

Surgeon at War 1939–45

Stanley Aylett with Holly Aylett
John Blake Publishing 2015
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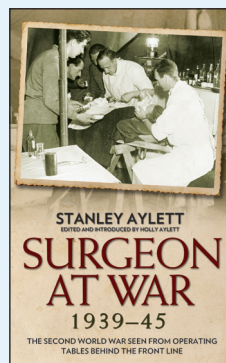
Stanley Aylett was born in 1911. He qualified in medicine at King's College Hospital Medical School in 1935 and obtained his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons a year later. Within weeks of the outbreak of World War II, he left his surgical registrar post at King's to join the Royal Army Medical Corps as a surgical specialist and within weeks was with the British Expeditionary Force in France in charge of a casualty clearing station. He and his team had a hazardous evacuation through Dunkirk back to England.

This was soon followed by Aylett's next posting, to join the 8th Army in the Western Desert of North Africa. Here he

commanded a field surgical unit, operating on casualties, usually in makeshift tented hospitals. With the German forces cleared from Africa, Aylett returned to England to prepare for the invasion of Europe and, with his surgical team, landed in France on D-Day and continued through France, Belgium and then into Germany, always actively engaged in military surgery.

The end of the war in Europe (VE Day) found Aylett, now promoted to lieutenant-colonel, and his surgical team as the first medical aid to reach the horror of the Sandbostel concentration camp in North Germany.

Returning home after the war, Aylett was appointed consultant general surgeon



at the Gordon Hospital, London, where he developed a special interest in inflammatory bowel disease. He died in 2003.

Stanley Aylett published 'Surgeon at War' privately in 1979. Now his daughter has edited and written a foreword to this new edition, profusely illustrated with photographs and with numerous detailed letters which Aylett sent to his

parents from abroad.

This book gives a vivid account of military surgery 1939–45 – days and nights of frantic operating, often under difficult and dangerous conditions. Surgical readers will be especially interested in Aylett's descriptions of the rapid evolution of the surgery of trauma. I can warmly recommend it.

Harold Ellis, King's College London, London

Pocket On Call

Andrew Stewart
CRC Press 2015
Price £12.99. Pp 151

ISBN 978 1 4441 8503 4

This truly pocket-sized text aimed at newly qualified doctors is a great thing to have to hand for any on-call shift. It is subdivided into four sections: preparing for the on-call, assessing and treating acutely unwell patients, e.g. the patient with sepsis, common scenarios faced during an on-call shift such as discussions with microbiology or certifying death, and culminates in a section on how to prescribe commonly used drugs and fluids.

Each section is divided into sub-sections covering how to deal with both the everyday and emergency scenarios a new doctor may face. It is easy to use with bold headings, diagrams and a summary of key points at the end of each sub-section. It has a clear contents page and index, making information easily accessible even in stressful situations.

This book aims to provide essential information rather than being a detailed source. Its size means it would easily fit into the pocket of a scrub top, clipboard or bag. However, I would not suggest this as a replacement for the *Oxford Handbook for the Foundation Programme* which covers the same material in an equally accessible but more extensive way. Given the wide

variety of books on the subject I do not feel the convenience of its size warrants the price tag attached given its basic content.

I would recommend this book solely as an adjunct to a more comprehensive text aimed at junior doctors, although if you are looking for something small to carry with you for an on call this would be a stellar choice.

Howell T Jones, University College Hospital, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, London

Pharmacological Basis of Acute Care

Edited by Yoo Kuen Chan,
Kwee Peng Ng and Debra Si Mui Sim
Springer 2015

Price £49.99. Pp 265

ISBN 978 3 319 10385 3

The delivery of acute medical care relies strongly on pharmacotherapy. Even those with acute surgical pathology or in need of other forms of physical support will generally require some form of medication to support their recovery. The array of medicines available for this endeavour is becoming ever larger, from antibiotics to immunosuppressants, from paralytics to antiarrhythmics.

This five-part book, a collaborative effort of the faculty of medicine of the University of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, attempts to provide an overview of the pharmacology relevant for acute medical

care. The first ten chapters provide an introduction to pharmacology as a whole, including absorption/bioavailability, distribution, metabolism and excretion, modes of administration, protein binding and ionization status. The second section covers groups of drugs per organ system, such as cardiovascular drugs and the neuromuscular system. The third section discusses specific patient groups, and the fourth section discusses oxygen and fluids, both of which can be regarded as drugs and certainly play a large role in acute care. Finally the fifth section covers medication errors.

Considering its size, this work covers a lot of ground and the editors should be applauded for this. However, it is difficult to say who is most likely to benefit from reading it. It could be useful for both medical students and doctors in the acute medical specialties, but much of the content is found in textbooks already used for other studies. Some chapters are very light on references, and others have references that are over 10 years old and potentially out of date. The cardiology chapter does not have a dedicated section on antiplatelets and anticoagulants, a curious omission as these are used widely in acute care. Another problem for most readers will be that with some exceptions it does not map very well with existing clinical guidelines.
Jacob F de Wolff, Northwick Park Hospital, Middlesex