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Highlights of this edition

Jeff Garner

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I am grateful to the Editor for giving me leave to indulge myself in what is my final contribution to the Journal as I relinquish my role as Consulting Editor. I have been part of the editorial board for 14 years, all of them spent with some sort of editorial responsibility or other as my predecessor Col Greaves asked me to become Assistant Editor within the first 30 minutes of my first editorial board! Since then I have handled over 2000 manuscripts, and pleasingly the journal has gone from strength to strength for which I must offer a number of thank you's.

The first is to Ian Greaves who got me into this in the first place, and for showing me the intellectual pleasure that editing could bring – turning authors' somewhat random words into readable prose is, to my mind, a kind of literary Sudoku and it turns out that I am one of those strange people who actually enjoys doing it, which was lucky! Ian also did an enormous amount of groundwork for the journal, changing its size, publication schedule and introducing free colour printing for authors – much of its current success is undoubtedly built on the foundations he laid.

I have been enormously lucky to be supported throughout my 14 years by editorial boards of the highest quality who have adapted to the changing requirements of the role, offering me advice and direction from specialities I know little about. Foremost amongst them has been Col David Ross, who not only organised and administered a robust clearance process for the journal that has helped me not get myself into trouble for many years, but also for the numerous sage words over the years that have pulled me back from numerous ill-considered actions.

I am most grateful to the whole staff of Regimental Headquarters and the RAMC Charity, who have supported the journal, both financially and administratively. The

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Directors General throughout my time, and more latterly Brigadier Fabricius as Director RAMC (and then Colonel Commandant), and other senior Corps officers have unwaveringly supported me, allowing me to publish articles that have challenged the status quo in military medicine and had the potential to generate significant wider media interest. Throughout much of my time Major Marie Ellis has been the Regimental Secretary and her support, and that of her staff, has also been invaluable and I am grateful for her help.

Moving forward I wish to express a very personal thank you to Peter Ashman, Janet O' Flaherty, and Claire Langford at the BMJ. In 2012, when General von Bertele told me he was approaching the BMJ Group to see if they would be our publishing partners I was confident that they would not be interested and was truly amazed when they said yes. The four and a half years since that partnership began has been the most enjoyable I can recall throughout my entire association with the journal; the professionalism of the BMJ as an organisation is exemplary and it has been a true privilege to work with them, for which I am deeply thankful.

My final thank you must go to the readership who have sustained the journal over the years. There have been some dubious times, where copy was so short on the ground we could barely scratch an edition together (June 2006 for instance) and some great highs also. The quality of what we now publish is far and away better than we have been able to previously; it is oft said that "*The only thing that benefits from war is medicine*" but I would also add ". . . and *medical publishing*" as the decade or more of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan has provided a rich and fertile ground from which to write research and reviews, many of which have populated the pages of this journal. This gave me, as editor, a huge stock of material from which to choose, enabling us to raise our quality level, increase our rejection rate (which is generally seen as measure of quality) and secure an Impact Factor for the first time in the journal's 100 or so year history.

It has been a true privilege to edit the *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* for the last 14 years and I am delighted to see it grow in stature and reputation to the point where I genuinely believe it is the premier military medical journal in the world. As I bow out, I hand the reigns fully over to Johnno Breeze who I am confident will continue to guide the journal onwards and upwards, safe in the knowledge that he has such a groundswell of support throughout the DMS.

... AND FINALLY

This journal has not published obituaries for many years so it is bitter sweet that the Editorial Board kindly agreed to my request to carry the one that follows. Peter Roberts was the Professor of Military Surgery who interviewed me and accepted me into military surgical training in 1997 and was my first surgical mentor. He was a true gentleman - witty, dapper and urbane – and a great storyteller. As a junior he taught me about wound ballistics and the pathophysiology of blast injury and 19 years later I had the honour to teach with him on the Royal College of Surgeons' Definitive Surgical Trauma Skills course, where he was teaching another generation of surgeons about the management of high energy wounding. Despite his age – he was 75 at the time – he was undoubtedly the star of the show over the 2 days of the course. He was, as his obituary states, a true surgical giant who furthered the cause of trauma surgery in the military and UK civilian arenas immeasurably. He will be greatly missed.

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