

Book Review: War Surgery, Field Manual, Second Revised Edition

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This work is a book prepared to ensure that nurses, health staff, paramedics, physicians and surgeons are trained to perform their profession and better assist nearby civilians during wartime operations. Fundamentally, it contains life-protection and organ-protection procedures. In addition, it explains how to organize medical services provided in the field during the wartime. This work, which is beneficial even for the experienced surgeons, describes how to operate in locations where medical supplies are limited and the human population suffers major injuries. For instance, details of damage control surgery which has been gaining prominence in recent years, the concept of modern hypotensive resuscitation and certain details of bodily response to trauma on a cellular level are also explained in this work. One of the features that distinguish this book is the fact that both the editors and authors have gained relevant experience in combat zones.

Upon reading the work titled War Surgery, Field Manual, the most eye-catching aspect was that it contained real images of people injured by various weapons. These images were taken on the scene, in field hospitals, in medical tents or in open field. I have realized that the experience gained during the wars and battles in various locations of world including Myanmar, Cambodia, Palestine, Afghanistan, Burma, Iraq and Lebanon was gathered into this book. The book investigates various injuries caused by land mines, pistols and rifles of various calibers and brands, shrapnel, weapons and bombs that cause blast effect, knives, military knives and bayonets along with the occurrence mechanisms. Each region of the body, ranging from organs to bones, vascular-neural structures to tendons, have been singularly evaluated, explaining in details the forms of injuries each types of weaponry may cause as

well as how to remedy such injuries. Narration is enriched by various images, figures, graphics, illustrations and tables. Moreover, the form of injuries suffered by children and old patients as well as the treatments applied to patients of various age groups have been highlighted in details.

This book has 4 chapters into 3 basic parts. The first part of the book explains general principles of an approach to a trauma patient as well as patient triage. As is known, most terminally wounded patients pass away before the arrival of a surgeon. The authors explain in details how ordinary people can be trained to assist a critically wounded person.

The second part focuses on surgery and anesthetic techniques. As is known, medical facilities and particularly surgical equipment are quite insufficient in the third world countries. Yet, the people in these regions are shot by highly sophisticated and effective weaponry. The authors have featured the second part of the book based on this fact. The proposed anesthetic and surgical techniques are selected with the constrained societies in mind. For instance, you may find in this part of the book how the Afghan medic named Wares saved the life of a 16-year old shepherd named Nasi Gul by applying damage control surgery in a mud house.

The third part of the book contains simple records and logistic support methods. It also mentions some of the extreme issues that surgeons have to cope with in low-income societies, in wartime or famine. For instance, it is a rare occasion to find a classical textbooks containing detailed and basic information regarding amebiasis, which affects millions of people living in third world countries and presents significant issues to surgeons during pre-op, per-op and post-op periods. Moreover, we can see this book contains some important information that a surgeon living and operating under primitive conditions may require when faced with this and other similar issues. As the authors express, majority of books that explain wartime surgery, explain practices that can be performed in the air-conditioned operating rooms of highly equipped military hospitals.

Admittedly, the human being is the wildest creature on the earth. However, the man also seeks ways to remedy the wounds caused by this savagery. Unfortunately, we witness that our surgical experience is bolstered through new wars.

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