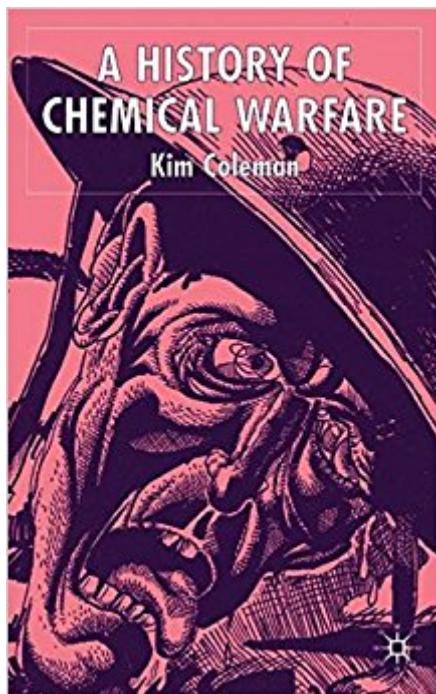


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A History Of Chemical Warfare



Synopsis

This book provides an analysis of the development and deployment of chemical weapons from 700BC to the present day. The First World War is examined in detail since it remains the most significant experience of the chemical threat, but the Second World War, and post-war conflicts are also evaluated. Additionally, protocols attempting to control the proliferation and use of chemical weapons are assessed. Finally, the book examines the threat (real and imagined) from a chemical warfare attack today by rationally assessing to what extent terrorist groups around the world are capable of making and using such weapons.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'At a time when the threat of chemical warfare looms ever larger this timely book makes an invaluable contribution, combining historical and contemporary perspectives to show how indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction have been developed and deployed.' - Professor Andrew Lambert, King's College, University of London 'Her excellent synthesis from Antiquity to the present day renders the causes and evils of chemical warfare, and the difficulties of chemical disarmament, comprehensible to everyone.' - Rolf Petri, Professor of Contemporary History, University of Venice 'A well-researched and clearly written history of chemical warfare, with many fascinating details, which is much needed and deserves to be read.' - Dr Peter Morris, The National Museum of Science and Industry 'an excellent historical perspective.' - Dr Tom Inch, OBE, former Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Chemistry

KIM COLEMAN gained her PhD from London University before lecturing in Modern European History at the University of Essex until 2004. She has acted as a consultant on educational books and for the BBC, dealing with nuclear and chemical warfare in the Twentieth Century and is currently researching her next book, a comparative history of the Battle of Arnhem in 1944. She lives in London with her three children.

A truly difficult work full of technical errors, typos, and a major lack of editorial oversight. The frequent use of "mustard gas" (which is actually a liquid) was particularly annoying. CBRN professionals will find much in here to bug them, and few will likely want to slog through its many inconsistencies and errors. It might be worth it only because there is some solid research buried in there and even a few original insights, but it is disguised by turgid academic prose. It reads like a masters thesis at a second tier school and lacks the depth of knowledge both about the weapons it describes, and the history it attempts to survey. Its conclusions are likewise flawed at several key junctures especially on WWI where it parrots the conventional wisdom regarding chemical weapons, even though it acknowledges the role propaganda played in forming it. It is also missing what I view as a number of key works and primary sources within its sources cited, but its bibliography and footnotes are useful for anyone looking to mine them for potential sources, especially anyone that is unfamiliar with the subject. Most of the major secondary works are adequately noted (even though incorrectly interpreted and cited). One word of caution: there are some citations that appear to be entirely made up. For example, a reference to Leonardo da Vinci and chemical weapons is to a work that makes no mention of such. Best to treat this entire work as suspect, even if its highlights are generally in accordance with the majority of secondary literature on the subject, though surrounded by errors and inaccuracies.

In "A History of Chemical Warfare", the author gives us a history of the development and use of chemical weapons from ancient times to the present. A lot of attention is given to WWI since the "great war to end all wars" saw the most prolific use of chemical weapons either before or since the war. Additionally, protocols attempting to control the proliferation and use of chemical weapons are assessed. Finally, the book examines the threat (real and imagined) from a chemical warfare attack today by rationally assessing to what extent terrorist groups around the world are capable of making and using such weapons. I thought the book was just so so. It was dry and somewhat boring.

Poorly researched, with resulting statements that are just untrue. Such as the supposed fact that Nazi 'G' agents were German & not Allied codes. On one page (not keyed in the index), Zyklon B is said to a HCN-based product (true) but on another page it is said to be a hydrochloric acid-based product!

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