

This Week's Citation Classic

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DeBakey M E & Simeone F A. Battle injuries of the arteries in World War II. An analysis of 2,471 cases. *Ann. Surg.* 123:534-79, 1946.
[Office of the Surgeon General, Washington, DC]

An effort was made in this report to present information on 2,471 acute arterial injuries in American forces during World War II, with respect to incidence, types, location, and morbidity. For the results of this study, which are too lengthy to abstract, the reader is referred to the original article. [The SCJ® indicates that this paper has been cited in over 215 publications since 1961.]

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"As a member of the Surgical Consultants' Division of the Office of the Surgeon General during World War II, I became interested in diseases and injuries of the circulation, owing to my interests and research activities in this field of endeavor before entering the service. Accordingly, I began an exhaustive review of the publications on this subject for all previous wars. It soon became apparent from this review that there was considerable confusion concerning the incidence, site of occurrence, treatment, and results of treatment of battle injuries of the arteries in previous wars. Even the official histories of World War I, including the American, British, German, and French, provided inadequate reports for proper evaluation of incidence and results of treatment. Moreover, during the first two years of World War II, reports received in the Surgeon General's office from various theaters of operations pro-

vided inadequate data for proper evaluation and basis for development of good concepts of treatment. It thus became clearly evident that special efforts were needed to study this problem and to collect data that would permit a more reliable analysis and more useful information from which proper concepts of treatment could be developed.

"For this purpose, I obtained the cooperation of our surgical consultants in various theaters of operations and asked them to collect data on this subject in accordance with certain guidelines I provided them. Moreover, I personally visited three of the armies (Third, Fifth, and Seventh) in the European theater of operations on a temporary duty basis. During these visits, I made a special effort to obtain firsthand information and collect data from the surgeons working in the field hospitals. During my visit to the Fifth Army, I met Fiorindo A. Simeone, who showed a particular interest in this problem and had already collected a considerable amount of data from the battle experience in that army. We agreed to collaborate on this subject, and this resulted in the preparation of the manuscript that is the subject of this commentary.

"The primary significance of this article lies in the fact that it was the first comprehensive review of battle injuries of the arteries that included World War II and previous wars and provided extensive statistical data on incidence, location of the injury, complications, methods of treatment, and results of treatment. It also indicated the need for better methods of treatment in both military and civilian arterial injuries. I believe that it provided a stimulus for efforts in this direction which have been fruitful, as evidenced by subsequent published reports showing great improvement in the methods of treatment and results of treatment by the application of vascular surgical methods of repair and restoration of circulation both in military and civilian wounds."¹⁻⁸

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