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4TH AUSTRALIAN
DIVISIONAL
GAS SCHOOL.
No. G.O. 9/15.
29 MAR 1917

SECOND ARMY.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR

GAS ALERT AND ACTION DURING A GAS ATTACK

TOGETHER WITH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARRYING

SMALL BOX RESPIRATORS

AND

TUBE HELMETS.

LIAN WAR RECORDS SECTION
C371/1
CLASSIFICATION SUB-SECTION

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THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF "WIND DANGEROUS" OR "ENEMY GAS ATTACK" ARE ISSUED AS A BASIS OF CORPS OR DIVISIONAL ORDERS, AND WILL BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO:—

1.—"WIND DANGEROUS."

"WIND DANGEROUS" will be ordered when the wind is in the dangerous quarter, *e.g.*, N.S.E., no matter what the strength of the wind.

The order "WIND DANGEROUS" will be sent out to all units by corps, or, if authority has been so delegated, by divisional headquarters, but brigade headquarters or battalion commanders are empowered to order "WIND DANGEROUS" from the wind observations of company gas N.C.O's, forwarded by company commanders. Such action will be reported immediately to the next higher formation.

"WIND DANGEROUS" will not be taken off without the authority of the divisional commander. When "WIND DANGEROUS" is ordered, the following arrangements will be carried out.

(i.) All small Box Respirators and P. H. helmets will be carefully inspected, and inspections will be carried out daily during the "WIND DANGEROUS" period.

(ii.) Within a mile of the front line the small Box Respirator will be worn in the "ALERT" position on the chest with flap unbuttoned, but protecting the respirator from the wet.

(*a*) The small Box Respirator will be worn in the "ALERT" position outside all clothing.

(*b*) Nothing will be carried slung across the body in such a way as to interfere with the adjustment of the Box Respirator.

(iii.) Where for any reason a man is not in possession of a small Box Respirator, he will wear his P. H. helmet pinned to the shirt in the "ALERT" position.

(iv.) The chin strap of the steel helmet will on no account be worn under the chin to impede the adjustment of the mask.

(v.) Detached parties of men moving within a mile of the front line will strictly observe the precautions laid down (in ii.), (iii.) and (iv.). Commanding officers will be held responsible that this is done.

(vi.) The duties of sentries are :—

(*a*) To give warning.

(*b*) To adjust immediately the curtains of gas-proof dug-outs.

(vii.) All working parties east of the line POPERINGHE — BAILLEUL — ESTAIRES will have a sentry posted to give instant warning of a gas attack.

(viii.) A sentry will be posted at each Strombos Horn or similar alarm and instructed in its use.

(ix.) A sentry will be posted at every tunnel dug-out or other dug-out holding more than 10 men.

(x.) A sentry will be posted to each group of two or three small dug-outs.

(xi.) A sentry will be posted on each head-quarters, signal office and independent body of men east of the line POPERINGHE — BAILLEUL — ESTAIRES.

(xii.) Men sleeping in rearward lines or in works or in rest billets where they are allowed to take off their equipment, will sleep with their small Box Respirators round their necks, and must know exactly where their P.H. helmet is to be found.

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(xiii.) Company Gas N.C.O's will report to Company Headquarters, in readiness to assist the Company Commander should a gas attack occur.

(xiv.) Medical Officers will be responsible that a proper proportion of the ammonia capsules issued to them are with stretcher bearers in the front line in readiness for their immediate use after a gas attack.

(xv.) Company Gas N.C.O's will inspect daily all anti-gas apparatus—Strombos Horns, flapper fans, vacuum bulbs and stores of combustibles for clearing dug-outs. They will see that gas-proof dug-outs are kept in good order and the curtains sprayed.

(xvi.) An officer on duty will be detailed from each company in reserve, except resting battalions.

(xvii.) Commanders of units in billets east of the line POPERINGHE—BAILLEUL—ESTAIRES, will organize a system of giving the alarm and rousing the men in cellars or houses.

2.—ACTION DURING ENEMY GAS ATTACK.

In the event of an enemy gas attack, the following action will be taken :—

(i.) The alarm will at once be given by all means available; by telephone, gongs, Strombos Horns, and, if necessary, by orderly, and in accordance with paras. (iv.) and (v.).

(ii.) **THERE SHOULD BE AS LITTLE MOVEMENT AND TALKING AS POSSIBLE.** All ranks will at once adjust their small Box Respirators. Is front lines, and wherever the tactical situation demands, they will stand to arms. In rear lines where there are large gas-proof dug-outs, there in no objection, provided the tactical situation allows it, for men, with the exception of sentries and officers and N.C.O.'s on duty, to remain in gas-proof dug-outs. In any case, small Box Respirators

will be adjusted immediately the alarm is given, and before the men leave the dug-out.

(iii.) On the alarm being given, all bodies of troops or transport on the move will halt, and all working parties cease work until the gas cloud has passed.

(iv.) Should the gas cloud be unaccompanied by an infantry attack, no S.O.S. signal will be sent, but the message "Gas Attack, Trench.....".

(v.) Should an infantry attack develop, the normal procedure of S.O.S. will be carried out.

(vi.) Troops in the front line not affected by gas must be warned to be prepared to bring a cross fire to bear on the enemy attempting to advance against a gassed portion of the trench.

(vii.) If a relief is going on, units should stand steady as far as possible until the gas cloud has passed.

(viii.) Supports, and parties bringing up ammunition and grenades, will only be moved up if the tactical situation demands.

(ix.) The blanket doorways of protected dug-outs will be properly adjusted.

(x.) Men in charge of combustibles and fans will prepare to use them as soon as the gas cloud has passed, so as to admit of helmets being removed.

(xi.) Helmets will not be removed after a gas attack until permission has been given by the Company Commander, who will ascertain from Officers and N.C.O's. trained at the Divisional Gas School that it is safe to do so. Trenches will be fanned clear of gas with fans and sandbags.

(xii.) In order to guard against the danger of a subsequent gas cloud, all ranks, as soon as the gas is clear, and permission has been received to remove their masks, and replace them in the "ALERT" position.

A SHARP LOOK-OUT WILL BE MAINTAINED AS LONG AS THE WIND CONTINUES IN A DANGEROUS QUARTER, AND MEN WILL SLEEP ON THE FIRE STEP, WITHIN REACH OF A SENTRY. A SUBSEQUENT GAS CLOUD IS ALWAYS LIKELY.

(xiii.) Dug-outs will not be entered for at least four hours after a gas attack, and should be ventilated freely. Ventilation (natural or by means of fires and anti-gas fans) is the only sure method of clearing a dug-out. If dug-outs have to be entered owing to heavy shelling, this should be done with the utmost caution, and gas helmets put on at the slightest trace of gas. The clearing of dug-outs should not be carried out by men who have been slightly affected by gas. Dug-outs can be efficiently ventilated by means of a small fire burning in the centre of a dug-out or cellar for 20 minutes. This method has been proved by experiments to be effective, but should be employed with due regard to the danger of smoke being visible to the enemy. Dry wood or other combustibles will be kept in readiness for the purpose.

(xiv.) Special arrangements will be made by Corps for warning the civil authorities, who are responsible for the protection and warning of all civilians within the Corps area.

3.—ACTION AFTER ENEMY GAS ATTACK.

(i.) Smoking will be prohibited for a period of three hours after the gas has ceased.

(ii.) After a gas attack, troops in the front trenches will be relieved of all fatigue and carrying work for 24 hours by sending up working parties from companies in rear. Horses should not be worked for a similar period if it can be avoided.

(iii.) No man suffering from effects of gas will be permitted to walk to the dressing station.

(iv.) Rifles and machine guns should be cleaned immediately after a gas attack; oil cleaning will prevent corrosion for 12 hours, but the first available opportunity should be taken to clean all parts in boiling water containing a little soda.

4.—ACTION DURING GAS SHELL BOMBARDMENT.

(i.) Small Box Respirators will be put on in the shelled area.

(ii.) In the event of a sudden and intense bombardment with gas shell, a local alarm will be given which will consist of blasts from French shunters' horns, which are shortly being issued for this purpose.

(iii.) All dugouts in the vicinity will be visited, and any sleeping men roused.

5.—DISCIPLINE WITH REGARD TO CARRYING SMALL BOX RESPIRATORS.

Small Box Respirators will always be carried within 2 miles of the front line (*i.e.* in advance of the line ELVERDINGHE — VLAMERTINGHE — DICKEBUSH — KEMMEL HILL — NEUVE EGLISE — NIEPPE—LAVENTIE) whatever the direction of the wind is. P.H. Helmets will always be carried in Corps areas whatever the direction of the wind is.

"WIND DANGEROUS" period.

Orders as to the position in which the above are worn in "WIND DANGEROUS" period are contained in Section 1.

"WIND SAFE" period.

When the wind is safe, working parties during work and at the discretion of the officer in command may take off their Box Respirators, provided the latter are placed conveniently at hand for use in case of a sudden gas shell attack or change of the wind.

The P.H. Helmet will always be carried.

(Signed), C. H. HARINGTON, M.G.G.S.

Second Army.