THE REMOVAL OF WOUNDED IN HILL WARFARE; A
METHOD LATELY INTRODUCED INTO PRACTICE
IN THE 30TH PUNJABIS.

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This method is likely to prove useful for the removal of wounded
of small groups left behind on a crest to cover the retirement of
picquets, and was specially devised for such occasions. Later trials,
however, show that it is useful also on the flat, and that a man can
carry another heavier than himself for a long distance without
undue fatigue, even if unconscious, as he could not possibly do in
any other way. In hill fighting small parties remain in occupation
of a crest-line long enough to give their picquets a good start, and
then have to make the best of their way down. Usually in frontier
warfare the enemy are up on that crest-line very soon after the
group leave it, and at such short range there is every chance of
a man being hit. There is no stretcher with the group, and even
if there were, its use is impracticable on a steep hillside, besides
taking two other men at least from the firing line. The usual
method is to hoist the wounded man on to another's back. Not
only is this a very fatiguing method and one which often requires
stoppages to be made, but it presupposes some help from the man
carried and the intelligent use at least of his arms, and the carrier
has no power to help himself over difficult ground, as both his hands
are employed in holding the man on his back; moreover, the man
may be so badly wounded that far from assisting he may even
embarrass the carrier.

With a view to overcoming the above defects the following
method has been adopted in the 30th Punjabis. It has been tested
on the bare khud-side and over broken nullahs and found successful.
To begin with, four men per company have been taught, but the
method is so simple that there is no difficulty in teaching it to all.
The correct method will thus be ensured and also a minimum of
time taken, which is an important consideration when an active
enemy is following up a retiring picquet.

For the actual removal of a wounded man only one man is
necessary, but two others are required to assist at first; when the
wounded man is made secure one man is free to go on fighting if
necessary and the other removes the rifles and either goes on ahead
to find a path or can go on fighting again.
For instruction purposes the following drill is carried out:—

1. A man lies down, as if wounded, in any position. The squad, consisting of three men, approach him, placing their rifles in a heap as they come up.

2. No. 1 then quickly turns the patient upon his back and opens his legs wide apart. He then squats down with his back as near patient’s fork as possible, lifting the wounded man’s knees up over his own legs. At the same time Nos. 2 and 3 quickly pull off the wounded man’s pugri, open it out and find the middle, which they place on the ground behind the wounded man’s head.

3. Nos. 2 and 3, standing respectively on the left and right of the wounded man, then hoist him up on to No. 1’s back—his legs slip forward voluntarily and are controlled by No. 1. *The wounded man must be hoisted up on to No. 1’s back so that the weight comes well on to his shoulders.* This is very important, as otherwise the weight comes too far down.

4. While in this position he is held there by No. 2, while No. 3
quickly places the middle of the pugri well opened out under his
seat and passes the left end to No. 2. The wounded man is thus
supported by a pugri seat.

(5) Nos. 2 and 3 then bring up the ends of the pugri over No. 1's
shoulders, cross them over his chest, bring them down, pass them
inside and under the wounded man's hams up and on to his back,
cross them and pass them over his shoulders.

(6) No. 1 seizes the free ends with one or both hands.

(7) Nos. 2 and 3 assist No. 1 to rise.

(8) No. 3 seizes his rifle and continues firing, No. 2 seizes the
other three rifles and either accompanies No. 1, going 20 yards ahead
to find a way, and assist over very bad ground, or, slinging two of
the rifles, covers the retirement by using his own.

The time employed from start to finish is now only one minute,
and with further practice this will be improved upon, some squads
now taking as little as forty seconds.

For active service the following points must be impressed on the
men:

(1) To lay their rifles close at hand.

(2) To drag the wounded man just under cover if possible.

(3) To place him on a slope with his head up; this facilitates
loading up.

The advantages of this method are many—

(a) No stretchers are wanted at all; (b) the man can be carried
where a stretcher is impracticable; (c) stretchers even if taken
are an encumbrance and may not be handy, and certainly will not
be available in case of retirement from isolated points; (d) all dead
and wounded must be removed in frontier fighting, and this must
be accomplished by the men on the spot; (e) the number of men
taken from the firing line is one more for about a minute than
would be necessary if the man was simply hoisted on to another's
back, but once there a man is saved for the firing line; it takes
two at least, if not three, to remove a man on a stretcher; (f) the
carrier has one hand free if necessary to balance himself by;
when a man is simply riding pick-a-back the carrier has no hand
free; (g) an insensible or dead man cannot be carried by a single
man for any distance; by this method a man can carry another
of greater weight for a long distance if necessary, as proved by
actual experiment; (h) only a small mark is offered to the enemy;
(i) the rate of progress is comparatively fast; (j) the wounded man
is absolutely secure and cannot fall off if he tries, and does not
sway from side to side, but is firmly held on to the carrier.