

• N-20152.23

82nd DIVISION

GAS OFFICER

REPORTS

N 20152.23

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October 13th, 1918.

From: Division Gas Officer,
To: Commanding General, 82nd Division
Subject: Report of Gas Attack.

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1. Commencing on the morning of September 13th, and continuing until the evening of September 19th, 1918 a series of gas bombardments interspersed with intermittent gas and H.E. shelling were put over by the enemy into the area occupied by the 82nd Division.

2. There were four well defined attacks, but because of the more or less persistent shelling which was kept up during the intervals between these different attacks, it was difficult to differentiate them, especially in the matter of resultant casualties.

3. The first attack was launched against units of the 327th Infantry in the early morning of the 13th September. This attack having already been described in report dated 16th September 1918, nothing concerning it will be included herewith further than to call attention to the fact that gas casualties resulting from it and the intermittent gas shelling that followed, continued to drift into the Hospital for several days after the attack proper. Casualties which were not carried on previous report are shown on the attached tabulation of casualties.

4. There were no new features in connection with these attacks. Yellow Cross shells predominated, but rather more than the ordinary amount of H.E. shells were mixed with the gas shells and some Blue Cross and Green Cross shells were also used.

5. Memorandum report covering the conduct of the different units of the Division in Gas defense measures during these attacks was made 17th September and for this reason it seems unnecessary to say anything further on the subject at this time.

6. In some of the units there appears to be a tendency on the part of Regimental and Battalion Gas Officers to disregard the necessity of reporting Gas attacks promptly and the securing of full data regarding same. At the same time the work of these Officers in looking after the protection of their respective units gas has been good.

7. Practically all the cases were light and there have been no deaths.

8. Included herewith are detailed statements covering specific attacks on units of the 325th Infantry, 326th Infantry and 328th Infantry. Also there is included herewith a tabulated statement of casualties by units and a map showing area bombarded with gas shells.

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BY J. Searle
ON 26 Oct 1981

H. J. Sheafe,
Captain Engineers,
Division Gas Officer.

325th Infantry.

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On September 16th, 1918 between the hours of 1 A.M. and 3.00 A.M. about 1200 shells were thrown into the Forêt de Facq and Bois de la Fourassé at co-ordinates 233.7-282.3; 233.8-382.8; 234.3-382.6; 234.2-382.1.

The bombardment was very severe, beginning with a combination of H.E. and Blue Cross which was later followed by Yellow Cross. The firing for the first 10 minutes was so rapid that it was impossible to count the number of shells dropping. The rate of fire then dropped to about 5 per minute, Mustard Gas shell predominating with and occasional H.E.

The calibers of the shells used were 77mm, 105mm, and 150mm. More 105's than any other caliber and a very small number of 150's were used.

The time, weather conditions and terrain were favorable for Mustard gassing. In the morning the sun came out and caused an increase in concentration of Mustard and the wind carried a light concentration over Battalion Headquarters and Machine Gun Company Headquarters of 325th Infantry, exposing a further 200 men. They were moved to higher ground which was free from gas.

The shelled area was not evacuated promptly by all units, as shown by the fact that Machine Gun Battalion units did not receive permission from Infantry Brigade Commander to evacuate until 10.00 A.M. Three men of this organization left to police up received body burns.

326th Infantry.

Approximately 200 Mustard and Blue Cross Gas shells, caliber 77mm, 105mm and a few 150mm, fell in Bois du Facq at point 382.4-233.5; 381.4-235.8 during the night of September 15th, between the hours of 1.30 A.M. and 3.15 A.M.

All conditions were very favorable for a mustard gas attack. The wind direction being W., velocity 2 M.P.H., temperature 18 degrees C., humidity high, terrain heavy woods with dense underbush.

The area of terrain affected was 1 sq. Km.

A Blue Cross dud, caliber 77mm, and fragments of 105mm shell marked with the Yellow Cross were located by the R. G. C. 326th Infantry at 382.4-233.5

The gas alarms was promptly given and masks adjusted. The majority of the men in the affected area were able to evacuate after wearing mask 2 hours, while others wore the mask for 3 hours before evacuating the positions. 10 men of the Machine Gun Company, 326th Infantry did not evacuate promptly. They later developed eye effects.

Guards were placed at approaches to the area. The disinfection of the area was begun as soon as day dawned. The disinfecting squad used Sag-Paste and each carried a quantity of Soda solution.

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All cases from this attack were light ones. Several were splashed with the liquid.

328th Infantry.

The area of the 328th Infantry including Norroy and north of village to Vandieres was exposed to intermittent gas shelling from 6.00 A.M. September 14th, 1918 to time of relief, night of September 19th, 1918.

On September 14th, 1918, (between hours of 6.00 A.M. and 8.00 A.M.) the eastern side of Norroy and Vandieres and region south for about 300 metres were severely bombarded with Green Cross and H.E. shells. Intermittent shells both gas and H.E. continued to fall throughout the morning and afternoon. At 3.00 P.M., for 15 minutes salvos of Blue Cross and H.E. fell in Norroy. This bombardment was shortly followed with Mustard gas shelling for 45 minutes. It was estimated that 400 Gas shells fell during this period. The caliber of shells used was 77mm. The length of front affected was about 500 metres.

Upon recommendation of the Battalion C.O. the Battalion Headquarters and troops in area were evacuated to western end of the town, which was free from Gas and protected from drift gas by a West wind. Masks were worn 4½ hours.

September 15th, 1918 from 1.00 A.M. to 3.00 A.M. Yellow and Green Cross shells fell in hill West of Norroy and in low ground between Vandieres and Norroy. An estimate of the number of shells was not obtainable. The 321st Machine Gun Battalion had companies advancing through areas and sustained casualties.

September 17th, 1918 between 2.30 A.M. and 3.00 A.M. approximately 300 Mustard Gas shells were thrown on road leading from Norroy to Vandieres at point 375.9-240.2 and west of this point about 600 yards.

Company "D" 328th Infantry was preparing for relief when the bombardment began. They held their position in the trenches until the bombardment was over as the pressure of H.E. mixed with Mustard made evacuation very dangerous.

to note

It is of interest that these areas were fired in- to intermittently in order to increase the concentrations already obtained.

825-6

HEADQUARTERS
157th F.A. Brigade
American E.F.

October 24, 1918.

From: The Commanding General 157th F.A. Brigade.
To: Commanding General Corps Artillery First C.A.
Subject: Gas bombardment.

*82nd Division
American Offensive*

1. On the night of October 18-19 the village of Champigneulle and the ravine north of Champigneulle was gased by the 157th Field Artillery Brigade. This village and ravine had proved to be a very serious obstacle to the infantry of the Eighty-Second Division who suffered severe losses from machine gun fire coming from this locality.

2. Fire upon this target was executed at 3 hours October 19th, 1918 and the same lasted for one hour and forty-five minutes, forty-eight guns in all participating in the bombardment. The rate of fire for the first three minutes was five rounds per gun per minute. Following this continuous fire at the rate of one hundred rounds per gun per hour.

3. The bombardment was started with No. 5 gas, the object being to secure as many casualties as possible by surprise effect. 1600 rounds of No. 5 gas were used followed by 5100 rounds of No. 20 Yperite, the calibre of all gas shells fired being 75 mm. The ravine to the north of Champigneulle was gased at the same time as the village as our observers had reported that whenever the town was heavily bombarded the Bosche would retreat to the ravine. The approximate area covered by the gas bombardment was two hundred and eighty thousand square meters.

C.D. Rhodes
Major General, U.S.A.
Commanding.

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batteries were exactly given and every battery reported as active, during the operations, fired a few shots, though very few, owing to the fact that they were reported in operation as soon as they opened up. A Battalion of our Artillery firing at the co-ordinates given us immediately stopped the fires reported.

2. The next gas attack of this Brigade was on October 12th, 1918, at 20 hours. Several wooded areas in the vicinity of 72.72, Map Buzancy, 1/20,000 No. 5 gas about 1000 rounds was fired which had the effect of silencing machine guns which were very troublesome. Meteorological conditions very foggy, very little wind.

3. On October 13th, 1918, the wooded areas at 72.90 and 72.97, Map Buzancy, 1/20,000 were gassed with 3000 rounds of No. 5 during the entire night, maximum rate of fire for ten minutes, concentrations being kept up by slow fire. Effect unknown. Weather conditions damp, very little wind, some rain.

4. On October 15th a small patch of woods at 73.96, Map Buzancy, 1/20,000 were gassed with 1000 rounds of No. 5 at 24 hours and 30 minutes. Previous to this time, Alliepont, same map, had been covered with 300 rounds. The effect of this fire is unknown as these points were thought to be assembling points for the enemy. Meteorological conditions; very little wind, very damp.

5. On October 18th, 1918, Champigneulle, Map Buzancy, 1/20,000, was gassed by this brigadem using 2500 rounds of No 5 at 6 hours. The effect so far as known. The 78th Division made an attack to the left of Champigneulle and no machine gun fire was reported from this town, though previous to thism this had been a very strong point. Meteorological conditions, heavy fog, and no wind. Champigneulle, on October 18th, was again gassed at 11 hours thirty minutes, 12,00 rounds being fired. Effect unknown. Meteorological conditions, clear with no wind, ground very damp. On October 19th, Champigneulle and ravine north of Champigneulle with trenches south of Champigneulle was gassed with 5000 rounds of No. 20, 1800 rounds of No 5 gas shell and 1000 rounds of No. 5 gas, 155's. No enemy activity noticed at this town for two days. On the 3rd day Champigneulle was reported to be occupied by the enemy with machine guns. Weather conditions, fair, slight wind, very damp.

6. On November 1st, 1918, as a part of the artillery preparation the woods 1 kilometer North-west of Imecourt was gassed with 5000 rounds of No. 5 gas shell. The entire 5000 rounds were fired between 4 hours and 30 minutes and 5 hours and 30 minutes. The effect, so far as known, was the complete elimination of the enemy from these woods, no resistance having been reported from these woods during the course of the attack. Meteorological conditions, very little wind, very misty and very damp. This was the last gas attack that was fired by this brigade.

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HEADQUARTERS
157th M.A. Brigade
A.E.F.

22nd February 1919

From: Commanding General
To: The Secretary, Office of Chief of Artillery, A.E.F.
Subject: Information requested by Chemical Warfare Service,
A.E.F.

1. This Brigade made the following gas attacks against the enemy:

5 hours before the attack at St. Mihiel, on September 12th, 1918, this brigade, which had been assigned chiefly to counter battery work, executed the following fires with gas shell.

Both the 75's and the 155's, put down on each battery of the enemy assigned to this brigade, a heavy concentration of No. 5 mixed with H.E., the H.E. Predominating at the first of the attack gradually increasing the percentage of No. 5 until they were using approximately all No. 5 gas. This concentration lasted for about fifteen minutes, each battery firing at a very rapid rate, the object of this attack being to surprise the enemy and kill him with phosgene if possible. After the first fifteen minutes of fire, each battery fired one round per gun per minute, putting down a heavy concentration of No. 20 mustard. After the concentration was built up the batteries only fired again against an enemy battery when the enemy battery showed signs of activity. This procedure was possible on account of the excellent service of the S.R.S. and S.R.O.T. in this area, reporting the German batteries with the co-ordinates as soon as they opened fire. Each German battery opening fire was silenced by a battalion of 75's or 155's firing at a rapid rate. During the three days fighting, September 12th, 13th and 14th this brigade fired 2000 No. 5 and 9500 No. 20. The Brigade also during this period, took under fire, five enemy observation posts, following the same procedure with these as with the German batteries. This fire continued during the entire 24 hours of each day. The effect, so far as known to us, was excellent, only 200 German shells falling in our Divisional Area which covered a front of approximately eight kilometers, during the day September 12th. Very little firing was done subsequent to this date by the Germans. The meteorological conditions were excellent for the use of mustard gas; a slight damp drizzle continuing during most of the operations, with very little wind. In connection with this attack, so far as the operations of this brigade is concerned a large measure of the success was due to the excellent French S.R.O.T and S.R.S. and to the best of our belief of the co-ordinates of the German

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Effect of German Gas.

The Artillery of this Brigade did not receive any heavy concentration of German gas. Very few casualties were suffered from gas and none of them very serious. There were no particular times at which concentrations of any note were put down but both in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne the Germans fired, Mustard, Phosgene, Lacrimatory, Sneezing and Vomiting gas. The concentrations were sufficient to cause masks to be worn sometimes for periods from 2 to 4 hours. Very few mustard burns were reported and in only one or two cases, notably the 319th Field Artillery in position near Baulny, were the gun squads compelled to leave their guns. At the time they left the guns no important fires were in progress. In case of an important operation the gunners would not have left the guns at this time, the gassing received by this brigade being more annoying than fatal. It is believed that the accuracy of our fire was materially affected in no way. From the observation of our officers, it is believed that the German gas was very badly used, from a tactical standpoint. In so far as the artillery of this brigade is concerned it was frittered away, a few shots at a time, which were not effective, when a little more would have caused heavier casualties and diminution of our firing power.

D.F. Craig,
 Brigadier General, U.S.A.
 Commanding.

E. C. Gwaltney
 E.C. Gwaltney
 Major, F.A.
 Adjutant.



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