

BOOK REVIEW

MILITARY MEDICAL ETHICS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by:

**Michael L. GROSS
Don CARRICK**

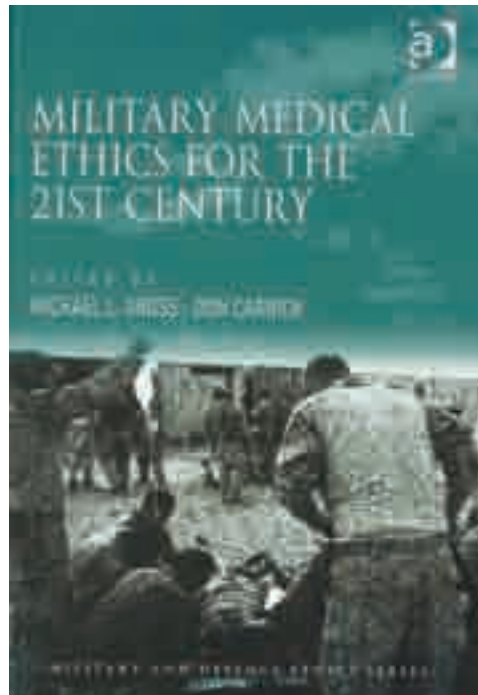
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Military Medical Ethics for the 21st Century is an extraordinary text that fills a yawning gap in two existing fields – bioethics and military ethics – while at the same time defining an important new sub-discipline – military medical ethics – and pointing the way for future scholars to continue to explore its vital issues. As editors Michael L. Gross and Don Carrick explain in their compelling introduction, the relationship between medicine and warfare has never been more complex. Not only have the realities of modern combat (including evolving forms of unconventional and asymmetric conflict, technological and biological enhancements, greater global transparency, and an expansion of international law) created new challenges for medical professionals working within the military context, but there is also an entire sphere of emerging medical technology with military applications.

This text is well designed to present readers with a wide range of challenging problems to consider. Some chapters focus on concerns that confront medical professionals working in war zones, such as whether they should treat civilians not injured by the conflict itself or if they should rigidly maintain their own neutrality and noncombatant status in all circumstances. Other chapters consider the ethics of participation in the bio-enhancement of troops and raise red flags about dual-use medical technologies that will inevitably

leak into the civilian sector. The issue of censorship of military medical research is especially intriguing, given the current proliferation of military funding for military and civilian research. Other issues addressed include the rights of military patients, the ethics of military medical experiments, the development of non-lethal weapons, medical education in the military, and tensions between military service and professional medical ethics.

Gross and Carrick have gathered a talented and international slate of authors to do justice to these weighty subjects. The result is a remarkably balanced presentation of perspectives and carefully considered arguments. None of the rich topics is exhausted, but the text provides a valuable roadmap for future study that is also tailor-made for use in a course at the college level or above. Medical professionals serving with the military and policy-makers will find this text essential, and it will also be of great interest to a more general, educated audience, concerned with how ethical principles are and ought to be applied when the stakes are at their highest.