
Editorial

Repatriation



In early 1917, even before victory was assured, Prime Minister 'Billy' Hughes promised the country's armed forces that 'When you come back we will look after you'. Repatriation or 'Repat' was born. The theme of this issue is 'repatriation' – a very Australian concept that is as relevant today as it was in 1917. Repat was not just about getting the troops home after the Great War, but aimed to meet the varying needs of returning veterans and their dependants, whether that was education, employment, healthcare, housing or war pensions.¹ Subsequent waves of veterans after the Second World War, Korean War, Vietnam War and more recent conflicts in East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan ensured that the need for the Repatriation Department, established in 1918 and now the Department of Veterans' Affairs, has never disappeared.¹ Various military doctors who had served with the A.I.F. took up roles with the

Repatriation Department. Sir Neville Howse VC, KCB, KCMG, after a distinguished career in the Army, including as the commander of the ANZAC medical services during the First World War, was to serve as the Minister for Repatriation from 1923 to 1929. My great uncle, Gordon Robertson, having served as a Regimental Medical Officer with the 30th Battalion of the A.I.F during 1918, also went on to work with the Repatriation Department during the 1930s.²

Our second issue of 2019 contains a diverse range of articles, with several addressing the theme of 'repatriation' in its broadest context. These include papers on disability reporting, disability benefits, management of PTSD in veterans and a perspective on the benefits of walking the Camino de Santiago. Operational papers look at the training of recruits, perceptions of treating battle casualties and a review of haemostasis in military trauma. Finally, there is a historical paper that looks at why we wear the uniforms we wear. 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 our 2019 themes of recovery, rehabilitation and repatriation, 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.
2. Halmarick DM. Thos. Robertson & Sons: Mainstays of our earliest days. Aristoc; Glen Waverley: 2000.