

**FM 6-22.5  
MCRP 6-11C  
NTTP 1-15M**

**HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

# **COMBAT STRESS**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

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## **FOREWORD**

### 1. PURPOSE

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11C, *Combat Stress*; Navy Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (NTTP) 1-15M, *Commander's Handbook on Combat Stress*; and Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22.5, *Combat Stress*, provide the tactics, techniques, and procedures required for small-unit leaders to effectively prevent, identify, and manage combat stress when it occurs in their units/commands.

### 2. SCOPE

This publication contains essential information about combat and combat-related stress. It describes, in layman's terms, techniques to prevent, identify, and treat harmful combat stress reactions at the lowest level or until professional medical assistance is available. It provides a basic understanding of the causes of stress and describes the preventive actions that can be taken to avoid or reduce its harmful effects. It describes how to identify and manage combat stress symptoms when they appear, and provides techniques to prepare units to handle combat stress reactions when they occur. All small-unit leaders should read this publication. Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used, both men and women are included.

### 3. SUPERSESSION

FMFM 4-55, *Combat Stress*, dated 13 April 1992.  
FM 22-9, 12 December 1991

4. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



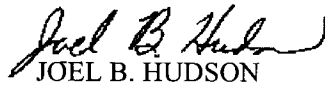
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## PREFACE

*Combat Stress* is the mental, emotional or physical tension, strain, or distress resulting from exposure to combat and combat-related conditions. Controlling combat stress is a command responsibility. In terms of Service members lost from action and reduced performance, combat stress seriously affects mission accomplishment. It is a leader's responsibility to take action to strengthen Service members' tolerance to combat stress and manage it in his or her unit.

Combat stress reactions are the result of exposure to the same conditions during military actions that cause physical injury and disease in battle or its immediate aftermath, and many combat stress reactions occur in persons who are also wounded or ill with disease. Rates of combat stress casualties vary greatly, with higher ratios during lengthy periods of intense combat. In Okinawa 1945, during a peak month of battle, the combat stress casualties among Marine Forces were reported as high as one for every two wounded in action (WIA). Under less lengthy periods, as suggested by data acquired from the Israeli Defense Forces fighting in Lebanon 1982, the ratio of combat stress casualties to WIA in small units can be as high as one to one. In the past, we have generally suffered as many as one battle stress casualty for every three to five WIA in heavy fighting. However, highly trained units with strong leadership and high esprit de corps have fewer combat stress casualties.

While this manual focuses on combat-induced stress reactions, it is important to emphasize that "combat stress" is not restricted only to combat, but may also arise from combat-like conditions present during military operations other than war. In an area of operations characterized by continuous action and high danger, our forces may experience high rates of stress casualties unless small-unit leaders are trained and prepared to manage stress.

This publication is written to inform small-unit leaders of stress characteristics and management techniques in order to *prevent, reduce, identify, and treat* combat stress reactions in the Service member's own unit to the maximum extent possible. A significant part of training is learning to control and cope with stress. Leaders must learn to cope with their own stress and then assist junior personnel in managing their stress. The application of combat stress management techniques helps conserve fighting strength and provides one more step toward achieving success.

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## **Chapter 1**

# **Combat Stress Identification**

### **1001. INTRODUCTION**

The Marine Corps' success as a fighting force is dependent on leadership that maintains a balanced focus between mission accomplishment and troop welfare. The small-unit leader is the key to building and maintaining high unit morale and peak efficiency. He achieves this in part by knowing his troops and understanding their strengths and weaknesses. To maintain that same level of morale and efficiency in combat, the small-unit leader must understand how to recognize, prevent, and even personally contend with reactions to combat stress when it occurs in his unit. If a condition accounted for as many casualties in combat and the condition was at least partially preventable, the prudent combat leader would be interested in knowing more about it. Combat stress reaction(s), also called battle fatigue, is that condition. It has the potential to disable the most courageous Service member and influence the success or failure of a unit in accomplishing its mission.

### **1002. HISTORY**

During the 1942-45 period in the European Theater, there was a ratio of one combat stress casualty for every three WIA. In a month of especially horrible, continuous fighting in Okinawa in 1945, the 6th Marine division had one stress casualty for every 1.8 WIA. However, the airborne divisions in Europe never had more than one for ten WIA, and usually less, even though they experienced very high casualties in some battles.