

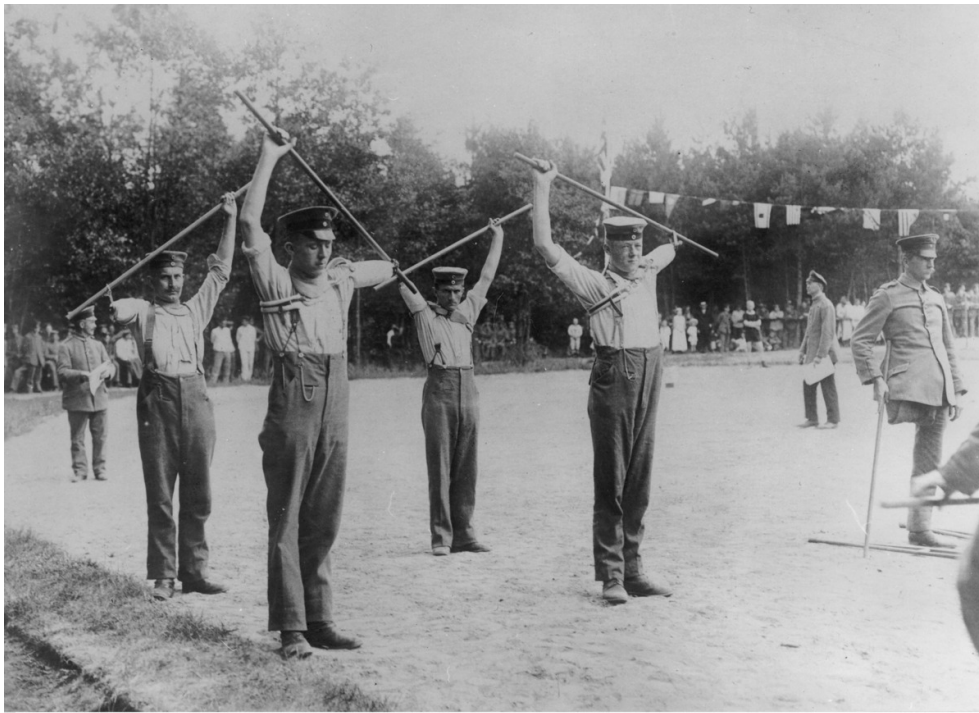
Disabled Veterans Do Calisthenics (c. 1917)

Abstract

The medical report of the German Army estimated the number of soldiers “crippled” in the war – that is to say, badly injured with arm or leg amputations or severe hearing, vision, or mental impairments – at 89,760. Although improved medical care saved a great number of lives, it did not always ensure the complete physical recovery of the injured. Medical technology reacted quickly to this situation, particularly the science of orthopedic prosthetics, which concentrated on the production of artificial limbs with a variety of functions.

Photographs of disabled soldiers exercising served propaganda goals by demonstrating the seemingly inexhaustible possibilities of medical technology. After the war, photographs of mutilated veterans were more likely to serve as evidence of the inhumanity of war, as, for example, in Ernst Friedrich’s famous pacifist photo collection *War against War* [*Krieg dem Kriege*] from 1924.

Source



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