

SPILT BLOOD. by I.E. Trimble.

There are too many people being killed. There are too many people being crippled. There is all too much agony as a result of "accidents".

In a year 8000 people (nine times the scouting population of Strassham) will die in England and Wales from home accidents. In 1968 in the entire nation 6810 persons were killed and 542,398 persons injured by road accidents - London's share (both City and Metropolitan police districts) was 697 killed and 71002 injured. Why should anyone suffer death or pain if it can be avoided?

The "accidents just happen" must have been first said by someone trying to smooth his own guilty conscience. The very word accident unavoidable implies a fatalistic happenstance (any suggestions for a new word). Every accident has one or more causes which bring about the accident in progress or "critical event" and might occasion varying results. Thus there are three ways we might lessen casualties; before, during and after: of. radar, depth soundings, and the captain's skill in avoiding collisions; water-tight bulkheads to minimise the effect of an accident in progress; life jackets, life-rafts, and rescue services to save lives afterwards.

The first few minutes following injuries are critical for the saving of life and will often determine to what extent he will eventually recover use of his body. There are some minutes when casualties are not attended by the organised services due to natural delay. In our society, so crowded and rushed, it is absurd policy to tolerate ignorance of life-saving techniques when so many are killed and hurt.

It is no longer simply prudent, it is now desirable for every capable person to learn First Aid. We should be grateful to volunteers who cheerfully have given skilled service over the years - but alone they are not enough. We must now - each of us be able to give an injured loved one or stranger the care we would hope to receive if we ourselves needed it.

Of course, it is not merely the binding up of the wounded parts which is needed. One must prevent these casualties by preventing the accident and by limiting the likelihood of harm should one happen. This is far better than mere "salvage".

"Safety" often seems to be a political football or to be something upon which any pub can produce at least six "experts" at any one time. Personally, we act as if it were the football pools: hope for the best, take a chance, ignore it the rest of the time.