



“WRAIR Forward”

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COMMANDER’S CORNER



It’s been a rewarding and busy time in my first 3 months of command. The USAMRU-E staff has been superb in helping me transition into the unit. This has included everything from incorporating me into USAMRU-E’s high-performing program to helping me adjust to living in Germany (although they are still

working on my pronunciation of German words like Apfelsaftschorle). Highlights in the unit this quarter include great presentations at both the Force Health Protection and American Psychological Association Conferences. In addition, we have been following up on our Battlemind Training research by developing Pre-Deployment Battlemind train-the-trainer materials as well as presenting briefs on the Battlemind Training System across the US Army, Europe (USAREUR). Simultaneously, the entire unit has been involved in preparing for our deployment as part of the upcoming Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT V) mission. On a personal note, after finishing the 1-month inprocessing required of US military personnel in Germany, I have settled into my home near the Altstadt (old town) section of Heidelberg. I am looking forward to traveling in Europe and drinking good beer, but more importantly, I’m looking forward to being a part of the USAMRU-E team, conducting research that optimizes Warfighter psychological resilience.

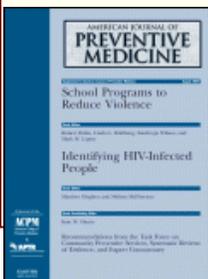
-MAJ Dennis McGurk

CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY AND DEPLOYMENT: LEAD JOURNAL ARTICLE

CPT Cabrera and colleagues published a lead article addressing the question of whether adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse or having an alcoholic parent, were associated with negative mental health outcomes following a combat deployment.

Results from surveys with 2,392 Soldiers administered 3 months after returning from Iraq found that Soldiers reporting adverse childhood events appeared to show greater resilience when confronted with combat experiences than those without a history of adverse childhood events. The article was selected for the journal’s continuing medical education program.

Cabrera, O.A., Hoge, C.W., Bliese, P.D., Castro, C.A., & Messer, S.C. (2007). Childhood adversity and combat as predictors of depression and post-traumatic stress in deployed troops. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 33, 77-82.



CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON USAMRU-E RESEARCH

The unit’s research program on the transition from combat to home was the focus of a briefing provided to STAFFDEL Miller, staff delegate from the House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee. The presentation was briefed by CPT Cabrera with support from Dr. Wright (Heidelberg; 20 AUG 07).

NEW PUBLICATION DEMONSTRATES UTILITY OF DISCONTINUOUS GROWTH MODELING

Bliese, P.D., McGurk, D., Thomas, J.L., Balkin, T.J., & Wesensten, N. (2007). Discontinuous growth curve modeling of adaptation to sleep setting changes: Individual differences and age. *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine*, 78, 485-492.



BATTELMIND FIRST AID: INVITED TALK

MAJ McGurk presented ‘Battlemind First Aid’, a training that has been developed for Army medics to provide mental health support and referral for Soldiers at the small unit level. The training, developed by COL Milliken, Division of Psychiatry and Neuroscience, WRAIR, is part of the larger Battlemind Training System. An overview of the training was provided to Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) Warrior Transition Unit personnel (Heidelberg; 30 AUG 07).

PRE-DEPLOYMENT BATTELMIND: TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED

MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler developed and provided a train-the-trainer course for pre-deployment Battlemind training at the request of the 1AD (Wiesbaden; 29 AUG 07). Training materials developed for the course will now be provided to the AMEDDC&S Battlemind Transition Office.

The AMEDDC&S Battlemind Transition Office serves as the proponent for the Battlemind Training Program oversight and administration.

MILITARY MENTAL HEALTH MEETING IN ESTONIA

MAJ McGurk attended the 10th Annual International Military Mental Health Conference in Tartu, Estonia (24-25 SEP 07) and presented:

Castro, C.A. & McGurk, D. *Mental Health of US Troops in Iraq: Findings From the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) IV.*





FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION HIGHLIGHTS BATTLEMIND TRAINING

The Army's Force Health Protection conference featured a WRAIR workshop chaired by COL Castro (now at the Medical Research and Materiel Command [MRMC]). The workshop, "The Battlemind Training System: Mental Health Training for Soldiers and Spouses across the Deployment Cycle," addressed training components, program evaluation results, and program efficacy research findings (Louisville, KY; 13-17 AUG 07). MAJ McGurk, Dr. Wright and Dr. Adler attended.

- Adler, A.B., Castro, C.A., & McGurk, D. Battlemind Psychological Debriefing.
- McGurk, D., Castro, C.A., Thomas, J.L., & Hoge, C.W. Pre-Deployment Battlemind Training.
- Castro, C.A., McGurk, D., & Hoge, C.W. Findings from the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) IV.
- Thomas, J.L., McGurk, D., Castro, C.A., & Hoge, C.W. Battlemind Training System at Post-Deployment: Immediate Reintegration & PDHRA.
- Riviere, L.A., McGurk, D., Castro, C.A., & Hoge, C.W. Pre- and Post-Combat PTSD Trajectories. [Poster]



USAMRU-E INVITED TO UK

The UK military invited LTC Bliese and Dr. Adler to present at their annual Defence Mental Health conference (Gosport; 2-3 JUL 07). They presented *Advances in Mental Health Support for Soldiers and Families across the Deployment Cycle*.

The invitation is part of an ongoing collaboration and followed the TTCP meeting of Technical Panel-13 "Psychological Health and Operational Effectiveness" held in London (Dr. Adler; 23-27 APR 07).

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Several presentations featured USAMRU-E at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association (San Francisco, 23-27 AUG 07).

The Battlemind Training System: Supporting Soldiers Throughout the Deployment Cycle symposium, chaired by COL Castro and MAJ Thomas, included:

- Adler, A.B., Castro, C.A., Bliese, P.D., McGurk, D., & Milliken, C. The Efficacy of Battlemind Training at 3-6 Months Post-Deployment.
- Thomas, J.L., Castro, C.A., Adler, A.B., Bliese, P.D., McGurk, D., Cox, A., & Hoge, C.W. The Efficacy of Battlemind at Immediate Post Deployment Reintegration.
- McGurk, D., Castro, C.A., Thomas, J.L., & Hoge, C.W. Pre-Deployment Battlemind Training.

Other presentations included:

- Cabrera, C.A., Wright, K.M., Bliese, P.D., & Adler, A.B. Stigma and Barriers to Care in Soldiers Post-combat. [Poster]
- Kendall-Robbins, A., Riviere, L.A., McGurk, D., Clark, J.C., Castro, C.A., & Hoge, C.W. The Impact of National Guard Specific Issues on Mental Health.
- Adler, A.B., Castro, C.A., McGurk, D., & Bliese, P.D. (2007, August). Psychological Resilience in Soldiers following a Combat Deployment. In D. McCreary (Chair), *Current Directions in Psychological Resilience Research among Military Personnel*.



CHANGE OF COMMAND AT USAMRU-E

On 10 July 2007, MAJ Dennis McGurk took command of USAMRU-E (photo at right). COL Kester, Deputy Commander of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), presided over the ceremony (photo below) in Wilson Theater on Nachrichten Kaserne in Heidelberg. In attendance were BG Rubenstein, Commander, ERMIC, COL Jaffin, Acting Commander, MRMC, LTC Korman, Director, Overseas Labs, WRAIR, and SGM Vignon, WRAIR.



Outgoing commander LTC Paul Bliese's new assignment is Chief, Department of Military Psychiatry, at the WRAIR in Silver Spring, MD. Incoming commander MAJ McGurk is the unit's 10th commander since its inception in 1977. Prior to assuming command, MAJ McGurk was the Chief

of Combat and Operational Studies, Department of Military Psychiatry, WRAIR.

USAMRU-E TALKS ABOUT BATTLEMIND

- MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler were invited to present on the Battlemind Training System at the USAREUR Deployment-Related Counseling Conference (Bad Kreuznach; 28 AUG 07).
- Dr. Adler was invited to present an overview of Battlemind Training to the Army Community Service Deployment Mobilization Managers (Schwetzingen; 25 SEP 07).
- CPT Lester, West Point instructor, visited USAMRU-E to discuss pre-deployment Battlemind Training (24 AUG 07).

ADVANCING BATTLEMIND FOR THE CLINIC

Dr. Wright and Dr. Adler worked with WRAIR researchers COL Hoge, LTC Bliese, and Dr. Wilk, on several projects, including a new proposal to adapt Battlemind Training for clinical populations (Silver Spring, MD 17-21 SEP 07).

ERMIC COMMANDER'S CONFERENCE

CPT Cabrera and SSG Abrahamson participated in the ERMIC Commanders-NCOIC's Conference (Weinheim; 21-22 AUG 07).

PERSONNEL UPDATES

- SSG Abrahamson completed the Basic NCO Course (San Antonio, TX; 14 MAY-6 JUL 07). Honors include the Commandant's List and a Physical Fitness Award.
- MAJ McGurk participated in the ERMIC Staff Ride to the Ardennes (4-7 SEP 07).
- Alfreda Smith began a year-long Heidelberg High School Career Practicum under the supervision of Research Associates Ms. Eckford and Ms. Salvi (12 SEP 07).

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