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## **Borden Institute Releases Book Exploring Military Medical Ethics**

*Latest in Textbooks of Military Medicine Series Offers First-Ever Book on Military Medical Ethics*

Washington, DC - Current events in Southwest Asia have once again highlighted the role of US military medicine in providing care for the wounded, whether coalition or enemy. The ethical necessity of this care is the subject of a long-anticipated and unique two-volume set on military medical ethics just released by the Borden Institute. The volumes are written for both military and civilian audiences.

*Military Medical Ethics* explores the ongoing tension between the medical profession and the profession of arms as experienced by the military physician, including an extensive and detailed discussion about the many lessons learned in previous wars. The book also offers various perspectives on past failures of medical ethics, especially during World War II and the Cold War.

"This is the first book to confront the ethical issues surrounding the role of military medicine in caring for the wounded," said Dave E. Lounsbury, MD (COL, MC, US Army), Director of the Borden Institute.

The book includes chapters from both military and civilian authors, many of whom are world-renowned. This distinguished group of authors provide a full and often critical exploration of the topic.

"While controversy is seldom comfortable, it should always be instructive," said Lieutenant General James B. Peake, The Surgeon General, US Army. "An excellent organization is willing to publicly examine and discuss its mistakes and to learn from them. *Military Medical Ethics* is offered in that spirit."

As technological advances play an increasingly important role in military medicine, medical ethics should not be forgotten. "Without an adequate appreciation of military medical ethics, some may find these new technologies so tantalizing that the basics of medical ethics may be set aside," said Thomas E. Beam, specialty editor for *Military Medical Ethics*, and a retired US Army military surgeon with service in the Persian Gulf War.

"Our unifying theme is straightforward: There is a tension within the individual military physician between the profession of medicine and the profession of arms, and that tension is good. There is, also, an ethic to what the military physician does, especially on and off the battlefield," Beam added. "That is the ethic of conserving the fighting strength by providing excellent medical care to military personnel."

According to the editors, the book will compel readers to think through their own views on ethically challenging issues.

"It should not surprise observers that the ethics of military medicine is the source of more passionate debate than any other aspect of the philosophy of ethics," said Ronald F. Bellamy, MD, FACS, Military Medical Editor of the *Textbooks of Military Medicine* series and a retired US Army military surgeon with service in Vietnam. "Nowhere else is there likely to be such a stark and ongoing conflict between what are radically different views of what constitutes the good."

"This book is intended to illuminate. If we cannot bear to look at past mistakes, particularly when they are ours, we cannot learn from them and therefore we cannot prevent them in the future," Peake said.

The *Textbooks of Military Medicine* series, published by the Borden Institute, Office of The Surgeon General, US Army, was conceived in 1986. The textbooks are available free of charge to qualified US military medical personnel. Each textbook is a comprehensive reference on the art and science of military medicine, extensively illustrated, and written in an easy-to-follow narrative. The series is designed to show how military medicine has built on the lessons learned in past wars and lays out the scientific basis on which the practice of military medicine is grounded.

The Borden Institute offers the textbook volumes in hardback as well as on its website and on CD-ROM.

For more information on the Borden Institute and how to order the books in the *Textbooks of Military Medicine*

series, visit the organization online at [www.bordeninstitute.army.mil](http://www.bordeninstitute.army.mil).

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