

FIRE FIGHTING—METHODS & PROBLEMS

IN spite of our wish to follow a policy of PANCH SHEEL our country was recently subjected to a naked aggression by enemies. Whether we choose it or not, that may happen again. We must, therefore, be prepared for the worst.

An hostile air attack may include the use of large numbers of small incendiary bombs, the object of which is to cause fires. The number of fires which might be started by an air raid, or a series of air raids, must be a matter of conjecture, but obviously might be very large. Briefly it may be stated that one large bomber can carry between 1,000 and 2,000 small incendiary bombs, which if scattered over a built up area, and not dealt with within two or three minutes after falling, might start so many fires that no fire service could be expected to deal with them all. Moreover the water mains might be damaged or drained dry for fire fighting elsewhere, with the result that there might not be enough water near by for a fire engine to use; or again roads might be damaged by high explosive bombs and so prevent a fire engine from reaching the site of fire.

Steps are being taken to augment fire services for the purpose of dealing with the emergency problem, but it will readily be appreciated that sufficient appliances might not be available to deal with every fire that might be caused by incendiary bombs; and as each fire left unattended in a building is a potential "burn out" of that and possibly neighbouring buildings, it is obviously of vital importance that as many of the public as possible should be in a position to deal with fires in their own property, before they have a chance of spreading so as to require the assistance of fire service. This is particularly important in the case of factories, works, hospitals, schools and other large institutions.

It has become necessary to muster the energy and the services of the individual citizens in this

regard. Every ward, Mohalla or colony, should make a concerted effort to make the member inhabitants fully conscious of the risk of fire and prepare themselves to meet the emergency, by organising house fire parties under the warden service of the area.

The equipment for each party will be one stirrup pump, three buckets full of water and a few sand bags. The resident may voluntarily select suitable number of men required for such house fire parties and contact the warden of the locality for receiving elementary instructions in the principle of elementary fire fighting.

WHAT TO DO IF FIRE BREAKS OUT

1. Do your best to put out the fire yourself, but if you cannot, then inform the Fire Station immediately. Be clear and concise, but do not get excited.
2. Exclude oxygen by keeping doors and windows shut when possible. Attack the fires at hearts and at close range, but do not go too near an incendiary bomb.
3. Do what you can to pacify and reassure people by personal advice.
4. If you have to open a door which may have fire on the other side, and it opens towards you, place your foot a few inches from it before turning the handle. The door may fly open but your foot will check it. The door will protect you against smoke and heat.
5. When you have to go near the seat of fire, keep low and crawl if necessary because the smoke and fumes are much less dense near the floor. Keep wet handkerchief, or any cloth round the mouth to avoid inhaling smoke.
6. In case you are trapped on the upper floor of the building and your escape route has been cut off, you should keep the door shut, tie the bed sheets or similar materials together end to end, attaching one end securely to a heavy piece of

furniture, throw the other end out through the window and slide down slowly.

HOW TO DEAL WITH AN INCENDIARY BOMB

You can tackle a small incendiary bomb yourself (better if you have some one to help you) if you follow these instructions.

The bomb will burn fiercely for a minute or so, throwing out burning sparks, and afterwards less fiercely. It will set fire to anything inflammable within reach. You should try to deal with it before it has caused a big fire.

Before you can get close enough to do anything, you will probably have to cool down the room with water, preferably with a line of stirrup pump. There are two ways of dealing with the bomb itself:

(1) It can be controlled by means of the *stirrup hand pump*, with a spray of water which, although does not extinguish the bomb, makes it burn out quickly and helps to prevent the fire from spreading. Water must not be used on a bomb in any other way.

(2) Use of sand or other material. After the priming composition of the bomb has finished burning, it should be quite easy to approach close enough to cover it with sand or other suitable material. A sand bag 3/4 full with sand or dry "matti" (earth) will serve this purpose. Keeping the bag in front of your eyes, approach the bomb and drop the bag, covering it from all sides. The bomb will burn out inside without causing severe damage, and the glare and radiated heat are reduced (this may not be possible in case there is a high explosive attachment fixed to the bomb).

FIRE FIGHTING HINTS

The principal points in fire fighting are briefly summarised below in the form of "DO's and "DONT's".

Do :

1. Break a panel near the lock if it is necessary to force open a door.
2. Turn off gas at the main on entering. This will prevent an explosion.
3. Start at the top and work downwards when searching a house.
4. Exclude oxygen by keeping doors and windows closed when possible.
5. Crawl, don't walk, when in thick smoke.
6. Keep near walls, where floors and stairs are strongest.
7. Attack fires at closest possible range.
8. Attack the seat of the fire.
9. Attack oil fires with sand, earth or foam.
10. Before leaving, be sure that all fires are out.
11. When leaving, turn off electricity at main.
12. Remember that phosphorus will re-ignite when dry.
13. Keep all fire fighting appliances in order.
14. Keep ample supplies of water if you cannot have too much. Don't.
1. Go alone in a smoke-filled building except to save life.
2. Enter a burning building or room, except to save life, without fire fighting appliances.
3. Play water on electric wiring.

GENERAL

1. When in smoke, and looking

for a window from which to escape, remember that fire may be reflected from a mirror and make it resemble a window.

2. Make a note of the position of the nearest :

- (a) Fire Station
- (b) Emergency Water Supplies, e.g. ponds, rivers etc.

WARNING SIGNALS AND YOU

(a) Air Raid Warning—(Red Signal)—This is a warning to denote that air craft is heading towards the city which may be effected within a few minutes. A signal on the siren of 5 minutes duration consisting of a fluctuating or warbling note of varying pitch.

(b) Raiders Passed—(Green Signal)—This is given by a continuous signal on sirens of 2 minutes duration at a steady pitch.

Supervise the following precautions :

(1) Send every member of the family immediately to the refuse-room.

(2) Make a round of the house, closing all doors and windows.

(3) Make sure that no lights are left burning which may be visible from outside.

(4) Extinguish all fires in ovens, and turn off gas from the cylinder.

(5) Use your common sense to do other things, according to the position of your refuse-room and the type of house you live in.

(6) Sit, or preferably lie down, and keep still, keeping warm with blankets or other coverings.

(7) Neither smoke nor light any fire.

(8) Pass the time sewing, reading, writing, playing cards, or quiet games, listening to the radios. Avoid exertion.

PROTECTION

(a) When in open—Upon hearing the Air Raid Warning do not run to cover if there is no time. Lie down flat on the ground, face downwards, keep chest slightly above the ground and rest on your elbows. Plug your ears with cotton and if cotton is not available, plug them with the palm of your hands. Put something flexible between your teeth to keep mouth open.

(b) Near a building—Stand near walls, archways and doorways. Do not lean directly against the walls.

(c) In the Building—Corners of building are safe places and be away from glass windows and doors.

(d) In Cinema—Be seated and keep calm.

(e) In train—Be under the seats, put off lights.

(f) Driving a car : (1) Stop the car keeping to the left.

(2) Leave the key in its place, so that others can drive it in case you are a casualty.

(3) Act as if you are in open.

(g) In a tonga or bullock cart—Unyoke the animals and tie them to the tree. Act as if you are in open.

Unexploded Bombs

If you know of a bomb which has fallen but not exploded, tell a policeman or air raid warden at once.

Leave it alone and keep away from it. It may still explode, even sometime after it has been dropped.

PERSONAL NOTES & NEWS

● Mr. M.N. Rao, Government Headquarters Hospital, Masulipatam A.P. has been promoted and posted as Nursing Tutor, Government General Hospital, Kurnool, A.P. Mr. Rao successfully completed his Tutor's course last year at the College of Nursing, New Delhi, under a TNAI Scholarship.

From Abroad

● Miss G. Sthalekar has resumed duty under Sir Dorabji Tata Trust on completion of her Public Health Administration and Teaching Course at the Post Graduate School of Nursing, Wellington, New Zealand.

● Miss Uma Sen Gupta has returned to Sadar Hospital, Ranchi, Bihar after completion of her studies in Wellington, New Zealand.

● Miss J.M. Wrigleworth has joined the Village Health Centre, Karur, Madras States after a period of furlough in England.