

With Healing Hands

The untold story of the Australian civilian surgical teams in Vietnam

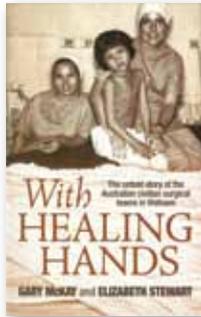
Gary McKay
Elizabeth Stewart

Australia: Allen & Unwin,
2009

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The Vietnam War is far enough in the past to be of interest to historians and yet close enough to the present to be remembered by many Australians.

It has been said that there are no civilians in war. The Australian civilian surgical teams who went to Vietnam worked in civilian hospitals, often under the most primitive conditions. At



times, they came under fire from the Viet Cong just like the soldiers who fought there. They themselves became victims of the war and many who went to help the civilians of Vietnam ended up with post-traumatic stress. None, it seems, came back unchanged by their experience.

While most of those who went with the teams were surgeons and surgical nurses, there were other medical specialties as

well. Among them was a group of GPs.

McKay and Stewart add a different medical perspective to the written saga of the fighting in Vietnam. Much of the caseload was surgical, including road trauma and war related injuries. But there were also the medical problems, such as

infections and paediatrics, of the type that GPs of the time did. The authors are both historians with an interest in military history. They interviewed many of those who served, both doctors and nurses, and use these interviews to tell a first-hand story of the Australian surgical teams who went to Vietnam. Some of the participants told their stories in the medical press at the time, others wrote books. The authors use all of these sources in this book.

With its many lists and good bibliography, this is a book for all GPs interested in history and one that should interest members of the Chapter of Military Medicine.

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Prostate Cancer

Your guide to the disease, treatment options and outcomes

Prem Rashid

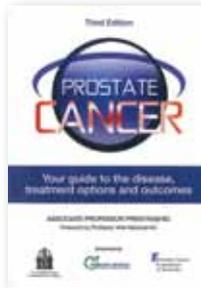
Australia: Uronorth Group,
2010

ISBN 978 0646 52575 4, \$40.00

Having recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer and undergoing a radical prostatectomy, I came to review this guide from a very personal context.

Having conducted my own internet search on the function of the prostate, the potential impact of the cancer and the full implication of what lay ahead for me, surprisingly, I was not aware of this book until soon after my surgery. I wish I had found this useful reference guide to prostate disease earlier as it has become my first port-of-call for my queries and concerns.

I was advised at the outset of my cancer that I was about to begin a journey; that my treatment would take me through a series of phases with the need to focus on 'one stage at a time'. This book is a most valuable guide that follows the natural and logical steps of prostate cancer



treatment and recovery. After completing an initial read through, each chapter of this guide has become a quick 'go to' resource as I reach the specific milestones in my journey. At the age of 56 years, this has, in particular, given me a better understanding of issues such as incontinence, erectile dysfunction and the emotional and psychological impacts associated with

the recovery. This edition also reflects current research and treatment approaches which are not always reflected in internet based information. This book provides valuable reference material from which more detailed information can be sought, if required, to assist in making decisions on treatment and dealing with the ongoing challenges faced afterwards.

I believe the majority of men have a 'head in the sand' approach to men's health issues. This book helps to demystify and simplify the language of health, medical and cancer issues that most men would normally find confronting. Seemingly complex issues are explained in a clear, succinct and simple manner making it easier to understand

the disease, the treatment options and likely risks and outcomes of treatment.

Another useful feature of this book is the use of case studies of men with their own story to tell of their unique prostate cancer journey. Not only do these snapshots reveal the real emotions and challenges faced by those with the disease, but also highlights that everyone's circumstances are different. There are no simple answers to the challenges ahead but the reader can take heart from those in sharing their experiences.

I recommend this book as an extremely useful personal resource for all men diagnosed with prostate cancer and as a valuable source of information for partners and families. I encourage all medical and health specialists involved in the diagnosis and treatment of this disease to advise their patients of its value in helping make informed decisions of the treatment options and the probable outcomes of life thereafter.

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