

# AMMA JOURNAL VOL 7 ISSUE 1

## APRIL 1998

### Editorial

by  
Russ Schedlich

Waxing lyrical as always, your Editor feels a need to touch on a number of diverse topics in his Editorial.

#### **A Varied Lot**

This edition of the Journal offers, once again, a good mix of copy. We start with Ben Fitzgerald's very good study on fungal infections at sea, which has shown, with statistical credibility, what most Naval medical officers (and probably those from the other Services as well), have long suspected - that, in the operational environment, constraints on regular showering and changing of clothing inevitably lead to an increased incidence of fungal skin infections. As an example of the direct benefit that this can have on the military this study is it since its results were used as the basis for advice to ships' Commanding Officers to arrange their routines, even in combat, to facilitate these basic activities of hygiene.

The second article is Tracy Smart's excellent 'Weary' Dunlop Award-winning (yes, your Editor did watch the Oscars) paper on the problems, challenges and solutions surrounding the movement of women into the fast-jet cockpit. It is of interest to note that many of the same issues, and quite a number of others, have been met and largely resolved in the navy with the integration of women into the Fleet - and shortly into submarines. That is not to say that there have not been problems - there have, and they were regrettable - but Navy has learnt from them and moved forward.

Next comes another article based on a Conference Paper, this time from the Naval Health Service's Conference of 1997. Ian Jones discusses many of the issues related to readiness of operational health services, and in particular the Reserve component of them. There is no doubt that, as the ADF Health Service becomes more and more dependent upon the Reserves (and with increasing civilianisation and commercialisation this will creep into the more traditional non-Specialist areas previously the preserve of the Permanent Forces), the ability to meet the Friday afternoon (it is ever thus) operational challenge will become more and more critical.

In a somewhat lighter vein, but perhaps more thought provoking, Anna Leavy provides us a view of the social, personal and psychological thematics entwined in the hit television series MASH. Noting that the series lasted three times longer than the war it depicted, she concludes that the series depicted important lessons to be learnt by all health care professionals.

Finally, your Editor thought that all of those who have been involved in major corporate restructuring / downsizing / rightsizing (etc) would enjoy the Memo from Santa.

#### **The Defence Health Service Branch**

As our President notes in his Message, the Defence Health Service Branch (DHSB) is now up and running. The impact of this is being felt most noticeably in the Bases, with new national and Regional/Area resource management structures on the verge of being established.

The Office of the Surgeon General, now under the full-time leadership of the Director General, Defence Health Service, Brigadier Paul Buckley, is, apart from some significant downsizing and rank reductions, largely unchanged from its previous role.

Operationally, the three single Service Headquarters - Maritime, Land and Air continue to do business as usual, with Headquarters, Australian Theatre coordinating.

Nationally, the Joint Health Support Agency is rapidly replacing the health management organisations previously represented by the single Service Support/Logistic Training Commands.

Locally, the country has been divided into Regions/Areas, largely along State lines, except in New South Wales where there will be three Areas centred on the three major service providers in Sydney - Balmoral Naval Hospital, 1 Field Hospital and 3 RAAF Hospital. The key to efficiencies will be in seeking to rationalise and coordinate service provision in the regions, and, where practicable, across the Nation.

**Finally**

Having broken his rule to keep his Editorial to one page, your Editor turns now to an apology. The Assistant Editor, being overseas at present, has been unavailable to do this Journal's update. The inadequate version herein is the responsibility of the Editor (as they say, never leave things to the Boss), and no doubt the Assistant will rectify the shortcomings in the next issue.