

WWI MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Discover a range of medical & surgical equipment used to treat soldiers on the Western Front.



Stretcher

Used in both many injured/wounded situations the stretcher is used for transporting wounded from the battlefield to the closest first aid point. Two men were required in normal conditions and would work in relays to get the casualty evacuated for treatment as quickly as possible. In muddy conditions like those of the Western Front, it would often take 6-8 men to extricate a wounded man.



Schimmelbusch Mask

This mask was originally designed by Dr Curt Theodor Schimmelbusch (1860-1895) in 1890 to administer ether (or chloroform) to anaesthetise patients undergoing surgery.



Bone Saw

For amputating infected or irreparably damaged limbs, these come in a variety of shapes and sizes and would vary depending upon the type of limb to be amputated, small bones such as fingers and toes, being amputated with bone pliers.



Tourniquet

To stem the blood flow from a wound. The strapping is wrapped around the wound while applying pressure and the wooden handle is twisted tight to maintain the pressure and stop the flow of blood from the wound.



ID tags

One remains with the body to notify the grave detail for burial, the other being used as identification with the casualties Commanding Officer using the details to notify next of kin.



Field Dressing

All soldiers carried a first field dressing into the trenches ready for immediate use. This consisted of a sewn bag containing two rolled bandages with a central small pad of gauze and an iodine capsule. This pack was fitted into a special inside pocket of the tunic.



Thomas Splint

Innovations developed in the First World War had a massive impact on survival rates – such as the Thomas splint, named after pioneering Welsh surgeon Hugh Owen Thomas, which secured a broken leg. At the beginning of the war 80% of all soldiers with a broken femur died. By 1917, 80% of soldiers with this injury survived.

View these artefacts and more at NST's Château d'Ebbingham when you take a WWI Battlefields trip to Northern France.