

natories will be required, and there is a possibility of class actions by victims against the manufacturing companies. It is my understanding that General Motors in the United States initially made landmines, but was forced to cease production because of public opinion (Dr Jason Garood, HMAS STIRLING, personal communication). General Motors' clients were next supplied by the Fiat company in Italy, but after further pressure there they are now being made in Algeria. The industry is certainly innovative. Biodegradable mines are available. New detector technology is required, and the military requires an alternative barrier system which could detect and easily deactivate the mines of friendly forces.

Just as air warfare is becoming more discriminatory, as we have seen with NATO's Kosovo campaign in 1999, antipersonnel mines may well develop in ways that minimise "collateral damage". If the future of warfare in democratic countries is to support human values, as appears to have been the mission in Kosovo, it is counterproductive to devastate the population the force is trying to protect by polluting their environment with lethal weapons.

References

1. Banerjee D. Ban on antipersonnel landmines comes into force. *Asian Defence J* 1999. March: 29-31.
2. Alford P. Cambodia's landmine myths exploded. *The Weekend Australian* 3/4 June 2000: 14.
3. Cobey JC. How can orthopaedic surgeons help put an end to the worldwide land mine epidemic? *Int Orthop* 1999; 2(1): 4-6.
4. International campaign to ban landmines. <<http://www.icbl.org/>>
5. Ban on mines gets muscle. *The Australian* 18 Sept 1998: 10.
6. Death by remote control: Japan sneaks under wire. *The Bulletin* 15 Sept 1998: 20.
7. Forum on landmines opens. *Bahrain Tribune* 12 Feb 1999: 5.
8. Improved mine-resistant vehicle to be unveiled. *Janes International Defence Review* 1999. Upgrade Update, Jan: 62.
9. Minelab wins extra UN mine detection orders. *Australian Defence Magazine* 6 Nov 1998: 13. □

Award

In May this year, Brigadier Robert Atkinson was honoured by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The President of the College, Dr Bruce Barraclough, presented Brigadier Atkinson with the prestigious *ESR Hughes Award* for the year 2000. The medallion was awarded in recognition of Brigadier Atkinson's distinguished contributions to military surgery.

— Bruce Short, Editor



Letter to the Editor

Military psychiatry

TO THE EDITOR: John Ellard's article on military psychiatry¹ was a timely reminder of the importance of the principles of proximity, immediacy and expectancy in the treatment of combat stress reactions. These therapeutic guidelines were formulated by the work of Salmon and colleagues in World War I,² and remain the recommended approach today.³

As Ellard described, these principles are effective in returning soldiers to duty. There is even some evidence that they can be effective in reducing the development of post-traumatic stress disorder. Solomon et al reported that the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder in Israeli veterans was inversely related to the number of Salmon principles that were put into practice in their treatment.

But were these principles employed in the care of ADF personnel during the recent conflict in East Timor? Or was the temptation to evacuate too great, with Darwin just 60 minutes away by air?

Martin and Cline described the consequences of the failure to adhere to these principles: "The worst mental health outcomes follow inappropriate evacuation out of the combat theater; soldiers can be lost to military service or effective civilian functioning."⁵

Duncan Wallace, FRANZCP

Commander, RANR

Consultant Psychiatrist to the RAN

St Vincent's Mental Health Service

299 Forbes Street, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010

1. Ellard J. Principles of military psychiatry. *ADF Health* 2000; 1: 81-84.
2. Bleich A. Military psychiatry in Israel: historical overview and guiding principles. *Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci* 1992; 29: 203-217.
3. Belenky G, Martin JA. The future practice of combat psychiatry. In: Martin JA, Sparacino LR, Belenky G. Westport: Praeger, 1996: 178-188.
4. Solomon Z, Benbenishty R. The role of proximity, immediacy and expectancy in front-line treatment of combat stress reaction among Israelis in the Lebanon War. *Am J Psychiatry* 1986; 143: 613-617.
5. Martin JA, Cline WR. Mental health lessons from the Persian Gulf War. In: Martin JA, Sparacino LR, Belenky G. Westport: Praeger, 1996: 161-178. □