

Foreword

Skin diseases such as infections, infestations, and immersion foot may devastate the fighting strength of a unit by incapacitating its soldiers. In addition, whereas environmental insults such as severe cold will affect an entire force, the sheer numbers of troops who fall victim to frostbite or nonfreezing injuries can easily *cripple* an entire force. It is important to keep in mind that incapacity due to skin disease is usually preventable. When preventive measures fail, the soldier may be back on the front line relatively quickly with proper treatment, as opposed to the more dramatic missile wounds, where evacuation and replacement are often necessary. The role that military dermatologists play in educating, implementing preventive measures, and treating these common disorders is indispensable.

Owing to the historical perspective of the *Textbook of Military Medicine* series, this volume contains several lessons to be learned. First, dermatologists who can function as consultants, educators, preventive medicine officers, and healers need to be available for deployments of a division or greater. Organization that will provide them mobility so they can provide on-the-spot advice to unit commanders in the field regarding preventive strategies will help avoid many days of soldiers' incapacitation. Second, training of nonsurgical medical officers in the diagnosis and treatment of skin disorders should be firmly established as a portion of the core curriculum. This volume will provide a useful tool from which such training can be modeled. And third, research efforts directed at protective and preventive strategies needs to continue to be supported.

This volume will be useful to active-duty and reservist dermatologists, family practitioners, general medical officers, internists, nurses, physician assistants, and medics. It provides an up-to-date, in-depth, highly visual resource both for teaching and for providing medical care to our soldiers in the field.

Lieutenant General Alcide M. LaNoue
The Surgeon General
U.S. Army

August 1994
Washington, D.C.