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## Editorial

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# Editorial

Charles R. Figley

Once in a blue moon is a common way of saying *not very often*. Today is Tuesday, September 11, 2007, 6 years from both the day of the week and month that changed lives worldwide. I think of it as the “Blue Tuesday Anniversary” because an anniversary that falls on the same day of the week is uncommon. Why is it important? The “anniversary effect” is common knowledge among those who work with the traumatized (cf. Bornstein & Clayton, 1972). It is important because there is a confluence of cues that increase the likelihood that survivors will remember more vividly the traumatic event. September 11 represents the start of fall season and the academic and school years; it occurs soon after the long Labor Day weekend; it is the start of football season. And for places where the planes took off and crashed there are vegetation, smells, and an angle of the sun that are like no other time of year. When you add to this situation the actual day of the week, Tuesday, it is even more powerful.

In contrast with past anniversaries, the sixth one provides sufficient time for reflection, such as the recognition that things have changed so much in such a short time: War is now such a common theme throughout our daily lives, and public trust in elected national leaders and the media has plummeted.

One thing that has not changed over the last 6 years, fortunately, is the respect for and appreciation of first responders and members of the military. No matter how much Americans may disagree with the Bush doctrine and the reasons for going into and staying in Iraq, there is wide consensus that more needs to be done for the troops who risk their lives in the region. What needs to be done? Most Americans would answer: anything and everything to help our military personnel recover from being in harm's way and be honored for their service.

To that end, I am happy to introduce readers to this final issue of Volume 13 of the journal that includes a special issue entitled “The 2006 Mental Health Advisory Team Report of Behavioral Health Down Range.” As noted by the introduction to the

special issue, the focus is on an extraordinary study. The centerpiece of the special issue is a set of three articles derived from a report of this study, released just months ago by the U.S. Army. The *Traumatology* Editorial Board believed that this report is extremely important and should be studied and its findings taken into account by all traumatologists and others who care for and care about combatants and their families. The report (Castro & McGurk, 2006) is referred to as “MHAT-IV” (Mental Health Advisory Team Report IV). The articles, coauthored by Carl Castro and Dennis McGurk, address the extraordinary findings of the team in terms of high levels of combat stress that cause the highest levels of combat stress reactions ever recorded and reported. The reactions are not only due to the intensity of battle but, even more importantly, the suffering of both the combatants and their families is due to the multiple and lengthy deployments with less and less time at home between deployments. These articles are accompanied by two sets of commentaries. The first is by a group of practitioners who study and treat returning veterans. There is also a commentary by a battalion commander, Colonel Patrick Donahue. They confirm the importance of the study and report and discuss its implications for helping the returning troops to somehow recover from their experiences. In the final set of commentaries, Castro and McGurk themselves as well as a senior officer and psychiatrist within the behavior health unit that oversaw the study and its implementations offer their observations.

The rest of the issue is composed of regular submissions and reviews of media (a book and two video productions). The first article, “Blended Versus Era-Specific Group Therapy for Veterans,” is quite relevant to the special issue. It is a report from the field by a nationally known clinical psychologist highly experienced in treating military veterans, Judith Lyons, and her psychology intern, Ashley Swearingen. They report on their initial experiences in working with two types of therapy groups. One is homogeneous and includes only veterans from a single war

era, such as Vietnam. The other group is heterogeneous (i.e., blended demographic cohorts) and includes veterans from more than one war era. They report that both types of groups have their advantages but the heterogeneous groups are helpful for both the younger and the older veterans. They note, for example, that older members can “contribute in educating their community about PTSD and available services, in serving as role models within the group, and often as mentors of the new generation of veterans outside group hours.”

The next article, with regard to the 9/11 terrorist attack, reports on a study of the resilience of Israeli body handlers. The article, “The Resilience of Israeli Body Handlers: The Implications of Repressive Coping Style,” was written by three internationally known Israeli scholars, Zahava Solomon, Roni Berger, and Karni Ginzburg. Their article reports the findings of their study that assessed posttraumatic and psychiatric symptomatology and perception of threat among Israeli rescue workers whose work involves body handling following terrorist attacks. What is extremely important about this article is that despite high levels of trauma exposure, there was considerable resilience because of a repressive coping style. These findings have very important implications for those who are deployed to highly stressful settings because of the benefits of repression of feelings. They found that among the 87 post-terrorist attack body handlers, those found to be repressors reported lower levels of psychiatric symptomatology than nonrepressors.

The final article, “Fearing Future Terrorism: Development, Validation, and Psychometric Testing of the Terrorism Catastrophizing Scale (TCS),” continues the theme of 9/11. Samuel J. Sinclair, a psychologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital of Harvard Medical School, and coauthor, Alice LoCicero of Endicott College, present preliminary results of an Internet-based study of 503 adults in their development of a promising new measure, the Terrorism Catastrophizing Scale (TCS), with three constructs: rumination, magnification, and helplessness. Among other findings, terrorism catastrophizing is a significant predictor ( $P < .0001$ ) of behavioral change and of symptoms of anxiety, depression, and physiological stress. These preliminary findings may lead to further research to establish the TCS as a useful measure in predicting terrorism-based fear reactions.

Many things have changed in the wake of 9/11, although by now more than 6 years have passed. Americans continue to balance their need to overcome fear through greater security measures with the equally important need for individual freedom. The Editorial Board of the journal, Assistant Editor Patricia L. Johnson, and I wish to express our appreciation to the men and women in the armed forces who make us all feel more secure while, at the same time, making it possible for us to experience freedom. Thank you.

We would also like at this time to express our appreciation to the many colleagues who have donated their time and talent to reviewing manuscripts for the journal. They include the following:

Francis R. Abueg  
Rick Allen  
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Finally, we appreciate Brittany Willkins' efforts as Assistant to the Editor for Media Reviews and Traci Post of Sage Publications for helping to bring everything together as our Production Editor.

The next issue of the journal will also contain a special issue (SI). This SI focuses on the pain, suffering, and wisdom of the students and faculty of Virginia Tech University and is entitled *What We Knew and Know About the Virginia Tech Shooting*. Virginia Tech Psychology Professor Russell Jones and I invited a select number of colleagues to write about how they experienced the shootings and the lessons learned as viewed from their own specialty (e.g., computer sciences, English, marriage and family therapy, psychology, sociology). This issue will be published in March, 1 month prior to the

first anniversary of the worst campus violence in the United States. The lessons from this incident are relevant far beyond college campuses and the field of traumatology.

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