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Abstract ID: 15150

Title: Stress Exposure Training for the Dismounted Squad: The Human Dimension

Subcommittee: Education

Abstract Text: Today's Soldiers face a complex, unpredictable, and fluid operational environment encountering more stressors and trauma than ever before. Mental disorders account for more hospitalizations of U.S. service members than any other diagnostic category. The Army is aggressively pursuing programs to address these challenges, including revising the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program and launching the Ready and Resilient Campaign to improve the performance, resilience, and readiness of Soldiers.

While most of the emphasis has been on post-event treatment, preventative resilience training that focuses on the human dimension is a key priority for the Army. The Army Study Program Office provided funding for the Squad Overmatch Study in 2013 and 2014 as its top priority program. This study is focused on investigating how to improve existing training methodologies and technologies to better develop cognitive skills and mental resilience at the squad level with more combat realistic exercises and experiences.

The vision for the Squad Overmatch Study is to optimize performance by enhancing existing training—from basic individual skills to unit training prior to, during, and post-deployment—through early and continuous Stress Exposure Training (SET) to reduce post-traumatic stress and to better prepare Soldiers for the stressful situations that are a natural part of combat operations. In June of 2014 the study team conducted a demonstration of graduated SET, as well as cognitive and situational awareness skills training. Of the Soldiers who participated, 90% agreed that the use of virtual technologies is effective for training situational awareness and resilience and 100% agreed that training that provides realistic scenarios are helpful in preparing for stressful combat situations.

This paper will describe the Squad Overmatch Study objectives, the squad-based SET gaming, virtual and live scenario exercises and technologies used, and present results of the 2014 demonstration at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Will this paper have one or more authors from outside the U.S.?

No

Discussion Points:

1. Army Human Dimension
2. Stress Exposure

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Dr. Jay Brimstin is the Deputy Director for the Directorate of Training and Doctrine(DOTD) at the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) at Fort Benning, Georgia. The Directorate is responsible for developing doctrine and training products, strategies, and programs for use throughout the MCoE and brigade combat teams across the Army. Dr. Brimstin has a PhD in education, specializing in training and performance improvement, as well as an MBA. Dr. Brimstin is a retired Army veteran with 30 years of service in which he served in multiple leadership and instructor roles. As the Deputy Director for the DOTD, Dr. Brimstin also functions as the agency career program manager for career program 32 for Department of the Army Civilian training, capability, and doctrine warfighting developers. Dr. Brimstin's specialization in training and performance improvement, and his academic background in business provide him with a unique perspective on assessing the overall effectiveness of training programs on the Army's bottom line, fighting and winning the nation's wars.

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