



Foreword by Group Captain Geoff Reid

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I am delighted to welcome this special issue of the Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps, a timely and comprehensive review of the present position in UK military psychiatry. I urge non-psychiatric specialists to read it!

We are fortunate that the Medical Quinquennial Review of 2001 included an independent Review of Defence Mental Health Care, resulting in the re-configuration of Armed Forces mental health services in April 2004. This created our present 15 UK Departments of Community Mental Health, the Academic Centre for Defence Mental Health at King's, London and out-sourced our relatively small need for in-patient facilities. This initiative and its ongoing subsequent development have created a purpose-designed occupational mental health service that is unique in the world and well-placed for our present situation. The results are shown in the contents of this Special Issue.

Operations are an emotionally ambivalent issue. The challenges that they present can provide one of the most demanding experiences anyone can face. Whilst a successful engagement in those challenges can give positive growth and development, the psychiatric hazards are also very real. It is vital that all our personnel have a realistic appreciation and understanding of these occupational hazards and that they are properly handled. This understanding is vital to all: individual personnel and commanders at all levels but particularly for all medical personnel. I therefore commend these articles to everyone.