LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BATTLEFIELD ANALGESIA
From Lt Col WF de Mello, RAMC and Flt Lt G Hocking, RAF

Sir, Following presentation of the above article at the TriService Anaesthetic Meeting in September 1996 we wish to further comment on improving the quality of battlefield analgesia using the morphine autojet by summarising some of the positive feedback from academics and senior TA MOs.

The algorithm for battlefield analgesia (1) raises the question of how many 10mg morphine autojets should be issued to Service personnel on active duty. Assuming a 12 hour delay from time of wounding to obtaining definitive medical attention, a 20 year old would require approximately 40mg morphine during that period. This is equivalent to four x 10mg morphine autojets.

Alternatively (this has commercial implications) doubling the dose of each autojet to 20mg and increasing the dosing interval would mean just two autojets using the above example. In our opinion this higher dose may increase the incidence of side effects which is why we prefer the former choice.

Interestingly, in Casualty Treatment Regimes (2) both 10 and 20mg doses of morphine are listed; and in the section on drugs for primary health care even a 15mg ampoule of morphine is available!!! This is an obvious area for rationalisation.

A more sophisticated approach to battlefield analgesia (using different drugs, techniques or routes of administration, concomitant use of antiemetics etc) is soon to be submitted.

We are etc
WF DE MELLO
G HOCKING

Senior Lecturer in Anaesthetics & Resuscitation (Army)
Duchess of Kent’s Hospital
Horne Road
Catterick Garrison
N Yorks
DL9 4DF

REFERENCES

SHATTERED ILLUSIONS - THE THIEPVAL BARRACKS BOMBING
From Maj MD Denver, RAMC

Sir, I read with interest the article “Shattered illusions The Thiepval Barracks bombing 7 October 1996” (1). Yet again the military performed well under exceptional circumstances and I would like to praise all the personnel involved. Perhaps now, however, it is time to act to formalise the training for major incidents throughout the Defence Medical Services.

In the National Health Service there are currently several major incident courses available. One in particular, Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS), is an intensive 3 day course teaching a systematic approach to major incident scene management. It is designed to be multidisciplinary, training doctors, nurses and paramedics on the same course. Even without modification this course is of direct relevance to the military. An Army emergency medicine specialist, Major T J Hodgetts, was instrumental in its conception.

MIMMS, or a military modification (M-MIMMS?), could be offered in a similar manner as BARTS and BATLS courses. This would ensure that a pool of trained military personnel could be available within most barracks. If the medical services are actually targeted and therefore part of the incident, as in the Thiepval Barracks, then the nearest trained incident officers could be quickly brought in to take over the management of the scene.

There is no doubt that the Defence Medical Services has specific expertise to offer, and should be leading the way nationally with major incident management.

I am etc
MD DENVER

Registrar in Accident & Emergency Medicine
MDHU Frimley Park Hospital
Portsmouth Road
Frimley
Surrey
GU16 5UJ

REFERENCES
Index Communications Meeting Services are supporting Trauma Care (UK) in the development and management of their first national Conference scheduled for November 1997.

The Conference is a three-day, national meeting for all professionals involved in the field of trauma, including GPS, paramedics, A&E physicians, surgeons, nurses and anaesthetists. The Conference runs from Tuesday 25th until Thursday 27th November and takes place at the Harrogate International Centre in North Yorkshire.

We anticipate over 400 delegates will attend the Conference but to ensure an excellent turnout for this inaugural event, I am writing on behalf of Trauma Care (UK) to ask if your Journal might be able to assist with publicising the Conference.

Would those interested please write for further details to the address below.

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT
Index Communication Meeting Services
Crown House
28 Winchester Road
Romsey
Hants SO51 8AA
United Kingdom
Tel: 01794 511331 or 511332
Fax: 01794 511455

Pen Guiver
From Pen Guiver, Project Leader

OBITUARIES
Regimental Headquarters would welcome self-written obituaries and when completed they should be forwarded to Regimental Secretary RHQ, RAMC, Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ.