

Ethics Thought Paper  
The Ethics of Preventive  
Medicine

By

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L564 Values, Ethics and Military Leadership

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16 November 2005

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## The Ethics of Preventive Medicine

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When I think about Army Ethics, several other terms come into my mind. I think about values, beliefs, equality and fairness and how it affects all people. I know there will always be disparity where there are people from different backgrounds. As I thought about a topic, I thought about the discussion with my peer group about taking a vaccination. The question that came to my mind is does the Army knowingly expose its personnel to unnecessary health risk?

The United States boast to having the, "World's Largest Army", the most technical with the most advanced weapons. However, what senior Noncommissioned Officers, NCOs, and Officers know is that the Army's greatest asset is the Soldier. In the Army's every day conversation a Soldier refers to the junior enlisted Soldier. By definition, a Soldier is anyone who serves in the Army. This includes Officers, Noncommissioned Officers and the Junior Enlisted, active and reserve. In today's Army, the definition could stretch to include the civilians working with the Army. In 2003, the Times Magazine named the American Soldier Time's person of the year. This honor speaks of the American people's great respect for the Soldier. Every Soldier knows their job is to support and defend the Constitution of the United States Against all enemies foreign and domestic. If a leader tells a Soldier to prepare to deploy they will prepare.

Each time the Army deploys the Soldiers must go through a regiment of Preventive Medicines and vaccinations. Are the Preventive measures as harmful as the disease? Soldiers finds problem with this situation and have asked this question a lot in the last few years.

Malaria is an infectious disease caused by the bite of an infected female mosquito. The Malaria parasite destroys red blood cells and can be deadly, but doctors can treat malaria. The Preventive Anti-malarial Medications most used by the Army are Mefloquine, Choroquine and Primaquine. The minor side effects of these medications include but are not limited to headaches, nausea, and diarrhea, sleeplessness, visual and audio disturbances and nightmares. The major side effects include seizures, gastric ulcers, and irreversible damage to the retina when used for a long period. What is a long period six months? Is a year a long period? Lastly, Soldiers have experienced psychiatric incidents. Can the numerous incidents at Fort Bragg after the Soldiers returned from deployment be attributed to antimalarial medications? We still wait in anticipation of that answer.

News Reporters have written many articles on Anthrax with diverse opinions on the safety of the Anthrax vaccination. Anthrax is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria Anthracis found in the soil. Grazing animals such as cows, horses, sheep, and goats eat grass infected by the soil and contract the disease. People contract the Anthrax virus when they eat infected animals, or are exposed to the products made from the animals. The Food and Drug Administration, FDA, must inspect all meats prior to selling to the consumer. So eating infected meat is not common but it can happen.

Anthrax is also produced commercially in dry forms to use in biological warfare. The greatest threat or risk to the Soldier is inhaling the Anthrax spore while deployed to a "Third World" country, like Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

Exposure to Anthrax has many effects. One of the effects is lesions or blisters on the hands, face and neck, but are not life threatening.

Doctors treat the lesions with antibiotics and the lesions usually disappear in a few weeks. If a person inhales the Anthrax spores lesions may form on the lungs and the brain. The lesions in the lungs as expected cause pulmonary respiratory failure and the ones on the brain can cause the person to go into a comma. The cases that affect the lungs and brain are fatal if not detected in time to receive treatment.

The side effects of the Anthrax vaccination are soreness, redness and swelling around the injection site. Subcutaneous nodules are formed in some cases. No long-term secondary side effects to the Anthrax have been noted. Currently Anthrax shots are mandatory for personnel deploying to various Area of Operations. Personnel that decline Anthrax vaccination are subject to action under Uniform Code of Military Justice, UCMJ, and by the Commander with UCMJ Authority.

Another ethical problem is should a Soldier be compelled to take a vaccination or a pill against their will. Soldiers are willing to fight its nation's wars but are not allowed to choose the battlefield or the fight. In addition, they are not allowed to choose which vaccine to take without repercussion. When the Army decides which battles to fight is the Soldier considered? I am not talking about whether the Soldier is physically ready training is a part of our daily routine, but are they mentally ready? When Soldiers are taking medications that interrupt their sleep pattern, that causing nightmares that cause impaired visions or impaired hearing how effective is that Soldier? Add the normal combat stressors the effectiveness of the Soldiers decrease. Do the side effects outweigh the possible effects of the disease?

Does the Army knowingly expose its personnel to unnecessary health risk? In my opinion no, but I would also say though there is some disparity regarding preventive medication in the Army that the possible side effects outweigh the effects of contracting Anthrax or Malaria. History has shown that Soldiers have been lost during battle and rendered unable to fight because of disease. Whether it is Cholera, Plague, Typhoid Fever, Malaria or Anthrax disease incapacitate the Soldiers. It is better preventing the disease than fighting the disease once it has been contracted.

Works Cited

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Department of Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Malaria Prevention and Control. (1997-2005) Antimalarial Medication<<http://www.vnh.org>>

Mama's Health. Malaria<<http://www.mamashealth.com>>

Mama's Health. Anthrax<<http://www.mamashealth.com>>

**THE ETHICS OF PREVENTIVE  
MEDICINE**

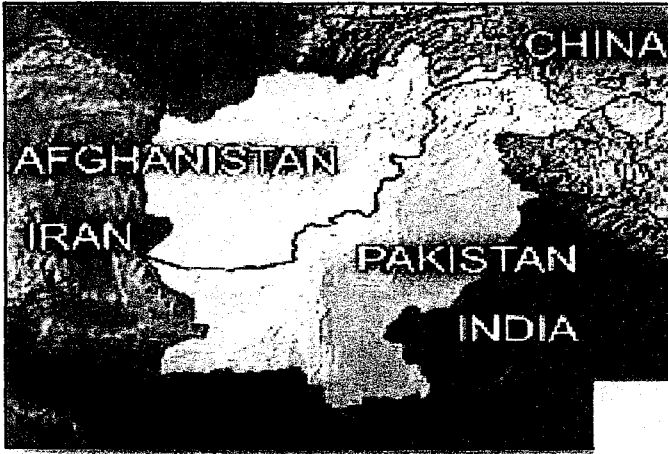
**SGM DEITRA P.C. FLOYD**

# AGENDA

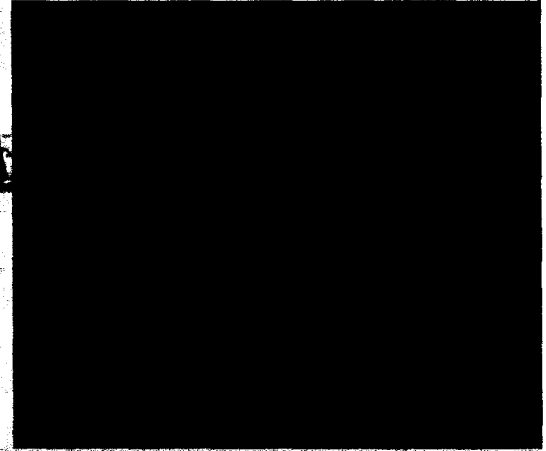
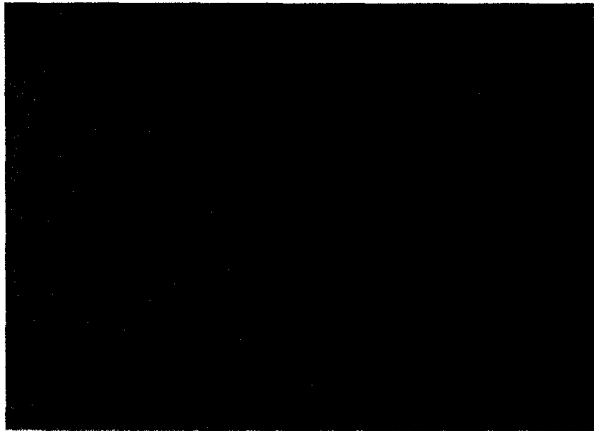
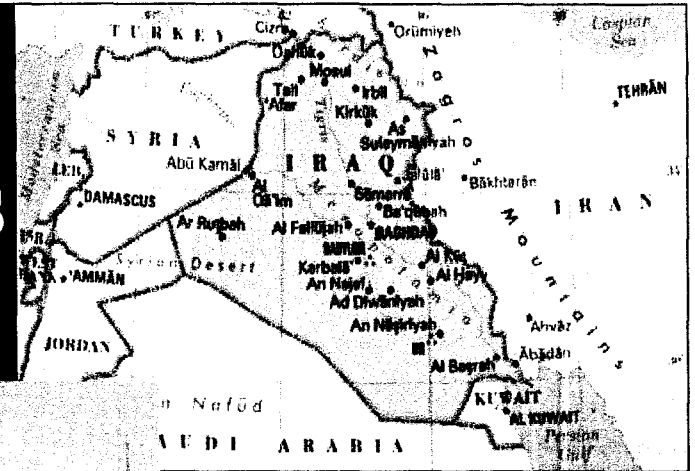
- ✔ **Ethics of Preventive Medicine in the Army.**
- ✔ **Various diseases and their side effects.**
- ✔ **Preventive measures and alternatives**
- ✔ **Summary**
- ✔ **Questions**
- ✔ **Conclusion**

# 2003 Person of the Year

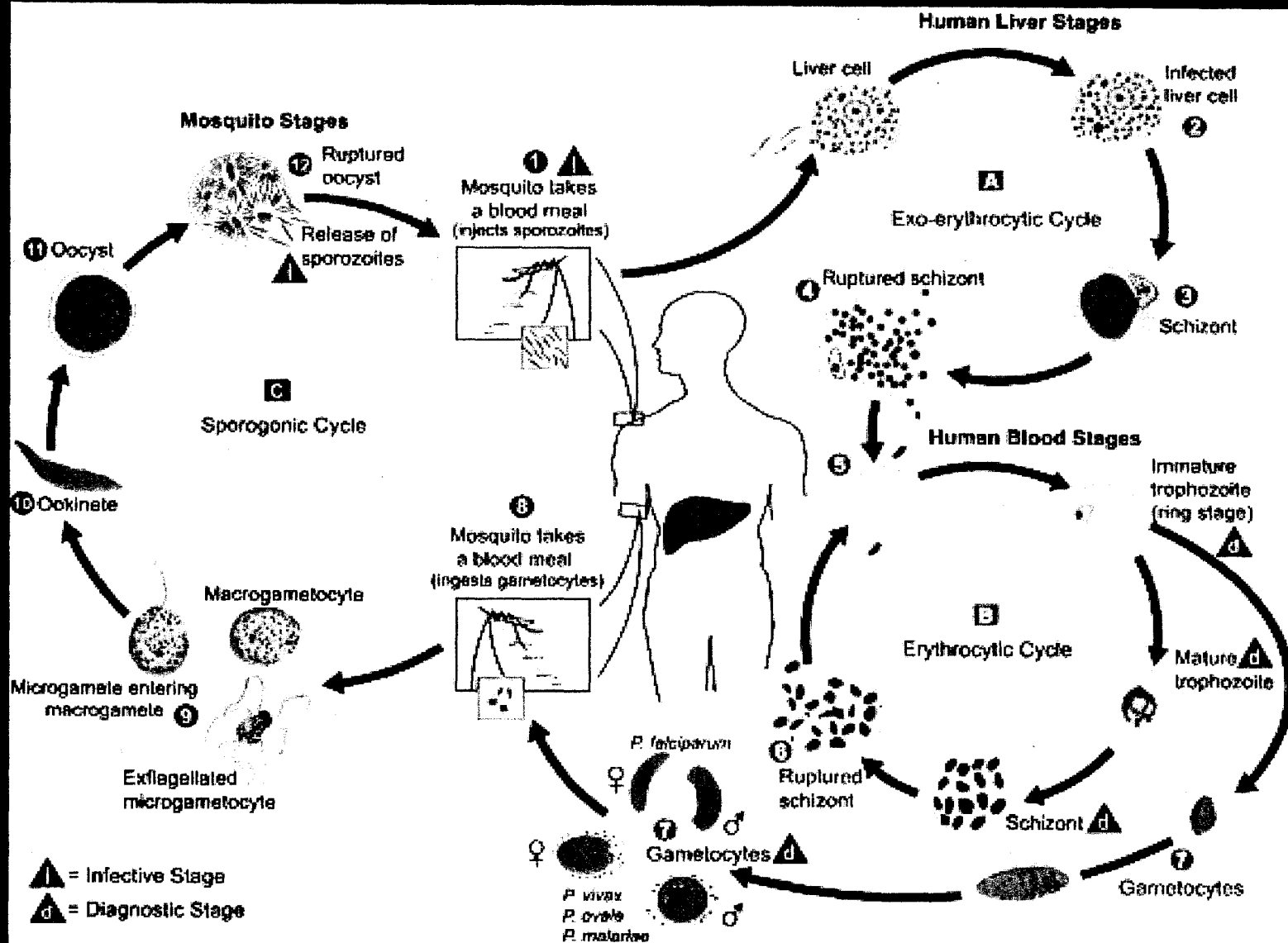




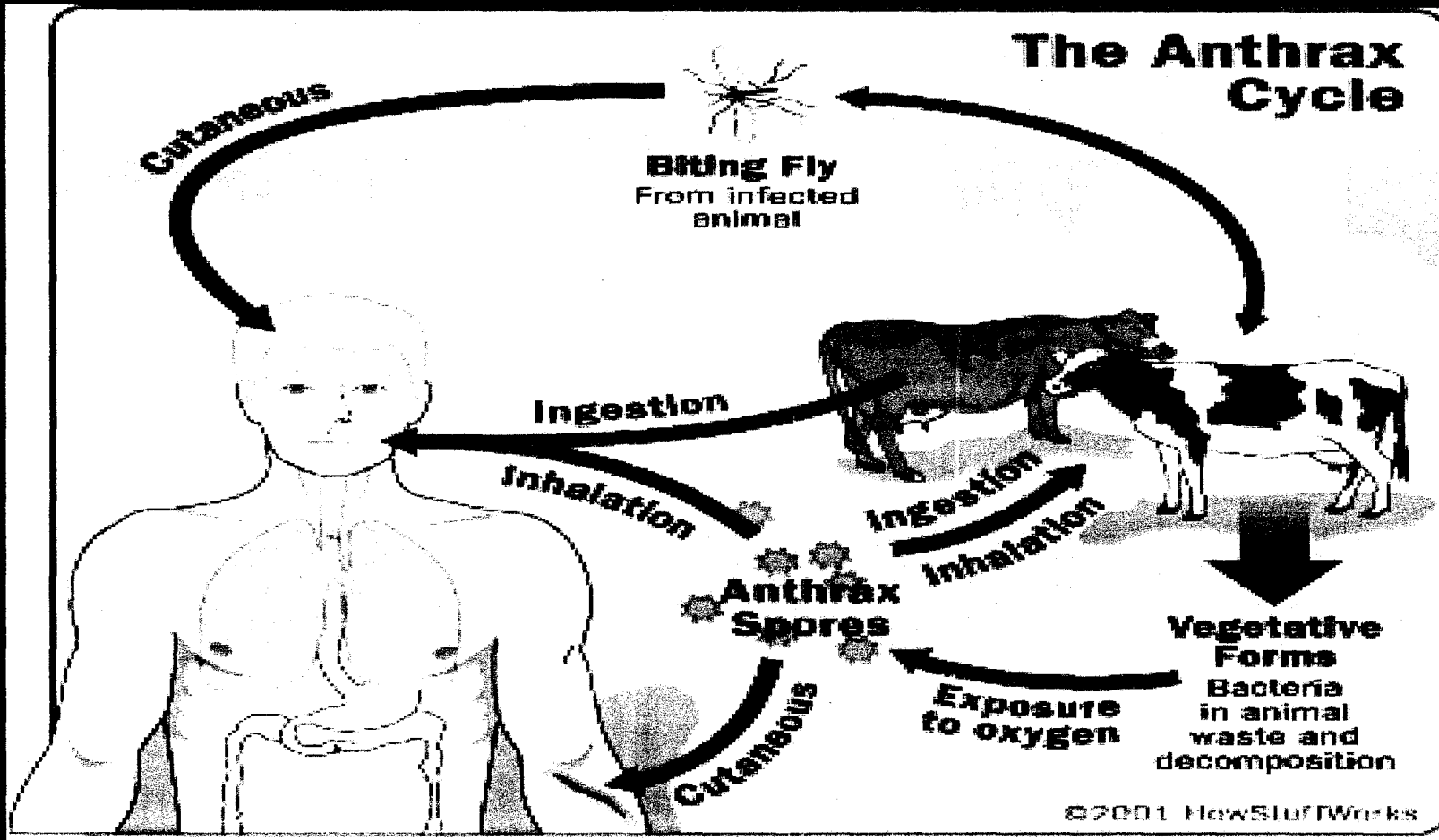
# Deployments



# MALARIA



# ANTHRAX



# QUESTIONS

