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## Medics preparing for the battlefield

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By Alyana Gomez

Not ready for war. That is what many returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan say about military medics. However, that's about to change.

The University of Florida was just given a \$1.7 million grant to prepare men and woman for the gruesome and sometimes traumatizing challenges faced on the battlefield.

"It's a madhouse," said former USMC Mortarman Patrick Petty. Petty lost hearing in his left ear the day he was hit by an improvised explosive device. His body was ravaged by the violence around him. The former Marine told Action News, in his mind, he can still see panicked medics rushing onto the battlefield.

"I've been there and I've seen corpsman trying to put a tourniquet on a guy because his leg has been blown off and there's still bullets cracking around his head," said Petty.

With four deployments under his belt, petty believes those medics weren't prepared for what they faced on the front lines.

"This blue means that I have venous return," said Dave Lizdas, a simulation engineer.

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The new simulation allows people to insert a needle in a model and get a 3D image of where they're putting the needle and if they're hitting a major lung.

The simulation also tells whether mistakes were made too. The simulator is also portable, which allows students to get a glimpse of wartime triage, complete with the sights and sounds of battle.

"You can build scenarios and that way when it happens in real life you can know what to do for the most part," said Dr. Samsun Lampotang, director of the Center for Safety Simulation and Advanced Learning Technologies at UF Health.

Since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, about one million service men and women were injured on the battlefield, according to the Department of Veteran Affairs last year.

The Department of Defense along with UF officials hopes to bring those numbers down with the new hands-on training. And UF Health in Jacksonville will be conducting a study to measure that, and will be working with the military to find out how the training is working to better prepare medics for serious or near-fatal injuries.

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