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Editorial – Vision for the future

by
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“You can never plan the future by the past” (Edmund Burke 1729-1797)

I have now just completed nine months as the Director of the Joint Health Support Agency. I often get asked how long I have been in the job, as many people imagine, for some bizarre reason, that I have been in the job for longer than I have. Sometimes, I will admit, it does feel like I have been in the job forever. One of the real challenges of this job is to plan for the future. One of the sessions at my next Senior Health Officers Conference, planned for October, will be a look at where the Joint Health Support Agency will be in five years' time. The planning for that conference got me thinking about the Australian Military Medicine Association. What are our strategic plans for the next five or ten years? This year AMMA will be having its tenth conference. This will be held on the Gold Coast from the 19 - 21 October 2001. Where will AMMA be in ten years time? Now is an excellent time for all members of AMMA to reflect on the past decade and to plan for the next one. AMMA is your Association and the direction it takes should and must be dictated by its members. From an editorial point of view, I would like to see Australian Military Medicine coming out six times per year and being substantially larger than it is already. The journal is already being catalogued by the National Library of Australia and I would like to see it catalogued as part of MEDLINE in the not too distant future. This is a good time for all members to consider what they would like to see from AMMA and to share some of their visions for the future at the coming AMMA Conference.

This issue of Australian Military Medicine is again a diverse and interesting one. We have a number of different themes. Naval medicine is well represented with articles on dangerous marine animals and the impact of sun exposure on Naval personnel at sea. Clinically, articles address key military medical issues of trauma, vaccinology, industrial medicine and infectious disease. We also have the first of the articles from the essay competition, which looks at the future impact of information technology on military health. I also commend you to read Marshall Barr's account of his time in Vietnam as a Civilian Military Force anaesthetist in 1967. This excellent book is due to be released on 07 September 2001 and is reviewed in this issue.

I would like to correct an unfortunate omission from the last Journal. In the review of the RACS Annual Scientific Meeting 2000, we failed to mention the contribution made by Paul Myers, who both convened the meeting and presented an excellent paper on his experience with INTERFET.

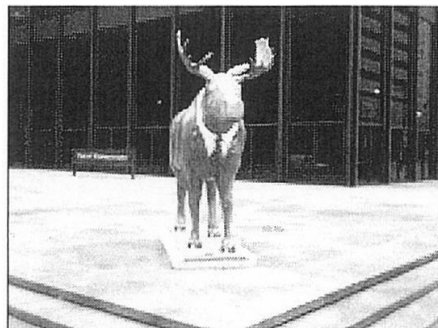


Figure 1: Toronto Moose (Photograph courtesy of the author)

Burke stated, almost three centuries ago, that 'you cannot plan the future from the past'. As an Association, we need to be relevant for the future. That is not just putting on new coverings like my Moose friend in Figure 1, but planning for the future so we will be a vital and relevant association in 2011.

I look forward to seeing you all on the Gold Coast.

Andy Robertson

