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# Way Back, When?



Family Impact Seminar

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# Way Back, When?

## Setting the Stage: Military Personnel and Families:

1. Military Life Course - A Personal Note
2. Family Experience - A Canoe Trip
3. Concepts of Deployment
4. Resilience & Resiliency - Paths & People
5. Expertise - North Carolina & Georgia



# Military Life Course

- My Way Back When...
- Everything changes as soon as you put on the uniform; life course of transitions
- Once underway, there may not be a clear “way back” but a “new normal”
- OIF (OND) & OEF - All volunteer force, < 1% serving 2 Wars
- Deployments as additional stressor

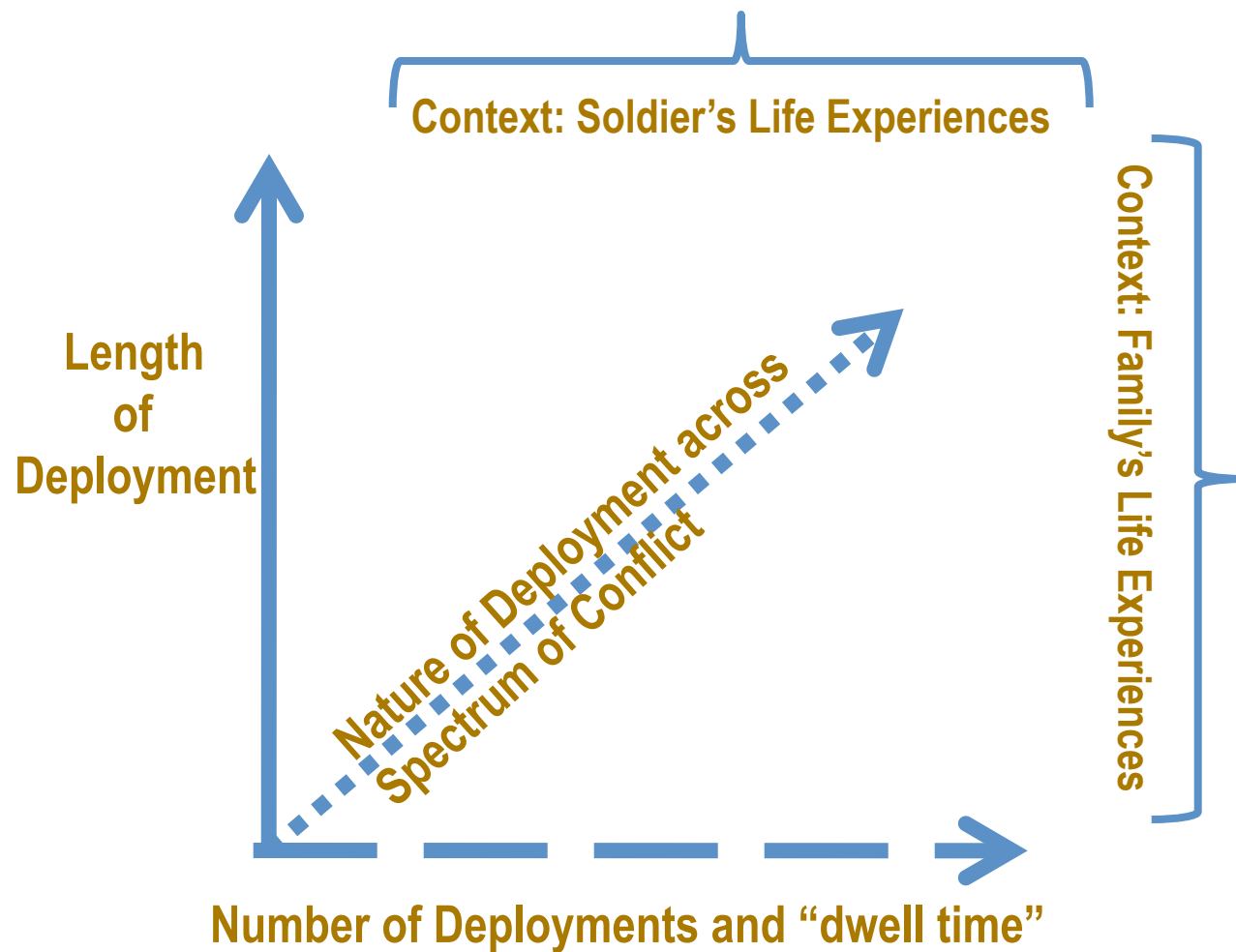


# Canoe Trip

- Receiving the call
- Getting ashore
- Regaining control of the canoe
- Getting back aboard
- Getting to a “new normal”
- **Deployment is a family experience**



# Conceptualizing the factors that determine Deployment Stress



10.22.09 (adapted by: J. Martin)

# Resilience & Resiliency

- How do so many do as well as they do?
- Resilience as process – building capacity to sustain, regain, or establish successful role and relationship performance, given significant adversity
- Resiliency as outcome – use of ability/capacity by individuals & families to “do what needs to be done” (learn, work, talk, listen and care...)



# Conclusion

- Prepare both the Way and the People
- Crystal Ball
- What about our future military service needs...
- Now, preparing the way back in North Carolina and Georgia



# Thank You

For your time and attention...





# References

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# Deployment & Families

1. Normality of War?
2. Sudden Impact, Sudden Change
3. Unpredictable Impact and Change
4. Implications for Reintegration & Family Functioning
5. Resilience & Resiliency
6. Ways to Frame the Conversation



# Normality of War?

- 5600 years of recorded history
- 14,600 reported wars (2-3 wars per year)
- USA since 1776, 190 years at war (note, includes Indian Wars, 1817-1898)
- Counting 80+ years of Indian Wars, at war 80% of our nation's history



# Sudden Impact, Sudden Change

- Combat Support Hospital, Balad, Iraq...

Neurosurgeon to wounded soldier,

***“We can save you. But you might not be what you were.”***



# Suddenly

- TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury happens in seconds
- War Context, mostly young men, in vehicles, in combat ('Battlemind' Driving)
- Now, add IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices)
- IEDs produce TBI, signature wound of OIF/OEF
- IED pressure wave - 1,000 times atmospheric (14.7 psi), 1600 ft/second (over 5 football-field lengths)
- Echo-Waves reverberate inside skull
- Secondary wave, displaced air collapses back in...



# Invisible Wounds of War (Tanielian et al, RAND, 2008)



# Prevalence of TBI

- Official military figures 2009 for OIF/OEF is approx. 115,000 persons
- RAND Study 2008 estimates 19.5%; over 300,000 (closed/hidden/invisible wounds)
- 5-10:1 injuries/fatalities; 30% at Walter Reed (30% of these w/cog./behav. or MUS – Medically Unexplained Symptoms)
- 13% w/ TBI indistinguishable from PTSD





# Unpredictable Mechanism of Change

- PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - \*Re-experiencing \*Avoidance \*Hyperarousal
- Unpredictable Onset – Dramatic Example
- Harry Patch (1898-2009), last British Army veteran of WWI died at age 111; his story...
- From 3.1 million Vietnam veterans **we know**: lifetime prevalence of combat related PTSD is 30.9%; 50% of men & 30% of women from that era who developed PTSD **still have it today!**



# TBI or PTSD?

- “A reliable way of differentiating between overlapping symptoms of TBI & PTSD is unclear...” (Psychiatric Annals, August 2009)
- In either case: majority recover with time; PTSD is failure of natural recovery; after one year (or 80) does not remit w/o treatment
- PTSD is highly distressing & debilitating



# Implications for Reintegration & Family Functioning

- More Vietnam Lessons, PTSD associated with :
  - 1) Increased rates of depression & suicide;
  - 2) Substance abuse;
  - 3) Family adjustment problems;
  - 4) Interpersonal violence;
  - 5) Poorer physical health
- PTSD – poorer significant other & family functioning...in different wars, times, and countries (Dekel & Monson, 2010)



# Presentation

## Primary Content Sources

- Content of 2010 Family Impact Seminar Paper
- RAND Study (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008)
- VA Sponsored Research & Empirical Observations by:
  - \* Chris M. Crowe, Ph.D., with Trauma Recovery Program, “PTSD & Co-Morbid Conditions<sup>1</sup>”
  - \* Dennis Hollins, M.D., Ph.D., Medical Director of Rehabilitation Unit, “Traumatic Brain Injury<sup>2</sup>”
- “A Terrible Love of War” by James Hillman & “On Killing” by Dave Grossman
- References List

