



“WRAIR Forward”

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COMMANDER’S CORNER

From a research perspective, USAMRU-E is currently in transition. In the nearly two-and-one-half years that I have been in command, our focus has been on developing tools to effectively screen Soldiers for psychological symptoms. The hard work of our team coupled with the excellent support from the Europe Regional Medical Command has produced screening research products that have impacted the entire Department of Defense. In terms of research, however, our unit is now focusing on evaluating the efficacy of interventions to assist Soldiers in their transition from combat to home. These interventions include critical incident stress debriefing, reintegration education, and combat-event disclosure through writing. Intervention studies are difficult and typically require large teams (see the Fort Carson write-up in this report); nonetheless, we owe it to Soldiers to find scientifically-based ways to help with the reintegration. USAMRU-E looks forward to the new research challenges.

-LTC Paul D. Bliese

Study Assesses Combat-to-Home Transition Training

Study Design

Scientists from the USAMRU-E and Department of Military Psychiatry, WRAIR, joined forces to find out what kinds of reintegration training combat Soldiers find useful. Platoons from a Brigade Combat Team that spent a year in Iraq were randomly assigned to one of three different kinds of training during their first week home at a large military base in the U.S. The hour-long training sessions included one of the following:

- (1) a traditional medical brief about symptoms related to post-deployment stress;
- (2) a brief about adapting combat skills to the home environment; or
- (3) a debriefing session in which Soldiers were guided through an interactive discussion of their combat experiences with a focus on identifying transition issues.

More than 50 platoons were included in the training, and more than 2,500 Soldiers were surveyed both before and after the transition training session. Surveys to be administered this Fall will assess which kinds of training were most effective.

The study is a follow-up to a deployment transition study conducted with a Brigade deployed on a six-month peacekeeping mission to Kosovo in 2002. Results from that study demonstrated that Soldiers preferred interactive training but the level of exposure to potentially traumatic events was negligible in comparison to the level encountered by Soldiers deployed to Iraq.

Combined Effort Across Labs

The data collection was conducted at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, Colorado, from 20 JUL to 10 AUG 05 (see photo of research team below). USAMRU-E team members

included Dr. Amy Adler (co-principal investigator), CPT Oscar Cabrera, SPC Nicol Sinclair, and Ms. Angela Salvi. Department of Military Psychiatry team members included LTC Carl Castro (co-principal investigator), LTC Anthony Cox, MAJ Dennis McGurk, MAJ Jeffrey Thomas, CPT Dave Cotting, Dr. Steve Messer, CDT Allison Whitt, SGT Nadia Kendall-Diaz, SPC Nicholas Hamilton, SPC Megan Legenos, SPC Kyle Shaul, Ms. Julie Clark, Ms. Wanda Cook, and Mr. Lloyd Shanklin. COL Charles Hoge, Director, Division of Psychiatry and Neuroscience at the



WRAIR research team, Fort Carson, CO (August 2005)

WRAIR, also conducted an on-site visit to review the study. The entire study was conducted under WRAIR protocol #862 and amendments covering changes related to this data collection (10 JUN 05, 27 JUN 05, 8 JUL 05, 19 JUL 05) were approved by the WRAIR Office of Research Management.

Future Research on Transition Training

Initial results from the study were briefed back to COL (P) Terry A. Wolff, Deputy Commander, 7th ID, and MAJ Joel Tanaka, Division Surgeon, 7th ID, where approval for follow-up transition training and surveys was obtained. This Fall, the same study will be conducted with another Battalion returning from a year in Iraq at Fort Riley, Kansas. The transition training study initiated this summer assures that Soldiers provide feedback into the development of what may become a standardized method of reintegration training.

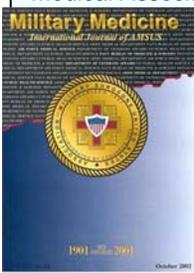
Psychological Screening Update

Consulting with the US Army, Europe

This quarter, USAMRU-E supported psychological screening of 77 members of a medical logistics unit recently returned from Iraq. Screening was conducted by USAMRU-E’s SGT Deena Carr, NCOIC, and Ms. Andrea Bellis, research associate, along with Mr. Richard Thompson, LCSW Care Manager, Baumholder Health Clinic, in Miesau on 15-16 AUG 05.

Screening Publications from USAMRU-E

Wright, K.M., Bliese, P.D., Adler, A.B., Hoge, C.W., Castro, C.A., & Thomas, J.L. (2005). Screening for Psychological Illness in the Military [Letter to the editor]. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 294, 42-43.



Wright, K.M., Thomas, J.L., Adler, A.B., Ness, J.W., Hoge, C.W., & Castro, C.A. (2005). Psychological Screening Procedures for Deploying U.S. Forces. *Military Medicine*, 170 555-562

Award-Winning Paper

Dr. Gilad Chen from Texas A&M University and LTC Bliese were awarded the **Sage Best Paper Award** from the Research Methods Division of the Academy of Management at their annual meeting (5-10 AUG 05). A complete version of the paper presented at the meeting was also published this year:



Chen, G., Bliese, P. D., & Mathieu, J. E. (2005). Conceptual framework and statistical procedures for delineating and testing multilevel theories of homology. *Organizational Research Methods, 8*, 375-409.

Conference Presentations

American Psychological Association in Washington, DC (17-21 AUG 05)

- Adler, A.B., & Castro, C.A. *The Stressors of Peacekeeping Operations*. In R.S. Nichols (Chair), Problems and opportunities for warriors doing peacekeeping.
- Bliese, P.D., Wright, K.W., & Adler, A.B. Current State of Psychological Screening Research in the US Army. In J.L. Thomas and D. McGurk (Chairs), *Psychological intervention tools for deploying and redeploying soldiers*.
- Ployhart, R.E., Bliese, P.D., Wright, K.M., Adler, A.B., & Thomas, J.L. Psychometric validation of US Army's psychological screening survey. In J.L. Thomas and D. McGurk (Chairs), *Psychological intervention tools for deploying and redeploying soldiers*.

Force Health Protection Conference in Lexington, KY (9-12 AUG 05)

- Bliese, P. D., & Wright, K. W. Psychological screening: Validation studies, key findings and future directions.
- Bliese, P. D., Hoge, C. W., & Cabrera, O. A. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Mental Health: Army Research.

Hungarian-US Military Medicine Conference in Garmisch, Germany (11-15 SEP 05)

- Bliese, P. D., & Wright, K. W. Psychological screening: Validation studies, key findings and future directions.

SPECIAL ISSUE

Military Psychology, the official journal of The Society for Military Psychology, a Division of the American Psychological Association, published a special issue on Operations Tempo this quarter (Volume 17, Number 3, 2005). This special issue, guest edited by LTC Castro (former USAMRU-E Commander) and Dr. Adler (USAMRU-E), highlights results from a two-year USAMRU-E study on the impact of workload on Soldier and unit readiness. Articles by current and former USAMRU-E staff members include:

- Castro, C.A., & Adler, A.B. Operations tempo (OPTEMPO).
- Dolan, C.A., Adler, A.B., Thomas, J.L., Castro, C.A. Operations tempo and Soldier health: The moderating effect of wellness behaviors.
- Huffman, A.H., Adler, A.B., Dolan, C.A., & Castro, C.A. The impact of operations tempo on turnover intentions of Army personnel.
- Thomas, J.L., Adler, A.B., & Castro, C.A. Measuring operations tempo and relating it to military performance.

MHAT III: Planning for Iraq

The third annual Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT III) is planning to deploy to Iraq in the Fall of 2005. LTC Bliese, Commander, USAMRU-E, and CPT Oscar Cabrera, research psychologist, USAMRU-E, join the 11-person team led by COL Edward Crandell, Chief, Department of Behavioral Health, Womack Army Medical Center. Through surveys targeting deployed personnel, mental health professionals, primary care providers, and chaplains, the team will assess troop mental health and access to mental health services.

Consulting with ERMC

LTC Bliese and Dr. Wright consulted on the implementation of the PDHRA (Post-Deployment Health Reassessment) at the request of COL Jordan, Chief of Staff, Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) (28 SEP 05).

Staff Visits & Coordination

- Mr. William Ward, Ms. Phyllis Bruce, and Ms. Lucille Battle, conducted a WRAIR Staff Assistance Visit to develop ABC accounting models for USAMRU-E (11-14 JUL 05).
- LTC Bliese conducted a site visit to the US Army Medical Research Unit-Kenya to discuss overseas lab management (1-4 AUG 05).
- Ms. Salvi, Research Associate and CACI contractor, provided training in scanning technology at the request of the US Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine - Medical Research Facility at Fort Bragg, NC (9-13 AUG 05).
- US Army Medical Command Inspector General COL Mosley and COL Gause, also with the IG's office, met with USAMRU-E staff to discuss screening research in USAREUR (15 SEP 05).

EXPO '05

USAMRU-E participated in the US Army, Europe's annual Expo, providing information about the unit, WRAIR, and the Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC) to thousands of visitors (21-23 SEP 05). Highlights include:

- Posters of recent publications, screening research, sleep findings, and MRMC award-winning accomplishments.
- Quizzes about research results geared for adults and children.
- Caffeine gum samples from WRAIR's sleep research program.
- Interviews with 14 NCOs and Officers as part of a NATO Research Group 20 project assessing leaders' views of mental health support on operations (protocol #1217; approved this quarter).

International Cooperation

- Ms. Jessica Ippolito, doctoral student at the University of Mannheim, began working with USAMRU-E through the Oak Ridge Institute for Research and Education (ORISE). Her major professor, Dr. Rupert Hoelzl, visited with LTC Bliese and Dr. Adler to outline plans for the coming year (14 JUL 05).
- Dr. Neil Greenberg, Surgeon Commander Royal Navy, and Ms. Vicky Langston, research associate, both from King's Centre for Military Health Research, met with Ms. Salvi to review survey scanning procedures used by USAMRU-E (8-9 SEP 05).

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