



BOOKS AND MULTIMEDIA OF INTEREST

Ruff's War: A Navy Nurse at the Frontline in Iraq, by CDR Cheryl L. Ruff, USN (ret.) and CDR K. Sue Roper, USN (ret.). 208 pages, \$25.95, Annapolis, Md: US Naval Institute, 2005, ISBN: 1-59114-739-5.

Cheryl Ruff is a nurse anesthetist who served in the US Navy for 25 years, most of it in the Nurse Corps. Throughout her career she had unique assignments and after becoming a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), her assignments took her to duty on 2 hospital ships, 2 aircraft carriers, and 2 amphibious assault helicopter aircraft carriers. The highlight of her career, however, was the subject of this book, the war to liberate Iraq, "Operation Iraqi Freedom." *Ruff's War* is a fast reading account of her experience with a mobile surgical support company that followed closely behind US Marines from Kuwait to Baghdad.

The book is written in the first person but coauthored with K. Sue Roper, the more experienced writer of the two, who also retired from the US Navy Nurse Corps. The writing style uses flashbacks and flashforwards. Each chapter ends readying you for the next. It's a page turner.

Some amusing moments describe why Ruff chose healthcare for a career and how her father influenced her decision to join the Navy, ironically in light of this narrative, to always have a roof over her head.

Much of the book, like much of war, is spent on what she experienced in preparing for war; from the fear of "Will I be able to func-

tion when I need to?" to the fear and preparation for possible death. There were the heart wrenching goodbyes to the final preparation and endless wait, wait, wait, and then "Let's get this war on and over so we can go home."

Living, more surviving, in the oppressive heat, while wearing heavy chemical warfare protection, in temperatures over 100°, she unabashedly describes the travails of bathroom needs. Safety and security, take over the needs of privacy and dignity as war intensifies and the dangers increase. The description of the inconveniences she and her compatriots suffered make the pages stink. You can't wait to finish many pages just to breathe better air.

Showing the love a nurse has for saving human lives, the authors do a very sensitive description of Ruff's moral anguish. She cared for our marines and soldiers while also treating Iraqi casualties. Some of those Iraqis she cared for were the same people who created casualties among their own people by booby trapping women and children, then ordering them to walk up to American troops.

Ruff shared her concern for saving her Iraqi patients, at the same time saying that if one threatened her, she would have no reservation about shooting him with her own handgun, which she kept cleaned, loaded, and at the ready.

There were moments of triumph like her favorite patient, a young Marine named Jeff, who had the difficult airway that Cheryl felt she had spent her entire career learning

how to manage. Sue and Cheryl presented a very sensitive description of Cheryl's moment of doing everything that could be done for her patient, but it wasn't enough. It was Cheryl's call when to stop squeezing the bag.

This book is not for every reader, but for nurse anesthetists, this is a must read. Ruff and Roper have written and described what we all hope we would be able to do under the same circumstances. When you close this book you are grateful that our fighting forces are being cared for by such people with boundless dedication. It makes you feel proud to be an American and a CRNA.

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Critical Care: The Requisites in Anesthesiology, by Peter J. Papadakos, MD, FCCM, FCCP, and James E. Szalados, MD, JD, MBA, MHA, FCCP, FCCM. 450 pages, 67 illustrations, \$79.95, Philadelphia, Pa: Elsevier Mosby, 2005, ISBN: 0-323-02262-6.

In clinical practice, nurse anesthetists encounter a diverse community of patients. They range from healthy young men and women, to chronically and critically ill individuals in constant need of highly adapted care and specialized support. Although all nurse anesthesia educational programs (NAEPs) require critical care nursing experience prior to acceptance, these experiences are not standardized,

and most NAEPs do not include a critical care clinical rotation in their schemas. Regardless, CRNAs are often called upon to provide services within a wide variety of critical care units. For that reason, it is important that CRNAs have access to a comprehensive and reliable reference that explores the modern critical care arena and focuses on current treatments, techniques, and advances in care that may alter or influence the anesthesia plan.

Critical Care: The Requisites in Anesthesiology is a reference that meets the aforementioned criterion. This text succinctly but comprehensively combines the principals of critical care with the standards and practice of anesthesia, revealing the importance of the linkage of the two in providing continuity of care for our patients. In the preface, the authors keenly suggest that every surgical patient, even those that undergo elective surgery, become critically ill, even if for a short time. As a result, the information provided can be readily used by the student and the seasoned practitioner alike to optimize the delivery of knowledge-based, safe, and high quality anesthesia care.

The textbook provides valuable insights into modern modalities of monitoring, mechanical ventilation, blood and fluid replacements, acid-base abnormalities, and chronic disease processes, along with their management. Eleven chapters are devoted to General Principals of the Intensive Care Unit (Section I), which discuss basic practices of

anesthesia in light of critical care principals, including metabolic derangements and arrhythmia management. Exploration of medications and intravenous infusions, some not commonly used in anesthesia delivery and management in the perioperative period, are discussed in detail, including fenoldopam and nesiritide.

The second section is devoted to organ systems and provides a pathophysiological approach to understanding illnesses common to the critical care unit and the long-term hospitalized patient. Next generation anesthesia machines now offer improved modes of ventilatory support, including synchronized intermittent mechanical ventilation (SIMV), pressure control, and pressure support. Useful intraoperative management and interventional techniques for patients experiencing pulmonary injury, brain injury, renal failure, myocardial infarction, and many other commonly encountered pathophysiological disruptions are discussed.

The final sections of the book are specifically devoted to trauma, ethics, and the postanesthesia care unit. All authors and contributors read as appropriately experienced and well versed on the topics presented. This text, approximately 450 pages in length, is rich in resources, yet is simultaneously designed with flexibility, allowing the reader to extensively study a chapter or quickly review a section prior to a case. Although the chapters are rela-

tively short, they are succinct and contain important information compiled in an attractive and practical fashion. Many illustrations, 67 total, provide further access to key points. Also unique to this book are case studies that appear at the end of some chapters and incorporate the operating room setting with a critically ill patient, reiterating the idea(s) presented in the previous section of text.

Although the authors do not claim that this publication should be used to guide the understanding of basic principals of anesthesia, this book could be an exceptional educational resource if used along with a primary anesthesia text to accentuate practice and further optimize patient care and safety. As such, *Critical Care: The Requisites in Anesthesiology* would be a valuable addition to the reference library of all anesthesia practitioners.

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