
Editorial

D-Day and Binh Ba – 6 June

Just over 75 years ago, 7,000 vessels carried 190,000 sailors and 130,000 soldiers across the English Channel to five designated beaches – Utah and Omaha on the American side, Gold and Sword for the British, and Juno for the Canadians. Some 7,000 aircraft took part, including transport planes, gliders, fighters and heavy bombers. Australia, with its forces largely in the Pacific, played a relatively small part, but still contributed about 3,000 Australians. The contribution was primarily in the air, with between 2,000 and 2,500 Australian airmen serving in various RAF and ten RAAF squadrons of all kinds. Fourteen Australians were killed on D-Day (two RAN and 12 RAAF).¹ 25 years later, 5RAR troops and tanks from 1 Armoured Regiment were involved in a ferocious battle around Binh Ba in Vietnam.² Both of these key battles led to wounded personnel, who required repatriation and rehabilitation.

The theme of this issue is 'rehabilitation', which follows on from the 'repatriation' theme in the April 2019 issue. It also picks up on Prime Minister 'Billy' Hughes promise to the country's armed forces that 'When you come back we will look after you', as it was an important part of the Repatriation system.³

In this issue, we have a number of papers looking at rehabilitation, from rehabilitation for spinal cord injury to post traumatic stress disorder and addressing reproductive health in veterans.

Our third issue of 2019 also contains articles on medical and dental officer training and two historical articles. 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. As many of our readers are getting ready to present at the Australian Military Medicine Conference in October 2019 (<https://amma.asn.au/amma2019/>), we would encourage all presenters to submit their completed papers to the Journal for consideration. Reviewers are also critical for ensuring the quality of articles and we would encourage any budding reviewers to nominate for articles of interest.

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References:

1. Stanley P. Australians and D-Day. Australian War Memorial; Canberra: 2004 <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/australians-and-dday-2004>
2. Ekins A. 'It had been a ferocious fight'. Australian War Memorial; Canberra: 2019 <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/battle-of-binh-ba-50-years-on>
3. Payton P. 'Repat': A concise history of repatriation in Australia. Department of Veterans' Affairs; Canberra: 2018.