Appendix A: MHAT III Report of Assessment of Multinational Force Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I)

A. Introduction

MNSTC-I is the subordinate command of the Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I). Commanded by a US Army LTG. It has the responsibility for the organization, training and equipping of all Iraqi forces to include civilian security and police forces. The Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams (CMATT) and the Joint Headquarters Advisory Support Team (JHQ) develop the Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) and their leaders to ensure that a competent force is prepared to assume responsibility for defense operations in support of the elected Iraqi government. The Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) prepares the Iraqi Civilian Police Forces, Department of Border Enforcement Forces, and the Facilities Protection Service Forces to ensure that a credible Iraqi security force exists.

B. Statement of the Problem

Soldiers assigned to MNSTC-I are deployed throughout Iraq serving as advisors as described above. At the request of the Commander, MNSTC-I, and in coordination with the MNF-I Surgeon, the MHAT III included Soldiers assigned to MNSTC-I in this report. The primary question to address is the status of the behavioral health of these Soldiers. The fact that this organization is conducting a relatively new mission permitted comparisons only with the Soldiers assigned to the Brigade Combat Teams.

C. Method

Survey data was collected from 349 Soldiers at one forward operating base and in the International Zone in order to assess behavioral health status. Survey data analysis included comparisons to the MHAT I and MHAT II data. Ten focus groups were also conducted with these Soldiers. Focus Group questions are at Appendix C.

D. Results

Demographics for this sample are in the figure below. This sample consisted of Soldiers who were more experienced and senior in rank than Soldiers assigned to conventional units. The median years of military service was 17 years for the MNSTC-I Soldiers and 4 years for the Soldiers assigned to the Brigade Combat Teams.

Gender:	Female	19% (n= 66)
	Male	81% (n= 281)
Age:	18-24	6% (n=22)
	25-29	14% (n=47)
	30-39	33% (n=115)
	40+	47% (n=165)
Ethnicity	White	64% (n= 221)
	African-Am	23% (n= 78)
	Hispanic	8% (n=26)
	Asian	3% (n = 9)
	Other	4% (n= 13)
Rank:	Jr. Enlisted	4% (n=14)
	NCO	27% (n=93)
	Sr. NCO	18% (n=63)
	Officer/WO	52% (n=178)

Component:	Active	46% (n=161)
	USAR	48% (n=168)
	National Guard	1% (n=2)
	AGR	3% (n=10)
	IRR	2% (n=6)
Median years in military:		17 years
Median months in unit:		4 months
Median months deployed in last 4 years:		4 months
Percent married :		71% (n =239)
Median years married:		11 years
Soldiers with children:		70% (n = 237)

Results of the Focus Groups contained numerous themes which emerged concerning the Soldiers reaction to their assignments and deployment. In order for an issue to be included, it had to be identified by at least three different Focus Groups. The themes which emerged included the challenge of adjusting to cultural differences, short notice notification for deployment by USAR Soldiers, and challenges obtaining infrastructure support. These Soldiers reported high job satisfaction and their belief that they are part of the solution to establish stability in Iraq.

Results of the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Soldier Survey are summarized here. The data reflect lower levels of acute stress despite the fact that many of these Soldiers were actively engaged in daily or almost daily exposure to combat. Items indicative of acute stress, anxiety, and depression were endorsed by less than 4% of these Soldiers as compared to rates of 8% to 14% for Soldiers assigned to the Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). When asked about their personal morale, 84% of the MNSTC-I Soldiers versus 61% of the BCT Soldiers reported their personal morale as medium, high or very high. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the MNSTC-I Soldiers rated unit morale as medium, high or very high versus 55% of BCT Soldiers.

A higher percentage (43%) of MNSTC-I Soldiers reported the deployment as having a positive effect on personal life with an equivalent number (52%) from both groups reporting self confidence in their professional skills as Soldiers. Unit climate as measured by confidence in leadership was high for both groups with 47% agreeing that leadership was concerned about Soldier welfare.

E. Discussion

The findings from the surveys and focus groups of MNSTC-I Soldiers revealed lower rates of self-reported problems and higher personal and unit morale with comparable levels of confidence in their professional skills. Although there are multiple factors contributing to these differences, experience is one probable contributor to the findings. MNSTC-I Soldiers are more senior (17 years versus 4 years). The fact that these

Soldiers reported overall lower levels of acute stress and depression in conjunction with relatively higher morale is highly significant in view of the increasing role that they will assume in meeting the objective of a fully trained Iraqi force.

F. Recommendation

Combat Stress Control Detachments should monitor the Soldiers assigned to these units through the use of the recently deployed Unit Behavioral Health Needs Assessment Survey.