

## AMMA JOURNAL VOL 10 ISSUE 2

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### RACS Annual Scientific Meeting 2001 - Military Surgical Section <sup>1</sup>

by  
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The Military Surgical Section of the RACS Annual Scientific Congress was held in Canberra on 10 May and 11 May 2001. The section was convened by Richard Nugent from Canberra. Two papers were also presented in the Trauma Section, which has a close relationship with the Military Section. These were LTCOL John Crozier presenting on 'Blunt trauma to the liver' and LTCOL Jeff Rosenfeld presenting on 'Neurosurgery by non-neurosurgeons'.

On the afternoon of 10 May 01 I introduced a mini-symposium on the surgical role in the 'Military Operations other than War'. We were fortunate to have Robin Coupland as our Foundation Speaker. He has published a book for the International Committee of Red Cross on War Surgery, which has been used by many of us on deployment. He gave an overview on International Humanitarian Law. This was followed by a series of presentations on our experience in 'Military Operations other than War'.

CAPT Pete Riddell detailed his experience in Afghanistan as a member of the International Committee of Red Cross team. WGCDR Gordon Morrison spoke on Rwanda and COL Peter Sharwood discussed Bougainville. LTCOL John Crozier presented on the tsunami in Papua New Guinea and LTCOL David McNicol, Orthopaedic Surgeon, gave a presentation on East Timor with UNTAET. He outlined a vision for the future, with which we all agreed, where the military surgical endeavour could possibly be combined with the humanitarian aid as the peacekeeping mission unfolded and the military aspects decreased.

I finally presented on the interface between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the military, pointing out in summary that we are approaching the same position, namely the peaceful development of a community, albeit from different directions. In a democracy such as ours, our values very much reflect those of the International Committee of Red Cross, which was supported by all.

Our formal dinner in the evening was combined with the History Section and was a splendid occasion at the War Memorial. Peter Stanley, the senior Historian, was our guest and the Foundation Speaker for the Military History Section.

The next day, I presented on the anti personnel landmine effects through the 'Surrogate Project' at the Defence Science and Technology Organisation at Salisbury. COL Peter Sharwood presented on the surgical experiences on East Timor and LTCOL Rob Presley presented on the gunshot wound that he had treated in East Timor. Rob Presley, a professional marksman with experience with various weapons was able to clearly demonstrate the problems with the safety mechanism of the Austeyr. COL Peter Byrne presented on the difference between Vietnam and East Timor, spanning his lengthy military career. Robin Coupland's talk extended from wounds from the Red Cross field hospital to international law. In essence, he drew on his large experience, which had resulted in his publication. BRIG Duncan Lewis, who spent nine months in command on the border on East Timor in 2000, presented on his experiences on casualty care from a Commander's perspective.

That afternoon, COL Don Beard gave a presentation on Korea, then and now, as he has just returned to Kapyong in North Korea with LTGEN Peter Cosgrove as part of the 50-year celebrations. COL Ross Blair from New Zealand presented on his experience, particularly in relation to New Zealand commitment in East Timor. BRIG Bran Pezzutti gave an erudite presentation on military anaesthetics and CAPT Ian Jones presented on obstetrics and gynaecology in active service from Bougainville to East Timor. COL John Crompton presented on ophthalmology in the military

and MAJ Andrew Ellis finished the day with a presentation on the education of military medical personnel using the surrogate models at Royal North Shore Hospital.