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Tactical Combat Casualty Care in Special Operations FREE

Frank K. Butler, Jr., MC USN, John Hagmann, MC USA, E. George Butler, MC USN

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Abstract

U.S. military medical personnel are currently trained to care for combat casualties using the principles taught in the Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) course. The appropriateness of many of the measures taught in ATLS for the combat setting is unproven. A 2-year study to review this issue has been sponsored by the United States Special Operations Command. This paper presents the results of that study. We will review some of the factors that must be considered in caring for wounded patients on the battlefield with an emphasis on the Special Operations environment. A basic management protocol is proposed that organizes combat casualty care into three phases and suggests appropriate measures for each phase. A scenario-based approach is needed to plan in more detail for casualties on specific Special Operations missions, and several sample scenarios are presented and discussed.

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