

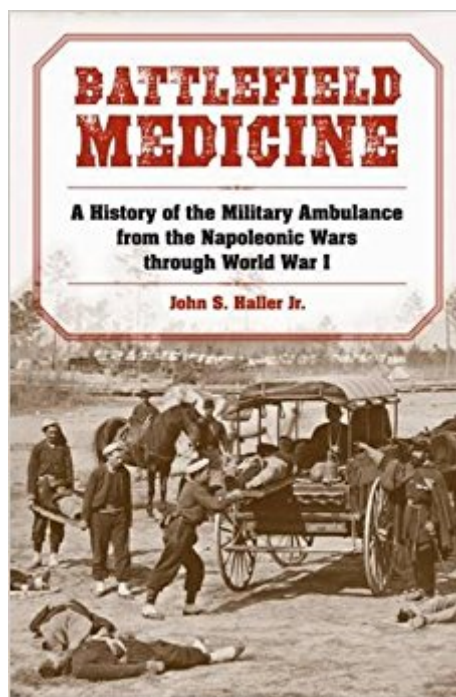


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Battlefield Medicine: A History Of The Military Ambulance From The Napoleonic Wars Through World War

I



Synopsis

In this first history of the military ambulance, historian John S. Haller Jr. documents the development of medical technologies for treating and transporting wounded soldiers on the battlefield. Noting that the word ambulance has been used to refer to both a mobile medical support system and a mode of transport, Haller takes readers back to the origins of the modern ambulance, covering their evolution in depth from the late eighteenth century through World War I. The rising nationalism, economic and imperial competition, and military alliances and arms races of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries figure prominently in this history of the military ambulance, which focuses mainly on British and American technological advancements. Beginning with changes introduced by Dominique-Jean Larrey during the Napoleonic Wars, the book traces the organizational and technological challenges faced by opposing armies in the Crimean War, the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, and the Philippines Insurrection, then climaxes with the trench warfare that defined World War I. The operative word is "challenges" of medical care and evacuation because while some things learned in a conflict are carried into the next, too often, the spasms of war force its participants to repeat the errors of the past before acquiring much needed insight. More than a history of medical evacuation systems and vehicles, this exhaustively researched and richly illustrated volume tells a fascinating story, giving readers a unique perspective of the changing nature of warfare in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John S. Haller, Jr., is a professor of history and medical humanities at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

The author, a professor of history and medical humanities: (1) describes the origins of military ambulances during the Napoleonic Wars; and (2) traces their evolution up through World War I. The author does a good job of describing: (a) the various challenges faced by the military in trying to evacuate casualties from the battlefield and transport them to temporary or regular facilities for medical treatment; (b) the tensions and conflicts that often arose between the requirements of military operations in wartime and the requirements of military medicine; and (c) the various ideas and techniques -- some successful and some unsuccessful -- that were proposed and tried to adapt and improve military ambulances for better evacuation of battlefield casualties. The book is a scholarly one, aimed at readers with a serious interest in military history or the history of medicine. Readers with only a casual interest in those subjects might find the book too detailed and technical in its approach. The author provides the reader with a thorough, in-depth look at the origins and early history of military ambulances. But, the author's focus on military ambulances leaves the reader with only a partial perspective on military medicine. Readers interested in a broader approach to battlefield medicine should consider taking a look at the following other books: Richard A. Gabriel, *Man and Wound in the Ancient World: A History of Military Medicine from Sumer to the Fall of Constantinople*; Richard A. Gabriel, *Between Flesh and Steel: A History of Military Medicine from the Middle Ages to the War in Afghanistan*; Emily Mayhew, *Wounded: A New History of the Western Front in World War I*; Scott McGaugh, *Battlefield Angels: Saving Lives Under Enemy Fire From Valley Forge to Afghanistan (General Military)*; and Bernard Rostker, *Providing for the Casualties of War: The American Experience through World War II*

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