

Stress can cause serious health problems

by Lisa Stafford
American Forces Press Service

Stress is inevitable in everyone's life today. However, proper stress management can lead to a healthier life.

Each person's body reacts to positive stress such as the birth of a child or a wedding, and to negative stress such as the death of a close friend or relative. How each individual handles stress and the physical hormonal changes that occur varies.

Stress causes hormones like adrenaline to surge in your body. Your heartbeat and blood pressure increase, and your blood sugar rises.

According to the American Medical Association, stressful situations that continue for a long time without relief can cause various diseases and disorders.

Colds, ulcers, asthma, heart attack, stroke and other gastrointestinal problems can develop. You will

feel tired, irritable, depressed or anxious.

For some individuals, getting too much or too little sleep becomes a problem. Eating disorders can also become an issue, as can smoking. To decrease your stress:

■ **Defuse stress**

Consider how you will handle the next potential stressful situation before it happens. Most times, stress results from the fear of the unknown.

■ **Learn to let go**

Stressful situations themselves are not the triggers, but our reaction to the situations cause physical and emotional distress.

■ **Take a breather**

When you start to feel stressed out, take a breather. Inhale deeply, hold for a count of five, then exhale slowly. Repeat three or four times until you feel calm.

■ **Learn to relax**

Go to a movie, take a long hot bath, go for long walks, listen to soothing music, take up a hobby.

■ **Exercise regularly**

Seek your doctor's permission first, then get into a routine that works for you.

■ **Avoid over-indulgences**

Excessive alcohol, caffeine, fats, sugar and smoking will increase stress.

■ **Help others**

Give volunteer time to a charity. Help someone who is ill. Find something that gives you pleasure and satisfaction.

■ **Create a support network**

Surround yourself with people you can confide in for comfort, a sympathetic ear or advice. Don't let passing stressful situations develop into permanent health problems. ■

listen up

30% of AF without GI Bill or VEAP

courtesy of Air Force News Service

Gen. Michael D. McGinty, Air Force deputy chief of staff for personnel, stated the case for more education program participation.

He said the service should vigorously pursue education benefits for an estimated 133,000 airmen, or 30 percent of the force, not covered by either the Montgomery GI Bill or the Veterans' Education Assistance Program.

This includes about 59,000 who never enrolled in VEAP, 19,000 who were once enrolled in VEAP but withdrew their contributions and were

not authorized to convert to the Montgomery GI Bill, and 55,000 who opted not to take the GI Bill when they entered active duty.

Also, he said the Air Force should expand the Montgomery GI Bill to let airmen pursue professional certification and licenses in certain career fields.

Starting in June 1985, all active-duty airmen were automatically enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill, upon entry on active duty.

This excludes Air Force Academy graduates and Reserve Officer Train-

ing Corps scholarship recipients. New service members have 14 days from entry on active duty to disenroll from the program.

Once an active-duty person has established eligibility for the Montgomery GI Bill veteran entitlement, they are authorized a \$439.84 stipend per month for 36 months of full-time training.

With annual reviews, these benefits can be used up to 10 years after retirement or separation. The Department of Veteran Affairs administers the program.

Montgomery benefits can also be used on active duty after 24 months of service are completed.

There have been changes to the Montgomery program in recent years:

○ Airmen with VEAP balances were eligible to switch to Montgom-

ery from Oct. 9, 1996 to Oct. 8, 1997

○ Flight training was added in 1990

○ Involuntarily separating airmen may now enroll before separation

○ ROTC scholarship recipients

whose scholarship was less than \$2,000 a year and who entered active duty on or after Oct. 1, 1996, may now enroll.

For more information on the Montgomery GI Bill, contact your base education office. ■

AIA 50th Anniversary

Gerald Ford and the "Mayaguez"

The 1975 rescue produced mixed results in American public opinion when 41 lives were sacrificed to save 40

by Dr. Dennis F. Casey

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In May 1975, Gerald Ford faced one of the many challenges of his presidency. He had only been in office for nine months when a Cambodian gunboat halted the passage of the "Mayaguez."

The worn forty-year-old freighter owned by the Sea-Land Corporation, recently repleated as a container ship, was making a familiar run from Hong Kong by way of Sattahip, Thailand, to Singapore and back.

On the first leg of that journey, the ship's decks were loaded down with crates of food, clothing, chemicals, paint, hospital stores and mail. The cargo did not contain arms.

Some 60 miles off the mainland coast of Southeast Asia and eight miles from Poulo Wai island in the Gulf of Siam, the ship's captain ordered all engines stopped in the early afternoon of May 12.

News of the seizure hit Washington hard. Just a few weeks earlier America had played out her final scene in Vietnam. In violation of a truce, North Vietnamese forces had surrounded Saigon, forcing the last remaining Americans in the country

to flee by helicopter. The proceedings had been captured in significant detail by the mass media.

By May 1975, all of Vietnam had fallen to Communist forces. The North American giant seemed to be slipping and to lack resolution.

President Ford and his chief advisers saw the seizure of the "Mayaguez" as certainly a challenge but also an opportunity. A bold and decisive response from the White House would go far in changing the view that America had become a reluctant superpower.

Both General David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger saw the Cambodian action as a direct challenge to American power and to the principle of freedom of the seas.

Henry Kissinger saw the "Mayaguez" incident as possibly a last chance for America to regain lost credibility.

President Ford and his advisers quickly agreed upon the objectives to be pursued. The "Mayaguez" and its crew needed to be freed.

While preparations were underway, the State Department would send a sharp note of protest to the Cambodian government through Peking. Additionally, reconnaissance aircraft would track the ship. Military action, everyone agreed, would be necessary at the appropriate time.

Once the precise location of the "Mayaguez" was determined, President Ford opted to take aggressive action to resolve the crisis.

A naval boarding action would free the ship itself and Marine landings on the island where the ship was tied up would free the captive crew.

Kissinger, who had been arguing for strong military action, had recommended massive B-52 raids on the Cambodian mainland.

President Ford agreed to naval strikes on the mainland only as a means of keeping Cambodian reinforcements from beefing up their troop strength on Kong Tang island, a small five-mile long island 35 miles off the coast of Cambodia and southwest of Sihanoukville.

In the afternoon of May 14th,