

GAUZE MASKS FOR MEN ON TRANSPORT KEEP FLU AT BAY

Two Die of Pneumonia at Sea; 28,898 Land Safely in France

ONLY 20 CASES IN CORPS

Medical Authorities Say Wave Has Nearly Run Its Trouble- some Course Through A.E.F.

Five thousand American soldiers last week wore chemically-soaked white masks all the while a 35,000 ton ocean liner was speeding them to France over the North Atlantic.

But when these soldiers, looking like ku-klux clansmen, disembarked at a base port there were no missing men when the rolls were called. Not a single soldier on that voyage had died of influenza or pneumonia. The medical officers in eight days had found only 34 men suffering from these diseases.

These facts stood out when 17 ships in two days landed 28,898 men at several A.E.F. base ports and the records showed that for 28,898 safely landed, two men had died at sea of pneumonia. There had been only 139 cases of influenza and pneumonia in the convoys.

Epidemic on Wane

At the same time this became known, it was announced at the office of the Chief Surgeon, A.E.F., that from all signs the backbone of the epidemic that has been sweeping the world has been broken so far as American soldiers in France are concerned. Reports from the whole Army showed that the number of cases had declined remarkably and that the severity of infections had been lessened.

Influenza as an epidemic, Army medical authorities say, runs a course approximately two months, and the second wave that has struck the A.E.F. is now almost at the end of its two-months' course.

They also say that the course of the disease has proved that they are closely related to living and sleeping conditions, practically all cases being in areas away from the front where troops had to be sheltered in large groups. In proof of this, one Army corps at the front in three months had only 20 cases of pneumonia.

More Room to Move In

Emphatic steps have been taken to fight the spread of respiratory diseases, these steps beginning the moment troops step on transports in the States.

Every man on embarking must have three blankets, an overcoat and a

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slicker, and he must be wearing heavy underclothing.

For ocean transport and at all places in France—barracks or tents—regulations provide 40 square feet of space per man instead of 20 square feet, which was the proportion during the rush months of summer.

The Red Cross has delivered to hospitals, camps and transports 200,000 gauze masks of the kind worn on the 35,000 ton liner which made last week's record, and is now making 500,000 more masks. These masks consist of a square of gauze which is saturated with a one per cent solution of iodine in alcohol. There are strips of adhesive for fastening the mask over the mouth and nose.

Sneezing and coughing are the ways in which infection is spread, not to mention spitting, whose dangers are already generally appreciated, the medical officers say.

In hospital wards the gauze is generally used. All influenza and pneumonia patients have the gauze at hand ready for use when they sneeze or cough.

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