

(4) Chemical Weapons: *Tear Gas and Nerve Gas*

Since WWI, a variety of man-made, supertoxic chemical substances have been used in weapons to kill, injure and incapacitate. Chemical agents can be dispensed in gas, vapour, liquid or solid forms and are used in artillery, rocket launchers, ground missiles, mines, grenades, spray tanks and aerial bombs.

CS Gas:

Chloracetophenone in Chlorpicrin (CS) gas was developed by the British in the 1950s as a potent replacement for tear gas. CS is considered a “personnel incapacitating agent” and is the chemical agent in what are often called a “riot control” weapons. It attacks the eyes, nose and throat and burns the skin. By 1965, CS was being heavily used in Vietnam, particularly against resistance fighters and civilians who took refuge in tunnels or caves to protect themselves from B-52 bombers. If they survived choking to death on CS and managed to escape from their hideouts, they often didn't survive the B-52 bombers that often followed up the CS gas attacks with conventional saturation bombing.

One of the main types of ammunition used by the US Air Force to “dispense” CS tear gas in Vietnam was the CBU-30 cluster bomb. It consists of an SUU-13 bomb casing filled with 1,280 gas-filled BLU-39/B23 submunitions carrying a total of 66 pounds of CS tear gas.

During the Vietnam War, CS cluster bombs were dropped by at least two types of US warplanes that have entertained at Canadian air shows:

F-4 Phantom
F-100 Sabre



The F-100 Sabre dropped CS gas in Vietnam and has also performed at Canadian military air shows.

VX Gas:

British scientists developed VX nerve gas while conducting insecticide research. It was found to be many times more lethal than previously developed chemical agents. By 1961, the US had begun carrying out large-scale production of this nerve gas at their military facility in Dugway, Utah.

VX production however was supposed to have stopped in 1968 when an accident during a bombing test raised national attention and caused a public uproar. During a “routine” bombing test by an F-4 Phantom at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah on March 13, 1968, a cloud of VX nerve gas drifted toward a nearby town, killing 6,000 sheep in the appropriately-named Skull Valley.

F-4 Phantoms are known to have provided entertainment for the Canadian public at air shows in London and Ottawa.

In 1969, leaking VX weapons stored at the US military base on Okinawa, Japan, sent 23 US servicemen to hospital. Until then, the Japanese did not know the US was stockpiling chemical weapons on their soil.

F-4 Phantom



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Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

In 1997, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, was signed by over 100 of the world's governments. However, the US exempted itself from the treaty by limiting inspections “in order to protect American pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.”

Source: <www.krysstal.com/demo/cracy_1997.html#chemical>

On Feb. 19, 1920, Secretary for War and Air, Winston Churchill asked air warfare pioneer Sir Hugh Trenchard to provide “asphyxiating bombs... for use in preliminary operations against turbulent tribes.” Churchill also said: “I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas. I am strongly in favour of using poison gas against uncivilised tribes.”

Source: Geoff Simons, *Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam* (1994)

“It may be several weeks or even months before I shall ask you to drench Germany with poison gas, and if we do it let us do it one hundred percent. In the meanwhile, I want the matter studied in cold blood by sensible people and not by that particular set of psalm-singing uniformed defeatists.”

Winston Churchill, Statement to the Chiefs of Staff, July 6, 1944.