

**War is more stressful than any training can be.**

The goal of the enemy is to stress and confuse you. Security and support operations can also involve heavy stress even if there is no combat. Mental and physical fitness will help you endure the stress of combat and military operations.

**Combat stressors** are any stressors occurring during the course of combat-related duties, whether due to enemy action or from the soldier's own unit, leaders, and mission demands or the soldier's home life.

**Stress** is the mobilization of the body and mind to counteract stressors. It involves the physiological reflexes that ready the body for fight or flight. It also involves mental reactions. Effects include decreased blood flow to skin, muscles, and heart; increased sweating, adrenaline release for energy and alertness; muscle tension; and interference with sleep.

**Misconduct stress behaviors** are unacceptable and even criminal ways to discharge or escape stress. Examples include substance abuse, brutal violence, recklessness, desertion, malingering, and fraternization.

**Battle fatigue/combat stress reaction** means weariness and/or decreased performance capability due to prolonged work or effort in dangerous situations.

**Physical fatigue** includes muscle tiredness, aerobic fatigue, and sleep deprivation.

**Mental fatigue** is impaired performance due to continued mental effort on a specific task. Unclear thinking, problems with communication, some emotions (such as anxiety, fear, boredom or uncertainty) also produce mental fatigue.



**Positive stress** helps improve tolerance to physical and emotional stressors. Stress helps the individual to function better, stay alive, and cope.

However, extreme stress may impair coordination and concentration. If stress persists too long, it can cause physical and mental illnesses.

Treatment consists of –

- ◆ Reassurance.
- ◆ Rest and sleep.
- ◆ Food and fluids.
- ◆ Hygiene (washing up with warm or cool water as needed; putting on a clean uniform).
- ◆ A chance to talk about what happened.
- ◆ Restoring the soldier's identity and confidence with useful work.

This should be done as quickly, simply and close to the soldier's unit as possible.



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