

## SOME FIELD AMBULANCE NOTES.

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DURING the eight months that the Field Ambulance to which the author was attached was in France and Belgium it was sometimes found necessary to use improvisations and unorthodox methods. Some of these were found sufficiently good to be used later as a routine and they are here described in the hope that others may find them of value.

(1) *Portable Shelter*.—This was designed for use in an area inaccessible to motor transport and was used more than once under these conditions. It is possible that it might be found of even greater value by regimental medical officers.

The shelter consisted of a tarpaulin thrown over three iron hoops which were bolted together by two iron rods which formed a ridgepole (figs. 1 to 3).

Additional security was given by two guys at each of the four corners. The ends of the tarpaulin were pegged down. Each end of the shelter was closed by two rot-proof canvas strips overlapping in the centre to allow entrance. The whole was rendered completely light-proof by a canvas "frill" sewn on to the edges of the tarpaulin and overlapping the rotproof canvas curtains at the ends of the shelter.

*Dimensions*.—Length 14 feet 6 inches. Breadth 9 feet. Height 6 feet. The weight of the iron hoops and rods was 70 pounds, but would be much less if made of tubular metal.

The metal portions, when taken to pieces, occupied very little space in a lorry and could be carried on one stretcher.

The tarpaulin, rolled, was also easily carried on a stretcher.

The shelter was simple to put up or take down. A trained squad was able to erect it in one and a half minutes.

It normally took two stretchers placed longitudinally but could accommodate nine men lying crosswise on groundsheets.

(2) *Portable Drying Room*.—The shelter described above could also be used as a drying room.

Hot air from the end of a field cooker (petrol) was led under the canvas at one end of the shelter. In order to avoid scorching the canvas, the end of the petrol cooker was inserted into a tunnel made out of petrol tins covered with asbestos sheeting and passing under the canvas. The opposite end of the shelter was closed with rot-proof canvas except for 6 inches at the top to allow the escape of hot air. Clothes to be dried were hung on strings running from side to side across the shelter.

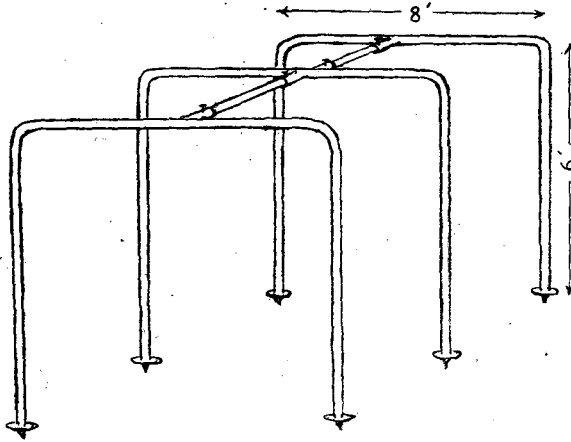


FIG. 1.—Metal frame of shelter.

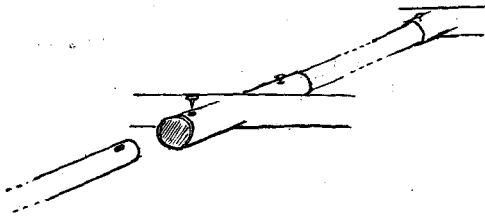


FIG. 2.—Detail of joints of ridge pole.

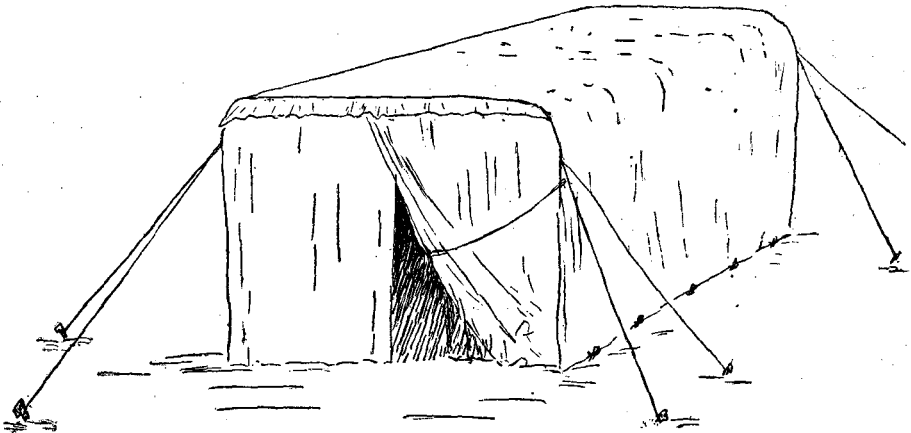


FIG. 3—Shelter erected.

No extensive trial was made of this method which was devised only a few days before the advance into Belgium.

(3) "*Spat*" Extension for Fractured Femur.—In cases of fractured femur in which it was found necessary to remove the boot a spat was buttoned on to the ankle and extension applied, on the outer side to the buckle of the spat, on the inner side to the strap which was sewn back on itself to form a loop (fig. 4).

This method should be of value in dealing with a case where the boot has become contaminated with mustard gas.

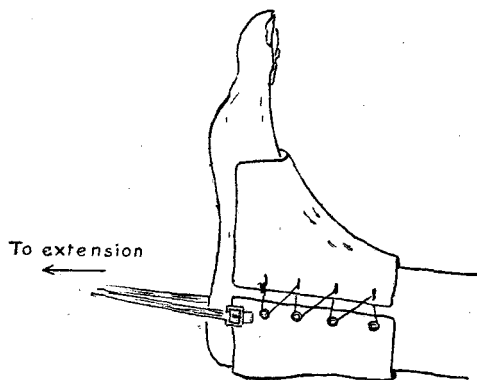


FIG. 4.—"Spat extension" for fractured femur.

(4) *Illuminated Serial Number for Night Convoy Work*.—When travelling in convoy at night, without side or tail lights, and using only the small white light fixed under the tail of the lorry and shining on the differential, it was often very difficult to be certain that one was following the correct convoy. To avoid this, a piece of sheet metal 8 inches square, painted white with the serial number in black, was fixed in metal guides on a wooden block bolted to the bottom of the lorry in such a position that the light shone on it.

The number could be easily read at 40 yards.

The detachable metal sheet was used so that it could be removed and cleaned after a journey.

The ambulance cars were dealt with similarly, except that the black serial number on a white background was painted on the rear cross-member.

(5) *Use of slings*, for hand-carriage of stretcher by four bearers.

When moving over very rough ground, especially at night, the shoulder-carry is liable to be dangerous.

In such cases the hand-carriage over long distances may be made much easier by the use of four stretcher-slings.

Each of the four bearers passes one end of his sling through the opposite loop. The large loop thus formed is passed round the chest and over the shoulder furthest from the stretcher.

The loop on the free end is passed over one stretcher handle and the length of the sling is adjusted so as to take most of the weight on the shoulder (fig. 5).

I am indebted to Captain G. N. Wood, R.A.M.C., for this idea.

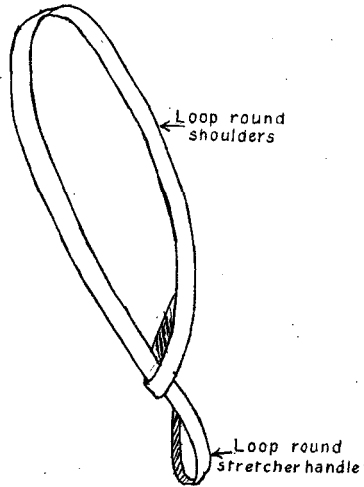


FIG. 5.—Sling adjusted for hand-carriage of stretcher by four bearers.

(6) *Alteration in Loading List for Company Lorries (30 cwt.).*—No. 1 lorry was loaded according to the list appended. This contained everything necessary for the establishment of an advanced aid post ("light section") and so could be sent out at short notice. The remainder of the Company equipment was distributed between the remaining three lorries.

The N.C.O. in charge of each lorry had a list of the contents of his lorry. On this list items that were operationally vital were marked with a red cross.

In the case of a lorry becoming disabled, it was easy for the N.C.O. to pick out and transfer to a rescue lorry the items marked in red and, if necessary, room could be made in the rescue lorry by throwing out the less important of its contents, i.e. those items not marked with a red cross.

#### LOADING LIST.—"A" COMPANY.

##### LORRY 1. LOADED AS FOR A.A.P.

F.A.P. No. 2 .. .. .	1
Flags, directing with pole .. .. .	1
Splints Thomas' complete .. .. .	2
Bars suspension .. .. .	2
Stretchers with pillows .. .. .	18*
Shovels G.S. .. .. .	1
Sheets ground .. .. .	15
Medical Comforts Pannier .. .. .	1

Blankets	40
Brushes sweeping	1†
Containers water 2 gallon	2
Containers kerosene 2 gallon	1
Containers food 1 gallon	1
Cramer's wire pieces	5
Lamps hurricane	1
Tins roasting large	1†
Tins roasting small	2†
Pails galvanized	1†
Axes pick	1
Signs A.A.P.	1
G.S. Pannier	1
Contents :	
Suits pyjamas	10
Hooks reaping	1
Scissors Stretcher Bearers'	6
Slings Stretcher Bearers'	16
Screwdriver	1
Stoves wickless	1
Repair outfits	1
Carbide	lb. 6
Lamps acetylene	1
Lamps oil wall	1†
Pannikins	6
Pincers carpenters'	1
Pliers side-cutting	1
Towels Terry	3
Teapots enamel	1
Warmers stomach with covers	3
Brushes scrubbing	1
Kettles enamel	1
Axes hand	1
Ointment A.G.	.. jars 20
Eyeshields boxes of 6	.. boxes 10
Haversacks surgical	.. 2
Haversacks shell dressing	.. 3
Shell dressing spare	.. 10
Bottles water medical	.. 4
Individual detectors	.. 100
Detectors gas ground	.. Bks. 5
Detectors gas spray	.. Bks. 8
Detectors gas spray holders for	.. 6
Boots anti-gas	.. pr. 8
Trousers A.G.	.. pr. 3
Pouches	.. 5
Signs warning gas	.. 4
Capes A.G.	.. 10
Gloves A.G.	.. pr. 10
Bleaching powder	.. lb. 28
Bags contaminated	.. 3

\* Includes additional issued and not included on G.1098.

† Indicates items purchased privately.

This lorry is loaded as an A.A.P. with some arrangements to enable the staff to cook.

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