

Annex F – NATO RTG/HFM-203 (MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING) WHITE PAPER 002

20 May 2010

SUBJECT: *Demands of Daily Military Life*

- 1) **Purpose:** To highlight the demands of military life that service members encounter in addition to deployment.
- 2) **The Challenge:** Service members face a variety of non-deployment related demands at work and at home. These demands can be cumulative, affect readiness, and influence the post-deployment adaptation and recovery process. Military organizations and leaders have the opportunity to reduce some of these daily demands, take action to mitigate the impact of these demands, and train service members to be successful in dealing with these daily demands.
- 3) **Demands:**
 - a) While demands are an essential component of military life, and offer service members the opportunity to engage in meaningful work, these demands can compromise morale, readiness and recovery. In this white paper, we consider two types of demands: military-related work demands and non-military-specific demands:
 - 1) Military-related work demands: These demands include work hassles (or occupational hassles) found in garrison such as unpredictable taskings, periodic mandated training, long work hours, lack of job control, interpersonal conflict, and poor leadership.
 - 2) Non-military-specific demands: These demands include family and relationship concerns, work-family conflict, and financial as well as legal difficulties.
 - b) Demands of daily military and non-military life can be a cumulative source of stress. By themselves, daily demands may adversely impact service member health. In addition, their cumulative effect potentially takes a toll on unit members at home and as they transition to and from deployment. Despite their common nature, *daily* demands are typically overlooked in favour of focusing on major stressors; however, daily demands must be addressed when developing countermeasures for reducing the impact of occupational stressors.
- 4) **Way Ahead:** Military mental health training needs to include ways to cope with daily military and non-military demands. By training service members to respond effectively to daily military and non-military demands, service members may be better able to focus on preparing for their military missions and recover from deployment. These demands represent an opportunity to develop, practice, and master skills that can help service members respond to deployment-related demands as well.

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