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Military psychiatry

Martin P. Deahl

Few have first-hand experience of military psychiatry. Military psychiatry, however, has had a substantial impact on us: WWI and ‘shell shock’, the ‘Northfield experiments’ of WWII, engendering a sense of therapeutic optimism, helping fuel the ‘care in the community’ movement and development of modern psychotherapy. PTSD and ‘Gulf War’ illnesses have stimulated critical reappraisal of psychiatric diagnosis, nosology, Cartesian dualism and hysteria. Servicemen and veterans have served and suffered in our name. We, in turn, have a duty to respect their sacrifice and this intellectual legacy by better understanding their needs, so we, in turn, can serve them more effectively.