WG 2 (Preventive Medicine and Healthcare Policies)

Measures of Disease Prevention During War

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In warfare, soldiers face not only armed enemies but also infectious diseases, which have historically caused more casualties than battle injuries.
Poor sanitation and hygiene in combat zones significantly increase the risk of disease outbreaks, jeopardizing both soldiers' health and operational effectiveness. During the "Iron Swords" war, the IDF implemented a proactive and innovative disease prevention strategy to mitigate these risks. This approach emphasized real-time field reporting, identification of critical intervention points, and a shift from reactive to preventive measures.
Key components included personal responsibility for hygiene, continuous supply of sanitation equipment, and structured layers of protection against disease, akin to protective measures against missile threats. Additionally, vaccination programs, enhanced water and food security protocols, and technological advancements played crucial roles in maintaining troop health.
These efforts were aimed to prevent infectious diseases transmission among soldiers, the local population, and hostages while preserving combat effectiveness and legitimacy. The IDF's experience highlights the critical importance of integrating comprehensive disease prevention strategies in military operations.

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Water Borne Disease Prevention

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Ensuring a safe drinking water supply for soldiers is critical, as waterborne diseases are among the most common and rapidly debilitating health threats in military operations. Contaminated water can significantly impair operational readiness, making water quality management a strategic priority.
In Israel, drinking water quality is exceptionally high, with over 60% of the supply originating
from desalinated seawater. However, in conflict zones such as Gaza and Lebanon, the situation is vastly different. In Gaza, groundwater is heavily contaminated and unfit for consumption. Under normal conditions, water was supplied through pipelines from Israel and seawater desalination. However, with the onset of the war, these sources became unavailable, necessitating the supply of bottled water and water tankers. As operations stabilized, water pipes were installed from Israel to forward logistics centers, and on-site water production facilities were deployed, including desalination units and atmospheric water generators.
In Lebanon, water quality is generally better, primarily sourced from groundwater and natural springs. However, most of these sources are also unsuitable for direct consumption. Water was supplied via bottled water and tankers. Recently, an innovative system for converting snow into potable water was developed and deployed for use in remote locations with limited water access.
In conclusion, ensuring a continuous and safe drinking water supply is a vital operational necessity, directly impacting soldiers' health, readiness, and combat effectiveness. Reliable water provision strategies must be an integral part of military logistics, ensuring that troops always have access to safe drinking water in any operational environment.