



WRAIR FORWARD

SEPTEMBER 2012, No. 61



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

It is an honor to be back as the USAMRU-E Commander! Since I was assigned to USAMRU-E over a decade ago as a young Captain, USAMRU-E has continued its excellence in applied behavioral health research for Soldiers and Families and had direct effects on Army and DoD behavioral health policy and practice. As we look to the future and the pace of combat operations slows down, USAMRU-E is positioned to address behavioral health challenges associated with a combat-experienced force adjusting to garrison life and non-combat operations. In addition, USAMRU-E will relocate next year to another Kaserne in Germany as part of larger changes in the force structure. Even with an evolving research focus and a new address on the horizon, USAMRU-E will continue its mission of providing world-class behavioral health research for Soldiers and Families.



Thanks,
LTC Jeffrey L. Thomas

ARMYSMART AND CSF-PREP TESTED IN GROUP RANDOMIZED TRIAL

The combined USAMRU-E and Military Psychiatry Branch research team conducted a group randomized trial in Fairbanks, Alaska with a Brigade returning from a year-long deployment to Afghanistan (overall dates 17 JUL-14 AUG 12). Fifty-four platoons were randomly assigned to one of three training conditions: behavioral health training (ArmySMART), performance psychology training (Comprehensive Soldier Fitness-Performance and Resilience Enhancement Program (CSF-PREP)), and a survey only comparison group. In all, more than 1,000 Soldiers were enrolled in the study.



The goal is to develop two effective methods of facilitating the transition home for high-combat units. Platoons in the training conditions received 9 hours of training across a three-day period. The ArmySMART material was developed by WRAIR and delivered by providers from WRAIR, The Office of the Surgeon General (OTSG), Defense Centers for Excellence (DCoE), 274th CSC Reservists, and the Heidelberg Health Clinic. The CSF-PREP material, developed by CSF master trainers, was delivered by CSF-PREP performance enhancement specialists from several different sites across the US.

A team of researchers from WRAIR conducted the study, including a baseline survey, immediate training follow-up survey, and on-site data processing. Coordination briefs were conducted with LTC Kleager, S-3 of the SBCT (27 JUL 12) and COL LeMaster, Commander, Bassett Army Community Hospital (30 JUL 12). An initial outbrief was provided to COL Reed, Commander, 1-25 SBCT, CSM Lewis, CPT Dillon, Brigade Surgeon, and staff (13 AUG 12). A follow-up survey is scheduled for OCT 2012.

MHAT-AFRICA: OUTBRIEF

The Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) – Africa study results were outbriefed this quarter. MHAT-Africa benchmarked behavioral health and behavioral health resourcing in the deployed force. The brief was based on data from 696 service members who completed the paper or on-line version of the survey. Study lead LTC Sipos and Dr. Adler outbriefed Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HPO) and Camp Lemonnier leadership in Djibouti (8-10 JUL 12). Outbriefs were also conducted with the AFRICOM Surgeon (12 JUL 12; Stuttgart) and USARAF Surgeon (13 JUL 12; teleconference).



BENEFIT FINDING BUFFERS AGAINST EFFECTS OF COMBAT EARLY IN COMBAT DEPLOYMENT

(New Publication)



Wood, M. D., Britt, T. W., Wright, K. M., Thomas, J. L., & Bliese, P. D. (2012). Benefit finding at war: A matter of time. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 25, 307-314. doi: 10.1002/jts.21701

RESILIENCE TRAINING EFFECTIVE AT POST-DEPLOYMENT: RANDOMIZED TRIAL

(New Publication)

Castro, C. A., Adler, A. B., McGurk, D. & Bliese, P. D. (2012). Mental Health Training with Soldiers Four Months after Returning from Iraq: Randomization by Platoon. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 25, 276-383. doi: 10.1002/jts.21721



Left to Right: Ms. Merrill, Ms. Auchterlonie, Ms. Clarke-Walper, CDR Vythingam, Mr. Kok, CPT Skipper, MAJ Wood, Ms. Young, COL Tomsyck, Ms. Eckford, Dr. Adler (Study Lead), Ms. Bauer, Dr. Gersons, LCDR Toblin, Dr. Metzler, Mr. Kim, CPT Evenson, Ms. Lord, Dr. Petta, SGT Mills, SGT Marroquin, Ms. Mitchell, Ms. Kreilein, Dr. Hoge, SPC Bean. Not pictured: Dr. Harada, CPT Forbregd, LTC Whalen, Dr. Wilk, MAJ Zenzen

MHAT-8 RETURNS FROM AFGHANISTAN



Left to Right: MAJ Topott (UK), Ms Cook (WRAIR), CDR Kennedy (USN), SSG Martinez (NCOIC), LTC Burrell (MRMC), CPT LaPresti (WRAIR), LtCol Savoie (USAF), LTC McGurk

SSG Martinez, unit NCOIC, deployed to Afghanistan as a member of the Joint-Mental Health Advisory Team-8 (J-MHAT 8; 18 MAY 12 to 8 JUL 12). J-MHAT 8 assessed the behavioral health of the deployed force and behavioral health resourcing. The team, led by former USAMRU-E Commander LTC McGurk, included representatives from the Navy, Air Force, and UK. Several hundred surveys were collected and processed, and many focus groups were conducted with platoons across a range of maneuver units. Outbriefs were conducted with the leadership on site (AUG 12) and will continue over the next several months. Previous MHAT reports are available on-line at: <http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/reports/reports.html>

PLANNING RESILIENCE RESEARCH

- LTC Thomas and Dr. Adler participated in a planning and training development meeting for the CA Army National Guard post-deployment intervention study on social fitness (24-26 SEP 12; Silver Spring, MD).
- Dr. Adler attended the Resilience In-Progress Review (IPR) as a Subject Matter Expert for the Military Operational Medicine Research Program (28-29 AUG 12; Frederick, MD).
- Dr. Adler attended a planning meeting on the Psychological Return to Duty Task Area (30 AUG 12), led by COL Bliese, Director, Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience, WRAIR, and LTC Whalen, WRAIR.
- LTC Thomas and Dr. Adler met with leadership at the 30th MEDCOM to coordinate a survey planned with deployed medical personnel (13 SEP 12; Sembach and 18 SEP 12; Panzer Kaserne).

USAMRU-E CHANGE OF COMMAND

LTC Thomas took command of USAMRU-E from LTC Sipos in a Change of Command ceremony in the Rose Garden of Nachrichten Kaserne (16 JUL 12). LTC Sipos and LTC Thomas are swapping jobs – LTC Sipos departed Germany to take over as Chief, Military Psychiatry, WRAIR, LTC Thomas' previous position. LTC Sipos will also serve as Deputy Director, Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience, WRAIR. COL Erikson, Commander, WRAIR, presided over the ceremony. LTC Thomas is the first USAMRU-E commander to have been assigned to the unit twice – he was assigned to USAMRU-E as a Captain from 1999 to 2002.



COL Erikson (right) passes the guidon from LTC Sipos (center) to LTC Thomas (16 JUL 12; Heidelberg)

USAMRU-E VISITORS SUPPORT UNIT

- COL Castro, Director, Military Operational Medicine Research Program, Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC) met with LTC Thomas to discuss unit relocation plans and upcoming research projects (3-4 SEP 12; Heidelberg).
- COL Bliese and LTC Sipos met with LTC Thomas and Dr. Adler to coordinate project planning and analysis (7-9 SEP 12; Heidelberg).

PERSONNEL UPDATES

- SGT Mailhot, USAMRU-E's newest 68X, arrived at the unit on 5 SEP 12. SGT Mailhot is the Acting NCOIC in absence of SSG Martinez.
- As part of the Workforce Recruitment Program, Ms. Madison Taylor (4 JUN-14 JUL 12) and Ms. Diane Belanger (6 AUG-28 SEP 12) worked as unit archivists.
- MAJ Wood was promoted to his current rank (Fairbanks, AK; 1 AUG 12).
- SSG Martinez deployed as a Medical Augmentee for 6 months in support of Joint Task Force-Guantanamo Bay JTF-GTMO (27 SEP 12; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba).

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://usamru-e.amedd.army.mil> or contact MRU-Webmaster@hbg.amedd.army.mil