

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### The Robert M. Yerkes Award Awarded to Mrs. Patricia Shinseki

On August 15, 2008, the Society for Military Psychology, Division 19 of the American Psychological Association, awarded the Robert M. Yerkes Award to Mrs. Patricia ("Patty") Shinseki.

The Yerkes Award is given for significant contributions to military psychology by a non-psychologist. The award is named for Robert M. Yerkes, the "Founding Father" of military psychology. Yerkes (1876-1956) had a distinguished career as a comparative psychologist at Harvard and later at Yale University. As the President of APA in 1917, Yerkes led in the application of psychology to the demands of World War I. Also serving as chief of the Psychology Division in the Surgeon General's Office during World War I, Yerkes led in the development and use of the Army Alpha and Beta Tests, the first large-scale application of psychological testing. Previous recipients of the Robert M. Yerkes Military Psychology Award include Senator Daniel Inouye, Ms. Elizabeth Dole, and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison.

Mrs. Patricia Shinseki has spent her adult life in service to the Soldiers and families of the U.S. Army. Her husband, GEN (R) Eric Shinseki, served the nation for over 30 years in many key positions, including Army Chief of Staff. As anyone who has served in the Army knows, military spouses play a significant role in command, particularly in leading, nurturing, and supporting the families of Soldiers. Throughout General Shinseki's long career, Patty was at his side, always seeking innovative ways to make the Army better for spouses and children.

The Society for Military Psychology 2007/2008 President, Dr. Michael Matthews, nominated Mrs. Shinseki for the Robert M. Yerkes Award on the basis of her work with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with the mission of promoting the welfare and education of the children of America's active duty, Reserve, and National Guard military members. The MCEC provides a wide range of services to military children. Mrs. Shinseki currently serves on the MCEC Board of Directors and she spearheaded the effort to develop the Living in the New Normal: Supporting Children Through Trauma and Loss (LINN) program for the Military Child Education Coalition. Dr. Stephen Cozza, Deputy Director of the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress serves as its Senior Advisor.

Prior to the establishment and careful implementation of the MCEC's Living in the New Normal: Supporting Children through Trauma and Loss (LINN) Initiative, there was no systematic program in place in the U.S. to assist children who have had a parent killed or seriously wounded while in service to our country. The program was developed in consultation with experts in the fields of trauma, grief, resiliency, healthcare, and child development. This comprehensive approach is based on the underlying philosophy that children are naturally courageous and resilient, and that these strengths can be enhanced through systematic and deliberate encouragement from adults in their lives and professionals in the community. The MCEC's Living in the New Normal is delivered through Professional Development institutes, carefully screened resources, and a community engagement process that includes members of the education, faith, health, business, civic, and service sectors.

Mrs. Shinseki and the MCEC staff have worked closely with leading positive psychologists, including Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson, to apply these emerging constructs into MCEC programs aimed at capitalizing on children's inherent character and personal strengths, rather than focusing on their difficulties.

The impact of LINN and other MCEC programs cannot be understated in this time of prolonged war. To date, well over 4000 American service men and women have been killed in the line of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, and close to 10 times that many have been wounded. Over half of all active duty Soldiers are married, and nearly half of these have children – the majority of which are under 16 years of age. In the Army alone, there are now over 450,000 dependent children. Thus, thousands of children of military personnel have been personally affected by the death or injury of a parent.

Patty Shinseki's efforts with MCEC and LINN have improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of military children. And when you improve the lives of the military children, you also improve the lives of their parents and ultimately improve the readiness of our armed forces to commit to the job for which they have unselfishly volunteered – the defense of our country.

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*The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 148,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.*

*The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a private, non-profit organization addressing the unique academic needs of military children. Working with all of the armed services, parents, and educators, MCEC develops provides programs and timely information designed to ease transitions and deployments. For more information about MCEC and its initiatives to help military children, please visit [www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org).*

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