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GS Publication

881



*Notified to  
ACI's  
17th March,  
1943*

# Field Service Pocket Book

Part I—Pamphlet No. 10

**GAS**

**1943**

*(This pamphlet supersedes FSPB, Pamphlet No. 8, 1941)*

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*By Command of the Army Council.*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. D. S. S. S.' or similar, written in a cursive style.

THE WAR OFFICE,  
17th March, 1943

## FIELD SERVICE POCKET BOOK

## Part I—Pamphlet No. 10, 1943

GAS

## CONTENTS

SEC	PAGE
1. Introduction ... ..	1
2. War gases ... ..	1
3. Protection—personal, unit, and collective ... ..	1
4. Intelligence ... ..	2
5. Effects of weather and ground on gas. Liquid and vapour dangers ... ..	3
6. Decontamination ... ..	4
7. Replacement of contaminated clothing ... ..	5
8. Protection of food supplies ... ..	5
Appendix A. War gases ... ..	7
"  B. Liquid danger (blister gas) ... ..	8
"  C. Vapour danger (blister gas) ... ..	9
"  D. Decontamination ... ..	10

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gas knowledge must be of such a standard as to ensure that the use of gas by the enemy will not stop the operations being carried out by our own troops.

The responsibility for protecting himself against gas rests on the individual.

## 2. WAR GASES

A table giving the types, effects, and action (including first aid) to be taken on encountering war gases is given at Appendix A.

## 3. PROTECTION

1. Personal and unit protection (*see also sec 5*)

Gas alarms (to be printed on future issues of the eyeshield case) are as follows:—

*(a) Gas other than blister gas spray*

Gas rattle or shout of "Gas." A rattle is issued to all platoon and equivalent sub-unit HQ.

The rattle will be sounded to give warning to those in the immediate vicinity of the presence of gas other than blister gas spray. To shout "Gas" has the same meaning. Those within hearing will adjust respirators and carry on work; later they should carry out personal decontamination if contaminated by blister gas liquid.

*(b) Spray*

The word "Spray" will be given by word of mouth when the presence of blister gas spray has been detected. Any individual in the open hearing it will carry out personal decontamination Part 1.

The respirator should not be adjusted unless vapour can be smelt.

The best defence against LOW blister gas spray is vigorous anti-aircraft fire from all available weapons.

*(c) Gas clear*

The words "Gas clear" will be passed verbally. They signify that individuals should test for gas and remove respirators if it is found safe to do so.

**2. Protection in camps and bivouacs**

The chief consideration is the protection of personnel, equipment and stores against blister gas spray. All possible use of shelter provided by trees and woods should therefore be made.

Detectors, gas spray, should be in position at all times. The old type can be arranged in groups of nine so as to form a square of about 18 ins.; the new type is a metal sheet, 18 ins square, painted with detector paint by the unit.

These groups will be placed in the open about 200 yards apart in irregular lines throughout the area. A sentry will be detailed for every three or four groups of detectors, and will visit each group at intervals of not more than ten minutes.

**3. Preparedness**

*Surprise* is of paramount importance in chemical warfare, but can be countered by efficient organization and training, by maintenance of protective equipment in good condition, and by a high standard of gas discipline. *Surprise* may be attained by use of new gases, new methods, or by use on a larger scale than hitherto experienced.

**4. INTELLIGENCE****1. Reports**

Reports will include the following items with regard to gas:—

- Place and time of attack.
- Gas weapon used.
- Type of gas.
- Casualties.
- Conditions of weather and ground.
- Area affected or contaminated.

**2. Samples**

The following materials are required for examination:—

- Generous samples of contaminated material.
- Specimens of our own respirators or protective equipment if they appear to fail or give unexpected results.

*(c) Fragments of gas projectiles.* Unexploded projectiles will be reported, but not moved.

*(d) Enemy respirators and protective equipment.*

Materials will be sent or reported to the nearest formation headquarters which has a CW technical officer.

**5. EFFECT OF WEATHER AND GROUND ON GAS. LIQUID AND VAPOUR DANGER****1. Weather***(a) Non-persistent gas*

The effectiveness of non-persistent gas is governed by the direction and strength of the wind, which should not be above 15 mph.

The most favourable conditions for non-persistent gas attacks are clear sky by night with light or gentle breeze.

Conditions at dusk or dawn, or an overcast sky at night, are moderately favourable. Overcast sky by day is less favourable.

Sunny days are bad.

Rain has no appreciable effect on non-persistent gas.

*(b) Persistent gas*

Blister gases can cause casualties as a result of exposure either to liquid or vapour. Generally, weather conditions that favour persistence do not favour a high vapour concentration, and *vice versa*.

Strong winds evaporate the gas, and reduce persistence without increasing the vapour danger. High temperatures reduce the persistence, but increase the vapour danger.

Rain may wash blister gas from one place to another, but it still remains dangerous.

**2. Ground***(a) Non-persistent gas*

Flat unbroken ground is favourable for the travel of gas clouds. At night, in light winds, gas clouds tend to follow valleys and to hang in built-up or enclosed areas or in woods, especially if in leaf.

*(b) Persistent gas*

On dry porous ground the liquid tends to be absorbed, giving relatively great persistence and low vapour concentration; on hard ground liquid will evaporate and persistence be reduced, with correspondingly greater vapour danger.

Persistence is normally greater on wet and muddy ground than on dry, but soft ground is not a favourable target for gas projectiles since the gas content tends to be buried.

### 3. Liquid danger

A rough guide to the periods of danger by contact with liquid blister gas is given at Appendix B.

### 4. Vapour danger

A rough guide to the periods of danger from blister gas vapour is given at Appendix C.

The military situation governs the degree to which casualties must be accepted by remaining in vapour. The respirator is always complete protection to the eyes and lungs; casualties by blistering are not fatal.

The scrotum is the most vulnerable part of the body not protected by the respirator. AV battledress, if worn, gives complete protection against vapour to the covered parts of the body; *it does not protect against liquid*. Exposed skin, and the scrotum if AV battledress is not worn, can be protected by prior application of anti-gas ointment. (Note.—AG ointment No. 2 is too irritant for scrotal use.)

## 6. DECONTAMINATION

### 1. Personal decontamination C-O-E-C-D-O

#### (a) Part I

Immediate action—can be done on the move; time required about 5 minutes.

- C *Cotton waste*—Remove free liquid from exposed skin.
- O *Ointment*—Rub vigorously into exposed skin for at least half a minute, using both hands.
- E *Eyeshields*—Remove, and, if contaminated, renew.

#### (b) Part II

If possible to be done under cover or on "clean" ground, usually on the orders of the local commander; time required about 15 minutes.

- C *Clothing*—Swab off boots and any free liquid on cape. Remove contaminated clothing or apply ointment to both sides, and rub into skin underneath.
- D *Detectors*—Swab or change sleeve detectors. Decontaminate weapons.
- O *Ointment*—Wipe hands with clean swab. Rub ointment into hands for half-minute.

### 2. Decontamination of clothing and equipment, etc.

Methods of decontaminating clothing, equipment, weapons, instruments, and vehicles are given at Appendix D.

## 7. REPLACEMENT OF CONTAMINATED CLOTHING

### 1. On active service abroad

Contaminated clothing is packed into sacks, paper, gas-proof, and is sent back in returning supply vehicles for delivery to Ordnance. Decontamination is carried out by Ordnance in mobile laundries or static decontamination plants, according to circumstances. The decontaminated clothing is taken on to Ordnance charge for re-issue in the normal way.

### 2. During active operations in the UK

Collection of contaminated clothing is arranged on an area basis and varies in different parts of the country to suit local conditions. Decontamination is carried out in static and satellite decontamination plants, mobile laundries, and civilian laundries where arrangements have been made. The clothing is afterwards returned for re-distribution through RAOC.

## 8. PROTECTION OF FOOD SUPPLIES AGAINST GAS

Food should always be kept under cover and spray detectors put out.

All war gases in liquid and solid form make both food and water unfit for human consumption.

Blister gas vapour is absorbed by fatty foods and makes them dangerous.

If food is contaminated it should be set aside for expert inspection; the table overleaf may, however, be taken as a general guide to treatment.

PROTECTIVE VALUE OF MATERIALS USED FOR HOLDING OR COVERING FOOD-STUFFS AND METHOD OF DECONTAMINATION

(d) Name of covering	(e) Protection against vapour	(f) Protection against liquid gas	Method of decontamination or treatment
1. Sealed tin	Complete	Complete	(g) Wash exterior with rag moistened in petrol or paraffin. Turn inside out and wash as long as possible before finally with water and wiping dry. As above.
2. Glass bottles, glazed earthenware jars	Complete; corks good if sealed with wax	Complete; corks fairly good if sealed with wax	Smear with bleach paste as above if certain that cations are waterproof, before opening.
3. Waxed cartons	Good if well sealed	Good if all joints are waxed or covered by a layer of moisture-proof collabone	Provided the petrol or paraffin will not enter the package and render the contents distasteful, wipe with these solvents as above. Bleach paste is NOT satisfactory.
4. Moisture-proof cellulose film	Good	Fairly good if contamination is slight	If spot is not possible, if slight contamination, remove with water, care not to decontaminate the contents.
5. Gasproof paper	Good	Fairly good if contamination is slight	Turn out contents and examine. Cases splashed with liquid may be bled if GAG gloves or clothing used, and must be subsequently burned. Cases contaminated with any blaser gas vapour should be allowed to weather.
6. Wooden cases	Poor, unless joints are tight	Poor—soft woods are very absorbent	Smear affected parts with bleach paste. Cases must subsequently be burned.
7. Three-ply tea chests	Good	Good if sound condition and lined internally with metal foil or cellulose film	Turn out contents and examine.
8. Thick cardboard or fibreboard boxes	Good if joints are tight or taped	Poor, very absorbent	Hose down with water followed by washing. It will normally be necessary to remove tar-packs from stacks before being down, and great care is necessary to avoid contamination of the stacks.
9. Oilskins, tarpaulins	Fairly good	Good	

WAR GASES

APPENDIX A

LIQUID DANGER (BLISTER GAS)

APPENDIX B

The figures given below are not to be regarded as precise, but are intended to give a general indication only of the interval which must elapse before ALL danger has completely disappeared. It must not be deduced from the table that many casualties will necessarily occur if the area has to be occupied or traversed in a period under that quoted. With reasonable common sense casualties should be few, and must be accepted as a war risk whenever the military situation makes it essential.

(a) Type of contamination	(b) Action of troops	(c) Type of surface	(d) Climate	(e) Safe after	(f) Remarks
1. Very heavy.	Marching.	Hard surface such as tarmac or adium road.	(g) Any climate.	(h) Immediately.	See Appendix A, para 4, on decontamination of boots in contained spaces. Avoid obvious patches of liquid.
2. Heavy.	Marching.	Loose grass or ferns.	(g) Very cold.	(h) 3 days.	Though liquid may come above the surface of the boots during the period of considerable casualties is very slight. If possible, wash liquid off boots immediately.
3.			(g) Average.	(h) 1 day.	
4.			(g) Very hot.	(h) 3-4 hours.	

Gas	How detected	Effects on body	Immobilize action	First aid
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1. Choking gases	Small and irritant effect.	Coughing, choking, or difficulty in breathing. Cough may cease temporarily, to be followed by renewed attacks. Eye irritation and tears may be caused.	Adjust facepiece; this gives complete protection.	1. Adjust facepiece, or if any wet cloth is attached, ease it off. Give warm, sweet tea; keep warm. No smoking. No artificial respiration. 2. Evacuate to medical services.
2. Nerve gases	Effects produced after a few minutes. The hands stand from bursting bombs, shells, or grenades. May even appear as a thick cloud.	Pain in nose and chest. Possible feeling of influenza and dizziness. No effect on eyes. Also tear effect may be noted.	Adjust facepiece; this gives complete protection. Do not adjust facepiece until you are satisfied of active troops with good gas discipline.	1. Adjust facepiece, or if any wet cloth is attached, ease it off. 2. Do NOT evacuate to medical services. <i>Note.</i> —After facepiece has been put on, symptoms may diminish, but do not let facepiece until he is kept on.
3. Tear gases	Irritate effect on eyes.	Stinging pain in the eyes, immediate tears. No injury to eyes. The same effects on eyes are striking.	Adjust facepiece; this gives complete protection. Do not adjust facepiece until you are satisfied of active troops with good gas discipline.	1. Adjust facepiece. 2. Wash eyes with liquid or solid gas in the eyes, wash out immediately with much water.
4. Blister gases	Columns, when low or blown in gales; giving off invisible vapour. Drops on detection. A red or brown mark.	<b>Liquid</b> Fury; Redness, pain, and immediate irritation. Often followed by permanent blisters. Reddened and swollen some hours later. <b>Vapour</b> Severe damage. Eyes: Pain, redness and temporary blindness. Zorgs: Headaches, blisters, and severe respiratory injury. Shells, particularly the aerobom: Redness and irritation may be noted some hours later. All efforts are delayed for hours or even days.	<b>SPRAY AND LIQUID.</b> Eyeball should always be worn in the open once gas has been used. Wash and immediately and thoroughly with water. Shells: Swab off with cotton waste and rub in ointment vigorously. Apply ointment to both sides of forehead and skin underneath. If very heavy contamination, discard clothing affected. Clothing, boots and equipment must not be taken indoors until they have washed in. <b>VAPOUR.</b> All clothing gives protection. If it is possible to get into a concentration of vapour, tight on neck and cuffs of boots, dress, and apply ointment to exposed skin, and to scrub it in. Do not adjust facepiece; this gives complete protection to eyes, throat, and lungs.	<b>LIQUID.</b> 1. Eyes: After washing out with much water (lauze-dine action) evacuate to medical services with liquid or solid gas in the eyes, wash out immediately with much water. <b>VAPOUR.</b> 1. Eyes and lungs: Evacuate immediately to medical services. Change clothing when possible. Do NOT use ointment once the skin has started to redden.
5. Phosgene and	Columns, liquid readily visible on invisible vapour (almost invisible) evaporation in hot weather. Smell of almonds.	Glitchiness, headache, followed by unconsciousness and death. Only effective in high concentrations. Much liquid allowed to soak into the skin, especially under the clothing, can quickly produce the same effects.	IF FACE IS NOT SPLASHED, stop breathing, adjust facepiece. IF FACE IS SPLASHED, stop breathing, wipe face, then adjust facepiece. If it is possible to get into a concentration of vapour, tight on neck and cuffs of boots, dress, and apply ointment to exposed skin, and to scrub it in. Do not adjust facepiece; this gives complete protection to eyes, throat, and lungs.	If unconscious, evacuate to safe air atmosphere, give artificial respiration. (summer W).

## LIQUID DANGER (BLISTER GAS)

## APPENDIX B

The figures given below are not to be regarded as precise, but are intended to give a general indication only of the interval which must elapse before ALL danger has completely disappeared.

It must not be deduced from the table that many casualties will necessarily occur if the area has to be occupied or traversed in a period under that quoted. With reasonable common sense casualties should be few, and must be accepted as a war risk whenever the military situation makes it essential.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Type of contamination	Action of troops	Type of surface	Climate	Safe after	Remarks	
1. Very heavy.	Marching.	Hard surface such as road.	Any climate.	Immediately.	See Appendix A, para 4, on vapour danger from contaminated clothing and boots. Avoid obvious patches of liquid.	
2. Heavy.	Marching.	Long grass or sward.	Very cold.	3 days.	Though liquid may come above ground, there is a danger of considerable casualties in very slight. If possible, wash liquid off boots immediately.	
3.			Average.	1 day.		
4.			Very hot.	3-4 hours.		
5.	Lying or sitting on the ground or hand-lie stores. (Danger of contact with liquid.)	Grassland.	Very cold.	Up to 1 month	The danger is not serious towards the end of these periods, and is only pronounced if the contact is continuous. It may be occasionally reduced by obvious precautions such as using oil-skin and spreading the cape on the ground.	
6.			Average.	" " 10 days.		
7.			Very hot.	" " 3 days.		
8. Spray.	Marching.	Any surface.	Any climate.	Immediately.	Possible danger to troops with bare skin in long grass.	
9.	Lying or sitting on the ground or hand-lie stores. (Danger of contact with liquid.)	Grassland.	Average.	Up to 24 hours.	Lie on gas caps.	
10.	Lying or sitting on the ground or hand-lie stores. (Danger of contact with liquid.)	Grassland.	Average.	About 4 hours.		



## APPENDIX C

## VAPOUR DANGER (BLISTER GAS)

The figures given in this table must not be taken as any more than a general guide as to the safe period of occupation of contaminated areas. They apply only to normal weather conditions. For hot weather, times must be halved.

Type of contamination		Time since contamination	Period of safe occupation of area by troops wearing 1--*		
			Respirators and AV' battledress	Respirators and ordinary battledress	Not wearing respirator
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1.		Immediately after	2 hours	30 mins	15 mins
2.	As from bombs, chemical mines, or heavy gas shelling	3-6 hours	4 hours	1 hour	30 mins
3.		After 24 hours	No danger	No danger	No danger
4.		Immediately after	No danger	1 hour	30 mins
5.	As from spray (unless very low and very heavy), or light gas shelling	2 hours	No danger	No danger	1 hour
6.		4 hours	No danger	No danger	No danger

\* Note.—The times given in columns (d), (e) and (f) apply to troops not only within the contaminated area, but also up to 100 yards downwind of it, or even up to 500 yards if contamination is very heavy.

DECONTAMINATION

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(This pamphlet)

THE WAR OFFICE  
17th March 1945

Article to be decontaminated	Method of decontamination	
(a)	(b)	(c)
<p>1. Clothing and equipment</p> <p><i>In the field:</i> Swab off free liquid gas, rub in ointment on both sides of material and into bare skin underneath. If practicable, keep the contaminated clothing off the skin with a wad of waste, grass, or handkerchief.</p> <p>Heavily contaminated clothing and equipment should be packed into sacks, paper, gasproof (see sec 7). Spare sets of clothing are held in reserve on a basis of 30 per cent of establishment.</p> <p>Lightly contaminated clothing which has been exposed to blister gas vapour should be allowed to weather for 24 hours or until smell disappears. If clothing smells strongly of blister gas remove it before entering a confined space.</p>		<p><i>Where laundry facilities are available:</i> Contaminated articles are immersed in boiling water—1½ gallons of water to each pound of clothing. If boiling tanks are used, a grid is necessary to keep the articles off the bottom of the boiler. The times articles should be kept boiling are shown below. Where advocated 2 oz washing soda should be used to every 10 gallons of water.</p> <p>Rubber knee boots and rubber anti-gas gloves . . . . . 2 hours No soda. Web equipment and canvas . . . . . 1 hour Soda. Ground sheets and waterproofs . . . . . 1 hour No soda. Clothing—cotton and linen . . . . . ½ hour Soda. Clothing—woollen (clean) . . . . . 1 hour No soda. Clothing—AV (clean) . . . . . 1 hour 6 oz chalk per 50 gallons. Clothing—woollen (greasy or oily) . . . . . 2 hours No soda.</p> <p>Light suits and anti-gas capes should be immersed for half an hour in plain water kept just off the boil. Each treatment decreases the efficiency of oilskin clothing. With heavily contaminated clothing the steam given off may be dangerous, involving careful ventilation. The same water should not be used more than three times.</p>
<p>2. Respirators</p>	<p>1. <i>Vapour contamination:</i> Allow to weather. 2. <i>Liquid contamination:</i> Normally returned to Ordnance as at sec 7. If this is impossible:— (a) Remove the container and eyepieces. (b) Boil facepiece and connecting tube for three hours in plain water. Dry thoroughly. (c) Swab off liquid from eyepieces and container. Apply AG ointment vigorously and then wipe off. (d) Boil haversack for one hour in water with soda if available.</p>	
<p>3. Leather</p>	<p>Soak for six hours in water at about 125° F. (the hottest a man can keep his hand in). Allow to dry in a free circulation of air. After drying, apply dubbin liberally.</p>	
<p>4. Boots</p>	<p>Soak for two hours in water at about 125° F. Allow to dry in a free circulation of air. Apply fresh dubbin.</p>	
<p>5. Weapons and instruments</p>	<p>1. <i>General:</i> (a) Swab off all free liquid. (b) Apply ointment to the contaminated portions. Ointment should be wiped off metal parts. Petrol or paraffin, if available, should be used on the metal parts in preference to ointment. (c) Oil metal parts. (d) Hands should be covered by a film of ointment before decontaminating; after completing the operation, remove with a swab and rub ointment well in for 30 seconds.</p> <p>2. <i>Slings:</i> (a) Swab off liquid. (b) Apply ointment to both sides. If grossly contaminated, remove and boil. See "Canvas" under "Clothing and equipment" above.</p> <p>3. <i>Eyepieces of sights, rubber mouthpieces, etc.:</i> Remove and boil.</p> <p>4. <i>Telephones, microphones, and receivers:</i> Swab with petrol or paraffin.</p>	
<p>6. Vehicles</p>	<p>1. <i>General:</i> Mainly decontaminated by weathering. As a rule only those parts with which contact is likely will be decontaminated. Hose or swab off visible liquid contamination from outside of vehicle.</p> <p>2. <i>Woodwork:</i> Apply bleach paste of creamy consistency, working from the outside of the contaminated area inwards to prevent spread; leave for at least six hours, then wash off. In the absence of bleach, petrol will have some effect.</p> <p>3. <i>Metal parts:</i> Swab off with sandpaper or rags soaked in petrol. Use plenty of water. Light contamination, as from high spray, can be left to weather.</p> <p>4. <i>Tires:</i> Swab off with petrol and allow to weather.</p> <p>5. <i>Leatherwork and cushions:</i> No practicable method. Removable leather articles can be treated as for "leather" above. As a temporary measure, seats should be swabbed, turned upside down and the gas raps placed on top. Seats should be replaced by new ones as soon as possible.</p> <p>6. <i>Canvas covering:</i> Swab and allow to weather. Bleach paste rots fabric. During weathering process the contaminated vehicle should be marked with chalk or gas warning signs.</p>	

## AMINATION

## Method of decontamination

(c)

*Where laundry facilities are available:*

Contaminated articles are immersed in boiling water—1½ gallons of water to each pound of clothing. If boiling tanks are used, a grid is necessary to keep the articles off the bottom of the boiler. The times articles should be kept boiling are shown below. Where advocated 2 oz washing soda should be used to every 10 gallons of water.

Rubber knee boots and rubber		
anti-gas gloves	2 hours	No soda.
Web equipment and canvas	1 hour	Soda.
Ground sheets and waterproofs	1 hour	No soda.
Clothing—cotton and linen	½ hour	Soda.
Clothing—woollen (clean)	1 hour	No soda.
Clothing—AV (clean)	1 hour	6 ozs chalk per 50 gallons.
Clothing—woollen (greasy or oily)	2 hours	No soda.

Light suits and anti-gas capes should be immersed for half an hour in plain water kept just off the boil. Each treatment decreases the efficiency of oilskin clothing. With heavily contaminated clothing the steam given off may be dangerous, involving careful ventilation. The same water should not be used more than three times.

Ordnance as at sec 7. If this is impossible:—

soak for three hours in plain water. Dry thoroughly.

Remove from container. Apply AG ointment vigorously and then wipe off with soda if available.

Remove the hottest man can keep his hand in. Allow to dry in a free circulation of air.

Allow to dry in a free circulation of air. Apply fresh dabbie.

Wipe off portions. Ointment should be wiped off metal parts. Petrol or paraffin, if available, is in preference to ointment.

Apply a coat of ointment before decontaminating; after completing the operation, remove with a brush or 30 seconds.

If grossly contaminated, remove and boil. See "Canvas" under "Clothing and

Remove and boil with petrol or paraffin.

Washing. As a rule only those parts with which contact is likely will be decontaminated. Wash from outside of vehicle.

For consistency, working from the outside of the contaminated area forwards to prevent wash off. In the absence of bleach, petrol will have some effect.

Leather. If soaked in petrol. Use plenty of swabs. Light contamination, as from high spray, can be removed by rubbing.

Removable leather articles can be treated as for "leather" above. Seats should be replaced.

Other. Bleach paste rots fabric. During weathering process the contaminated vehicle should be marked with signs.