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## INTRODUCTION

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As military Medical Officers we will all, at some time in our careers, be faced with the daunting task of either treating patients while we ourselves are in an austere environment, or patients who have been exposed to these conditions. This special edition of the Journal covers many of these situations, and aims to give practical advice on assessment and treatment of such patients.

We have targeted situations that are common to military personnel, including hot and cold climates, altitude medicine and diving medicine. The opportunity to undertake a military expedition is one of the

incentives for young doctors to join the Armed Forces, and we try to give some practical advice to those providing medical support to such an expedition. There is also an attempt to give some guidance on critical care in austere environments, and some practical suggestions for coping in such a situation.

We hope you will find this special edition a useful resource that can be applied to clinical practice in the most challenging of environments.

**Surg Cdr JE Smith RN  
Specialist Editor**