

## SSC 5c – Elective Report

### Objectives:

1. What are the prevalent conditions of Military personnel during peacetime requiring anaesthesia for surgical interventions, compared to the general UK population?
2. How are medical services delivered to Military personnel at a District General Hospital / Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit? How the Army Medical Services deployed, and once deployed what is structure of a Military Field Hospital compared to a UK hospital?
3. Experience the practices and protocols of delivering medicine whilst on a Military training expedition with the Joint Services Adventure Sail Training Centre (JSASTC).
4. Gain insight into the delivery of anaesthesia, practice basic anaesthetic skills and develop competence in clinical skills.

### Introduction

For my 5 week medical elective placement I gained experience in Military Medicine. My placement had 3 aspects, allowing me to gain experience in: the field whilst on a training expedition; in a Military environment at a Field Hospital; and at a predominantly civilian NHS hospital (or Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit).

Whilst not on Military operations, many Army Personnel are based in the UK at several purposefully built Military stations or Garrisons. Garrisons usually contain more than one barracks or camp and their own Military Headquarters. Aldershot Garrison, known as the home of the British Army was established in 1854 and is one of the major Garrisons in South East England. It hosts around 70 Military units and organisations, has a population of 10,500 and acts as a hub for nearby satellite establishments: Minley, Bordon, Sandhurst, Pirbright, Deepcut, Keogh, Arborfield, Winchester and Worthy Down.

### Military Healthcare

Aldershot Garrison as well as containing barracks and quarters, comprises of various sporting facilities and the Aldershot Centre of Health. The Aldershot Centre of Health was opened in 2008 and is a purposefully-built health centre, combining both Army and NHS Primary Medical Services (General Practices and Dental Clinics). The health centre also contains outpatient facilities including several departments such as: radiology, pathology (blood tests), podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech & language and pharmacy. These facilities support the local hospital – Frimley Park. Not only is Frimley Park one of the leading NHS foundation trust hospitals, serving the community across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire, it is a Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (MDHU). Military staff are integrated into the hospital staff and both NHS and Military Staff treat both military and civilian patients alike.

### Military Patients Requiring Surgical Intervention&Anaesthetics

The Military population is generally a fit and a young population, but require comparable medical services to the general UK NHS population. The emphasis is however less on the long term chronic conditions, but focused towards acute services, including: accident & emergency, and trauma & orthopaedics.

During my time in Anaesthetics at Frimley Park Hospital I saw a good mix of NHS and Military patients. The most common conditions I saw Military personnel requiring anaesthesia for surgical interventions, included: appendicetomy;reduction & fixation of bone fractures; and shoulder & knee arthroscopy including ligament reconstruction, menisci repair & debridement.



My elective placement also gave me the opportunity to attend a wide variety of theatre lists including: general surgery, ENT, trauma and orthopaedics, urology, gynaecology, minor operations, dental extractions and caesarean sections. By attending these lists I have been able to witness various methods of anaesthesia. Local anaesthetic techniques have included: local skin infiltration, nerve blocks, epidurals and spinals. General anaesthetic techniques have included: intravenous non-opioid or opioid induction, gas induction and rapid sequence induction. Also by attending a wide variety of theatre lists and shadowing anaesthetists I have been able to witness/carry out pre-operative assessments and practice clinical skills. I have been able to apply routine monitoring equipment and carry out routine monitoring. I have been taught various techniques of airway management, how to: secure airways with simple adjuncts; administer oxygen and how patients are ventilated. I have also been able to practice skills of: cannulation; drawing up and administering parenteral drugs; and prescribing post-operative analgesia and anti-emetics.

### Military Field Hospital

A field hospital aims to deliver deployed hospital care in order to maximise operation capability. Although a field hospital is a large mobile medical unit, since its origin of a simple ambulance, a field hospital has changed dramatically. Now operating out of tents or existing buildings, a Field hospital provides NHS standards of care for all injuries (military and civilian) anywhere in world. Fully deployed a field hospital can provide up to 200 nursing and ITU beds, 7 operating theatres and a full range of diagnostic and clinical departments. So nowadays a Field hospital due to its size and complexity is rarely moved.

I was unable to spend my planned week at 22 Field Hospital based in Aldershot, but I was fortunate enough to spend a day doing a "Hospex" (hospital exercise) at 34 Field Hospital, York.

### Joint Services Adventure Training Sail Centre

The last aspect of my Military Medical elective was taking part in a Military training expedition with the Joint Services Adventure Training Sail Centre. Adventure training is defined as: "challenging outdoor training in specified adventurous activities, involving controlled exposure to risk, to develop leadership, teamwork, physical fitness, moral and physical courage, among other personal attributes and skills vital to operational capability." Adventurous Training is seen as a valuable addition to formal military training, helping to develop, through challenging pursuits and within an outdoor environment, leadership and the qualities necessary to enhance the performance of military personnel during peace and war. By taking part in a sailing expedition I was able to provide medical cover whilst taking part in sailing course, a specified adventurous training which allowed me to learn new skills and develop teamwork & leadership skills.

### Conclusion

Throughout my 5 week Military Medical elective, I gained experience in: adventurous training whilst providing medical cover for a sailing training expedition; witnessed the running of a hospital exercise in a Military Field Hospital; and delivery of healthcare to Military personnel alongside the civilian NHS population at a Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit.

As well as developing and becoming confident in vital skills such as airway management I have had an opportunity to test my physical fitness and develop teamwork & leadership skills. I have enjoyed my elective placement and gained valuable experience in the speciality of Military Medicine