

## LESSON FIVE

### MINIMIZE COMBAT STRESS

**Critical Task No: S3-9001.18-0002**

#### OVERVIEW

##### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

This lesson defines combat stress, identifies the signs of stress (in yourself, in others, and in the unit), describes the treatment of the different levels of battle fatigue, and describes how to prepare your unit to accomplish its mission despite combat stress.

##### TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

- ACTION:** Minimize Combat Stress.
- CONDITION:** Prior to combat, you must train your unit in stress reduction methods. When you go into combat, stress will affect all the members of your unit and some will become casualties as a result. You must also learn how to recognize and quickly restore to duty those soldiers who become battle fatigue casualties.
- STANDARD:** Identify how to train your unit in the procedures used to minimize combat stress and battle fatigue. Identification will be in accordance with FM 26-2, GTA 21-3-4, GTA 21-3-5, and GTA 21-3-6.
- REFERENCES:** The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications: FM 22-9, FM 26-2, GTA 21-3-4, GTA 21-3-5, and GTA 21-3-6.

#### INTRODUCTION

Stress exists in every situation encountered. Stress can and does exert both positive and negative influences on both leaders and subordinates. Combat is probably the most stressful environment that the leader will encounter.

#### PART A - THE DEFINITION OF STRESS

1. Stress is the body's response to a demand (stressor). Stressors are events or situations which require change, create internal emotional conflict, or pose a threat.

2. The demands placed on you may be physical (cold, injury, disease) or mental (fear, conflict, pressure). Stressors can be positive or negative depending on how they are perceived by the person. Thus, stressor plus perception causes stress.

## **PART B - DEFINE COMBAT STRESS AND EXPLAIN ITS SOURCES**

1. Carrying the generic definition of stress one step further, "combat stressors" are any stressor which occurs in the context of performing the combat mission (whether under fire or not). For example:

- o A 155mm round exploding 100 meters away.
- o Your first sergeant being wounded.

2. A stressor plus your perception of that stressor causes "stress."

a. Combat stress is the mental and physical process within the individual soldier of reacting to and dealing with the combat stressors. Stress depends very much on your appraisal of the stressor and its context.

b. Combat stress at any given time is the net result of many stressors: fear of death, fear of failure, other intense painful emotions like grief and guilt, uncertainty, boredom, worries about what is happening back home, and the many physical and mental demands of combat duties. Combat stress is the cause of battle fatigue.

3. The sources of combat stress include individual stress, organizational (unit) stress, and stress created by the battlefield.

a. Individual stress is stress that is unique to you, the soldier. Sources of individual stress are external to the organizational environment and include such things as family and marital conflicts, money worries, or illness. Positive changes that may require adjustments in life-style, such as marriage and parenthood, are also sources of personal stress. An example of an individual combat stressor would be receiving a letter from your wife or girlfriend which says she is going away with Jody. Although the stressor is not directly related to combat, the individual's stress is collective in that it is likely to affect the soldier's effectiveness during combat.

b. Organizational stress is stress that is common to other soldiers. Organizational stress occurs when soldiers are troubled by situations in the unit and adverse conditions under which they must function. Situations such as an unclear chain of command, ineffective communications, lack of unit cohesion, competition with peers, lack of privacy, or isolation are examples of organizational stress.

- c. The battlefield contributions to stress include the following:
  - o Possibility of death or injury to self.
  - o Continuous operations.
  - o Low light level and poor visibility.
  - o Inactivity and boredom.
  - o Frustration and pressure (also a sign of individual stress).
  - o Fear of the unknown.
  - o Uncertainty and the lack of information.
  - o Lack of control over the environment.
  - o Enemy fire.
  - o Mental and physical fatigue.
  - o Sleep loss.
  - o Interrupted day and night rhythms.
  - o Isolation.
  - o Adverse weather.
  - o Death or injury of comrades and leaders.
  - o Horrible sights and experiences.

**PART C - IDENTIFY THE SIGNS OF COMBAT STRESS IN  
YOURSELF, IN OTHERS, AND IN THE UNIT**

1. Signs of Stress in Yourself.

- a. The physical signs of stress you may experience include:

- (1) Dry mouth. Your mouth feels as if it is full of cotton. It contains no saliva and swallowing is difficult.

- (2) Fatigue. Feeling weary is natural after long hours of hard work or combat. (You are physically drained and feel unable to react to the changes or events happening around you.)

- (3) Inability to move. Some muscles cannot be made to move.

- b. Mental signs of stress you may experience include:

- (1) Forgetfulness. This involves a lengthy period of time whereby planned action is not taken, a check in a procedure is not made, or an order acknowledged earlier is not remembered.

- (2) Inability to concentrate. This is similar to forgetfulness, but this reaction lasts for shorter periods of time. Example: You hear someone else speak but forget the beginning of the sentence by the time the end occurs.

c. Emotional signs of stress you may experience include:

(1) Anxiety. You are anxious when you feel afraid without any specific or immediate threat. You are often tense, worried, and unable to concentrate.

(2) Frustration. Frustration occurs when your anger has no outlet, fear cannot be escaped, or you feel powerless to act.

(3) Guilt. You have done or want to do something wrong.

(4) Irritability. Everything annoys you. You see anything that anyone else does or says as wrong.

(5) Moodiness. Feelings you have which are similar to apathy or depression--though milder.

(6) Nervousness. You are jumpy, tense, irritable, and distracted.

(7) Pessimism. You magnify difficulties and expect failure. The outlook on both the present and future is grim.

(8) Tension. Tension accompanies waiting for something or wanting to do something--to act. Often what is to be done is not clear. Tension occurs when you are getting ready for some demanding future effort and there is no immediate outlet.

<b>PHYSICAL</b>
o Dry Mouth
o Fatigue (Feeling weary after long hours of hard work or combat)
o Inability to move
<b>MENTAL</b>
o Forgetfulness
o Inability to concentrate
<b>EMOTIONAL</b>
o Anxiety
o Frustration
o Guilt
o Irritability
o Moodiness
o Nervousness
o Pessimism
o Tension

Figure 5-1, Signs of Stress in Self.

2. Signs of Stress in Others. Signs of stress in others are easier to detect than the signs of stress in self because they are demonstrated in obvious behaviors.

Remember--that the signs of stress in self also appear in others.

a. Use of alcohol. Alcohol and combat do not mix! Drunken soldiers in combat endanger themselves and others. Drinking too much and too often increases stress; it does not lessen it. Drinking to excess is a sure sign of ineffective coping.

b. Use of drugs. Drugs not only mask stress but also make it worse. Soldiers who take drugs are not effective, although they may think they are. They endanger themselves and their units.

c. Emotional outbursts. When stress is high, self-control decreases. Anger may flare for small reasons. Soldiers may spontaneously cry, show fear, and talk about being scared.

d. Excitability. Soldiers may become easily agitated. In combat they jump at sudden noises or laugh too loudly at jokes. They are restless and unable to sit still, and they may talk too much. They overreact to everything.

e. Negativism. Soldiers assume negative, resistive attitudes toward situations. For instance, a soldier whose request has been denied by the commander becomes defensive and negative toward all the commander's orders.

f. Restlessness. Soldiers cannot relax; they must move constantly. If walking is not possible, they may fidget with their equipment. When trying to rest, they cannot lie still.

g. Speech disorders. Changes in the way soldiers speak may signal stress. Their speech may become faster or slower than before. They may have difficulty getting words out, their speech may be slurred, and their sentences may be incomplete or fail to make sense. Mumbling is another form of speech disorder.

h. Trembling. The hands usually begin to shake first, and soldiers cannot keep their weapons steady. They adjust or fit together small objects only with difficulty. Sometimes their legs or even their whole bodies begin to tremble.

i. Apathy. Soldiers show a lack of concern or emotion.

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ○ Use of alcohol      | ○ Negativism       |
| ○ Use of drugs        | ○ Restlessness     |
| ○ Emotional Outbursts | ○ Speech Disorders |
| ○ Excitability        | ○ Trembling        |
|                       | ○ Apathy           |

Figure 5-2, Signs of Stress in Others.

3. Signs of stress in the unit. Just as soldiers show signs of stress, so do units. The stress of a military unit differs from the stress its members experience. After a long stretch of tough combat, every member of a unit is exhausted. However, this fact does not mean that the unit has problems. Rest and relaxation restore unit functioning. Some of the signs of stress in the unit include:

a. AWOL. High AWOL rates may reflect dislike of duties and conditions in the unit or loss in confidence in the unit, in its leaders or among its soldiers.

b. Bickering. Frequent conflicts among members of a unit signal a serious problem. Bickering, which often concerns petty matters, reflects a lack of concern about meeting unit objectives--getting the job done. When soldiers are annoyed by conditions, one outlet for them is clashes with other soldiers.

c. Dissatisfaction. When unit morale is low, complaints increase. Eventually almost anything causes complaints. Some complaints are justified, but most are petty.

d. Lack of cohesion. Soldiers have little or no pride in the unit or in themselves. They complain about the unit, its leaders, and its members. They carry a spirit of defeat into any test of capability or competition with other units; they just do not care.

e. Failure to follow orders. Soldiers ignore standing orders, established SOPs, and established policy. Instead of complying, soldiers try to get around the rules.

f. Insubordination. Instead of following orders, soldiers challenge them. They talk back instead of obeying promptly. The unit spirit is one of obstruction, not cooperation.

g. Low productivity. Low productivity in combat is best illustrated through examples--soldiers taking an extraordinary long time to perform simple tasks such as weapons cleaning or preparation of fighting positions. Also soldiers may blame their equipment or procedures for failing to accomplish their assigned missions. They may try and avoid contact with the enemy. They have to be constantly reminded to perform basic tasks--personal hygiene, maintenance, resupply actions, and security operation.

h. Sensitivity to criticism. In a healthy unit a dressing-down from a superior is a spur to greater effort--in an ailing unit, however, it causes resentment. Excuses are offered.

i. High sick call rate. Soldiers use various excuses for reporting to sick call. They often report vague ailments and minor physical problems. They claim that treatments are ineffective. These soldiers' problems may be emotional rather than physical.

AWOL	Bickering
Dissatisfaction	Lack of Cohesion
Failure to Follow Orders	Insubordination
Low Productivity	Sensitivity to Criticism
High Sick Call Rate	

Figure 5-3, Signs of Stress in the Unit.

#### **PART D - DESCRIBE THE TREATMENT OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF BATTLE FATIGUE**

Combat stress causes battle fatigue. Battle fatigue is the broad "umbrella" label for the physical, mental and emotional signs that result naturally from facing danger or from performing demanding missions under difficult conditions.

Figure 5-4, Battle Fatigue Definition.

1. Battle fatigue is the approved U.S. Army term for combat stress symptoms and reactions which --
  - o feel unpleasant and/or
  - o may interfere with mission performance,
  - and
  - o are best treated with reassurance, rest, replenishment of physical needs, and activities which restore confidence.(The four r's).

2. The term battle fatigue is used whether the signs occur in a new soldier or in a veteran after months of combat. It is used whether the signs start before shooting starts, during the action, or in a let-down period before further action. It can occur in headquarters and combat service support soldiers who are not themselves under fire, but are performing demanding duties under the threat of enemy action.

3. Combat stress reactions are observable behaviors which the soldier shows as the result of internal stress (either to overcome the stress, to escape it, to make it more tolerable, or simply as a side effect of it). Battle fatigue is one group of combat stress reactions.

4. Battle fatigue is a simple, common sense name for a natural, common condition which is not a medical or psychiatric illness.

The term stress fatigue can be used for the same signs occurring under stressful conditions where no actual combat is involved. For example, stress fatigue is common among soldiers at the National Training Center.

5. The following are some general facts about normal, common signs of battle fatigue.

a. Most soldiers have some of these signs before, during, and after combat or danger. These signs can be managed by self- and buddy-aid, leader actions, or unit medics.

b. Some soldiers have many of these signs often, yet they still fight well and perform all essential duties.

c. All soldiers, especially leaders, need to know that these are normal and common so they won't worry about them too much.

d. These signs are so normal that you should look closely at soldiers who never show any. Maybe they are just controlling their fear very well. But maybe they do not realize the danger. Or maybe the absence of the normal response is a more serious sign of battle fatigue.

Remember--

(1) Most of the physical signs are the result of having a lot of adrenaline in your bloodstream. They are likely to be worse when you cannot be physically active, or when you stay keyed up for a long time without resting.

(2) The mental signs of battle fatigue are natural in situations where high stress, fear or fatigue temporarily overload the brain's ability to process information. The emotional signs are likely to occur because things happen in combat to cause normal grief, guilt, resentment, and doubt.

Go to page 3 of GTA 21-3-5 (Appendix A) .Be sure that you understand that some of the "more serious" signs differ from the "normal, common" signs only in degree or the situation.

Examples:

- o Fidgeting and trembling are normal and common, while constantly moving around or obvious shaking is "more serious."
- o Trembling of the hands before action is normal and common, but the same trembling while performing the critical combat task is more serious if it results in mission or task failure.

6. The following are facts about the more serious signs of battle fatigue:

- a. "More serious" means that there are warning signs which deserve special attention and leader action. They are only "more" serious in relation to the normal, common signs, and not in some absolute sense.
- b. More serious does not necessarily mean that the soldier needs to be relieved of duty or evacuated as a casualty. Immediate action by leaders, buddies, or the soldiers themselves may be all that is required.
- c. Any of the normal, common signs become more serious if they interfere with essential performance, even after the soldier's buddies or leaders have taken action to help.
- d. Normal, common signs should be considered "more serious" if they do not go away completely while the soldier gains combat experience. Also, some of the signs may continue for a time after soldiers return home from combat.
- e. The signs must be considered in relation to a soldier's usual way of reacting. Take them more seriously if they come as a big change from how that soldier usually reacts to danger or interacts with other people.

7. Cases of battle fatigue are classified by severity. The three classifications are outlined in GTA 21-3-6 (Appendix A) and are defined below.

- a. Mild. The soldier remains in the small unit (section or platoon) to rest and to be restored to full duty.

b. Moderate. The soldier cannot remain in the small unit and must be sent to another supporting unit for temporary rest and replenishment, but not necessarily to a medical unit. After temporary rest and replenishment, the soldier returns to the small unit.

c. Severe. The soldier must be sent to a physician, physician's assistant, or mental health officer for evaluation and treatment.

8. The labels "mild, moderate, and severe" should be thought of as nothing more than "tickets" which say where the soldier should go at this time.

The following points (or criteria) are used to decide where the soldier can be treated.

a. "Mild" applies to soldiers who:

(1) Show normal, common signs of battle fatigue, feel uncomfortable, but are 100 percent effective.

(2) Show "more serious" signs and may be partially or even completely ineffective, but are not an unacceptable risk or burden to the unit in the tactical situation, and do not need urgent medical evaluation.

b. "Moderate" applies to soldiers who must be sent to another nonmedical unit.

(1) They are too much of a risk or burden to stay with their own unit at the time, given its tactical mission.

(2) The soldier's own unit cannot provide a sufficiently safe stable environment for rest and replenishment at the time.

(3) The soldiers are not too disruptive or potentially dangerous for a unit with a less demanding mission, at the time.

(4) They do not need urgent medical evaluation to rule out some possible serious physical cause or illness for the signs they are showing.

Whether a case of battle fatigue is called "mild" or "moderate" depends more on the tactical situation, the mission, and the resources of the small unit than it does on the signs the soldier is showing. A unit which is pulling back into reserve can keep a soldier who might have to be "left behind" if the unit were just leaving for action behind enemy lines.

c. "Severe" applies to any soldiers with "more serious" signs who fit within one or both of the categories below.

(1) The soldier is too burdensome, disruptive, or possibly dangerous to keep in the small unit, or in any available nonmedical support unit, at this time.

(2) The soldier's symptoms could be due to a physical cause which may need urgent medical or surgical treatment (for example, head or spine injury, drug abuse).

The difference between "moderate" and "severe" is influenced more by the kind of signs the soldier is showing than was the difference between "mild" or "moderate," although the availability of other combat service support units can still affect this classification.

(3) There is no easy rule for deciding whether a "more serious" warning sign makes the soldier a case of "mild," "moderate," or "severe" battle fatigue. That will require judgment based on what the leader, and perhaps the unit medic, know about the individual soldier; what has happened to the soldier; how the soldier responds to helping actions; what is likely to happen to the unit next; and what resources are available to the unit.

(4) Signs which usually cause the case to be classed as "severe" include:

(a) Dangerous threatening behavior by the soldier which is not just a disciplinary problem.

(b) Hallucinations and delusions not explained by sleep loss.

(c) Serious memory loss.

(d) Extreme pain.

(e) Loss of a major physical function, such as vision or the ability to move an arm.

(f) Complete unresponsiveness; not moving or answering at all.

Any of these cases might still be classified as "moderate" or even as "mild" if the signs occur in response to extreme stress and clear up quickly. A severe classification does not necessarily mean that a soldier is less likely to recover than cases classified as moderate or mild.

9. A key point to remember is to determine battlefield cases based on how far forward they can be managed and treated to maximize rapid return to duty. Use the principal of "Proximity" to the unit (treat as close to the soldier's unit and the battle as possible; prevent overevacuation); "immediate" treatment (without delay); the expressed "expectation" of a rapid and full recovery; and "simple" and short treatment methods. A good way to remember this is PIES.

10. A company leader's actions for moderately fatigued soldiers are outlined in GTA 21-3-6 (Appendix A). Leaders must understand and practice actions which are relevant to moderately fatigued soldiers and units to include actions that prevent battle fatigue.

The following are key points:

- o Take the soldiers and find them another safer, quieter place to rest and to work for a day or two.
- o If the soldier's small unit cannot wait for the First Sergeant or an NCO to take the soldier, it may be necessary to evacuate to the first-echelon supporting medical element. Every effort should be made there to remove the soldier to a nonmedical unit for further rest and replenishment.
- o The soldier must remain accounted for and not get "lost in the shuffle." There must be a positive plan to return the soldier to the original unit in a short time, and the soldier must know this.
- o Every reasonable effort should be made to maintain personal contact between the soldier and the original unit.

11. Leader actions for severely battle-fatigued soldiers are the same as for moderately battle-fatigued except that the soldiers are evacuated medically as soon as possible to be examined by a physician or physician's assistant. Soldiers are held at the medical facility for treatment with the "four r's." The medical officer may reclassify the soldier as mild or moderate after evaluating him.

A key point for you to remember is that the battle-fatigue victim after returning to battle is no more likely to suffer recurrence of battle fatigue than the next soldier.

**PART E - PREPARE YOUR UNIT TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION  
DESPITE COMBAT STRESS**

1. As a leader you are responsible for stress management in your unit. Your responsibilities include the following:

- a. Initiate and support stress management programs.
- b. Act as a role model to prevent stress.
- c. Provide information to reduce stress.
- d. Ensure that each soldier has mastered at least one stress-coping (relaxation) technique.
- e. Look out for the soldier's welfare.
- f. Communicate with soldiers personally to detect signs of stress.
- g. Create a spirit to win under stress.
- h. Plan to manage stress continually for unit effectiveness. An effective stress management program takes into account all phases of an operation including deployment, predeployment and combat, and post combat.
- i. Identify the importance of spiritual guidance and chaplain support services.

Lessons learned from Operation DESERT STORM conclude:

- o A chaplain assigned to the units added greatly to the stability and deployability of that unit.
- o Soldiers want to practice their religion and they want their free time, too. Training schedules are packed tight, and rightly so. Soldiers still want time to worship and pray to God. Time must be provided in the schedule for individuals to worship. It is highly recommended that those who make up the training schedule set aside time for church and worship services in the schedule.
- o The best results for the soldiers are obtained when the chaplain who worked with them before deployment is assigned to them when they return to the mobilization station. Continuity can be achieved.
- o The chaplain assigned to units that received severe and or heavy casualties must be a good listener and be able to craft questions that will encourage soldiers to keep talking.

2. To accomplish these things you must have a stress management program that includes planning, training, and preparing their unit for combat.
3. There are things you can do prior to combat to reduce the effect of battle fatigue. During the predeployment phase, you must plan to do the following:
  - a. Build unit cohesion. Unit cohesion is the personal trust and loyalty among members of a small unit that makes them prefer to stick together even when sticking together involves great hardship.

Encourage cohesion by having the members of a team always working together, under their leader. When you have a requirement for a detail, don't make up a work party from soldiers drawn out of several teams. Assign the project to one team, and let its leader organize how it will be done. Use physical fitness exercises and team sports to promote mutual reliance and closeness within each team.

- b. Ensure proper reception and integration into the unit. During reception and integration ensure that new arrivals are welcomed into the group and become known and trusted members quickly. The new member is at high risk of developing serious battle fatigue (and of getting killed) until he has developed shared trust and confidence with the rest of the team. In garrison, you should appoint a suitable sponsor for each newcomer. Ensure that the sponsor really does show the newcomer around and assists him in settling in on the job and the community. In a combat setting, it is even more important to get the new soldier linked up with an appropriate buddy or buddies.

- c. Promote unit pride. Promote unit pride by educating your soldiers in the history of the unit, the branch of service, and the Army.

- d. Develop physical fitness. Physical fitness programs are useful in promoting unit cohesion, and they are also important in themselves as protection against battle fatigue. Physically fit soldiers have a better chance of surviving if wounded. Being fit is not a guarantee against disabling battle fatigue, but it does increase self-confidence and delays the onset of muscular fatigue. Not being physically fit sets the soldier up for physical exhaustion or for actual damage to muscles or joints when work demand suddenly increases in combat.

- e. Provide realistic training. It is your responsibility to provide realistic training that builds confidence and cohesion. Realistic training is designed as close to combat mission and combat environment as possible, including noise, confusion, delays, and setbacks. The objectives are to learn to accomplish the mission in spite of hardships, to build toughness and confidence and that the soldier can "take it," and to do the job.

(1) You as the leader must share the discomforts and risks with your soldiers. You must seek and conduct challenging and tough training.

(2) You must educate your soldiers to maintain themselves, each other, and the equipment as a matter of professional pride and personal caring, not just as discipline.

(3) You must train subordinate leaders to be interchangeable--to take over when you need sleep or if you should become a casualty. Be sure they do the same with their subordinates.

(4) You must prepare your soldiers for battle fatigue. Everyone must know basic self-aid and buddy-aid for battle fatigue. Practice this as part of any training exercise. An example would be providing "mouflage kits" to make soldiers appear to have serious battle wounds will better prepare soldiers to face the real sights of battle.

(5) Through realistic training you learn each soldier's strengths and weaknesses. Then by identifying the critical duties in the mission, you are better prepared to match those duties to the best qualified soldiers.

As a part of realistic training and prevention, soldiers must drink a lot of water. Troops should drink a quart of water per hour to keep hydrated. This practice should be established prior to combat and carried on throughout combat, if practical.

f. Develop a sleep plan. Before deployment you must consider fatigue and sleep loss that occur during combat. Work schedules and their enforcement should begin early. During continuous operations, fatigue caused by lack of sleep is a major source of stress; breaks in combat are irregular and infrequent, and unscheduled, extended sleep is not likely.

(1) The plan should allow soldiers at least 4 hours of sleep each 24 hours, preferably uninterrupted, ideally between 2400 and 0600.

(2) Priority for sleep should go to those whose judgment and decision making are critical to mission accomplishment.

(3) Relaxation exercises should complement sleep schedules. These exercises should be used as an alternative to regular sleep or as an aid to help soldiers rest under difficult circumstances. (See paragraphs 3g below)

g. Teach individual stress-coping techniques as a part of unit training. The effects of mental stress, tension, fear, frustration, and anxiety keep fatigued soldiers from falling asleep quickly. Several techniques that can help soldiers gain some control over stress and allow for sleep should be incorporated into training.

- o Deep breathing exercise. This exercise consists of deep inhaling, which expands the abdomen, and thorough exhaling, which tries to push out all the remaining oxygen.
- o Muscle tension-relaxation exercises. These exercises are more complex. They generally consist of concentrating on various muscle groups and limbs, tensing and relaxing them to relax the entire body.
- o Cognitive exercises. These exercises consist of self-suggestion, imagery and meditation. They involve creating positive mental images that reduce the effects of stressful surroundings.

h. Conduct cross training. Cross training every key task is essential in combat. Knowing that there is someone capable of stepping in to replace key members of the unit in combat if necessary gives all of the unit members confidence in the unit's ability to survive.

i. Resolve personal and family matters. Personal stress adds to that imposed by combat. It is in the unit's best interest to help soldiers resolve important family matters before deployment and to develop methods for helping families when soldiers are absent.

- o Lessons learned from DESERT STORM reemphasized the crucial need for "taking care of family matters." Mobilization is a tremendously stressful event to a Reserve Component soldier, his family, and the community in which that person lives. This is why so much emphasis is placed on premobilization planning and training to include family support plans, wills, and support from employers. Personnel who are self-employed have unique problems and stresses to deal with during mobilization, e.g., RC doctors who must ensure their respective patients are referred to another physician for appropriate care. Reserve Component units which have not prepared well for mobilization create additional stresses on unit personnel. This is further multiplied by poorly executed procedures when a unit arrives at a mobilization station.

4. In addition to the normal stress associated with moving to a combat zone, soldiers in the deployment and combat phase start worrying about their survival and performance under fire. Their thoughts become centered around fear of the unknown.

a. Unit leaders should reinforce the stress reduction techniques learned during predeployment and help their soldiers understand what will happen to them when stressors occur.

b. Since uncertainty about the future is a major source of stress, timely and accurate information becomes vital. The lines of communication must be clearly defined and kept open. Informational meetings should be conducted at regular times even when there is no new information to disseminate. Information should include how the unit can and will cope with the barriers to communicating in battle and how to communicate when information is scarce. It should include how information will flow in all directions--down the chain of command, within and between units, and up the chain of command.

c. The mechanisms and structures set up before deployment for family support must be continued. The Army Community Service and its action agencies are available to assist families whose soldiers are absent and provide help for day-to-day needs. The Red Cross provides an information network between soldiers and families. Leaders need to reassure soldiers that these programs are available to serve the needs of the Army community.

d. Anticipate and treat battle-fatigued soldiers.

5 Just as predeployment and combat are stressful, the period after combat is also difficult. Today's rapid transportation enables soldiers to travel from the battlefield to their hometowns in 2- to-3 days. This short time often does not give them the time they need to "sort out" with their comrades what happened in combat or what will happen afterward.

a. Debrief. The debriefing process should begin while still in the theater of operations, if possible, and continue after returning home. The debriefing process allows soldiers to work through the common experiences of war such as the death of buddies, or the feelings of alienation from friends or family who have not been through combat. Again, get the unit chaplain involved.

b. Unit officers and NCOs should prepare the soldiers for problems that may be connected with their families and the family reunion. Many soldiers expect to resume their roles of primary income providers and disciplinarians for their children. However, their spouses may resist giving up their new roles as decision makers and primary home managers. These feelings may become additional sources of tension.

c. Soldiers should be briefed on such symptoms as startle reactions and occasional problems with sleeping. (An example of a startle reaction is the "jumpiness" you experience when someone walks up behind you unexpectedly or your reaction to a car backfiring.) The fact that these are normal reactions should be reinforced. Soldiers should be told about the Army community resources that are available to help them deal with the symptoms if they persist.

## **PART F - REVIEW**

1. Stress is the body's response to a demand (stressor). Stressors are events or situations which require change, create internal emotional conflict, or pose a threat.
2. Combat stress is the mental and physical process within the individual soldier of reacting to and dealing with the combat stressors. Stress depends very much on the individual's appraisal of the stressor and its context.
3. The sources of combat stress include individual stress, organizational (unit) stress, and stress created by the battlefield.
4. Signs of stress in self.
  - a. Physical signs of stress include dry mouth, fatigue, or the inability to move.
  - b. The mental signs of stress include forgetfulness and the inability to concentrate.
  - c. The emotional signs of stress include anxiety, frustration, guilt, irritability, moodiness, nervousness, pessimism, tension and apathy.
5. Signs of stress in others include the abuse of alcohol or drugs, emotional outbursts, excitability, negativism, restlessness, speech disorders, and trembling.
6. Signs of stress in unit include a high AWOL rate, bickering, dissatisfaction, lack of cohesion, failure to follow orders, insubordination, low productivity, sensitivity to criticism, or high sick call rate.

7. Combat stress causes battle fatigue. Battle fatigue cases are classified as mild, moderate, or severe.
  - a. Soldiers with mild battle fatigue stay in the unit to rest and to be restored to full duty.
  - b. Soldiers with moderate battle fatigue cannot stay in the small unit; they must be removed from the immediate area for temporary rest and replenishment.
  - c. Soldiers with severe battle fatigue must be sent to a physician, physician's assistant, or mental health officer for evaluation and treatment.
8. Prepare your unit to accomplish its mission despite combat stress. Plan to manage stress continually during predeployment, deployment and combat, and post combat.

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