

APPENDIX No. 13

FRONT LINE APPLICATION OF THE THOMAS SPLINT

THE technique devised for applying the Thomas Splint in the field varied somewhat in different Armies, and a number of modifications and improvements were introduced. At the end of the war, however, a very exact procedure had been worked out and this was embodied in a system of drill, by numbers, for the instruction of stretcher-bearers. The sub-joined diagram and directions were issued to No. 2 A.C.C.S. (then in Fifth Army) in October, 1918:—

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FRONT LINE APPLICATION OF THOMAS SPLINT. DRILL BY NUMBERS

The Thomas Outfit consists of:—

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Stretcher on Trestles. | Flannel Bandages (6 yards), 3. |
| Blankets, 3. Primus Stove. | Triangular Bandages, 4 |
| Thomas Splint (largest size). | Dressings. |
| Reversible Stirrup (Sinclair's). | Safety Pins |
| Suspension Bar. | Gooch Splinting (10" × 6" and 8" × 6"). |

Personnel required:—

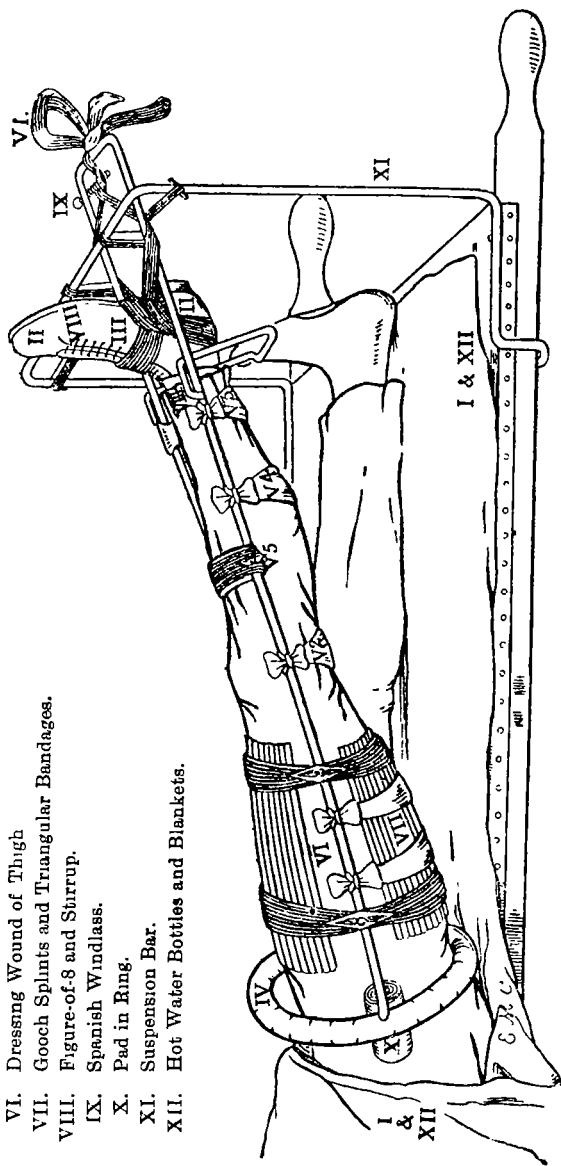
Operator 1. No. 1 Assistant. No. 2 Assistant (if available).

When not in use the splint is kept hung up. The five slings of flannel bandage are rolled round the inner bar of the splint, the leather is kept soft by saddle soap, and the iron bars are smeared with vaseline.

Indications of Front Line Application.

1. For all fractures of the thigh bone, except where there is an extensive wound in the upper part of thigh or buttock, which would interfere with the fitting of the ring.
2. In severe fractures about the knee-joint or upper part of the tibia.
3. In certain cases of extensive wounds of fleshy part of thigh.

- I. Warming (Réchauffement).
- II. Extension.
- III. Modified Clove-Hitch over Foot.
- IV. Splint.
- V. Fixation of Leg.
- VI. Dressing Wound of Thigh
- VII. Gooch Splints and Triangular Bandages.
- VIII. Figure-of-8 and Stirrup.
- IX. Spanish Windlass.
- X. Pad in Ring.
- XI. Suspension Bar.
- XII. Hot Water Bottles and Blankets.



A FRONT LINE APPLICATION OF THE THOMAS SPLINT
 (See also Plates Nos. 39-40-41 at p. 348.)

From diagram printed in France by the Army Printing & Stationery Services

DETAIL OF THOMAS SPLINT DRILL

I.
Warming
(Rechauffe-
ment).

On the word "One."—The stretcher, placed on trestles with a Primus Stove beneath, is prepared as follows:—The first blanket is folded lengthwise into three, two folds lie on the stretcher, one hangs over the side. The second blanket is arranged in the same way, one fold hanging over the other side of the stretcher.

The patient is now placed on the prepared stretcher and lies on four folds of blanket; the two folds hanging down form a hot air chamber. The third blanket is placed across the patient's chest, while the splint is being applied.

II
Extension.

On the word "Two"—The No. 1 assistant stands at the foot of the stretcher facing the patient and opposite the injured limb. Grasping the heel of the boot with his right hand and the toe with his left, keeping the arms straight, he exerts a steady pull, thereby producing the necessary extension. The No. 2 assistant supports the injured part above and below the fracture.

III.
Modified
Clove-
Hitch.

On the word "Three."—To form the modified clove-hitch, the operator takes a length of 9 feet of flannel bandage. Holding it in the left hand by its mid-point, he grasps the centre of the left half with his right hand, palm to the right, and makes a loop which is carried up and passed behind the left hand, thus forming a clove-hitch with a diameter of 10 inches.

This is applied over the boot, with the short end on the outer side; the long end is carried under the instep, up and through the loop round the ankle. The two extension bands thus produced are ready to be attached to the splint later on. Care must be taken not to constrict the ankle.

IV.
Splint.

On the word "Four."—The operator threads on the splint; No. 1 assistant removing and re-applying upper and lower hands alternately to allow the ring to be passed over the foot. The splint should be pushed up under the buttock as far as possible, care being taken to keep the notched transverse bar horizontal. No. 2 assistant, as before, steadies the thigh.

V.
Fixation
of Leg.

On the word "Five"—1 The extension bands of the clove-hitch are tied round the notched bar at the end of the splint as follows.—The outer band is passed over and under the bar, round the notch, drawn taut, and held over to the opposite side. The inner band is passed under and over the bar, then also round the notch where it crosses the first band and prevents it slipping. The two are finally tied off by a half bow.

2 The middle sling is tied off over the outer bar, No. 2 assistant keeping the knee partly bent

3 and 4. The slings behind ankle and calf are tied, so that the leg rests in a shallow trough, half in and half out.

5. To prevent the leg rising off the splint a narrow fold bandage is placed across the leg, just below the knee; the ends are carried down between the leg and splint, brought up outside the bars, and tied off. The lower limb is now firmly fixed in a position of extension and it may be moved without causing pain to the patient or damage to the injured part.

VI.
Dressing
Wound of
Thigh.

On the word "Six."—The wound is exposed by cutting away the

overlying portion of trousers on the wounded part of the thigh, and the dressings are applied.

On the word "Seven."—The Gooch Splints are now applied. The short piece is placed behind, and secured by tying the remaining two slings. The long piece is placed on the front of the thigh, care being taken to avoid pressure on the knee-cap. The whole is now retained in position by two narrow fold bandages, carried round the thigh outside the bars of the splint

VII.
Gooch
Splints
and
Bandages.

On the word "Eight."—The stirrup is "sprung" on to the splint above the ankle, its foot towards the stretcher. A bandage is then applied to form an additional sling, which by a figure-of-8-turn prevents lateral movement of the foot.

VIII.
Stirrup and
Figure-of-8.

On the word "Nine."—The extension bands are tightened and a small piece of wood or a nail is introduced to increase the tension by twisting up as required.

IX.
Spanish
Windlass.

On the word "Ten"—A pad is placed inside the ring on the outer side of the thigh to act as a wedge and prevent undue movement.

X.
Pad in Ring

On the word "Eleven."—The suspension bar is fitted to the stretcher with the "grip" away from the rackets. The splint is slung up not less than a hand's-breadth from the horizontal part of the suspension bar. To damp down the side movements, lateral tapes are tied to the uprights, they should not be tight. For the journey in the motor ambulance an additional band may be passed from the splint round one handle of the stretcher; this prevents excess of vertical movement.

XI.
Suspension
Bar.

On the word "Twelve."—Hot bottles are applied. The third blanket is folded into two lengthwise, and laid over the patient. The hanging folds of the first and second blankets are brought up over this so that the patient is evacuated with four folds of blanket on top as well as underneath.

XII.
Hot Water
Bottles and
Blankets.