Rothman and LTC Thompson attended a board-of-directors meeting at the Europe Regional Medical Command.

## Personnel Updates

- SPC Terry, the unit’s new 91X, PCSed from Korea (6 MAR 06).

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