

Foreword

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I have had the honour and tremendous pleasure of knowing and working with Pete Mathew for many years in the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification at the University of Dundee. It is a privilege to have been asked to write this Foreword. In keeping with his explicit instructions, I will be brief.

This is not a verbose scholarly text, but one specifically designed to assist practically those multiskilled humanitarian surgeons who work in conflict zones – frequently with imperfect and restricted resources and no luxury of time. No two scenarios are the same, and the Authors – with a combined experience of over fifty years in the fields of humanitarian and military surgery – have constructed a text that is singularly fit for purpose, which specifically addresses the technical surgical aspects of the initial management of penetrating wounds caused by weapons of war (i.e. high-energy wounds).

The structure of this book is critical to its clinical value, and it is designed to provide a different reading experience when compared to most of the available texts on the same subject. It is arranged in four sections; the central Section III applies the information contained in Section I and Section II to the acute clinical reality. This unique approach provides a decision-making framework for surgeons who are working in far from ideal clinical conditions, frequently in the immediate and chaotic atmosphere of an emergency facility, and operating within an active and hostile environment.

Section IV gives an account of subsequent actions that may be taken to achieve the maximum likelihood of restoration of normal function. The content is sharply focused on

giving precisely what information is required, without unnecessary ‘filler content’. Wherever possible, topics are organised into two-page spreads, with notes on the left-hand page and diagrams and photographs on the right. All the illustrations and diagrams were specially devised by Pete Mathew to ensure absolute clarity and cohesion with the text.

The logical layout of the book includes colour-coded sections and side-tabs, enabling quick and easy access to relevant information, and the ‘unbound’ page format adds greatly to its value as a practical tool at the surgeon’s side.

Overall, this no-nonsense text is designed to directly assist surgeons in emergency and operating rooms who are confronted with the rapid decision-making processes required to address the acute surgical management of penetrating wounds caused by weapons of war.