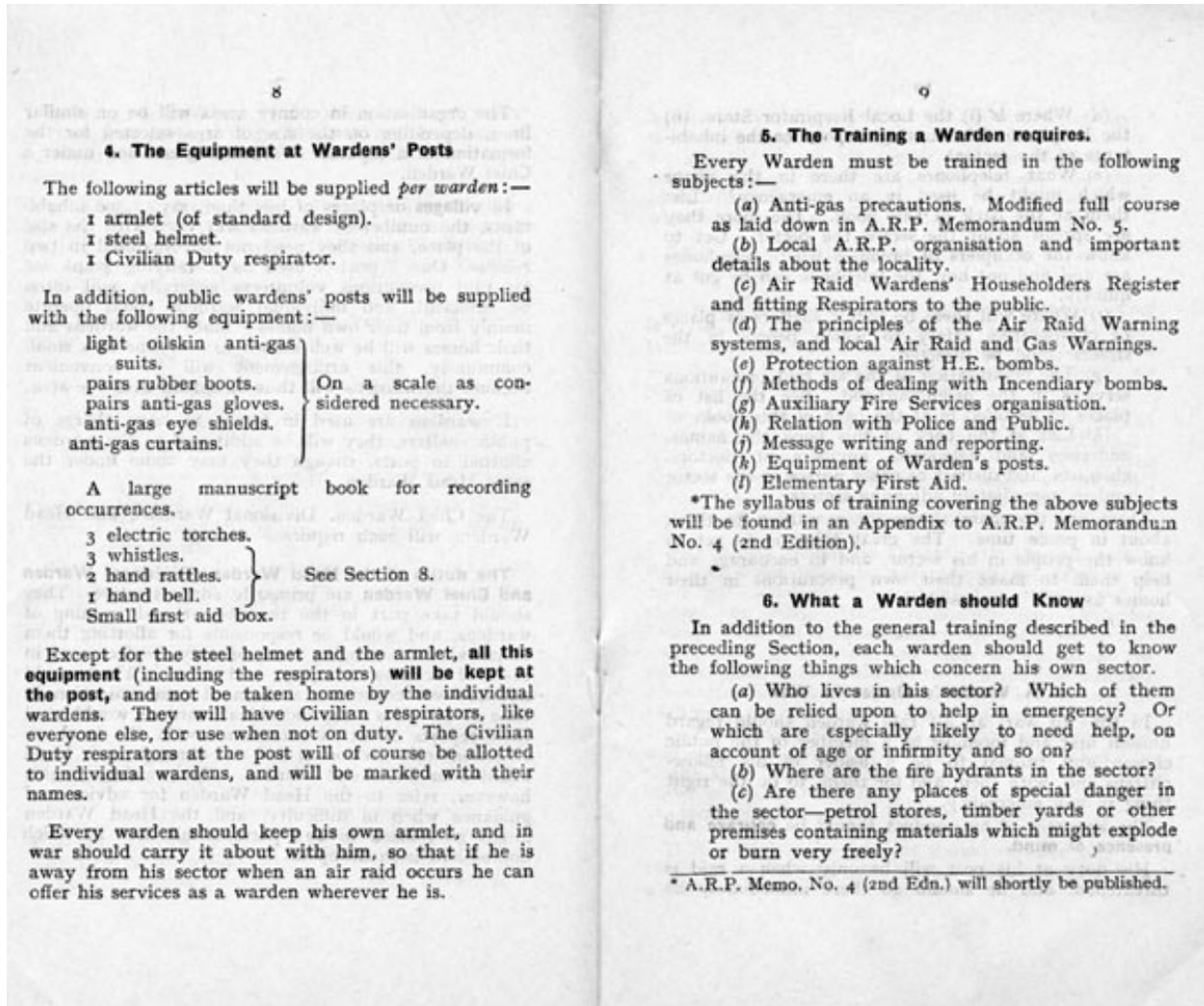


# Wartime West Sussex 1939 - 1945: AIR RAIDS – ARP WARDENS

## Duties of Air Raid Wardens

Extracts from ARP Handbook No. 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)



### 4. The Equipment at Wardens' Posts

The following articles will be supplied *per warden* :—

- 1 armlet (of standard design).
- 1 steel helmet.
- 1 Civilian Duty respirator.

In addition, public wardens' posts will be supplied with the following equipment:—

- light oilskin anti-gas suits.
  - pairs rubber boots.
  - pairs anti-gas gloves.
  - anti-gas eye shields.
  - anti-gas curtains.
- } On a scale as considered necessary.

A large manuscript book for recording occurrences.

- 3 electric torches.
  - 3 whistles.
  - 2 hand rattles.
  - 1 hand bell.
  - Small first aid box.
- } See Section 8.

Except for the steel helmet and the armlet, **all this equipment** (including the respirators) **will be kept at the post**, and not be taken home by the individual wardens. They will have Civilian respirators, like everyone else, for use when not on duty. The Civilian Duty respirators at the post will of course be allotted to individual wardens, and will be marked with their names.

Every warden should keep his own armlet, and in war should carry it about with him, so that if he is away from his sector when an air raid occurs he can offer his services as a warden wherever he is.

### 5. The Training a Warden requires.

Every Warden must be trained in the following subjects:—

- (a) Anti-gas precautions. Modified full course as laid down in A.R.P. Memorandum No. 5.
- (b) Local A.R.P. organisation and important details about the locality.
- (c) Air Raid Wardens' Householders Register and fitting Respirators to the public.
- (d) The principles of the Air Raid Warning systems, and local Air Raid and Gas Warnings.
- (e) Protection against H.E. bombs.
- (f) Methods of dealing with Incendiary bombs.
- (g) Auxiliary Fire Services organisation.
- (h) Relation with Police and Public.
- (j) Message writing and reporting.
- (k) Equipment of Warden's posts.
- (l) Elementary First Aid.

\*The syllabus of training covering the above subjects will be found in an Appendix to A.R.P. Memorandum No. 4 (2nd Edition).

### 6. What a Warden should Know

In addition to the general training described in the preceding Section, each warden should get to know the following things which concern his own sector.

- (a) Who lives in his sector? Which of them can be relied upon to help in emergency? Or which are especially likely to need help, on account of age or infirmity and so on?
- (b) Where are the fire hydrants in the sector?
- (c) Are there any places of special danger in the sector—petrol stores, timber yards or other premises containing materials which might explode or burn very freely?

\* A.R.P. Memo. No. 4 (2nd Edn.) will shortly be published.

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(d) Where is (i) the Local Respirator Store, (ii) the Respirator Distributing Depot, for the inhabitants of the sector?

(e) What telephones are there in the sector which might be used in an emergency? List them at the back of this book. The more they are spread about the sector the better. Get to know the occupiers of premises where telephones are and find out how the telephone can be got at quickly.

(f) Where will there be public shelters or places of comparative safety to which people in the streets could be directed.

(g) The organisation of the air raid precautions services in the neighbourhood. See the list of places to be filled in at the back of this book.

(h) List at the back of this book the names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors, chemists, and district or other nurses in the sector and in immediately adjoining sectors.

These are the main things for a warden to think about in peace time. The great thing is to get to know the people in his sector, and to encourage and help them to make their own precautions in their homes as good as possible.

## 7. A Warden's Duties in War

In time of war, an air raid warden should regard himself first and foremost as a member of the public chosen and trained to be a leader of his fellow-citizens and, with them and for them, to do the right thing in any emergency.

The keynotes of his conduct should be **courage and presence of mind**.

His duty at his post will be only when a raid is threatened, and he should go there immediately he

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hears the Warning signal (if he has not been warned to do so before), and see that his equipment is there. He should put on his armband, and his steel helmet with its anti-gas curtain and the eye-shield, and carry his Civilian Duty respirator. He should also put a whistle in his pocket.

The Senior Warden or Second Warden at the post will take charge.

If wardens come on duty **before the Action Warning is given**, it will be best for them to remain at the post. Remember that until the Action Warning the public are expected to continue their ordinary occupations without interruption. See Section 8.

**When the Warning signal is heard**, or when the Action Warning is received at the post by telephone from headquarters, the public duty of the wardens begins. **One warden will always remain at the post**, to be ready to answer the telephone and to send reports. The others will patrol the sector.

The streets should be cleared. People not within reach of home (that is, who cannot get there in 5 minutes) should be directed to the nearest public shelter, or other refuge accommodation. Vehicles (except those on official duty) should stop before the end of the 5 minutes, and their occupants go to shelter. The wardens should try and see that *vehicles are drawn into the kerb* before being left, so as not to hinder the movement of fire engines, and so on. In narrow main streets they should be directed to side streets if possible. Horses should be taken out of the shafts and tied to a lamp-post, etc., in a side street or somewhere where they would get the best available protection from walls or buildings.

If it is night, the wardens should at once call the attention of the occupier to any unobscured light in a building.

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As soon as the streets in the sector are clear, each patrolling warden should go back to the post, or to some pre-arranged spot where the other wardens can find him. **Wardens are not expected to remain in the open while a raid is in progress**, except when there is something definite for them to do. They should, however, stay where they can quickly see if anything happens near them. They can have quite good protection by standing in a doorway or archway.

**If bombs fall** in the vicinity, the first duty of each wardens' post is generally speaking to get reports through to headquarters. See Section 9. **This duty must come before any help to individuals.**

How to give a **local gas warning** is described in Section 8.

Any individual help which can be given without delaying reports should be given unstintingly, even if bombs are still falling. It may too be possible to get assistance from neighbours. But try to prevent panic-stricken people rushing out into the street.

A warden with some knowledge of first aid may be able to help the injured before the first aid party arrives.

**If small incendiary bombs have been dropped**, some will probably lodge at the tops of buildings. The wardens should see that any people who may be in the building know the bomb is there. The occupants, or their neighbours, should try to deal with it. In this case the warning to the occupants of the building should take priority over the making of a report to headquarters.

A look-out should be kept for the **fire patrol**.

Similarly when the first aid party, or rescue party, or the police, arrive they will expect to find a warden at the post to guide them and tell them what has happened.

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It is important to repeat that the wardens' first duty is to their sector as a whole, before even their duty to help individuals in distress. **The post must always be kept manned**, so that someone can be found there, and can answer the telephone. If all the wardens were scattered in damaged houses, and could not be seen, unfortunate delay might result when the various services arrived.

**When the Raiders Passed signal is sounded**, one warden should go round the streets of the sector ringing the hand bell, unless there is still gas about (see Section 8). If no bombs have been dropped, all the wardens should await orders from headquarters before the post is closed.

If there is bomb damage in the sector, the wardens may have work to do for some time, until all casualties have been removed and fires put out. They must in any case wait so long as there is gas about, unless they are relieved by instructions from headquarters.

**Every warden when released from duty** must first return his equipment to the post.

If he has reason to think his clothing may be contaminated with blister gas, he should go to the nearest first aid post for cleansing.

**If a warden is away from his own sector** when he hears the Warning signal, and cannot get there in the time, he should be ready to be of use wherever he is. If he is at work, he may be most useful in the premises where he works. Otherwise he should go to the nearest wardens' post, and offer his services. His training will make him valuable, but he should remember that he may not know the sector as well as the wardens belonging to it, and should be ready to do what he is told so as to make himself of most use.