

# HEALTH SERVICE SUPPORT IN A THEATER OF OPERATIONS

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\*This manual supersedes FM 8-10, 2 October 1978.

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## CHAPTER 1

## HEALTH SERVICE SUPPORT IN THE AIRLAND BATTLE

## Section I. THE MISSION

## 1-1. The AirLand Battle Doctrine

The Army's keystone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, explains how the Army plans and operates with other Services and allied forces. While emphasizing conventional military operations, FM 100-5 recognizes that Army forces must be capable of operating effectively in any battlefield environment.

## 1-2. The Mission of the Army Medical Department

*a.* Armies that are winners of battles and campaigns have the following common qualities:

- They are physically fit.
- They are emotionally well.

- They are capable of concentrating superior combat power at decisive times.

*b.* The AMEDD plays a key role in developing and maintaining combat power. Its mission is to maintain the health of the Army to conserve its fighting strength (trained manpower). Commanders need to retain acclimated and experienced personnel to perform their particular mission. In retaining such personnel, the load on the replacement system is diminished, and the requirements for patient evacuation are decreased. On the other hand, accumulation of patients within any combat unit restricts its movements. It may also reduce the soldier's willingness to take necessary risks because of a perceived lack of HSS.

## Section II. THE BATTLEFIELD OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

## 1-3. The Operational Continuum

The strategic environment within each theater consists of a variety of conditions—political, economic, and military. It also consists of a range of threats that result in a wide range of operations that can correspondingly occur in response to those conditions and threats. These operations are conducted within a continuum consisting of three general states—peacetime competition, conflict, and war. The operational continuum discussed below suggests the types of operations conducted during the three general states. The operational continuum is intended to assist in the articulation of the strategic situations within a theater. Although the following discussion of the states within the continuum describes each in distinct terms, in actual circumstances there may be no precise distinctions where a particular state ends and another begins. In any case, the ability to describe strategic situations in clear terms will assist commanders in chief (CINC) in defining needs, devising strategies, and projecting resources.

*a. Peacetime Competition.* Peacetime competition is a state wherein political, economic, informational, and military measures, short of

combat operations or active support to warring parties, are employed to achieve national objectives. Within this state, US forces may conduct joint training exercises to—

- Demonstrate resolve.
- Conduct peacekeeping operations.
- Participate in nation-building activities.
- Conduct disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.
- Provide security assistance to friends and allies.
- Execute shows of force,

Some operations, such as support to interagency counternarcotic operations, have dimensions that may span peacetime competition and conflict. These examples are illustrative, not inclusive. When confrontations and tensions occur involving the clear threat or the use of armed force, a situation exists that is a potential point of transition to a state of conflict.

*b. Conflict.*

(1) Conflict is an armed struggle or clash between organized parties within a nation or between nations to achieve limited political or military objectives. While regular forces are often involved, irregular forces frequently predominate. Conflict is often protracted, confined to a restricted geographic area, and constrained in weaponry and level of violence. Within this state, military power in response to threats may be exercised in an indirect manner while supporting other elements of national power. Limited objectives may be achieved by the short, focused, and direct application of force. Conflict also describes situations where continuing clashes or crises occur over—

- Boundary disputes.
- Land and water territorial claims.
- Conditions in which opposing political factions engage in military actions to gain control of political leadership within a nation.

(2) In the future, potential exists for crises and clashes in space.

(3) As the amount of forces, frequency of battle, number of nations, and levels of violence increase and are sustained over an extended period of time, and when the sovereignty of a nation is threatened, conflict approaches the threshold of a state of war.

*c. War.* War is sustained use of armed force between nations or organized groups within a nation involving regular and irregular forces in a series of connected battles and campaigns to achieve vital national objectives. War may be limited, with some self-imposed restraints on resources or objectives; or, it may be general with the total resources of a nation or nations employed and the national survival of a belligerent at stake.

**1-4. The Medical Threat**

The medical threat is the composite of all ongoing or potential enemy actions and environmental conditions that reduce the performance effectiveness of the soldier. The soldier's reduced

effectiveness results from sustained wounds, injuries, or diseases. Examples of significant threats to the medical mission area are—

- Those weapons or environmental conditions that generate wounded, injured, and sick soldiers beyond the capability of the HSS system to provide timely medical care.
- Those weapons or environmental conditions that produce qualitatively different wound or disease processes.

**1-5. Enemy Combat Operations**

A threat to the medical mission results from enemy combat operations that—

- Disrupt HSS operations.
- Threaten the survival of HSS.

*b.* This threat, however, is NOT considered to be a medical threat.

**1-6. Elements of the Medical Threat**

*a. Naturally Occurring Infectious Diseases.* Naturally occurring infectious diseases, also referred to as endemic diseases, represent a significant threat to US armed forces deployed outside continental United States (OCONUS). Historically, infectious diseases have been responsible for more lost foxhole days than battle injuries. Many naturally occurring infectious diseases have short incubation periods. They may cause significant numbers of casualties within the first 48 hours to 2 weeks of a deployment. Some examples of the more militarily significant, naturally occurring, infectious disease threats are as follows:

- (1) Acute diarrhea.
- (2) Acute respiratory diseases.
- (3) Malaria.
- (4) Arbovirus infections.
- (5) Sexually transmitted diseases.