CHAPTER 9

SPRAINS AND DISLOCATIONS—BURNS—NUCLEAR WEAPON INJURIES

Sprains

1. Bones meet at joints where movement occurs. The bones at a joint are held together by tough bands called ligaments. A sprain is a torn ligament. Sprained joints are painful and swollen.

2. **Treatment.** It is difficult to be sure a bone is not broken. Treat a sprain as you would a fracture. Apply a firm supporting bandage and, if necessary, transport on a stretcher.

Dislocations

3. A dislocation occurs when the bones of a joint are out of place. Never try to put the joint back in place. This is a job for the doctor. If the shoulder joint is dislocated, apply a sling to take the weight off the arm and forearm.

Burns and Scalds

4. Burns are caused by dry heat, for example fire. Scalds are caused by wet heat, for example boiling water or steam.

5. **Treatment.** Lessen the spread of heat in the tissues and alleviate pain by immersing the part in cold water for a minimum of 10 minutes or until the pain stops, if possible, and cover with a clean, dry dressing. Never apply ointment, oils or lotions to burns. (If the burn is on the face, cover it as far as possible to keep out dirt.) Do not touch the burn. Cut clothing if need be. Do not prick or burst the blisters. Promptly remove anything of a restricting nature—rings, bangles, belts or boots. Get medical aid quickly. Treat scalds the same way. Treat for shock and reassure the casualty as the treatment is being given.

Electric Burns

6. Treat electric burns as above. But remember, if the patient is not breathing, give artificial ventilation first.

Phosphorus Burns

7. Phosphorus is contained in incendiary bombs and is widely used in industry.

8. **Treatment.** Flood the burns with water. Remove the pieces of phosphorus with a wet cloth. Place a very wet cloth or dressing over burns, and keep it wet.

Acid or Alkali Burns

9. Flood acid or alkali burns with water and apply a dry dressing.

Injuries Caused by Nuclear Weapons

10. Following a nuclear explosion, four types of injury may occur. They are:

a. *Blast Injuries*. Treat blast injuries in the normal way.

b. *Ordinary Injuries*. Ordinary injuries from falling buildings, and so on, should be treated in the usual way.

c. *Burns*. There will always be a very large number of burn casualties. They are likely to be of two kinds, and both are treated as for any burn.

(1) *Flash Burns*. Flash burns are caused by the flash from the explosion, and like sunburn, may not appear until some time afterwards.

(2) *Flame Burns*. Flame burns are caused by the heat of the explosion or by the fires resulting from it.

d. *Radiation Sickness*. The gamma rays given off by a nuclear bomb cause radiation sickness. This causes diarrhoea, vomiting and headache. The casualty will feel unwell, but if he feels able to carry on, then let him. Severe cases should be treated for shock and sent off to hospital.