

FROM THE EDITOR

In 1982, the editor wrote “*The purpose of this editorial is to stem the drift into oblivion of the object lessons adduced [from the war]*”. This remains, in a more general sense, one of the aims of the RAMC Journal. Sadly, experience bears out the suspicion that history is composed of lessons forgotten as often as it is of lessons learnt.

I remember watching film on the news of Sir Galahad burning whilst I was a medical student and realising that my belief that wars had become something that didn't happen anymore was wrong. The Vietnam and Korean wars had been years previously and World War II had been more than thirty years earlier, talked about only by people of my parent's and grandparent's generations. Times have changed again, and we now live with a continuing backdrop of wars involving British service personnel. Barely a week goes by without news of another death in action, yet I still remember the emotional shock to the Nation of the human cost of the conflict twenty five years ago. What also marked out the conflict in the South Atlantic was the almost universal support for what was judged to be a “just war”. It is surely a matter of pride that the people of the Falklands are as proud of and grateful to the Armed Forces now as they were all those years ago and that the Islands are more populated and more prosperous than ever before. And still British as their inhabitants wish.

It is right, therefore, that we take this opportunity to mark the anniversary of the Falklands War and to pay tribute to those who served and to those who died. It is also important that we draw on their experiences in any way we can to ensure that the

“*object lessons*” are not forgotten. Anyone reading the articles in this issue will readily realise that in many respects the challenges facing the medic at war have changed little since, just as they had changed relatively little in the years before.

Much of this special issue consists of articles originally published in the Journal in the immediate aftermath of the War. Where necessary, I have included commentaries placing the articles in a modern context. Brief biographies of the original authors are also included. I am most grateful to Surg Capt Walker and Col Jim Ryan for their recollections of their service during the War, one on board ship, the other in the Field Hospital at Ajax Bay.

The Army Medical Services are extremely lucky to have someone as enthusiastic and knowledgeable as Capt Peter Starling as their museum curator and I am immensely grateful to him for his patient responses to my many queries regarding this issue.

In conclusion, the Royal Army Medical Corps lost four of its members in the Falklands Conflict and it is to them in particular that this issue is dedicated:

Major Roger Nutbeem

S. Sgt Phillip Currass QGM

L/Cpl IR Farrell

Pte K Preston