
Editorial

After the war

The theme for this year's AMMA conference is "After the War: Repatriation, recovery and public health". The impetus for this theme was the realisation that 100 years ago, in 1919, our forebears were just coming to terms with the fact that the Great War, the War to end all Wars, was finally over. Repatriation of service men and women back to Australia was a key focus of the government, as was the recovery from the economic and public hardships from the war. Rehabilitation of the 137,000 wounded was also a key focus. To complicate this further, pandemic influenza had spread around the world in the second half of 1918 and continued in 1919, with an estimated 100 million deaths. While initial transport of the personnel back to Australia, under the control of Lieutenant General Monash, proceeded well, with all troops largely home by September 1919, the other key elements of the repatriation system were in their infancy and progressed far more slowly. The term 'Repat' quickly acquired pejorative connotations in some quarters, with soldiers venting their frustration in various papers. A short story in the Sydney Mirror observed that if Repat officials 'had as much silk as they have method they wouldn't have enough to make a necktie for an ant'.¹ Given the sheer numbers involved, it is interesting to ponder how Australia would fare under similar circumstances 100 years later, even given the support systems that have grown up over that period.

The Journal now has a new website - <https://jmvh.org/> - with enhanced search capability and a full coverage of all the issues over the last 28 years. I would encourage all our readers to visit the website to find articles of interests. Podcasts are likely to be added in 2020. The issue themes for 2020 are also listed, and I would encourage authors to submit articles on Transition to Civilian Life (April 2020), Global Health Security (July 2020) and Preparing for Conflict and Disaster (October 2020).

Our fourth issue of 2019 primarily addresses the abstracts of papers presented at the 28th AMMA Conference. There are also three excellent articles – a timely review of rehabilitation in the ADF, a review of stress mediators in military physical performance and a salient respiratory disease case study. We continue to get a good range of articles, but other military and veterans' health articles are always very welcome and we would encourage all our readers to consider writing on their areas of military or veterans' health interest. We would particularly welcome papers based on the presentations at the conference, but welcome any articles across the broader spectrum of military health.

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References:

1. Payton P. 'Repat': A concise history of repatriation in Australia. Department of Veterans' Affairs; Canberra: 2018.