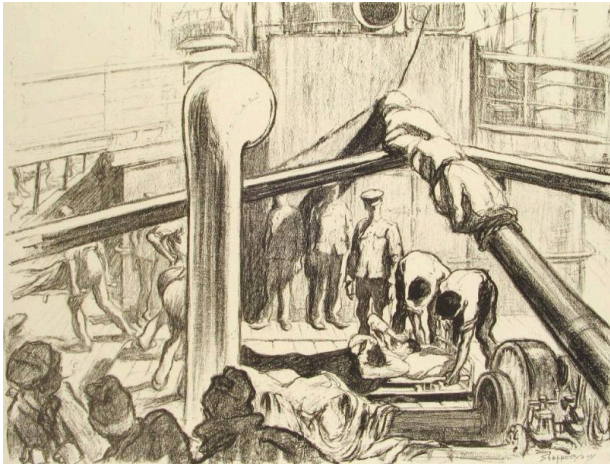


Basic Detail Report



No. 51 "On Board a Hospital Transport" [From 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'Tending the Wounded' series]

Date

1917

Primary Maker

Claude Shepperson

Medium

Lithograph on paper

Dimensions

35.6 x 46 cm

Description

This is a planographic print (lithograph) on paper, and is part of a series entitled 'The Great War: Britain's Efforts And Ideals shown in a series of lithographic prints: 'Tending the Wounded' series. There are a total of six lithographs in this particular series, and in total there are ten series. The lithographs are numbered as if the entire ten series are one, so this print is number 51. This print shows a wounded soldier in a bed on the deck of a ship, two men stoop to carry him, with onlookers in the foreground. The structure of the ship cuts across the composition partially obscuring another soldier being carried inside the ship on a stretcher. Shepperson's lithographs illustrate the stages involved in bringing wounded soldiers from the front back to England for treatment and convalescence. Shepperson does not show the faces of the figures in any detail and many of the figures turn away from the viewer. This creates a sense of anonymity and a disquieting atmosphere of foreboding. With great subtlety he has successfully captured the intense strain of the conflict and the quiet courage of the army of medical staff required to keep the war effort going. The vast scale of the war and the huge range of injuries involved presented the Royal Army Medical Corps and other medical services with tremendous challenges. Wounded soldiers needed access to medical facilities as quickly as possible but in the early stages of the war the system struggled to cope with the enormity of the task. After receiving first aid, wounded soldiers were brought to an advanced dressing station; these were located a short distance from the front in dug-outs and bunkers or ruined buildings which provided shelter from aerial bombardment. From here soldiers were taken to the casualty clearing station where more complex procedures could be carried out. Soldiers who needed prolonged care could be moved from the 'CCS' to a base hospital near the front and, if necessary, to an evacuation port from where they would travel back to England. Once the wounded arrived at a British port an ambulance train transported them to

a receiving station. Soldiers were sent to receiving stations close to their homes and from here they would go on to a hospital, followed by convalescence. In all, over two million British soldiers were wounded during the First World War. Of these, 64 per cent recovered and resumed their duties. Shepperson's lithographs provide an eloquent testimony to the dedication of thousands of doctors, nurses and auxiliary medical staff.