

OT Section

By LTC (P) Cozean, Chief, OT Section

Defense undersecretary for personnel and readiness, David Chu, was quoted by the press saying; “US forces involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) are flexible, agile and more able to respond to the unexpected than any force in history.” The test of time will determine if his remark holds true. Bottom line, our troops have done an outstanding job and we are proud of them and what an honor it is to support them and be a member of the US Army. As I thought about this quote, I thought about Army OT and wanted to say what a professional job you are doing each and every day. Whether you are deployed in support of OIF or OEF, or you are back in a clinic holding the operations together and working short of staff, you are demonstrating flexibility and the ability to respond to the unexpected. The same holds true for our Reservists. Reserve OT’s are deployed overseas and are helping us in a number of clinics. It is all about our soldiers and each of you talk this, and believe this, as you step up to the plate and carry through during challenging times. What a job you are doing and I’m proud of you and thank you.

Presently there are twelve OT’s deployed in support of OIF. Eight are in Echelons Above Corps (EAC): Three are AC, with the 115th FH and five are RC, one with the 865th CSH and four with the 883rd CSC. The 85th CSC and 528th CSC are in Iraq and our OT Assistants are deployed and supporting multiple units too. Our OT with the 30th Med. Bde. tells me he is heading north this week. The 98th CSC has deployed. The OT’s that I have heard from have been positive and they appreciate the care packages many of you are sending and they do enjoy hearing from the OT community so thanks for keeping them updated and continue to keep them in your prayers.

Moves for 03

This will be a busy summer for PCS moves and here is the latest update on where each OT is going: MAJ Andy Fabrizio will be the Chief at Landstuhl with CPT Lisa Smurr as his Assistant Chief. CPT Jay Clasing will be the Chief at Heidelberg. COL Brenda Mosley will be the new Chief at Tripler and CPT Laurie Duesler will be Chief at the 121. LTC Bobbi Amaker will be Chief at Ft. Bragg and CPT Atherton will be Assistant Chief at Ft. Knox. LTC(P) Bill Howard will be Chief at Walter Reed and LTC Harvey will be his Assistant Chief and the Internship Director. LT Lindsey Stawarczik will be a staff therapist at Ft. Benning and LT Patricia Stange will be Assistant Chief at Ft. Campbell. LT Mark Tenhor will be a staff therapist at Ft. Gordon. MAJ Steve Gerardi will be the Director of the 91WN3 Program at the AMEDDC&S. COL Len Cancio will be the Chief at BAMC as LTC Cassy Lewis will be retiring this fall. MAJ Stan Breuer will be the Chief at Ft. Bliss. MAJ Jesus Rodriguez will be the Assistant Chief at Madigan. CPT Kurt Brower will be Assistant Chief at Ft. Carson. CPT Randy Thomas will be the Chief at Ft. Hood and CPT Michael Kim will be Chief at Ft. Riley. CPT Priscilla Bejarano will be Chief at Ft. Sill and LTC Sandra Harrison-Weaver will be Chief at Ft. Lewis. CPT Jorge Smith-Leon will be the OT supporting the 98th CSC Det.

Good News Story

OT is doing very well with ASAM III. Approximately fifty percent of our clinics have been surveyed and your input to justify needed staff requirements to service your local patient population has been successful. The reviewing MEDCOM staff for ASAMIII are honoring the established ratio formula for OT, and our requirements are going up as planned. Understand this does not increase our military authorizations, nor does money necessarily follow the increase requirements. But it does provide you the avenue to justify to your Command the need for hiring civilian OT staff to support the hospital mission. A requirement is needed in order for you to hire a civilian. Having the additional requirements will provide the necessary staff needed to meet our missions of injury prevention through ergonomic intervention and our mental health role with the behavioral health team. For those of you who have not yet been surveyed, prepare for your site visit. Be proactive and don't rely on others to defend your requirement needs. No one can support your justification as well as you. Call or email me with your questions.

Ongoing Business

We will be consolidating our Internship program during the next year. Madigan's program will be moved back to Walter Reed after the present Interns graduate this December. The Internship program at Walter Reed will have an additional block of instruction from CHPPM to prepare OT's for ergonomic interventions. Training Army OT in the area of Ergonomics has been hit and misses at best, with the loss of the Corps Ergonomic short course. Providing this training during the Internship will allow OT's to have the necessary skills needed to perform our ergonomic mission. Research will also continue to be an integral part of our Internship program as we become a Masters prepared profession. LTC Karoline Harvey will involve the Interns in the process of research as we focus on outcome and evidence based practice as a section.

Our physical agents training program being developed by Dr. Bracciano and Dr. McFee is progressing, and the target date for distribution to the field continues to be late fall.

I will announce the winner for the 2003 Myra L. McDaniel Writers Award during our next VTC on 14 May. This is quite an honor and the committee had a challenging time deciding on the winning article. Thanks to all of you who participated.

The OT's involved in Project Paratus will be providing a progress report during our next VTC (14 May) on their sections developments. I know this additional work may be carved out of your personal time and I thank you for your valuable contributions. What you are doing is vital to our mission in psychiatry and I know we will succeed in coming up with an updated plan of action that will enhance our involvement with the mental health team.

Communication with LTC Altena (C, OT IMA) has been very successful in helping clinics with backfill needs and we appreciate our RC Occupational Therapists for their

support. MAJ Chuck Walters was able to coordinate with MAJ Shajuanda Strickland (a prior AD Occupational Therapist) to help him this summer during staffing shortages. As a one-officer clinic presently, LT James Watt will have MAJ Lynn Burns cover his clinic so he can attend the CSC course in May. Because MAJ Burns is a CHT, and is familiar with Army OT, this will work. I share these two examples with you to show that if you plan out your staffing needs and provide enough time for the system to respond, good things can come your way.

Departures

We have four OT's departing the Army family this summer and I want to say thank you for your commitment and dedicated service.

LTC Max Ito served as an Army OT for 25 years. He began his career at Ft. Riley and soon became the Asst. Chief at WBAMC. He then went on to be the Chief at Ft. Dix and later served in Hawaii as Chief of Schofield, and acting Chief, Tripler. He mentored many new OT's as the Internship Director at WRAMC and then served as a researcher and team leader at USARIEM. He was the Corps research consultant. LTC Ito has accepted a faculty position at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale. He will be responsible for entry level masters courses and labs, and for research methods with the masters and doctoral programs. LTC Ito was our section "out of box thinker" and he mentored many of our officers. We will miss your wisdom Max, but are glad to know that you and we both plan to stay in touch as you begin your new life in academics.

LTC Mary Laedtke served in the Army for 22 years. She began her career at Letterman Army Hospital and then PCS'd to Landstuhl. She was the Chief OT for the 528th Medical Detachment in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. She was the first OT to be assigned as the Chief, Health Screening Center at Ft. Benning and also the Program Planner for Health Promotion at the Pentagon. Her last duty assignment has been at CHPPM in the Directorate of Health Sciences as an Ergonomist. Mary's talents have been greatly appreciated in her dynamic ability to teach. She represents CHPPM well in her travels to provide DoD staff with the necessary training needed to reduce work related injuries. Mary, we will miss your passion for teaching and know that our loss will be another's gain. Mary plans to stay at home for a while to enjoy raising her family.

LT Christine Caruso completed her Internship at MAMC and is assigned to Ft. Knox and LT Julie Pavlish completed her Internship at WRAMC and is assigned to Ft. Carson. Both of these fine officers have decided to practice OT in the civilian community and we are sorry to lose you but know that you will be wonderful assets wherever you go. We thank you and wish you the very best!