



A highly organized system was put in place to move wounded men quickly off the battlefield. They were sent to aid stations, then field hospitals, and, if necessary, to evacuation and base hospitals where they received successively more complex levels of care.



Medic's belt



Doctors developed new antiseptics and liberally administered tetanus antitoxins in an attempt to prevent infections.

*"A war benefits medicine more than it benefits anybody else. It's terrible, of course, but true."*  
 -Dr. Mary Merritt Crawford, surgeon at the American Hospital in France, about 1919

# MEDICINE AND WAR



Library of Congress

Many soldiers were killed in the horrific fighting, often by exploding artillery shells. But the desperate needs—and sheer number—of those who survived their wounds or gas attacks inspired innovations in trauma care, medical evacuation strategies, surgical and nursing procedures, and rehabilitation practices.



From *Cartridge magazine* by Marie Curie

The Hirtz compass—used in combination with x-ray images—helped surgeons locate and remove shrapnel.

Before millions of recruits were sent to France, military physicians evaluated their health and physical condition, providing the basis for the nation's first comprehensive health assessment.

Smithsonian

100 THE UNITED STATES WORLD WAR ONE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION AND THE SMITHSONIAN WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

WORLD WAR I: LESSONS AND LEGACIES

World War I: Lessons and Legacies is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and the National Museum of American History, with funding from The United States World War I Centennial Commission and the Smithsonian Women's Committee. Images are from the National Museum of American History unless otherwise indicated.



Many of those who survived underwent new types of physical and occupational therapy in order to return them to "usefulness." Stateside, the government established a system of special veterans hospitals that in 1921 became part of a newly established Veterans Bureau.