

Defensive measures against gas attacks / C.F.N. MacReady.

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doing this he must ascertain that the trench is free from gas by raising a little of the skirt of his helmet and smelling carefully. Some visual means will be devised shortly to obviate this.

If Vermoral Sprayer solution fails and gas still hangs in trenches and dug-outs it should be fanned out by means of sandbags.

SHELL GASES.

Troops should be practised in the adjustment of goggles, it being seen that as good a junction as possible is made between the goggles and the face. The wire which is on most types of goggles is to be moulded across the nose to aid the junction.

The following measures can be carried out to moderate the discomfort caused after a bombardment with lachrymatory shells:—

- (1) Keep the entrance to a dug-out closed by means of a wet cloth or blanket.
- (2) Cover up shell holes and the ground round them with fresh earth.
- (3) It should be remembered that a bombardment with gas shells, not necessarily lachrymatory, may take place whatever the wind is.
- (4) Recent experience shows that while the tube helmet stops the constitutional action of lachrymatory shells it permits enough of the irritant substance to pass to cause watering of the eyes, and difficulty in "sighting" the guns in the case of artillery. In the case of infantry, a second pair of goggles can be worn under the helmet, thus avoiding lachrymation. This cannot be done by artillery, as the second glass makes it difficult to see the dial readings on the sights.

A special tube helmet with rubber sponge rims fixed to the inside of the goggles is now being made available and will be issued to artillery for use of officers and men serving the guns.

- (5) Ordinary Vermoral Sprayer solution is useless against lachrymatory gas.

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G.H.Q., 18/1/16.

Lt. H. W. Salmon.

[S.S. 388.]

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DEFENSIVE MEASURES AGAINST GAS ATTACKS.

The following summary is given of points on which orders have been issued, or to which attention has been drawn, since the issue of the pamphlet "Defensive Measures against Gas Attacks."

The experience of the recent gas attack shows that the tube helmet gives perfect protection, and that to ensure an absolute minimum of casualties from gas, it is necessary to take the utmost care:—

- (a) In inspection of helmets.
- (b) In training all ranks in quick adjustment of the tube helmet under all conditions.
- (c) In taking full measures to ensure that every man, whether in front or support lines, can be given immediate warning.

TUBE HELMETS.

1. The present "P" pattern tube helmet will be gradually replaced by the "PH" pattern tube helmet, which contains more chemicals and is an improved form of protection against gas. It may be distinguished by the markings "PH" on the helmet. The "PH" helmet will be carried in the satchel and be worn first in a gas attack. The precautions to be taken in the care and use of the "PH" helmet are the same as are observed in the case of the "P" helmet.

Men must be warned that with the "PH" helmet they may expect to feel slight irritation in the nose and eyes during a gas attack. This is quite harmless, and they must not think that they are being "gassed."

2. The tube helmet is issued with a paper wrapping round the mouthpiece. This will now be removed.

3. The two tube helmets issued to officers and other ranks are invariably to be on the individual. The newer one carried in the satchel will be put on outside everything, so that it can be readily got at and easily detached for wearing. Whenever the greatcoat is worn the slung tube helmet is to be worn outside.

4. Officers should wear a safety pin under the lapel of the jacket, so that the helmet can be securely fastened.

5. Wet Tube Helmets.—Helmets are effective against gas if they have been kept in the containers and satchels, and these have been kept in good condition and well fastened up. If, however, they become so SODDEN with water that it is impossible to breathe through them, they must then be condemned. Commanding Officers will initiate measures to prevent helmets from being thus wetted.

6. See that the tapes of the container are tied in bows and not in knots, otherwise there will be a difficulty in undoing them in the dark.

7. The valve rubber sometimes becomes hard. This can be remedied by breathing out through the valve for about a minute at each helmet inspection.

DRILL.

Drill with practice helmets will be carried out with and without greatcoats and equipment. It should have the object of teaching the quick adjustment of the helmets under all conditions, of accustoming the men to wearing them for a long time and doing a certain amount of exercise in them.

The following points are to be noted:—

- (1) Men must be timed against a watch in removing the helmet from its container, getting it over the head and gripped at the neck with one hand so that the material is tight all round. This should take less than 15 seconds, and the continual carrying out of this practice cannot be too strongly emphasised. The remainder of the adjustment is to be completed with the free hand before the hand below the chin is removed.
- (2) Men will be practised in changing from one helmet to another without drawing breath in the process.
- (3) Men must be told that on no account must the helmet be raised until the gas cloud has passed. They must keep as still as possible for the first 4 or 5 minutes, until the feeling of oppression has worn off. They must be warned that during a gas attack the smell of the chemical on the helmet becomes stronger.

ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS.

1. Sentries should have at least two men within reach of them, so that the alarm can be spread rapidly.

2. When the wind is favourable for a gas attack, men in trenches less than 200 yards from the enemy should have the button of both greatcoat and coat undone, in order to facilitate rapid adjustment of the helmet.

3. When the wind is favourable for a gas attack, a sufficient number of sentries must be posted over large dug-outs, or groups of dug-outs, to ensure that all sleeping men can be roused with no delay.

4. When a man is wounded he must be watched to see that he does not remove the helmet. Men must be always on the lookout to help each other in case a helmet is damaged by fire or accident.

5. When, owing to weather conditions or other circumstances pointing to imminent danger of a gas attack, it is found necessary to order the wearing of rolled-up tube helmets in the forward trenches, Officers Commanding units will take steps to hand in for exchange all the tube helmets so worn on the unit, completing its tour of duty in the trenches.

PROTECTION OF DUG-OUTS.

Where possible the entrance to a dug-out should be closed by means of a blanket wetted with water (or preferably with Vermoral Sprayer solution) or by means of a suitable door. The points to be noted in fitting are:—

- (1) The curtain must be made to fit the entrance as closely as possible by weighting the lower edge.
- (2) It must be dropped immediately the gas alarm is sounded.
- (3) There must be no draught round the edges of the blanket or door.

In large dug-outs in support lines it is possible that if such screens are well made and there is no traffic through the entrance very little gas will penetrate.

ORDER TO REMOVE THE HELMET.

When the gas cloud has passed, and the Vermoral Sprayers have been used, the order to raise tube helmets will be given by the officer or N.C.O. in charge of each section of trench. Before