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Highlights of this edition

doi:10.1136/jramc-2016-000659

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This edition showcases the Defence Medical Services (DMS) response to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa in 2014–2015. The story of the outbreak is perhaps well known and is retold here from a variety of perspectives. Operation GRITROCK was the DMS response to the crisis and the many faceted story is described in detail. GRITROCK itself was remarkable in two ways: firstly the flexibility demonstrated by the DMS and the wider Ministry of Defence in responding to an infectious disease/humanitarian crisis so soon after being fully committed to enduring combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan where trauma was at the

forefront of everyone's mind and secondly the way in which partnerships were forged with Non-Governmental Organisations. The personal view from Michael von Bertele who retired from the position of Director General Army Medical Services and landed as International Humanitarian Director for Save the Children is a fascinating insight into this new partnership way of working, as is the observational discussion on the same theme by Forestier *et al*.

The internationality of the response to EVD is reflected in the authorship of the papers in this edition, and it is a pleasure to host the article by Lu *et al* which recounts the excellent outcomes from the Chinese Military EVD treatment unit.

The Editors Choice is 'Surgery in the time of Ebola: how events impacted on a single surgical institution in Sierra Leone' which is co-authored by three Sierra Leoneans and represents the other side of this terrible disease. It describes the toll on

indigenous healthcare workers and the effect this had on the ability to provide 'normal emergency' surgical services throughout the outbreak and should remind us of our continuing responsibilities as a medical profession to help develop sustainable in-country provision in Low and Middle Income countries around the world.

The editors are grateful for the following foreword from Surgeon Vice Admiral Walker, the Surgeon General, who provides yet another viewpoint on the response to the EVD outbreak as he was Director Medical Policy and Operational Capability during the crisis.

Competing interests None declared.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

To cite Breeze J, Garner J. *J R Army Med Corps* 2016;**162**:147.

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doi:10.1136/jramc-2016-000659

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