

Secret.

NOT TO BE TAKEN INTO THE TRENCHES.

LESSONS FROM RECENT HOSTILE GAS ATTACKS.

August, 1916.

ISSUED BY GENERAL STAFF.

The following conclusions have been drawn as a result of the gas attacks recently made by the enemy:—

1. MOVEMENT DURING A GAS ATTACK.

All movement must be reduced to a minimum. If a relief is going on, units should stand steady as far as possible until the gas cloud has passed. This also applies to working and carrying parties, etc.

Supporting troops should only be moved up if the tactical situation demands it and not automatically on the gas alarm being given.

There should be as *little movement and talking as possible* in the trenches. Men must be made to realise that with the gas now used by the Germans the observance of this rule is essential for their safety.

2. MOVEMENT AND WORK SUBSEQUENT TO A GAS ATTACK.

No man suffering from the effects of gas should be allowed to walk to the dressing station.

The clearing of dug-outs should not be carried out by men who have had a slight trace of gas.

After a gas attack, troops in the front trenches should be relieved of all fatigue and carrying work for 24 hours by sending up working parties from Companies in rear.

Horses which have been exposed to the gas should not be worked for a similar period if it can be avoided.

3. CARRIAGE OF HELMETS DURING "GAS ALERT."

The method of carrying the helmet during Gas Alert described as the "Alternative Method" in fly-leaf to p. 5, S.S. 419, has proved entirely satisfactory and should be adopted for all troops within 1,500 yards of the front line. Officers or N.C.O.s in charge of any unit or party should see that this is done, both for troops in front line trenches and for detached bodies of troops (working and carrying parties, etc.).

All equipment should be adjusted so as not to interfere with the quick putting-on of the helmet, e.g., nothing should be slung across the chest—the second satchel should be carried attached to the belt or slung from the left shoulder perpendicularly down under the belt.

Troops should be frequently practised in putting on helmets in full marching order.

358
340941

L641a
1916

Coats should not be removed within 1,500 yards of the front line. They may be opened. Two top buttons should be left undone.

4. CLEARING GAS FROM DUG-OUTS, ETC.

Dug-outs not protected during a gas attack should not be entered for four hours after the cloud has passed, even if they have been sprayed. Vermorel sprayer solution does not completely remove all the constituents of the gas now used by the enemy and must not, therefore, be depended on for rendering dug-outs and shelters habitable. Thorough ventilation—either natural or by means of anti-gas fans—is the only sure method for clearing away the gas.

If, after a gas attack, unprotected dug-outs have to be entered owing to heavy shelling, helmets should be worn.

5. TRAINING OF OFFICERS AND N.C.O.s AT DIVISIONAL ANTI-GAS SCHOOLS.

(a) It is absolutely essential that as many Officers and N.C.O.s as possible should be trained at the Courses held at Divisional Anti-Gas Schools, and every opportunity and facility should be given for this to be done. Only in this way can it be ensured that all ranks realize the necessity for strict adherence to the rules and recommendations laid down at various times for protection against gas attacks.

(b) Arrangements should be made to replace Gas N.C.O.s *at once* in the event of their becoming casualties or their removal to other duties. Each unit should have supplementary N.C.O.s ready trained so as to take the place of the Gas N.C.O.s in case of need.

6. TRAINING IN ANTI-GAS MEASURES.

Practice and drill in the use of anti-gas appliances should be carried out continuously. This applies especially to troops which have returned to trench warfare after having been in districts where more open fighting may have led (a) to a temporary lapse in this training (b) to the subsequent incorporation of drafts only partially trained in anti-gas measures.

Continuous and thorough training in defensive measures against gas attacks is of the greatest importance.

7. STANDING ORDERS.

Comprehensive instructions dealing with the behaviour of troops during "gas alert" and gas attacks should be embodied in all Corps and Divisional Standing Orders.

Typical Standing Orders, which can be modified to suit local requirements, will shortly be circulated for information.

358. Lessons from
340941 recent hostile gas
attacks

L641a
1916 RC 11576. J48

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



AWM051077