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Reserve Soldier fills vital role in Fort Sill's 428th Field Artillery Brigade

FORT SILL, Okla., Feb. 11, 2021 — Leading the health and welfare of the 428th Field Artillery Brigade became an easier task for its commander, Col. Neil Morgan, when a new Training and Doctrine Command program assigned a behavioral health officer to his unit.

The program, called TRADOC Organic Medical Support (TOMS), integrates medical resources directly into brigades.

Dr. (Maj.) Stephen Scott is a Reserve Soldier who fills that behavioral health role helping his superiors to lead in a time of multiple stressors.

“I like being a part of the world’s greatest Army,” he said. “I’m a psychologist and this is the way I can contribute.”

How he came to this point in his career happened via a different path. Although Scott was offered a commission while an undergraduate student, he declined.

“I decided not to commit then, and it was something I always wondered about,” he said.

Scott worked hard to complete his doctoral degree at the University of Miami, Florida, calling it a very good, but very expensive school.

“I had scholarships and assistantships the whole way or I could never have afforded it,” he said.

Scott’s full-time civilian job is in psychological evaluations for the Social Security Administration in its disabilities benefits department. He also provides this expertise to the Federal Aviation Administration for matters related to their pilot corps and air traffic controllers.

Despite a busy and meaningful practice, he was still mulling over the extent of his service to his country. At age 45, Scott said his answer came during a discussion with his wife at dinner.

“She asked me why I didn’t join now if it was something I may have regretted,” he said. “I told her I was much too old to join, but she convinced me to check on the internet.”

What he found surprised him.

“There wasn’t a maximum age for my particular skill set. Apparently, the Army had the need (for psychologists) and was willing to write a waiver.”

In the Army Reserve for about five years, When the call comes for his services, Scott said normally it’s for two-week slots. Lately those call-ups have been for extended periods. This time he volunteered and interviewed for the position in the 428th FA Brigade and will be here through late summer.

Scott’s role is different from the one the Behavioral Health Clinic at Reynolds Army Health Clinic accomplishes — helping individual Soldiers. Scott’s primary focus is to provide brigade oversight and consultations with leaders at all levels.

“This might translate to answering specific questions from a battery commander or providing ideas to brigade leaders on how to better

support Soldiers during the increased stress of COVID-19,” said the major.

In a sense, he can wear two hats as he also sees individual Soldiers when called to do so.

“Over holiday block leave, command asked that I give a high level of support to some individuals who were at increased risk,” said Scott. “Although I functioned as a psychologist when meeting with those individuals, I saw them at a much greater frequency, and sometimes well outside regular clinic hours, than the (behavioral health clinic) could have reasonably done.”

That kind of effort wasn’t lost on Morgan.

“Number 28 of the Fires Center of Excellence’s Fires Fifty states, ‘Nobody cares how much you know until they know you care.’ Stephen cares! His deliberate approach with our Soldiers nested with commander’s guidance and intent is a combat multiplier,” said the colonel.

Morgan added it’s great Scott arrived at the brigade when he did.

“The timing of his assignment to the brigade couldn’t have come at better time based on senior leader discussions and focus of the three corrosives to the Army — suicide, sexual assault, and racism,” said Morgan. “The increased anxiety with COVID is another reason Major Scott’s leadership and engagement has been (beneficial).”

In regard to the TOMS approach, Scott said seeking behavioral health care is much like finding care for a hurt knee or back pain.

“If you were being limited by those physical injuries, your command would want you to go to the clinic and get them fixed,” he said. “The

same applies with behavioral health: If anxiety or depression is limiting how well you are functioning, your command would want you to get the help you need.”

That help may come from the RAHC Behavioral Health Clinic or other facilities on post, such as the MR2 (Ready and Resilience) center.

“They are all about training your mind for improving functional performance,” he said.

Soldiers can also call a Military and Family Life Counseling program representative for a confidential talk, or contact a military chaplain.

“It doesn’t matter if you think of yourself as spiritual or not – those are some of the most caring people in the entire Army,” said Scott.

He added he’s still learning about his position but committed to making it as efficient as possible.

“This is a busy job, and there’s quite a learning curve coming from the civilian world into the military and Fort Sill processes,” said Scott. “It keeps me stretched.”

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Editor’s Note:

For any questions pertaining to Fort Sill please contact Fires Center of Excellence Public Affairs office at 580-442-6270 or 580-442-2521.