
Editorial

Before the Next Mission

The delay of this issue reflects the significant change that the world is going through in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic. The title for this editorial matches the planned theme for the AMMA conference in 2020, where we will turn our gaze forward to the next mission preparing for conflict and disaster. The organising committee placed a focus on disaster relating to the recent bushfire crisis, recent floods and potential mass casualty events, including pandemics. Social distancing is the new normal. Healthcare workers around Australia and the world have become the front-line troops in the battle with Coronavirus. One only needs to reflect on 100 years in the past when the world was dealing with the 'Spanish flu' influenza pandemic from 1918 to 1920 after World War I. This is history repeating itself, but hopefully with a far better outcome to avoid the high death toll of up to 100 million seen a century ago. The military, and particularly those in the field of military medicine, will be called upon to provide care and leadership during the coordinated response to this pandemic. Our Editor-in-Chief, Commodore Andy Robertson, CSC, PSM, RAN, has been working tirelessly to provide clinical leadership in his role as Chief Health Officer and Assistant Director-General in the Public and Aboriginal Health Division of the Department of Health in Western Australia. Many of our readership are equally busy coordinating or supporting the federal, state and local health response to this crisis.

The first issue of 2020 commences with an obituary for a friend and colleague. Many of us knew Lana and it is very appropriate that we begin this year remembering her and celebrating her life.

One original article explores the outcomes of art-based rehabilitation activities for members of the Australian Defence Force. A second reviews the current approach to post-traumatic stress disorder and potential barriers to treatment that may be related to the name of the condition itself. There are a series of articles with a Navy theme, from the prehistoric origins of warfare, ships and medicine, to a modern review of casualty evacuation in the ADF and then to the development of Clinical Managers in the Royal Australian Navy. As always, there is benefit looking at the past and current standards to improve our military deployed healthcare system in the future. We then explore our whole of health community support by reviewing civilian university and military collaborative partnerships. It is indeed timely that the final article relates to infectious diseases in jungle warfare training.

For all of you on the front-line of the COVID-19 crisis, stay safe and take care of yourself.

Dr Ian Young, AM
Captain, RAN
Guest Editorial