

Foreword

The dramatic technological, social, and economic progress of the twentieth century has yet to prevent the use of armed conflict to resolve political differences among nations. As those of us in military medicine prepare to support our forces into the next century, we must continually be ready for the many challenges presented by modern warfare.

The Army Medical Department has embarked on an ambitious readiness initiative. This new doctrine focuses on far-forward surgical care, increased intensive-care capabilities, a policy of returning soldiers to duty as far forward as possible, improved ground and air evacuation capabilities, new medical logistics systems that incorporate blood-distribution networks, and improved management of combat stress. Our goals are to maintain our momentum as we conserve fighting strength and to support our soldiers and their families both in peacetime and in time of war.

The military health-care system is the largest comprehensive health-care organization in the United States. Because the vast majority of our patients are not active duty military personnel, it may seem that our day-to-day activities are far removed from what we would be required to do during time of war. The ability to deploy a highly trained medical corps to any area of the world, however, is our highest priority. To be effective, we must not only maintain the highest standards of technical competence, but must also be prepared to use our skills creatively and courageously in situations that may be primitive, dangerous, or unknown. Major General James H. Rumbaugh, the late commander of Walter Reed Army Medical Center (who aptly described his organization as "the largest live-fire range in the Army"), understood that everything we do in our daily practice hones our expertise. Our readiness initiative will provide a clearer combat context in which to apply that expertise. Lessons of medical survival have been learned in previous conflicts at great cost. We cannot afford to forget them.

It is my hope that you will find the *Textbook of Military Medicine* series a useful addition to your readiness training programs, and that it will stimulate you to think about and plan for what will be required of each of us should the need arise to make a transition from peace to war.

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The Surgeon General
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