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**OTOLARYNGOLOGY/HEAD AND NECK SURGERY  
COMBAT CASUALTY CARE IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM  
AND OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM**

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The Coat of Arms  
1818  
Medical Department of the Army

A 1976 etching by Vassil Ekimov of an original color print that appeared in *The Military Surgeon*, Vol XLI, No 2, 1917

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This textbook is dedicated, by the editors and authors, to those brave women and men of the US and Allied military forces who voluntarily chose to serve their country by placing themselves in harm's way. Many of them were grievously injured on the field of battle and now face a more difficult life dealing with the aftermath of these serious injuries—yet, they do so with courage and without regret. All of the surgeons who participated in this textbook realize that the true heroes, the individuals to be admired and praised, were our patients and their supportive families. Our thoughts and prayers will always be with them.

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Black Hawk helicopter landing at the Air Force Theater Hospital in Balad, Iraq (November 2004).

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# Contents

Contributors	xiii
Foreword by The Surgeon General	xvii
Preface	xix
<b>Section I: History and Recollections</b>	<b>1</b>
1 History of Deployed Army Otolaryngologists in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Joseph C. Sniezek and G. Richard Holt	3
2 History of Deployed Air Force Otolaryngologists in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom G. Richard Holt	7
3 Participation of Deployed Navy Otolaryngologists in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Michael E. Hoffer	13
4 Recollections From the Front Joseph A. Brennan	15
<b>Section II: Principles and Demographics</b>	<b>25</b>
5 Evacuation and Roles of Care G. Richard Holt and Timothy K. Jones	27
6 Demographics of Head and Neck Injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan Joseph A. Brennan	47
7 Impact of Body Armor on Head and Neck Injuries: Preventive Measures J. Christopher Post	61
8 Concept of a Dedicated Head and Neck Surgical Team Kenneth C. Y. Yu	77
<b>Section III: Ballistics of Injury</b>	<b>85</b>
9 Weapons and Mechanism of Injury in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom David K. Hayes	87
10 Pathophysiology of Head and Neck Injuries Joseph A. Brennan	103
<b>Section IV: Emergency Management of Head and Neck Trauma</b>	<b>113</b>
11 Primary and Secondary Trauma Assessment Guillermo J. Tellez, Joseph DuBose, and Richard J. Barnett	115

12	Airway Management Mark Boston	131
13	Hemorrhage Management and Vascular Control Steven Hong and Christopher Klem	145
14	Indications for Facial and Neck Trauma Surgery Brent Feldt and Manuel Lopez	159
15	Mass Casualties and Triage Joseph A. Brennan	171
<b>Section V: Acute Head and Neck Surgery/Treatment in the Deployed Setting</b>		187
16	Preoperative Planning for Acute Head and Neck Surgery Cecelia E. Schmalbach	189
17	Acute Soft Tissue Injuries and Repair Jose E. Barrera	201
18	Cranial Nerve Injuries Scott B. Roofe, Caroline M. Kolb, and Jared Seibert	213
19	Salivary Gland and Duct Injuries Lakeisha Henry, Jamie Andrews, and Jennifer Mitchell	227
20	Acute Otological Trauma Philip D. Littlefield and Mitchell J. Ramsey	239
21	Thermal Injuries Jonathan Luke Arnholt	255
22	Temporal Bone Fractures Carlos R. Esquivel and Nicholas J. Scalzitti	267
23	Paranasal Sinus Fractures Mark Gibbons and Nathan Salinas	281
24	Orbital Trauma and Nasoethmoid Fractures Carlos Ayala, Brian Groat, Lisa Mihora, and Demetrio Aguila	289
25	Midface Fractures George Coppit	315
26	Mandible Fractures Jeffrey A. Faulkner	329
27	Complex Head and Neck Reconstruction in Theater Christopher Klem	343
28	Penetrating and Blunt Neck Trauma David K. Hayes	357
29	Management of Acute Laryngotracheal Trauma Robert L. Eller, Gregory Dion, and Erin Spadaro	373

30	Acute Management of Pharyngoesophageal Trauma Nici Eddy Bothwell	399
31	Management of Neck and Skull Base Vascular Trauma Anthony M. Tolisano and Christopher Klem	411
32	Foreign Bodies of the Head, Neck, and Skull Base Richard J. Barnett	423
<b>Section VI: Delayed Head and Neck Surgery/Treatment at the Role 4 Facility</b>		439
33	Preoperative Planning for Delayed Head and Neck Surgery Jose E. Barrera and Cecelia E. Schmalbach	441
34	Delayed Soft-Tissue Injuries and Repair Eric R. Helling	453
35	Cranial Nerve Injuries Jose E. Barrera	481
36	Delayed Otological Trauma Mitchell J. Ramsey and Philip D. Littlefield	491
37	Repair of Midface Bony Defect Cecelia E. Schmalbach	507
38	Repair of Mandibular Bony Defects Jeffrey A. Faulkner	523
39	Delayed Management of Paranasal Sinus Fractures Roy F. Thomas and Nici Eddy Bothwell	531
40	Delayed Management of Laryngotracheal Trauma Robert L. Eller, N. Scott Howard, and Erin Hamersley	543
41	Delayed Treatment of Pharyngoesophageal Trauma Nici Eddy Bothwell	575
42	Delayed Treatment of Otologic Trauma Ben J. Balough	589
43	Vestibular Trauma Kim Gottshall	605
44	Traumatic Brain Injury Michael E. Hoffer, Carey Balaban, Sara Murphy, and Richard W. Thomas	619
<b>Section VII: Unique Head and Neck Issues in the Deployed Setting</b>		631
45	Operating in Austere Environments Richard W. Thomas	633
46	Advances in Surgical Techniques, Procedures, and Wound Care Nick Lake and Brian A. Moore	643

47	Head and Neck Lessons Learned in Iraq and Afghanistan Joseph A. Brennan	659
48	Afterword Joseph A. Brennan	675
	Abbreviations and Acronyms	xxi
	Index	xxiii

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# Foreword

The incidence of head and neck injuries in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom is double the incidence historically seen during previous conflicts. Airway compromise, primarily due to these head and neck injuries, continues to be either the second or the third leading cause of potentially survivable death on the battlefield for our Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen. Consequently, this textbook is a compendium of 48 chapters written by 34 combat surgeons who have deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, or both war zones. These evidence-based lessons learned have saved lives and will save lives in future conflicts.

The goal of this text is to impart these lessons learned to future military and civilian head and neck surgeons. If we are successful, then in future conflicts we will achieve or surpass our current historically high combat survival rates at the outset of fighting, based, at least partially, on these lessons learned.

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Washington, DC  
January 2015



# Preface

More than 7,000 American service members and tens of thousands of Iraqis and Afghans have suffered head and neck wounds during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The authors of this textbook have personally treated the majority of these injuries over the past 12 years. Consequently, the goal of this trauma textbook is to impart the lessons learned during the treatment of these devastating injuries to our military and civilian colleagues. It is our sacred duty to ensure that these lessons paid for in blood are used to improve the survival of head and neck injured patients in the next inevitable conflict.

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January 2015

