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# Editorial

## Infectious Diseases in Military Medicine

In spending a little less time on COVID-19, I have been reflecting on the role of infectious diseases in military operations, as diseases like tuberculosis, Japanese encephalitis and even syphilis make a resurgence in Australia and overseas. Biselli et al. provide an excellent historical review of the role of military health personnel in researching, diagnosing and managing operationally critical infectious diseases, from Emil von Behring's work on diphtheria and tetanus therapies, to Major Walter Reed's work on Yellow Fever, and the early adoption of vaccinations and other therapies by various militaries with significant consequent benefits to their overall health and operational fitness.<sup>1</sup> Professor Shanks has added to this medical historical literature in this issue with his review of dengue epidemics in Queensland during the Second World War.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has recently created and appointed three reserve personnel, one from each service, to Principal Consultant roles for Trauma Specialists, Force Health Protection and in Nursing, Mental or Allied Health. These roles will report to the Surgeon General ADF (SGADF) and will be the first point of contact for the SGADF in obtaining academic, clinical, and technical advice

through the network of specialist practitioners both within the ADF and into the civilian sector. They will also lead the establishment of the broader Faculty of Defence Health to include Senior Consultants and Consultants. They will have a key role from 2024 onwards in ensuring that the SGADF and Joint Health Command are receiving the appropriate operational, policy and clinical advice, including in the infectious disease space, through these networks.

Our first issue of 2024 contains a range of articles on diverse topics spanning infectious diseases, mental health, health monitoring, military operational training, and military health history. We continue to attract a good range of articles, including from overseas. Other military and veterans' health articles, however, are always very welcome, and we would encourage all our readers to consider writing on their areas of military or veterans' health interest. We would particularly welcome papers based on presentations from our 2023 conference in Perth, but welcome any articles across the broader spectrum of military health.

**Dr Andy Robertson, CSC, PSM**  
**Commodore, RAN**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

## References:

1. Biselli R, Nisini R, Lista F, et al. A historical review of military medical strategies for fighting infectious diseases: From battlefields to global health. *Biomedicine* 2022;10(8):2050.