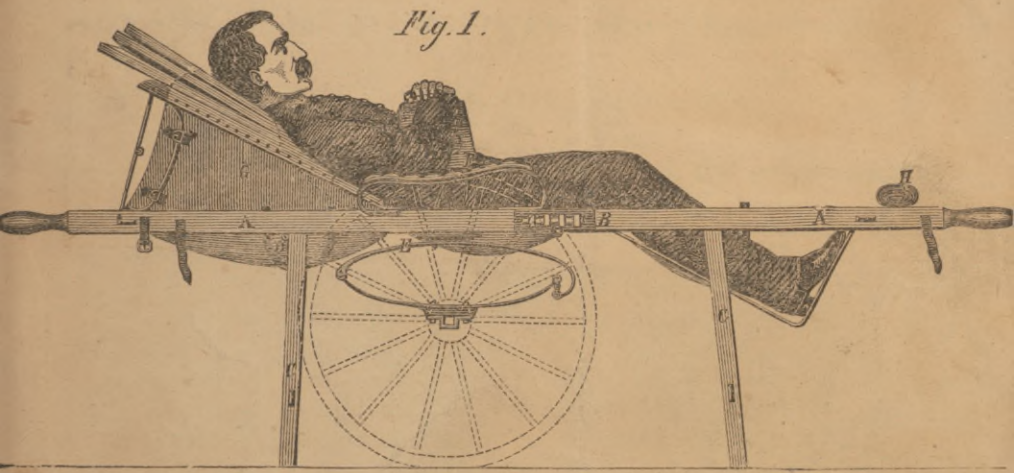
THE

# TOMPKIN'S STRETCHER,

OR,

# WHEELED LITTER.

*Fig. 1.*




PATENTED AUGUST 7, 1866,

By BREVET BRIG. GENERAL CHAS. H. TOMPKINS,

UNITED STATES ARMY.

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1866.

SOLE AGENT,

HENRY SIMONS,

Nos. 523 and 525 New Market street,

PHILADELPHIA, PA,

**To whom all Orders will be addressed.**

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# "TOMPKIN'S STRETCHER,"

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# WHEELED LITTER.

Of this invention, the *Scientific American*, of October 20, 1866, speaks as follows:

"The war created a demand for appliances to be used for the sick and wounded, appliances of which our service was, at the opening of the struggle, lamentably deficient. The invention illustrated in the engravings appears to be the best and most comprehensive device which has yet come under our observation. Nothing has been omitted that could be employed to diminish the torture of a wounded soldier or sick person. As will be seen by examining Fig. 2, it can be put into a compact form for transportation when not in use.

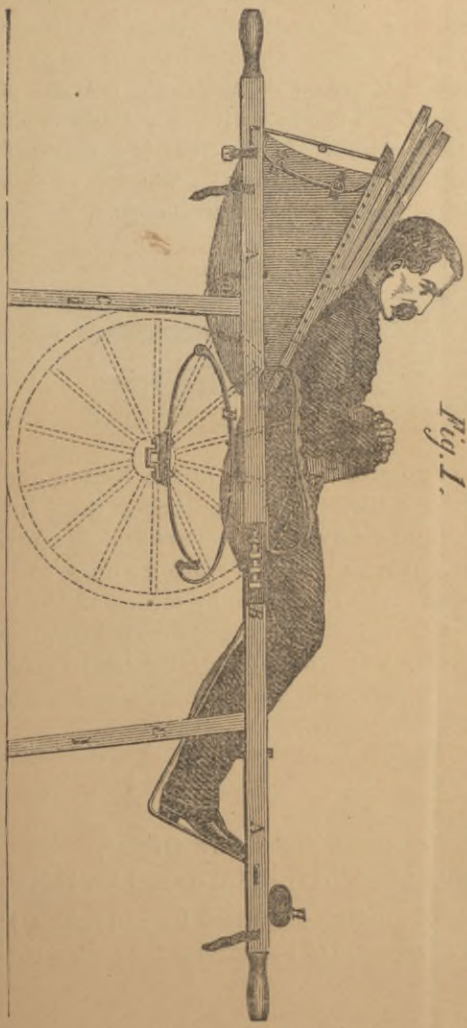


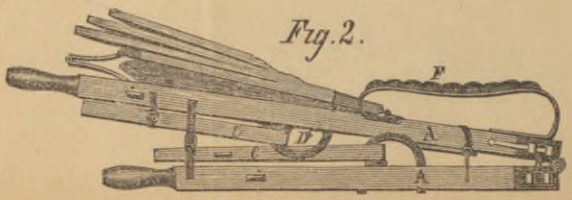
Fig. 1.

"Two longitudinal bars, with transverse connections, form the frame of the litter. These lengthwise bars have handles at each end to give facility for using the device as an ordinary stretcher. An axle can be added with wheels supporting springs, when the distance from the place of injury to the hospital

is too great to be performed in the usual manner. The litter then becomes an ambulance.

"The longitudinal bars, A, are hinged at B, at which point is a sliding bolt, which rigidly secures the two pieces in one. The legs, C, are also hinged to the bars, A, and secured in a vertical position by the semicircular braces, D. At E is a sacking to support the person, which is attached at one end to a sliding bar, by which it can be fixed in a level or concave form, as the patient may require. The arm-rests, F, are flexible and adjustable, and can be made to meet over the person at any convenient angle, for resting a wounded arm or arms. The head is supported on a flexible sacking, which also can be adjusted and secured as required, the space, G, under the head forming a receptacle for articles necessary for the patient. At the foot is a cloth, H, rolled, which can be used to cover the person. The top of G is an expansion top similar to that of a chaise or buggy.

*Fig. 2.*




"The axle is made in two pieces, jointed at the center, and, when straightened, held by a sliding sleeve covering the joint. The wheels are held on the axle by screw collars which screw into the inner end of the hub, so that there are no nuts to be lost. The springs are attached to the bars by means of blocks having dovetailed or T grooves, which receive corresponding tenons on the spring blocks. The whole apparatus can be made ready for the reception of a patient in a few seconds, and can be as quickly folded for transportation."

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SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., *August* 20, 1866.

GENERAL: The "Wheeled Litter" submitted by you fulfills, in a marked degree, the requirements of the service for such a conveyance.

For use in the field, its compactness, portability, and convenience of arrangement, make it peculiarly valuable, without in any way detracting from its more general utility at military posts, schools of practice, large hospitals, &c.

Wherever, from the nature of occupation, there is unusual liability to accident, the "Tompkins Litter" should be adopted as the readiest and most humane mode of transferring injured persons to their homes or to hospitals; and in all large towns and cities they should be supplied to the police stations for this purpose.

Very respectfully, yours,

J. K. BARNES,
*Surgeon General.*

Bvt. Brig. Gen. C. H. Tompkins,
*Quartermaster U. S. A., Washington, D. C.*

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Surgeon General's Office,
Washington, D. C., *August* 20, 1866.

I concur entirely in the opinion of the Surgeon General as regards the merits, uses, and advantages of the "Tompkins Litter."

C. H. CRANE,
*Assistant Surgeon General U. S. A.*

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General Land Office,
Washington City, *August* 22, 1866.

The invention of General C. H. Tompkins, U. S. A., as described in the foregoing letter from the U. S. Surgeon General, will, in the humble opinion of the undersigned, be found of inestimable value in relieving the sick and wounded; aiding in their recovery in many instances where, without the use of the "Litter," they might die; and I accordingly take pleasure in commending it to general attention.

JOS. S. WILSON,
*Commissioner.*

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Surgeon General's Office,
Washington City, *November* 5, 1866.

General: I have examined the litter constructed according

to your designs with much satisfaction. Believing that some form of wheel litter would ultimately be introduced in all armies as a subsidiary appliance to the ordinary means of transportation of the wounded, I have examined the plans and models of most of these conveyances, including the Evans Litter, designed during the period of the Crimean war, the China Barrow, the litter constructed by Fischer, of Heidelburg, after the design of the Austrian surgeon, Dr. Neudörfer, the Prussian litter from the factory of the Messrs. Neuss, Government carriage builders at Berlin, which was advantageously used in the last Schleswig-Holstein war, and which served as a model for the wheel litters constructed last year at the Government repair shops in this city, and finally the litter described by Professor Appia as having rendered good service in the late campaign in Italy.

The litter constructed according to your designs combines most of the advantages presented by these vehicles. It affords an exceedingly easy position for the sick or wounded; it can be moved with rapidity and great economy of labor, and little jolting; it can be folded into a compact package, and hence is adapted for storage on ship-board or on wagons. Its cost is moderate.

The Neudörfer Litter cost ten pounds, the Berlin Carriage fifteen pounds, while your litter can be constructed, as I am informed, for forty dollars.

I believe that this litter will prove of great utility in removing patients from one ward to another at large permanent hospitals, in conveying them from wharves or railway stations to hospitals, and, in civil life, in providing an easy mode of transport for the sufferers from street accidents.

For service on the battle-field, over the rough roads of our country, I conclude that this litter would require modifications. Many parts that are convenient but not essential could be dispensed with, and the vehicle could be made stronger and more portable, and with higher wheels it could pass over obstacles more readily.

I am, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE A. OTIS,
*Assistant Surgeon and Brevet Major U. S. A.,*
*Curator Army Medical Museum.*

To Bvt. Brig. Gen. C. H. Tompkins, *U. S. A.*

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC CHARITIES AND CORRECTION,
No. 1 BOND STREET, NEAR BROADWAY,
NEW YORK, *October* 4, 1866.

SIR: I have been requested by the Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction to acknowledge the receipt of the Stretcher invented and patented by you, and to express their high sense of its value. It seems to possess every requirement for the comfort of a patient. Whatever part of the human frame may be affected, ample provision is made for its protection from injury, while the facility with which the stretcher may be carried or wheeled renders it superior to any that have hitherto been used. Whether for the field, for casualties in cities, or for hospitals, its advantages over all other forms of stretchers are so manifest that it ought to be adopted by the army and by all institutions for the care of the sick and wounded.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

JAMES BOWEN,
*President.*

To Bvt. Brig. Gen. CHARLES H. TOMPKINS,
*Washington, D. C.*

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SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., *November* 1, 1866.

Major General M. C. MEIGS,
*Quartermaster General U. S. Army:*

SIR: I have the honor to submit for your action a report of a board of medical officers upon the Wheeled Litter submitted by Brevet Brigadier General C. H. Tompkins, Quartermaster's Department.

Agreeing with the board as to the utility of such a litter at permanent posts, and at depot hospitals, I would respectfully recommend that one be supplied to each depot of recruits, school of instruction, and to frontier posts of more than one company, either to remain under charge of the Post Quartermaster, or to be turned over to the Post Surgeon and kept at the hospital.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. K. BARNES,
*Surgeon General.*