MEDICAL ASPECTS OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE
The Coat of Arms
1818
Medical Department of the Army

The first line of medical defense in wartime is the combat medic. Although in ancient times medics carried the caduceus into battle to signify the neutral, humanitarian nature of their tasks, they have never been immune to the perils of war. They have made the highest sacrifices to save the lives of others, and their dedication to the wounded soldier is the foundation of military medical care.
Textbook of Military Medicine

Published by the

Office of The Surgeon General
Department of the Army, United States of America

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Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.¹


The poetry, excerpted from Dulce et Decorum Est, was written by Lieutenant Wilfred Owen of the Royal Army, who was killed in action in France on 4 November 1918.

“Gassed,” the frontispiece painting, shows the horror of chemical warfare in World War I as perceived by the artist, Gilbert Rogers.² As Keegan and Darracott observed, “Rogers was an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps commissioned to record medical work during the First World War. The subtitle to this painting, “In Arduis Fidelis” (Faithful in Hardships), suggests the subject is a stretcher-bearer who has succumbed to gas while transporting wounded.”³

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1997
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Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.
Contents

Foreword by The Surgeon General xi
Preface xiii
Patient Flow in a Theater of Operations xv
Medical Aftermath of the Persian Gulf War xvi
1. Overview: Defense Against the Effects of Chemical and Biological Warfare Agents 1
2. History of Chemical and Biological Warfare: An American Perspective 9
3. Historical Aspects of Medical Defense Against Chemical Warfare 87
4. The Chemical Warfare Threat and the Military Healthcare Provider 111
5. Nerve Agents 129
6. Pretreatment for Nerve Agent Exposure 181
7. Vesicants 197
8. Long-Term Health Effects of Nerve Agents and Mustard 229
9. Toxic Inhalational Injury 247
10. Cyanide Poisoning 271
11. Incapacitating Agents 287
12. Riot Control Agents 307
13. Field Management of Chemical Casualties 325
14. Triage of Chemical Casualties 337
15. Decontamination 351
16. Chemical Defense Equipment 361
17. Healthcare and the Chemical Surety Mission 397
18. Historical Overview of Biological Warfare 415
19. The U.S. Biological Warfare and Biological Defense Programs 425
20. Use of Biological Weapons 437
21. The Biological Warfare Threat 451
22. Anthrax 467
23. Plague 479
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Tularemia</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Brucellosis</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Q Fever</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Smallpox</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Viral Encephalitides</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Defense Against Toxin Weapons</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Staphylococcal Enterotoxin B and Related Pyrogenic Toxins</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Ricin Toxin</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Botulinum Toxins</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Trichothecene Mycotoxins</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Medical Challenges in Chemical and Biological Defense for the 21st Century</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acronyms and Abbreviations</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Interested readers can also find up-to-date information on the medical aspects of chemical and biological warfare at the following internet locations:

- The Medical NBC Information Server: [http://www.nbc-med.org](http://www.nbc-med.org)
- Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense: [http://chemdef.apgea.army.mil](http://chemdef.apgea.army.mil)
- Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases: [http://www.usamriid.army.mil](http://www.usamriid.army.mil)
- (numeric) [http://140.139.42.105](http://140.139.42.105)