Clinical and Other Notes.

TWO BICYCLE METHOD OF CARRYING CASUALTIES.

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In the G. 1098 of a Field Ambulance there are eight Carriage Ambulances, Stretcher, Collapsible (Miller James Wheeled Stretchers), on a scale of one per Section and two per Headquarters. The weight of these is 107 pounds each.

In speeding the evacuation of casualties over difficult ground they are invaluable. The R.M.O. feels constantly the need of these and other forms of wheeled transport.

The following is a description of a quickly improvised method which is faster in evacuation than the Miller James and can be used successfully on roads or 12-inch footpaths.

Requirements:—2 Bicycles.
6 Triangular Bandages.
2 Stretcher Slings.
1 Stretcher.

The two bicycles are placed head to tail. An open stretcher is then suspended with the traverse bar close under the saddle and over the rear wheel of the leading bicycle. The stretcher sling is looped to bring the buckle to 1 inch of the sewn edge, then it is looped over one stretcher handle, wound three times round the crossbar of the bicycle and finally looped over the second handle. It may be necessary to slacken the traverse bar slightly to force the last loop. The traverse bar is then straightened and a fair tension is taken on the stretcher sling. The rear end of the stretcher is similarly tied, with the traverse bar against the steering column of the second bicycle. It may be necessary to loosen the nut on the shaft of the front brake and leave it free. If this is not done it may interfere with the steering of the rear bicycle with consequent falls.
Stays are formed of triangular bandages as follows to prevent the stretcher rocking:

One end of a triangular bandage is tied to each runner, the other end of the front two bandages then being tied to the left of the bottom bracket near the mudguard of the front bicycle—the other end of the rear two to that of the rear bicycle. In order to keep the bandages clear of the pedals an encircling bandage is tied tightly to each pair, front and back, halfway down, and is itself then tied off to the rear of the frames, front and rear, respectively. This also gives a final tightening to the stays which fix the stretcher. If necessary after the patient is on the stretcher the bandages should be further tightened.

Drill for Loading and Moving Off.—Two men form the squad; No. 1 is with the rear bicycle and in charge.

No. 2 is mounted in the saddle with one foot on the pedal ready. No. 1 gives the command "Forward." No. 2 then pedals, No. 1 running by the side of his bicycle. When the machines are under way No. 1 mounts himself.

No. 1 gives the order "Slow down to halt." As the machines slow down No. 1 dismounts running by the bicycle and gives the order "Halt." All orders for turning, etc., must be given by No. 1.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS METHOD.

The casualty gets a comfortable journey, the stretcher slings giving additional springing. A small amount of practice only is required to make the bearers proficient. Casualties can be carried fast over roads and paths. Where the bearers cannot ride the bicycles can be pushed.

G. 1098 equipment only has been used. It is very obvious that special straps could be made instead of using triangular bandages but, in this Training Wing, nothing outside G. 1098 equipment is used in improvisations.

It is lighter than the Miller James and could serve as an additional method of evacuation for R.M.O.s from Companies to the R.A.P.

This method has been successfully put into practice over a period of six months training for S.B.O. Cadets, Medical Officers and Senior N.C.O.s, R.A.M.C., on courses.