

Supporting the global war on terror: a tale of two campaigns featuring the 250th Forward Surgical Team (Airborne.

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### Supporting the Global War on Terror: a tale of two campaigns featuring the 250th Forward Surgical Team (Airborne)

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#### Abstract

##### Background

Forward Surgical Teams (FSTs) are 20-person units designed to perform front-line, life-saving combat surgery. This study compares the employment, injuries encountered, and workload of an airborne FST in two widely varying campaigns.

##### Methods

The 250th FST provided far forward surgery for initial entry assaults and follow-on stability operations in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom [OEF]) and northern

Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom [OIF]). Prospective data on all patients admitted to the 250th were analyzed. Data from civil affairs missions were evaluated retrospectively.

## Results

In supporting combat operations, 127 surgical procedures (OEF: 68, OIF: 59) were performed on 98 patients (OEF: 50, OIF: 48) during 17 months deployed (OEF: 6, OIF: 11). After initial assaults, stability actions varied significantly in terms of civil affairs missions (OEF: 3, OIF: 161).

## Conclusions

Although the number and types of combat casualties were similar between the campaigns, employment of the FST changed dramatically in OIF because of increased medical reconstruction missions.



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## Keywords

Forward surgical team; Far forward surgery; War surgery; Operation Enduring Freedom; Operation Iraqi Freedom; Airborne operations; Damage control surgery

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