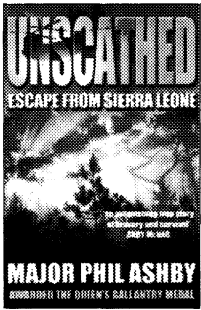


readers forum - book reviews



**Unscathed –
Escape from
Sierra Leone by
Major Phil
Ashby
Pan Macmillan,
RRP \$30**

Major Phil Ashby
was a Royal
M a r i n e

Commando who, between January and June 2000, served as a United Nations Military Observer (UNMO) with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which sought to restore peace in that West African country after 10 years of brutal civil war.

His book details his personal experiences of supervising the ceasefire between Sierra Leone government forces and the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and being forced to evade capture under extremely adverse conditions when the RUF restarted the civil war.

Ashby's narrative traces in great detail all the phases of his involvement as a UN peacekeeper at the northern town of Makeni.

Unscathed describes the full extent of the terrible consequences of the war, through the author's interaction both with many RUF fighters who had committed atrocities, and their victims – the civilian population.

Ashby's words embody his distaste for Forday Sankoh, the RUF leader, and his followers who were supposedly fighting the corrupt government on the people's behalf, yet perpetrated unimaginable abuses against them for the sake of controlling Sierra Leone's rich diamond mines.

Consequently, *Unscathed* provides a substantial understanding of the RUF's intentions, and the full horror and insanity of this conflict.

Unscathed's last few chapters detail fully Sierra Leone's position at that time and also updates the current situation.

As a result, one can see that, despite the setbacks suffered during April-May 2000, Sierra Leone's situation has improved, transformed from never-ending systematic human rights violations to tentative peace.

I first saw footage of Ashby and his colleagues during May 2000 on ABC TV news, when they were shown immediately after they had successfully made their way to safety in Freetown. This book provides an invaluable personal insight into the actual events behind those camera scenes, and is extremely useful in understanding the nature of Sierra Leone's atrocity-studded civil war.

The previously unfamiliar reader will emerge with a significant appreciation of the gross systematic violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) for which RUF was guilty.

Unscathed also compels significant questions on the continued inefficiency and shortcomings of UN peacekeeping, together with the politics which continue to underlie this unsatisfactory situation.

– **Melvin Loh, Volunteer,
Australian Red Cross (NT
Division)**



**Orthopaedics
for Lawyers by
Alan W Searle
The Lawbook
Company, RRP
\$138**

As a lawyer whose
practice requires
reading countless
medical reports,

I've found Alan Searle's book, "Orthopaedics for Lawyers" a welcome relief when I've been reading those orthopaedic reports where I understand very little of what is actually being said.

I often get the feeling the report could be written in a foreign language and I'd understand just as little.

This book, whilst only small in the context of other legal texts (it's only 224 pages including the index), succeeds to provide lawyers with a crash course in orthopaedic medicine, nothing complex, merely the basics.

The book is divided into 13 anatomical chapters, within which Searle deals with the issues important to lawyers, such as symptoms, causation, prognosis, investigations and treatment. Contrary opinions are also provided, where necessary, to assist the reader to obtain a more balanced view.

The font size is large enough to provide for comfortable reading at any time of the day.

The complex medical language has also been simplified immensely, allowing for a surprisingly enjoyable read.

For those of us who are unskilled in creating pictures in our mind, Searle has also kindly included, where necessary, simple, but very effective, anatomy diagrams, highlighting to the reader where the more relevant structures lie.

At the end of the book there are a

number of appendices providing useful information, such as deciphering those annoying medical shorthand that we all too often find in medical records. Whilst the list is very far from complete, it's a start.

There is also an appendix explaining, once again with diagrams, the many forms fractures can take.

I must confess to now having this book handy whenever I'm reading an orthopaedic consultant's report, and to also finding I now understand a lot more of the report than previously.

This book should be compulsory reading for all lawyers when dealing with medical reports.

If only there was this form of book for all the other specialties of medicine which pop up in the legal world...

– **Kylie Jamieson, lawyer,
Cridlands Lawyers**