[S.S. 734].

GERMAN TRAPS AND MINES.

(*Supersedes Ia/31737, "German Ruses."*)

1. ABANDONED POSITIONS.

Attention is drawn to the practice of the enemy, when making an *organized* withdrawal, of leaving certain positions, dug-outs, dumps, etc., mined, the firing arrangements being such that the charges are exploded after the position has been occupied by our own troops (*see* S.S. 163, "Hints on Reconnaissance for Mines, etc.").

2. LIKELY TRAPS.

The following should be regarded with special suspicion until investigation has been carried out by experts:—

Attractively furnished dug-outs.

Dug-outs under roads.

Single houses left standing when others have been destroyed.

All new work, or new trench or other equipment, in the midst of weather-worn ground or articles, *e.g.*, recently disturbed soil, new metalling, new trench boards.

Souvenirs, such as helmets, shells, badges and bayonets, left in conspicuous positions.

Articles sticking in the ground, such as stick grenades or shovels.

3. METHODS OF FIRING.

German traps and mines may be classified under the following headings according to the nature of their firing arrangements.

(*a*) **Delay action fuzes.**—The action of these fuzes depends on the eating away of a wire by a corrosive solution. The "delay" may be any time up to one month. Two patterns are known:—

(i.) *Automatic detonating device.*—This device differs from any other German fuze and can be easily identified. It is employed with bulk charges and placed in the explosive. For description *see* S.S. 733, "German Automatic Detonating Device."

(ii.) *1917 long delay action fuze.*—This is a counterfeit 1904 pattern German gun fuze and can only be identified by the fact that the gaine is painted red, but when screwed into a shell is indistinguishable from the ordinary fuze. For description *see* S.S. 732, "1917 German Long Delay Action Fuze for Demolition Purposes." It is primarily intended for destroying guns and ammunition. The 1904 fuze is principally used with 10-cm., 13-cm. and 15-cm. gun shell and with 15-cm. and 21-cm. howitzer shell. It is not used with any field artillery shell (*see* S.S. 306, "Notes on German Fuzes," page 68).

These fuzes are absolutely silent and require no connections outside the charge. New work or signs of the ground having been disturbed will probably be the only indications of their presence.

(*b*) **Clockwork devices.**—These are of complicated manufacture and will probably be rarely met with. They may possibly be discovered by the ticking.

(*c*) **Percussion devices.**—The percussion device may be set in action by treading or pressing on a board hidden under earth or by pressing against a railing, etc., when a safety pin will be withdrawn, releasing the spring of a spring lighter, or a striker may be driven into a detonator.

(*d*) **Electrical devices.**—Electrical devices depend on a pull on a wire or pressure on some article completing a contact.

(*e*) **Mines fired electrically from a distance.**—This method is chiefly applicable to bridges and billets used as H.Q.s, where telephone wires can be utilized for the firing circuit. These mines can be fired at will by the enemy at any moment so long as the wires remain uncut.

As a rule, suspicious wires should be cut at once, but care must be taken not to cut taut wires (these may be found mixed up with slack telephone wires) as they may be simply supporting a weight, which, if the wire is severed, will drop on and ignite a detonator. Wires, if cut, should not be pulled out, but the cut ends should be turned away from each other and carefully marked, both ends of each wire alike, so that experts when they arrive can investigate, trace and remove the charge.

4. TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF TRAPS.

1. Dug-outs.

(*a*) A shovel stuck into the side of a dug-out between the timbers; when the shovel is removed, it pulls a wire which explodes a mine.

(*b*) A French stove with stove-pipe dismantled; one wire attached to leg of stove and the other to stove-pipe near by. When the stove-pipe is picked up, a mine is fired.

(*c*) A charge of 2,000 lbs. Perdite in a seemingly dead end of the gallery of a dug-out and connected to ordinary telephone wires. Face of the gallery made up to look like undisturbed ground with pick marks on it.

(*d*) A window weight suspended by fine cord stretched across the entrance of a dug-out. On a man entering, the cord would be broken and the weight fall into a box of detonators connected to a charge of explosive.

(*e*) Cap badges, artificial flowers, bits of evergreen, pieces of shell and other articles likely to be picked up as "souvenirs," left in dug-outs and attached to charges.

(*f*) Hand rails on the steps of dug-outs attached by wires to a charge.

(*g*) One of the timbers on the side of the staircase of a dug-out was noticed to be projecting slightly inwards at the top, though it was in place at the bottom. A nail had been driven through its lower end, the point of which was placed against the cap of the cartridge, which had a charge of explosive behind it. Thus, if driven home, the nail would have struck the cap and exploded the charge.

(*h*) In dug-outs constructed with casing, mortice and tenon jointed, the position of the charge is sometimes indicated by the wedging of the timber where the sides have been cut and removed.

(*i*) A dozen stick grenades to be fired by means of a wire attached to a sandbag, which has to be moved before the door of a dug-out can be opened.

(*j*) Charge in a chimney, with length of fuze attached, which would be ignited if a fire were lighted.

(*k*) Detonators in lumps of coal.

(*l*) Book on table, with wire down leg of table. Charge would fire if book were lifted.

(*m*) A blown-in entrance to a dug-out is not always a safety sign. Charges may be concealed in the unblown portions. They are generally crudely arranged contact charges.

(*n*) A branch placed over the entrance of a dug-out as if to conceal it; on moving the branch, an explosion was caused *two minutes later*, the dug-out being completely destroyed.

(*o*) A false step in the stairway of a dug-out of thin planking making contact when trodden on.

2. Trenches.

(*a*) Hand grenades liable to explode when kicked or trodden on.

(*b*) Trench boards (*new* in every case) on fire-step, which detonated grenades when trodden on.

(*c*) Barricades interlaced with wires attached to stick grenades.

(*d*) Hand grenades buried in a trench, with telephone wire just showing attached to the grenade.

3. Roads.

(*a*) A cavity hollowed out under the road, leaving only the crust. An 8-in. shell placed in the cavity with a contact fuze arranged to fire at the slightest pressure.

(*b*) An automatic box-mine, designed apparently to explode under a weight greater than that of a man, has been found on a road. The box was a few inches below the surface of the road.

4. Stables.

Grenade placed in a hole in the floor of a stable and covered with a brick, the whole being concealed under straw. Any pressure on the brick causes the grenade to explode.

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