



“WRAIR Forward”

March 2009, NO. 47

THIS ACTIVITIES REPORT IS PUBLISHED BY THE U.S. ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH UNIT-EUROPE,
WALTER REED ARMY INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH, U.S. ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH AND MATERIEL COMMAND

COMMANDER’S CORNER

The term Battlemind, the lynch pin of the Army’s resilience training program, has been redefined to reflect the broader approach of the Battlemind Training System. The new definition, developed at USAMRU-E in conjunction with Mr. Rinehart of the Army’s Medical Department Center and School, is “the Warrior’s inner strength to face the realities of the environment with courage, confidence, and resilience.” The objective of Battlemind Training is to help Warriors identify the realities of challenging environments, develop skills to thrive and be resilient in the face of these realities, and know how to use these skills to help themselves, buddies, and those they lead.

Redefining Battlemind demonstrates the integrated approach that we are taking in our development of the Battlemind System. Resilience Training is not just something to be taught prior to or after deployment. It is also being integrated throughout the career cycle. Several of the initiatives described in this quarter’s WRAIR *Forward* epitomize the evidence-based and applied focus on the Battlemind Resilience Training program.

-MAJ Dennis McGurk

TRACKING POST-DEPLOYMENT HEALTH

USAMRU-E conducted an initial Command-Directed Mental Health Assessment of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment (2SCR) in Vilseck, Germany from 22-25 MAR 09 in response to a request from the Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC). The 2SCR returned from a 15-month deployment to Iraq in November 2008. As in the case of an assessment with a unit surveyed in 2008, the intent of these assessments is to track changes in mental health indicators over time, and identify specific needs and



optimal timing for interventions. In all, 1,851 Soldiers from five maneuver squadrons from the 2SCR were surveyed, and 21 Soldiers were interviewed in focus groups.

The assessment team was led by USAMRU-E scientists Dr. Wright and MAJ McGurk and supported by research assistants Ms. Eckford, Ms. Salvi, Mr. Terry and SPC Martinez (22-25 MAR 09). A follow-up survey is scheduled for the summer. These assessments are variants of the Unit Behavioral Health Needs Assessment Survey (UBHNAS), available at www.Battlemind.army.mil.

BASIC TRAINING FITNESS STUDY

A combined WRAIR and Army Center for Enhanced Performance (ACEP) research team moved closer to launching a pilot study with Basic Combat Training Soldiers. The study, mandated in a G3/5/7 Operations Order, assesses the efficacy of the Army’s two major mental fitness programs: Battlemind Training, which targets mental health, and ACEP education, which targets performance.



Dr. Adler and MAJ McGurk conducted a site visit at Fort Jackson (16-19 FEB 09 & 16-17 FEB 09, respectively) with ACEP researchers. Dr. Adler briefed BG May, Commander, Fort Jackson, on the study, and research protocol #1543 was submitted to the WRAIR. In addition, a meeting at WRAIR prepared research assistants Ms. Clark and Mr. Klocko for the study (Dr. Adler, MAJ McGurk, & Ms. Salvi, 23 FEB 09).

BATTLEMIND STUDY LINKED TO AUSTRALIAN RECRUIT TRAINING



The Battlemind Training for Basic Combat Training is modeled on the Australian Recruit Training Centre’s BattleSMART program. In turn, Battlemind researchers are consulting with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in developing ADF research plans on resilience. This quarter, Dr. Adler met with ADF mental health leadership in Canberra, observed mental health training at the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC), briefed the Commandant, ARTC, and briefed Brigadier Gill, Director-General Health Policy.

The US and Australian efforts are comparable in that both Battlemind and BattleSMART were developed to integrate valid mental health training across the military career cycle. These efforts are an extension of Technical Panel 13 (“Psychological Health and Operational Effectiveness”), of The Technical Cooperation Program (TTCP).

NEW PUBLICATION BATTLEMIND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEBRIEFING PROCEDURES

Adler, A.B., Castro, C.A., & McGurk, D. (2009).
Time-Driven Battlemind Psychological Debriefing:
A group-level early intervention in combat.
Military Medicine, 174, 22-28.



NATO'S NEW EXPLORATORY TEAM

A new NATO Exploratory Team (ET-104) has been established to develop a research group on Mental Health Training. The ET, chaired by COL Castro, met in Heidelberg (3-5 MAR 09). The team is composed of representatives from Estonia, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US (COL Castro, MAJ McGurk & Dr. Adler). The ET developed Terms of Reference and a Program of Work for a follow-on research group. This research group, if approved by NATO, will identify the fundamental principles of military mental health training and develop a prototype for use in Basic Training. This emphasis on mental health training and the focus on Basic Training is consistent with the USAMRU-E's new research study assessing the efficacy of Battlemind Resilience Training in Basic Combat Training. In preparation for the ET, COL Castro, MAJ van den Berge (BEL), MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler met in Heidelberg (12-13 FEB 09).



US-GERMAN INFORMATION EXCHANGE

USAMRU-E hosted Mr. Roth, Section Chief, Applied Military Psychology, German Army Forces Command, and Dr. Kowalski, Naval Medicine Institute, in Heidelberg (4 FEB 09). The meeting with MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler addressed psychological screening and mental health training research. MAJ Hill and MAJ Huck from Landstuhl Regional Medical Center also attended. This exchange was the outcome of US-German talks conducted by the US Army, Europe.

In a reciprocal visit, Mr. Roth hosted MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler, as well as MAJ Hill and MAJ Huck, in Koblenz (16 MAR 09). Mr. Kreim, Leader, Gruppe Wehrpsychologie, Streitkraefteamt Mr. Schanze, Department Head of Organizational Psychology, Streitkraefteamt, and Dr. Kowalski, were also present.

As a result of these talks, MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler were invited to speak with senior German military psychologists about the US experience with Battlemind Psychological Debriefing. Mr. Kreim and Mr. Schanze held the meeting to develop a way-ahead for the German military regarding the use of psychological debriefing (Bonn, 26 MAR 09).

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF BRIEFED

MAJ McGurk briefed congressional staffer Killdee on the unit's research program (Heidelberg, 13 JAN 08).

LEADERSHIP VISITS USAMRU-E

COL Kester, Commander, WRAIR, LTC Korman, Director, Overseas Laboratories, and SGM Mangra visited with USAMRU-E staff and received an update on the unit's research activities (MAJ McGurk & Dr. Wright) in Heidelberg (26 JAN 09).

MG Weightman, Commander, Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC), also visited the unit (26 JAN 09).

MEETINGS WITH STATESIDE PERSONNEL

- Ms. Salvi attended training provided by Ms. Conboy (MOMRP) on Website Adobe Dreamwaver CS3 (24 FEB 09)
- MAJ McGurk and Mr. Rahey met with Contracting at MRMC (24 FEB 09)
- Mr. Rahey met with WRAIR administrative staff (24-25 FEB 09)
- SFC Abrahamson and MAJ McGurk met with WRAIR SGM Mangra (24 FEB 09)

INVITED TALKS BY USAMRU-E

- McGurk, D. (2009, February). Mental Health Advisory Team V (MHAT V) OIF and OEF. *5th Annual Stress, Violence, & Trauma Conference*, Honolulu HI.
- McGurk, D. (2009, February). Leadership and Mental Health in OEF and Battlemind Training for Leaders. *5th Annual Stress, Violence, & Trauma Conference*, Honolulu HI.
- McGurk, D., & Warner, C. (2009, February). Research and Application of Battlemind Psychological Debriefing. *10th World Congress on Stress, Trauma & Coping*, Baltimore, MD.
- Adler, A.B., & McGurk, D. (2009, February). Building Resilience through Battlemind Training: A Research Overview. *Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR) Component Commander's Conference*, Stuttgart.
- McGurk, D. & Wright, K.M. (2009, March). Presented on Command-Directed Mental Health Assessments. *Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) Commander's Conference*, Wiesloch.
- Adler, A.B. & McGurk, D. (2009, March). Battlemind Training to Enhance Soldier Resilience: Research and Current Status. *Europe Regional Medical Command Behavioral Science conference*, Wiesloch.

RESEARCH AREA DIRECTOR VISITS

COL Castro, Director, the Military Operational Medicine Research Program (MOMRP), and MOMRP staff members met with USAMRU-E science staff members to discuss USAMRU-E research program (Heidelberg, 9-10 FEB 09).

The meeting also provided an update on two Program Task Areas. Dr. Wright, task area manager for Suicide Prevention, and Dr. Adler, task area manager for Mental Health Training, discussed a way ahead for research studies conducted as part of these two efforts.

RESILIENCE RESEARCHERS MEET

In support of the MOMRP Task Area on mental health training, researchers who are involved in deployment cycle resilience training development and validation met to discuss research plans. The goal is to develop an integrated research plan that builds toward an integrated system of enhanced training.

Dr. Jha, University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Shipherd, National Center for PTSD in Boston, Dr Stanley, Georgetown University and WRAIR researchers COL Hoge, MAJ McGurk and Dr. Adler participated (Silver Spring, 25 FEB 09).

PERSONNEL UPDATES

- Dr. Wright received the MRMC Award for Superior Civilian Service (26 JAN 09).
- Dr. Adler received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service (12 FEB 09).
- Dr. Adler was the invited speaker at a conversation hour with Clemson University organizational psychology graduate students (Clemson, SC, 20 FEB 09).

This is an unofficial Army publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1, published quarterly in the interest of the U.S. Army Medical Research Unit-Europe. Material has been reviewed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. There is no objection to its presentation and/or publication. The opinions or assertions contained herein are the private views of the author, and are not to be construed as official, or as reflecting true views of the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense. For information on our research initiatives, visit <http://www.usamru-e.hqusareur.army.mil/> or contact MRU-Webmaster@hbg.amedd.army.mil
Commander, USAMRU-E MAJ Dennis McGurk
Editor Amy B. Adler, Ph.D.