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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

The Gulf crisis has dominated the world's media for months and now as we come close to what may be a massive loss of life it is creeping into the journal. The *Observer* story (6 January, p 2) that half of British troops in the Gulf may be killed and that the NHS must make 7500 beds available for casualties has been denied (and it would be), but the tottering NHS may find itself having to cope with large numbers of casualties. Two Manchester surgeons take up this issue on p 117 and argue that "military secrecy must not leave us unprepared." For those already in the Gulf or thinking of going we reproduce the NHS Management Executive's guidance on pay and conditions (p 118):

the government's line is that nobody should suffer financial hardship and that wherever possible all jobs should be safeguarded. From the Gulf we have a report of the first use of the operating tents specially designed for use in chemical warfare (p 68) and an account from a dermatologist of what it's like to be suddenly transferred far away with the prospect of a catastrophic war (p 121).

But not all is darkness: the Medicine and the Media page (120) considers whether less whisky can make you more drunk and reports on a 93 year old doctor who was the first man to wear a zip fastener on his flies as well as to introduce the woggle into Albania.