

AMMA JOURNAL VOL 9 ISSUE 1
APRIL 2000
Half a League..

by
Andy Robertson

“Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death,
Rode the six hundred.”

Thus spoke Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. This charge, during the Crimean War, was probably one of the most ill-considered events in military history. The Crimean War, however was the one of the turning points of military medicine. From this foundation, we've seen the development of military medicine as a fundamental aspect of military planning and capability. The Australian Military Medicine Association was established to build on these foundations and to ensure that the study of military medicine continues to develop.

One of my aims, when taking over as the editor of this journal, was to tap in on the wealth of knowledge and information which I believe is in the Australian military medical community. To that end, as I forewarned in the last journal, I intend to increase the size of the journal with a variety of articles from all aspects of military medicine. This issue, at over 60 pages, is the largest issue that the AMMA has printed. I'm intending that future issues will be of a similar or greater size and encourage all our readers to consider submitting an article, letter to the editor, abstract, conference report or a book report. I am grateful for all those who have already taken up this challenge.

In this issue, we see a number of themes. The first of these is a preventive health theme. Keeping our defence forces healthy, whether in the fields of injury prevention or infectious disease prophylaxis, is a critical aspect of our work. Three excellent papers look at injury prevention, Ross River virus disease and the Plague. The second theme focuses on military medical practice. These interesting and diverse papers address emergency medicine in the military, the diagnosis of hypothermia and the costs of military pharmaceuticals. The final theme is a historical one. A challenging personal account of life in a German prisoner of war camp, and a fascinating article on Australia's naval involvement in the Boxer rebellion, tackle this theme.

From the last journal, the readers got an idea of my background. In this journal, I will provide some details of the assistant editor, SQNLDR Karen Gisler. Karen joined the RAAF as a medical undergraduate in 1988. She graduated in 1990 from the University of Queensland and, after residency in Brisbane, commenced full-time service in 1993. She has served in Townsville, Amberley and Canberra. Karen completed her MPH&TM in April 1997 before deploying to Iraq for 6 months in September 1997 as the SMO for UNSCOM. She is currently the S02 Prevention within the Directorate of Preventive Health within in the Defence Health Service Branch.

We look forward to you recontinuing contributions and encourage you all to contact either Karen or myself if you have any comments.

Andy Robertson