

MEDICINE

Casualty Care Planned

Swift rescue ships, special litters and use of non-medical personnel to assist surgeons are among measures used by the U. S. Navy.

► SWIFT, LIGHT, easily handled ships for rescuing men from sinking vessels, special litters equally suited to transportation on land and onto ships, one-man-carry packs of medical supplies for landing parties, twin medical stations on ships, and planned use of non-medical personnel to assist the surgeons are among the measures used by the U. S. Navy for caring for battle casualties.

They were described by Captain William L. Mann, Medical Corps, U. S. N., at the meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. Captain Mann, medical officer in command of the new Naval Medical Research Institute of Bethesda, Md., and first vice-president of the Association, spoke in behalf of Rear Admiral Ross T. McIntire, Surgeon General of the Navy.

The twin medical stations on ships with division of medical supplies and personnel are planned so that if one is put out of action by damage to part of the ship, medical care will still be available for the wounded.

The back-pack containing all items for battalion dressing station and company aid men with marine corps units is designed so that one hospital corpsman can carry it and at the same time have his hands free for use in debarking over the ship's side and over the gunwhales of ambulance boats. It is in line with the accepted idea of mobility of medical establishments and the principle of taking the treatment to the wounded rather than taking the wounded to the treatment.

This principle was developed by Dominique-Jean Larrey in 1792 when he organized a "flying ambulance corps" and was followed in World War I by the actual use of airplanes to transfer medical personnel and materiel near the scene of conflict. A demonstration of transporting field hospitals to the scene by airplane, and dropping tentage, supplies, doctors and nurses by parachute, Captain Mann said, was given in one of the European capitals a few years ago.

Assistance of non-medical personnel is planned because, he declared, it is almost axiomatic that in any catastrophe,

military or civil, adequate medical personnel is seldom available to handle the personnel casualties promptly and efficiently.

He expressed gratification that this principle has also been well recognized in civil life as shown by the many persons on the home front who have taken courses in first-aid training since the war started.

The problem of adapting a suitable litter for land and sea evacuation has been solved by use of the standard Army litter with bunk straps which are readily available on board ship. Light folding litters and a light waterproof substitute for blankets have been adopted for use during the highly mobile stage of land engagements. Collective litter hoists which Capt. Mann showed save valuable time in embarking the wounded on combined land and sea operations. If by the use of such expedients, he pointed out,

five minutes can be saved in handling each patient, there will be a saving of two days in loading one hospital ship with 575 casualties.

Science News Letter, November 14, 1942

MEDICINE

Epilepsy May Increase Due to War Wounds

► THOUSANDS of war workers are being wasted through neglect and prejudice because they have a background of epilepsy, Dr. William G. Lennox told the New York Academy of Medicine meeting in New York.

During the war the number of epileptics will increase due to brain wounds, of which 5% to 15% will cause epilepsy, judging from the last war. The proportion may even be higher this time, Dr. Lennox believes, because new drugs will save the lives of many with brain wounds who before would have died.

Most employers will not knowingly hire an epileptic, Dr. Lennox pointed out, yet probably upwards of two-thirds of the present 350,000 could do useful work.

Many of these persons are denied employment through prejudice or fear of the employer that he will be held liable



COAST ARTILLERY—Gun mounts in the shops of the Baldwin Locomotive Works. This famous builder of locomotives is now at work on several types of war material. The mounts shown weigh 250,000 pounds each and are built from steel castings produced in Baldwin foundries.