**Mission OPSEC vs. Secretiveness**

**In Combat:**
- You talk about the mission only with those who need to know; you can only talk about combat experiences and missions with unit members or those who have “been there, done that.”

**At Home:**
- You may avoid sharing any of your deployment experiences with your family, spouse or friends.
- You may avoid telling your family, spouse or significant other where you are going or when you will get back (and get suspicious when they ask).

**Transitioning the Combat Skill:**
- OPSEC involves providing information to those who need to know and trusting your fellow Soldiers. The “need to know” now includes friends and family.

**Action:**
- Realize that your family needs to know something about your deployment experiences.
- Tell your story the way you want to tell it.
- Share with your significant others what you are doing, day to day.
- Be proud of your service.

**Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt**

**In Combat:**
- Your responsibility is to survive and do your best to keep your buddies alive.

**At Home:**
- You may feel you have failed your buddies if they were killed or seriously injured.
- You may be bothered by memories of those wounded or killed.

**Transitioning the Combat Skill:**
- Soldiers make life and death decisions in the heat of battle; responsibility involves learning from these decisions without second guessing.

**Action:**
- Recognize that there are human limits to preventing death and injuries.
- Do not allow “survival guilt” to destroy you. Your buddy would want you to drive on.

**Discipline & Ordering vs. Conflict**

**In Combat:**
- Survival depends on discipline and obeying orders.
- Following orders kept you and those around you safe and in control.

**At Home:**
- Inflexible interactions (ordering and demanding behaviors) with your spouse, children and friends often lead to conflict.

**Transitioning the Combat Skill:**
- Giving and following orders involves a clear chain of command which does not exist within families and friends.

**Action:**
- Acknowledge that friends and family members have been successful while you have been gone and may have developed new ways of doing things.
- Always be prepared to negotiate.
- Families and friends are not military units.

**The Alcohol Transition**

**In Combat:**
- Alcohol use was limited.

**At Home:**
- Alcohol is now plentiful.

**Action:**
- Pace yourself and don’t encourage each other to get drunk.
- Don’t drink to calm down or if you’re feeling depressed.
- Don’t drink if you’re having trouble sleeping; it actually makes the sleep worse.
- Look out for each other.

**Mental Health Resources**

**Unit:**
- Buddies, Leadership, Chaplain

**Post:**
- Troop Medical Clinic, Behavioral Health Service

**Off-Post:**
- Civilian Doctor or Mental Health Professional, VA

**Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR)**

**U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command**

**Battlemind Training was developed by the WRAIR Land Combat Study Team**

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The opinions and views expressed here are those of the Land Combat Study Team, and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.

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**www.battlemind.org**

**Training Timeframe: At Post-Deployment**
The Transitioning Warrior

From the combat-zone to the home-zone.

- **Battlemind** includes combat skills and the battle mindset that sustained your survival in the combat-zone...
- But Battlemind may be hazardous to your social and behavioral health in the home-zone...

**Successful transitions**

- Every Soldier will adjust to home in their own way.
- Build on your proven strengths.
- Translate combat skills to home skills.
- Effectiveness at home is as important as effectiveness in combat.

**Professional combat skills helped you survive**

- **Buddies (cohesion)**
- **Accountability**
- **Targeted Aggression**
- **Tactical Awareness**
- **Lethally Armed**
- **Emotional Control**
- **Mission Operational Security**
- **Individual Responsibility**
- **Non-defensive (combat) driving**
- **Discipline and Ordering**

It is **CRITICAL** that you not let your combat behaviors and reactions determine how you will respond at home.

**Buddies (cohesion) vs. withdrawal**

In Combat:

- No one understands your experience except your buddies who were there.
- Your life depended on your trust in your unit.

At home:

- You may prefer to be with your battle buddies rather than your spouse, family or friends.
- You may assume that only those who were there with you in combat understand or are interested.
- You may avoid speaking about yourself to friends and family.

**Transitioning the combat skill:**

- Cohesion in combat results in bonds with fellow Soldiers that will last a lifetime; back home, your friends and family have changed, re-establishing these bonds takes time and work.

**Action:**

- Develop and renew relationships at home.
- Spend individual time with each of your loved ones; balance time spent with buddies and family. Provide and accept support from them.

**Accountability vs. control**

In Combat:

- Maintaining control of weapon and gear is necessary for survival.
- ALL personal items are important to you.

At home:

- You may become angry when someone moves or messes with your stuff, even if it is insignificant.
- You may think that nobody cares about doing things right except for you.

**Transitioning the combat skill:**

- Being accountable and in control keeps you combat ready; back home, the small details are no longer important; family decisions and personal space are best shared.

**Action:**

- Giving up control at home does not place you at risk.
- Distinguish between what is and is not important.
- Do not be afraid to apologize if you overreact. Apologizing is not a sign of weakness.

**Targeted vs. inappropriate aggression**

In Combat:

- Split second decisions that are lethal in highly ambiguous environments are necessary. Kill or be killed.
- Anger keeps you pumped up, alert, awake and alive.

At home:

- You may have hostility towards others.
- You may display inappropriate anger, including physical assault, or snap at your buddies or NCOs.
- You may overreact to minor insults.

**Transitioning the combat skill:**

- “Combat anger” involves appropriate responses to the actual threat level to ensure safety.

**Action:**

- Assess whether there is a real threat to your safety.
- Think before you act; Wait before you respond (count to 10); Walk away.
- Talk to someone—get an azimuth check.

**Tactical awareness vs. hypervigilance**

In Combat:

- Survival depends on being aware of your surroundings at all times and reacting immediately to sudden changes such as sniper fire or mortar attacks.

At home:

- You may feel keyed up or anxious in large groups or situations where you feel confined.
- You may be easily startled, especially when you hear loud noises.
- You may have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares.

**Transitioning the combat skill:**

- Combat requires alertness and sustained attention; back home, it takes time to learn to relax.

**Action:**

- Monitor yourself for “revved-up” reactions to minor events.
- Engage in regular exercise.
- Do not drink large amounts of alcohol or take illegal drugs to help you fall asleep; these will actually make your sleep worse.

**Lethally armed vs. “locked & loaded” at home**

In Combat:

- Carrying your weapon at all times was mandatory and a matter of life or death.

At home:

- You may feel a need to have weapons on you, in your home and/or car at all times, believing that you and your loved ones are not safe without them.

**Transitioning the combat skill:**

- In the combat zone you developed and followed strict rules for weapons safety, including when to fire your weapon.

**Action:**

- Resist the desire to have a weapon “locked and loaded”.
- Follow all laws and safety precautions regarding weapons. Never drive with a loaded weapon.
- Never use a weapon to threaten or intimidate loved ones.

**Emotional control vs. anger/detachment**

In Combat:

- Controlling your emotions during combat is critical for mission success and quickly becomes second nature.

At home:

- Failing to display emotions around family and friends or only showing anger will hurt your relationships.
- You may be seen as detached and uncaring.

**Transitioning the combat skill:**

- Emotional control involves both holding in and expressing feelings.

**Action:**

- Express your emotions appropriately.
- Showing emotion is important for keeping your personal relationships healthy.
- Displaying emotions is not unmilitary and does not mean you are weak.