



## Source 5

**British Army source documenting the impact of gas attacks, 1917**

(Catalogue ref: WO 32/5176)

### How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. It contains information that could be useful in your presentation on life in the trenches. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- What is this report about?
- What effects has the new type of German shell had, according to this source?
- What seems to be the best defence against this weapon?
- Which aspects of trench warfare does this source provide information on?
- How could this source be used in your final presentation?



## Source 5

### LIQUID FROM NEW GERMAN SHELL.

Chemical and physiological examination has shown this liquid to consist principally of dichlorethyl sulphide, the other constituents being apparently only ordinary impurities resulting from the process of manufacture. The vapour, even when highly dilute, attacks the eyes and causes conjunctivitis, but the results are not felt until some hours after the exposure. If the vapour is breathed in sufficient quantity it also attacks the air passages, and may lead to death from pneumonia.

If the liquid comes into contact with the skin and is not perfectly removed at once, after a few hours it causes blisters which as a rule are very persistent. The great danger of blistering is from the spray of a bursting shell falling on the clothes, or from sitting on the ground or <sup>on</sup> objects which have received some of the liquid.

The most likely cause of the eyes or respiratory system being attacked is omission to put on the mask during a shell attack, or after the attack is over, during occupation of the ground; remaining for any considerable time in a dug-out into which the liquid has penetrated is almost sure to cause affection of the eyes, chest or skin, or all.