



“WRAIR Forward”

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

“The art of leading, in operations large or small, is the art of dealing with humanity, of working diligently on behalf of men, of being sympathetic with them, but equally, of insisting that they make a square facing toward their own problems.”

– S. L. A. Marshall

Several years ago we began working with a NATO Research Task Group on writing a leaders' guide for providing psychological support across the deployment cycle. Over the years, this project has provided a forum for exploring national differences in psychological support on deployment. As the project winds down and the guide is completed, however, it has become clear that the more than 20 nations involved in the project share the same fundamental belief espoused by S.L.A. Marshall decades earlier: One of the best ways to take care of Soldiers is to provide resources and support to their leaders.

-LTC Paul D. Bliese

NATO Editing Committee Meets

Operational leaders report a lack of training specifically geared to help them deal with unit member psychological stress on operations. These results were from a recent survey of 172 military leaders from 16 nations conducted by NATO Research & Technology Task Group (RTG-020). Survey results also identified specific areas for training improvement and suggestions about what leaders need to know regarding unit stress before, during and after NATO operations. The NATO Task Group is integrating these recommendations in a Leader's Guide to Psychological Support.

The information in this guide highlights:

- The role of leaders in supporting unit member mental health,
- How to assess individual fitness and unit morale,
- What to do in the aftermath of critical incidents, and
- How to provide family support over the course of the deployment cycle.

Members of the editing committee, Lt COL Cuvelier, Chair of the Task Group and an officer in the Belgian Armed Forces, Dr. Hacker Hughes, Vice-chair of the Task Group and military scientist at Kings College in the UK, LTC Bliese and Dr. Adler edited the chapters (21-23 AUG 06).

The Task Group then met in Toulon, France for the final full meeting. The Task Group continued editing the Leader's Guide and developed plans to ensure operational leaders review the chapters before publication (17-22 SEP 06).



SMA Visits Unit

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, the Army's highest ranking enlisted Soldier, visited the unit on 13 JUL 06. He was briefed on unit activities and recent research accomplishments by LTC Bliese.

Accompanying him was CSM James Diggs, Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC). SMA Preston recognized the unit staff by awarding SMA coins.



Left to right: SPC Terry, LTC Bliese, SGT Carr, SMA Preston

APA Symposium Provides Soldier Perspective on Traumatic Stress

Dr. Adler and LTC Bliese chaired a symposium entitled “Traumatic Stress Symptoms: The View from Combat” at the 114th meeting of the American Psychological Association held in New Orleans, LA (10-13 AUG 06).



The symposium included WRAIR presentations that addressed the epidemiological issues associated with traumatic stress, predisposing characteristics of Soldiers who report traumatic stress, Post-Deployment Health ReAssessment (PDHRA) of traumatic stress and co-morbid symptoms, and issues of validity in diagnosing post-traumatic stress disorder in combat veterans.

- Hoge, C., & Castro, C.A. (2006, August). Epidemiology of Mental Health Status in Combat Veterans.
- Bliese, P.D., Wright, K.M., Cabrera, O., & Adler, A.B. (2006, August). The co-morbidity of traumatic stress in soldiers returning from Iraq.
- Adler, A.B., Wright, K.M., Bliese, P.D., Prayner, R., Salvi, A., & Evans, S. (2006, August). Immediate responses to combat-related events: Beyond fear, helplessness, and horror.
- Wright, K.M., Cabrera, O., Bliese, P.D., & Adler, A.B. (2006, August). The role of pre-deployment symptoms in post-combat traumatic stress. [CPT Cabrera presented].

Focus on Post-Deployment Transition

BG Jerry D. de la Cruz Jr., Acting Deputy Commanding General, V Corps visited the unit to discuss research related to psychological adjustment at post-deployment. (1 AUG 06).

USAMRU-E Completes Data Collection on Combat-to-Home Transition Study

The final data collection to assess the long-term efficacy of post-deployment psychological debriefing and Battlemind Training compared to traditional stress education was conducted from 19 JUN to 7 JUL 06.

In all, 2,254 surveys were administered. These surveys represent the 10 month follow-up to assess the efficacy of transition training conducted with units during the first week of reintegration following a year in Iraq. LTC Kruger, Deputy BCT Commander, was outbriefed on 6 JUL 06. (WRAIR protocol #862, Dr. Adler and LTC Castro, Principal Investigators).



Pictured clock-wise: CPT Cabrera, Ms. Prayner, SPC Terry, Ms. Salvi, Dr. Adler, and Ms. Terra.

Consulting on Soldier Risk-Taking at Post-Deployment

USAMRU-E provided subject matter expert (SME) support to the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) on the topic of deployment and risk-taking. Results from recent USAMRU-E analyses linking risky drinking and driving with deployment experiences were integrated into a briefing prepared by ERMC for the USAREUR Safety Council chaired by GEN McKiernan, Commander, U.S. Army, Europe.



The brief, conducted by LTC Trynieszewski, Director, Soldier and Family Support Services, ERMC, was provided to GEN McKiernan and the Safety Council with LTC Bliese serving as a Subject Matter Expert (SME: 13 SEP 06). The brief was also developed by Dr. McCollum, Drug and Alcohol Control Officer, Installation Management Agency-Europe and Ms. Fontanese, Safety Officer, ERMC.

ERMC conducted preliminary briefs with BG Rubenstein, Commander, ERMC (6 SEP 06), COL Ciesla, Chief of Staff, ERMC (8 SEP 06), and CSM Diggs, ERMC (6&8 SEP 06). Dr. Adler served as the SME for these briefings.

Meeting in New Orleans

COL Hoge, LTC Bliese, and Dr. Adler met with Dr. Pennebaker, consultant on the unit's new post-deployment transition protocol (#1171), to discuss methodological design issues (12 AUG 06). The meeting was co-located with APA in New Orleans.

Force Health Protection Conference Features USAMRU-E Research



The 9th annual Force Health Protection conference sponsored by the Army's Medical Command featured three presentations involving USAMRU-E personnel. The presentations highlighted the work that USAMRU-E, in conjunction with the Department of Military Psychiatry, WRAIR, are conducting to ensure that recommendations for providing mental health support to deploying troops are based on research. USAMRU-E members attended the conference in Albuquerque, NM from 7-9 AUG 06.

- Castro, C.A., Hoge, C.W., Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.D., & Milliken, C. (2006, August). *Battlemind Training facilitates the transition of Soldiers from combat to home.*
- Adler, A. B., Castro, C.A., Bliese, P.D., McGurk, D., Wright, K.M., & Hoge, C.W. (2006, August). *The efficacy of post-deployment psychological debriefing with Soldiers.*
- Bliese, P.D., & Wright, K.M. (2006, August). *Post-Deployment psychological screening: maximizing the utility of the DD Form 2900.*

International Consultation

Dr. Arvers, Department of Human Factors, Research Center of the French Health Services for the Armed Forces (CRSSA), visited the unit to discuss family research and statistical applications with LTC Bliese and Dr. Wright (6 JUL 06).

USAMRU-E Participates in ERMC Change-of-Command

On August 23rd LTC Bliese and SPC Terry represented USAMRU-E in a change of command ceremony for outgoing ERMC Commander, BG Hawley-Bowland, and incoming ERMC Commander, BG Rubenstein.

Personnel Updates

- Ms. Christina Terra, CACI contractor, was invited to serve as a Subject Matter Expert in relational database design and management by the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (Beirut, Lebanon; 6-7 JUL 06).
- SGT (P) Carr was awarded the MSM and ARCOM (14 JUL 06).
- SGT (P) Deena Carr PCSed to Fort Drum, NY on 24 JUL 06.
- Ms. Evans, CACI contractor, left the unit for graduate school (28 JUL 06)
- SPC Bargas arrived at the unit on 8 AUG 06 from Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii.
- SPC Bargas was laterally promoted to CPL on 29 AUG 06 and assumed the duties of NCOIC at the unit.

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