

Mustard Gas

The German Army first used chlorine gas (Mustard gas) cylinders in April 1915 against the French Army at Ypres. French soldiers reported seeing yellow-green clouds drifting slowly towards the Allied trenches. They also noticed its distinctive smell which was like a mixture of pineapple and pepper. When the gas arrived at the Allied front-trenches soldiers began to complain about pains in the chests and a burning sensation in their throats.

Chlorine gas destroyed the respiratory organs of its victims and this led to a slow death by asphyxiation. One nurse described the death of one soldier who had been in the trenches during a chlorine gas attack. "He was sitting on the bed, fighting for breath, his lips plum colored. He was a magnificent young Canadian past all hope in the asphyxia of chlorine. I shall never forget the look in his eyes as he turned to me and gasped; I can't die! Is it possible that nothing can be done for me?" It was a horrible death, but as hard as they tried, doctors were unable to find a way of successfully treating chlorine gas poisoning.



British soldiers – victims of a mustard gas attack

WWI New Technologies Analysis

After learning about WWI, this activity allows you to explore the new technologies and devices which came out from this world war. Here is what your group will do:

1. Have someone in your group read the description and brief background about your particular device. Other students in the group should follow along taking note and pulling out the important information. Jot down a brief (3 or 4 sentence) paragraph summary.

2. Look at the image at the bottom of the page. Think about these questions when viewing it.
 - a. What ways do you think the device was used and how do you think it was utilized when fighting? Why?

 - b. By looking at your weapon do you think it was light weight and easy to maneuver to the battle grounds? How do you think it was operated?

3. Figure out a solution to the following dilemma: *If you were a soldier on either front (you pick a side) and you wanted to protect yourself from enemy fire from these weapons, what methods or ways would you use to counteract them and protect yourself?* (Example: If your enemy fought on a horse and you were a foot soldier, whose men continued to die by the horsemen, maybe your army would begin to wear protective armor or start riding on a horse.)