

FIFTH ARMY

314.2

Instructions for

**GAS ALERT and . . .
ACTION DURING A GAS
ATTACK**

TOGETHER WITH

Instructions for Carrying

**Small Box Respirators
and Tube Helmets.**

The following instructions regarding the action to be taken in the event of "Gas Alert" or "Enemy Gas Attack" are issued as a basis of Corps or Divisional Orders, and will be strictly adhered to:—

Section 1.—"Gas Alert." *ON WIND. DANGEROUS*

"GAS ALERT" will be ordered when the wind is in a dangerous quarter, no matter what the strength of the wind.

The order "GAS ALERT" 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 will order "GAS ALERT" when necessary 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.

"GAS ALERT" will not be taken off without the authority of the divisional commander.

When "GAS ALERT" is ordered, the following arrangements will be carried out.

a.—General.

(i.) All small Box Respirators and PH helmets will be carefully inspected, and inspections will be carried out daily.

(ii.) Company and Battery Gas N.C.O's will report to Company and Battery Headquarters at once.

(iii.) Company and Battery Gas N.C.O's will inspect daily all anti-gas apparatus—Strombos

horns, flapper fans, vacuum bulbs and gas testing tubes, and stores of fuel for clearing dug-outs. They will see that gas-proof dug-outs are kept in good order and the blanket curtains sprayed.

(iv.) Gas Alert notices should be placed at the entrance to each main communication trench and at suitable points in the Divisional Area:

(v.) 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.

(vi.) Precautions should be taken to protect unboxed ammunition from the corrosive action of gas.

b—Within one mile of the front line.

(i.) 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.

(ii.) The PH helmet will be carried slung in such a manner that it is immediately available for use if required.

(iii.) Where for any reason a man is not in possession of a small Box Respirator, he will wear his PH 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 will strictly observe these precautions.

c—Within ^{three} ~~two~~ miles of the front line

(i.e., ~~East and North of the line SAILLY AU-BOIS COLINCAMPS MAULLY MAILLET — MESNIL — AUTHUILLE OVILLERS — POZIERES~~).

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

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

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

(iv.) A sentry will be posted on each headquarters, signal office and independent body of men.

(v.) All working parties will have a sentry posted to give instant warning of a gas attack.

(vi.) The duties of sentries are :—

(a) To give warning of a Gas attack.

(b) To adjust the blanket curtains of gas-proof dug-outs immediately after giving the alarm.

(vii.) 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 PH Helmet is to be found.

d—Within six miles of the front line

(i.e., ~~East of the line HENU—ST. LEGER—
ACHEUX—BEDAUVILLE—GENLIS~~).

(i.) Commanders of units in billets will organise a system of giving the alarm and of rousing the men in cellars or houses.

Section 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. (vii.) and (viii.).

(ii.) **There should be as little movement and talking as possible.** All ranks will at once adjust their small Box Respirators. Men in dug-outs will do so before leaving dug-outs. In front lines, and wherever the tactical situation demands, they will stand to arms.

In rear lines there is no objection, provided that the tactical situation allows it, to men, with the exception of sentries and officers and N.C.O's on duty, remaining in dug-outs. In any case, small Box Respirators will be adjusted immediately the alarm is given and will be worn in dug-outs whether the latter are gas-proof or not.

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

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

(vi.) The blanket doorways of protected dug-outs and cellars will be properly adjusted.

(vii.) Should the gas cloud be unaccompanied by an infantry attack, no S.O.S. signal will be sent, but the letters G.A.S. will be telephoned or telegraphed followed by the name of the trench opposite to which gas is being liberated: *e.g.*, G.A.S. MUCK TRENCH.

The above message will only be sent in the case of a gas attack from cylinders.

The message will be passed from front to rear in the same way as the S.O.S. signal; it will not be distributed laterally.

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

(ix.) Occasional short bursts should be fired from Lewis and machine guns to prevent the accumulation of fouling.

(x.) 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.

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

(xii.) Respirators or 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.

(xiii.) 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, will 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.

(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.

XV see attached .X

Section 3.—Action After Enemy Gas Attack.

(i.) 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.

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

(iii.) Gas may persist for several hours in dug-outs and cellars, and until they have been shown to be free from gas they will only be entered by men wearing Box Respirators or helmets.

Sect. 2. After sub-section (xiv) add :- a list of all units with-
(xv) Corps will keep up to date rning will be sent.
in their Corps area, to whom warned who are outside Corps
The Army will warn all conce of the front line.
areas, but within 40 kilometres

Ventilation by means of fires and anti-gas fans is the only efficient method of clearing dug-outs. A supply of fuel will be kept in readiness for this purpose. The clearing of dug-outs should not be carried out by men who have been slightly affected by gas.

(iv.) Rifles, machine guns and ammunition 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.

Section 4.—Action During Gas Shell Bombardment.

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

(ii.) The gas alarm will not be given, but units will arrange to warn everyone in the vicinity immediately a gas shell bombardment begins.

(iii.) Dug-outs will be visited, the gas-proof blankets adjusted, and sleeping men aroused.

Section 5.—Discipline with Regard to Carrying Small Box Respirators and Tube Helmets.

(i.) All troops within ^{three}~~two~~ miles of the front line will always carry the small Box Respirator, whatever the direction of the wind.

~~The two mile limit is laid down in Sec. 1 (c).~~

(ii.) In the trench system the small Box Respirator will always be carried in the ALERT position to protect it from water and damage.

The flap of the haversack will be kept buttoned except during the "GAS ALERT" period.

(iii.) The personnel of batteries in position behind the ~~two~~^{one} mile limit will always have the small Box Respirator close at hand.

(iv.) Officers and men of battalions in reserve outside the ~~two~~^{one} mile limit will keep the Box Respirator with their equipment, so that it is immediately available.

(v.) All troops ^{in Corp Area.} within 15,000 yards of the line will at all times carry a PH helmet: ~~is, East of the line FAMECHON — THIEVRES — ARQUEVES — HARPONVILLE — WARLOY.~~

"Gas Alert" Period.

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

Working Parties within the ³ mile limit.

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 PH helmet will always be carried.

(Signed) N. MALCOLM,
M.G.G.S.

3rd January, 1917.