

The PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE MOVEMENT (PEM)

*Designed to Raise Awareness
of the Valuable Role of Sport Psychology Outside of Sport*



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the Performance Excellence Movement (previously known as the Performance Excellence Program). After a brief hiatus, the newsletter is back!

The Performance Excellence Movement (PEM) was designed to, "...provide you with interesting information about how colleagues successfully apply their sport psychology techniques to areas other than sport, facilitate employment opportunities for students, increase the profile of sport and exercise psychology in our communities, improve student training and skills, and most of all, foster the passion in all of us for our chosen field!" Despite the change in name and a new committee, those visions have not been altered – if anything, they have increased in importance as the role of sport and exercise psychology has continued to grow in the years since the first newsletter.

In special recognition of Robert J. Fazio and Michelle M. Colman (the founders and publishers of the first two PEM newsletters in January 2001 and January 2002), the PEM newsletter retains much of the original format, including professional and student profiles, original student contributions, important AASP announcements, and other sport psychology resources. We believe the PEM will provide an excellent opportunity for AASP student members to become more involved in student initiatives as well as create an ideal forum through which they can share their successes and struggles in trying to apply sport psychology in many walks of life.

The current organizing committee consists of 3 AAASP student members: Tucker Readdy, M.A. (Oregon State University), Jennifer McClurg, B.S. (University of South Alabama), and David Bellinger, B.S. (Texas Christian University). Although our role in publishing this newsletter has involved editing previous work, conducting new interviews, and so forth, **we would like to take this opportunity to encourage all of you to contribute!** We are always looking for new topic areas, suggestions for people to interview, and original student contributions. If you have any questions as to how to become involved, just e-mail Tucker (readdy@onid.orst.edu).

With that said, welcome to the third edition of the PEM newsletter, "Sport Psychology in the Military." We hope you find the information interesting, thought provoking, and practical.

Sport Psychology in the Military

Given the recent national and international attention afforded to the role of the U.S. military in ongoing conflicts, it seems only appropriate that we as AASP members turn our awareness there as well. Thus, this issue is dedicated to the role of sport psychology in the U.S. armed forces, with particular emphasis on how traditional performance enhancement strategies are being employed across the entire spectrum of an individual's military experience.

As noted by Robert Fazio, Ph.D. and Michelle Coleman, Ph.D., in a previous draft of this edition, psychologists have been actively involved in trying to help U.S. military forces improve their levels of performance since World War I. In their initial involvement, psychologists were usually asked to help select, train, and motivate people to undertake the difficult tasks that occur frequently in combat situations. In non-combat roles, psychologists have performed duties that included screening of leader candidates, team training, and promotion of personnel (Allen, Chantelier, Clark, & Sorenson, 1982; Page, 1996). More recently, sport psychologists have been involved in a number of research and applied opportunities, within the U.S. military forces, aimed at increasing the likelihood that military personnel will perform to their maximum potentials.

In this issue, we explore some of the more contemporary ways sport and exercise psychology is being applied in the military. We hope you enjoy the description of the current applied performance psychology programs used in the Army, the professional profile of Jim Bauman, and the short editorial on using "boot camp" exercise classes in fitness clubs.

Organizational Profile: United States Military Academy's Center for Enhanced Performance

By: Jen McClurg, B.S.

"Success in war lurks invisible in that vitalizing spark, intangible, yet as evident as lightning – the warrior soul..." Words spoken by G.S. Patton in 1931 and today embraced by the United States Military Academy's Center for Enhanced Performance (CEP). The CEP provides comprehensive training in applied performance psychology to cadets throughout their 4-year West Point experience in key every developmental dimensions (academic, military, and physical). Started in 1989 solely as a support service for West Point's varsity football team, the CEP's Performance Enhancement Program now trains over 300 cadets a year in cognitive skills for confidence, goal setting, attention control, stress/energy management, and imagery/visualization. The training, enthusiastically backed by many varsity sport coaches, is available to all cadets who are interested in enhancing military, physical, and academic performance, as well as athletic achievement.

This training has been deemed so important by the leadership in the army that it is now being mainstreamed into the military education for all cadets. According to Dr. Nathaniel Zinsser, Director of the Performance Enhancement Program, beginning in the summer of 2006, "all entering cadets will receive three hours of training, and all returning sophomores will receive an additional four hours. Also, starting in Summer 06 all upper-class cadets who are serving as leaders for the freshman in Basic Training and sophomores in Field Training will receive an additional three hours," (personal communication, March 20, 2006)

To meet the growing demand for instruction outside of West Point, the Army provided two additional officers to the CEP in order to create The Army Outreach Mobile Training Team (AOMTT). The AOMTT trains soldiers in mental skills and development of the Warrior Ethos – to "be confident, mentally agile, self-aware, and adaptive." Some of the training courses for concentration, stress management, confidence, and imagery for healing are available online for military personnel. The soldiers in the U.S. Army undergo rigorous training, in many respects comparable to that of competitive athletes. In order to continue to improve their proficiency and effectiveness, it has been necessary to develop new training strategies. Teaching soldiers to be able to focus and shift mental attention during chaotic combat engagements is important not only to the survival of the soldier, but also to mission accomplishment. Many of the skills taught during the AOMTT day-long seminars are also aimed at improving leadership and communication skills. Soldiers

leave the training being more aware of their psychological skills and equipped with new strategies on how to improve themselves as well as train their subordinates.

Thus far, over 10,000 soldiers have been trained in psychological skills for performance enhancement prior to deployment. The attendees range from team leaders to brigade commanders and the program is still expanding in scope. Dr. Zinsser reports very positive results since the program's inception. One of the first units to undergo the 6-hour performance enhancement training, the medium weight striker brigades, has been deployed to Iraq and returned. Feedback upon return was that the mental skills for performance training was an extremely valuable part of the program for these soldiers in the field. One of the greatest benefits of the training is to make physical training and preparation more efficient by using attention control and mental imagery. By decreasing the amount of time the unit required to train new personnel, the striker brigade was able to save time and money while training replacements to a higher level than previous methods achieved. Not only do soldiers improve their skills professionally, but the mental training is also designed to improve them personally, concentrating on developing the whole person and family, not just the "warrior." With one of the divisions served by the AOMTT, the Division Commander requested specialized training for the family members left behind. Although this unit lost more soldiers on its second tour to Iraq, the spouses of the senior leaders in the unit felt very strongly that the mental skills training helped family members cope better with the lengthy separation, resulting in fewer family problems normally associated with war-time deployments.

Dr. Zinsser reports that the Army is currently expanding the program based on the success at West Point. Planned expansion includes establishing satellite centers at major Army installations beginning in 2006. Other endeavors include development of assessment instruments and ongoing research.



Professional Profile: Dr. Jim Bauman

By: David Bellinger, B.S. & Tucker Readdy, M.A.

* Dr. Bauman is a licensed psychologist in both California and Washington and has been a full-time sport psychologist for the past 16 years; 9 at the university level and another 7 with the U.S. Olympic Committee. Dr. Bauman was gracious enough to provide two

separate interviews relating some of his experiences in the military and how they continue to inform his practice as an applied sport psychologist.

Dr. Bauman, could you briefly describe your military experience?

My military experience consists of 5 years of active duty (1971-76) and 8 years of reserve duty as an Army officer. My branch of services within the Army was Air Defense Artillery. My jobs during my 5 years of active duty consisted of a being a battery officer, working in the G-1 (Command personnel), and teaching Air Defense Missile System tactics and serving as a Senior Tactical Briefing Officer at the Air Defense School at Ft. Bliss, Texas for 3 years. My reserve duty took me to duty stations in Ft. Bragg (Airborne), West Point, Japan, Ft. Lewis, and back to Ft. Bliss several times. These were primarily positions in the S-3 offices, which translates into tactical preparation and planning. Ultimately, I started out as a 2nd Lt. and left the military at the rank of Major.

How has your military experience informed your practice as an applied sport psychologist?

I would characterize my military experience as learning a lot about leadership, hard work, dealing with personnel problems (up and down the chain of command), being solution oriented with very few resources, developing a clear understanding of battlefield tactics, and recognizing that I did not want to do that line of work for a life-long career.

All of these, except for the last item, have been very helpful in working with coaches and sport organizations' middle and upper management, helping athletes develop "tactical" plans for their training and competition, and dealing with a broad range of personalities in sport. I found out what it was like starting out at the bottom of the military officer food chain and gaining respect by what you do, rather than because you "out rank" someone.

There weren't any official training programs in applied performance enhancement. Other than having classes during my 4 years in ROTC and the Officer's Basic Course, no other specific training was provided. It was learn on the run, by making mistakes, or by a process of elimination. Certainly, because I was not in PsyOps (psychological operations), there was no real need for explicit applied sport psychology outside of leadership expectations, an area where specific training was provided.

Ultimately, the military was another valuable life experience, much like being a construction contractor, a stock broker, a disabilities specialist, or a forensic psychologist (all previous career stops for me). Collectively, they have helped me get a more rounded perspective of how people view themselves, others, and how people interact with the world around them.

Do you have any current involvement with the military? If so, how do you integrate it into your practice as an applied sport psychologist?

My recent and continued experience in working with the Navy SEALs at the Navy Special Warfare School in Coronado, CA amplifies all of the lessons I have learned. Without a doubt, those men are cut from a very special "piece of cloth" and they have a very special job to do, a job they do incredibly well. I have taken seven Olympic groups to train with the SEALs for a day, just to provide them with an opportunity to see and briefly experience a day in the life of another "elite group of people." I consider the Olympic hopefuls and Olympic athletes, with whom I work with on a daily basis as an "elite group" as well. However, the Navy SEALs certainly provide our athletes with a much different view about what hard work and dedication are, what it means to know and do your job, and what team work is.

One message that athletes receive in their 1-day experience is what it means to do your job. The military has the flexibility to provide "lifelike" training environments, which is a major challenge to athletic teams. Another major piece of that 1-day experience is the importance of team. No one person is bigger than the team. That is a lesson that nearly every athletic team needs to learn. We have a few out there that get to regularly create the lifelike atmosphere, but with the always changing list of players this seems to be a fleeting experience for most, rather than a standard piece of the training environment.

Finally, is there any advice you can provide to any person that wants to get involved in applied sport psychology?

Should you choose to go down the path of becoming a sport psychologist, be clear about what you are getting yourself into. Be sure the graduate program you are going to apply to is the right fit for you. Secondly, find a great mentor. Someone in the business - and I mean in the business, not just talking about it. If you want to teach, talk to a professor. If you want to do applied work, talk to an applied sport psychologist. In any case, get ready for a long and sometimes trying journey. Finally, you must have a genuine passion for this kind of work. It is not about perceived status, perceived glamour, or any other perception about how "cool" this work might be. This is "blood, sweat, and tears" - just like it is with the sport organizations, coaches, and athletes with whom we work. So, please, ask lots of questions.

Student Editorial: Combat in Fitness Clubs?

By Tucker Readdy, M.A.

I was recently reading the April, 2006 edition of *Athletic Business*, the self-proclaimed, “leading resource for athletic, fitness and recreation professionals.” This particular issue contained a brief article by Andrew Cohen entitled “Kirk’s Army,” and was intended as a profile of Kirk Links (a retired Air Force deputy and a current fitness director at an Air Force base in Ohio). Yet, Cohen’s article did more than just detail how Links has replaced traditional fitness activities with exercises supposedly designed to simulate real-life combat situations, including building levees out of sandbags, pugil-stick training, and various forms of full-contact self-defense training. In addition, Cohen drew comparisons between Link’s programs and the “boot camp” classes that are becoming increasingly popular in health clubs, which often bear little resemblance to the actual boot camps that cadets experience. The issues discussed in the article got me thinking – given the potential for physical and psychological abuse to occur in real boot camps – just how socially appropriate are such classes?

I have to admit I don’t really have a good answer to that question. We all have different histories and contexts that would lead us to provide unique responses to such a query. But there is some pedagogical value in at least trying to formulate a response, as it highlights many of the difficulties inherent in practicing any sort of applied science, including sport and exercise psychology. What are the social, environmental, and institutional contexts in which we are providing services to our clients? Are our interventions consistent not only with accepted theory and evidence-based practice, but also with the value systems of those we seek to help? How much of our past work has been limited by our adherence to what works for us, as opposed to what works for those who seek our assistance?

Many questions without many answers, I know. If anybody would like to share their thoughts, we will include editorial replies in the next newsletter. Perhaps this would be a good thesis or dissertation topic for one of our readers, as our field could surely benefit from compelling descriptions and analysis of what goes on in these classes. I don’t see the “boot camp” theme leaving any time soon (and maybe it isn’t even presently a problem), but the potential dialogue around the issue is one worth engaging.

Special Thanks

The Organizing Committee would like to give a big round of applause to Jessica Mohler, Ph.D. and Heather J. Peters, Ph.D., both of whom were invaluable in obtaining previous PEM newsletters and establishing interview contacts! We would also like to thank Dr. Nate Zinsser, Dr. James Bauman, and Cheryl Weiss, M.A. for their invaluable assistance in reviewing this newsletter. Finally, we offer a big round of applause for the reviewing efforts of Dr. Patsy Tremayne, Ph.D. and Dr. Mark Andersen, Ph.D.

Resources

Allen, J.P., Chantelier, P., Clark, H.J., & Sorenson, R. (1982). Behavioral sciences in the military: Research trends for the eighties. *Professional Psychology*, 13, 918-929.

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