

Chemical weapons in the Great War

Tom Simoens

Senior Captain

Tom.simoens@mil.be

Brussels

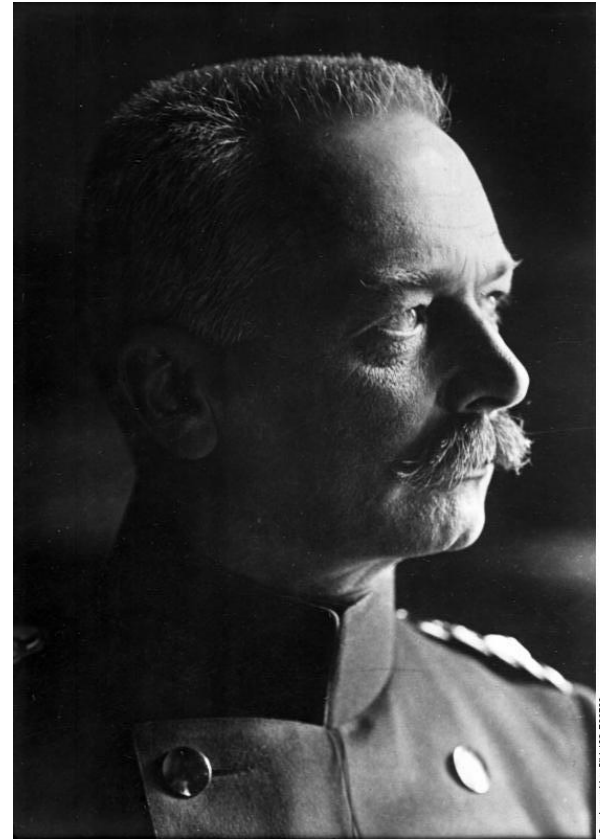
07 Dec 2015

1. Who initiated chemical warfare?

First use of...	<u>non</u>-lethal toxic agents	lethal toxic agents
By France	August 1914	February 1916
By the German Empire	October 1914	April 1915
By Great Britain		September 1915



Fritz Haber



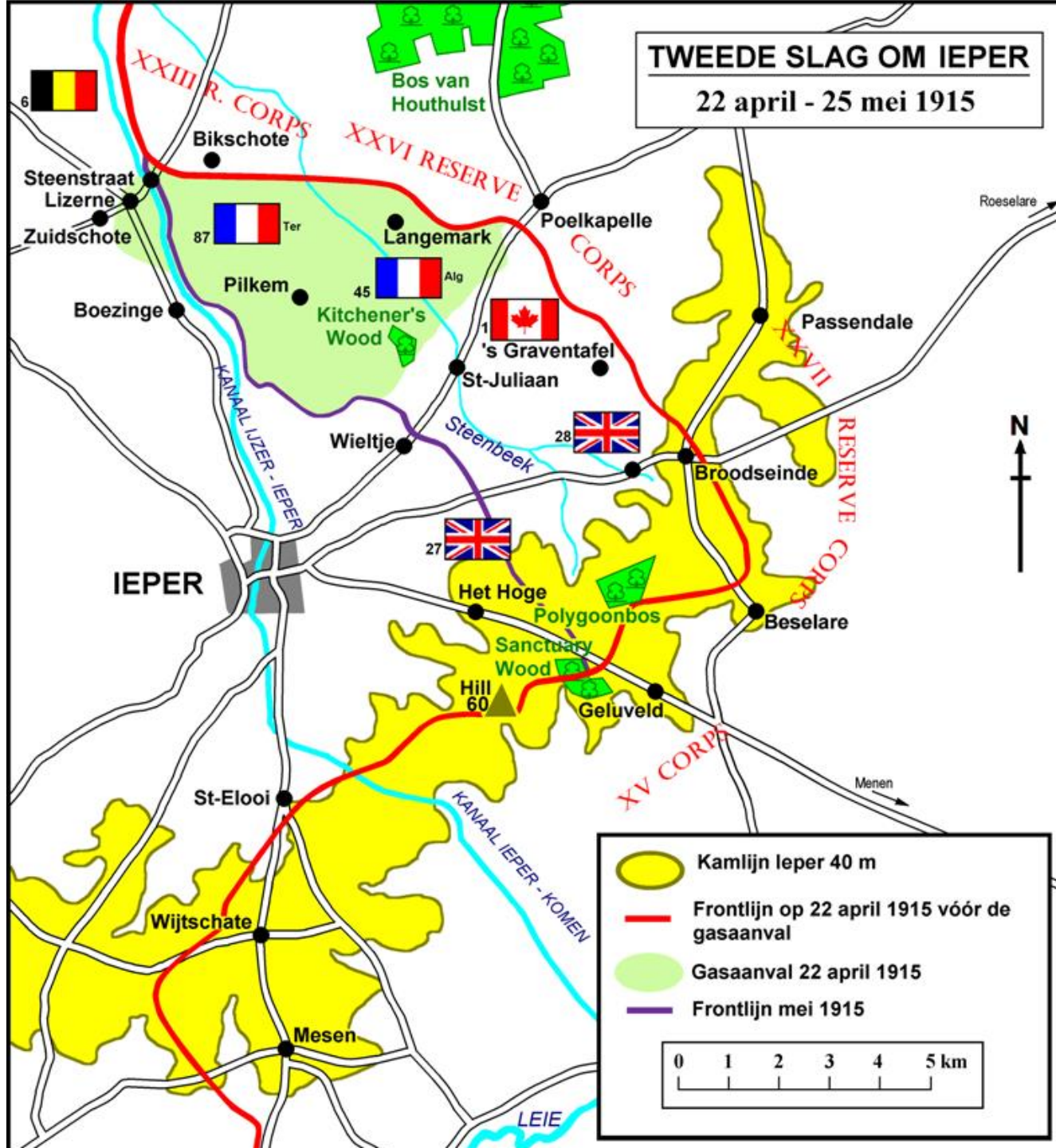
Erich von Falkenhayn



Gas cloud

TWEEDE SLAG OM IEPER

22 april - 25 mei 1915



2. How did chemical warfare develop during the war ?

First trend:

arms race and battlefield competition



1. Improving the agents

2. Improving the delivery systems

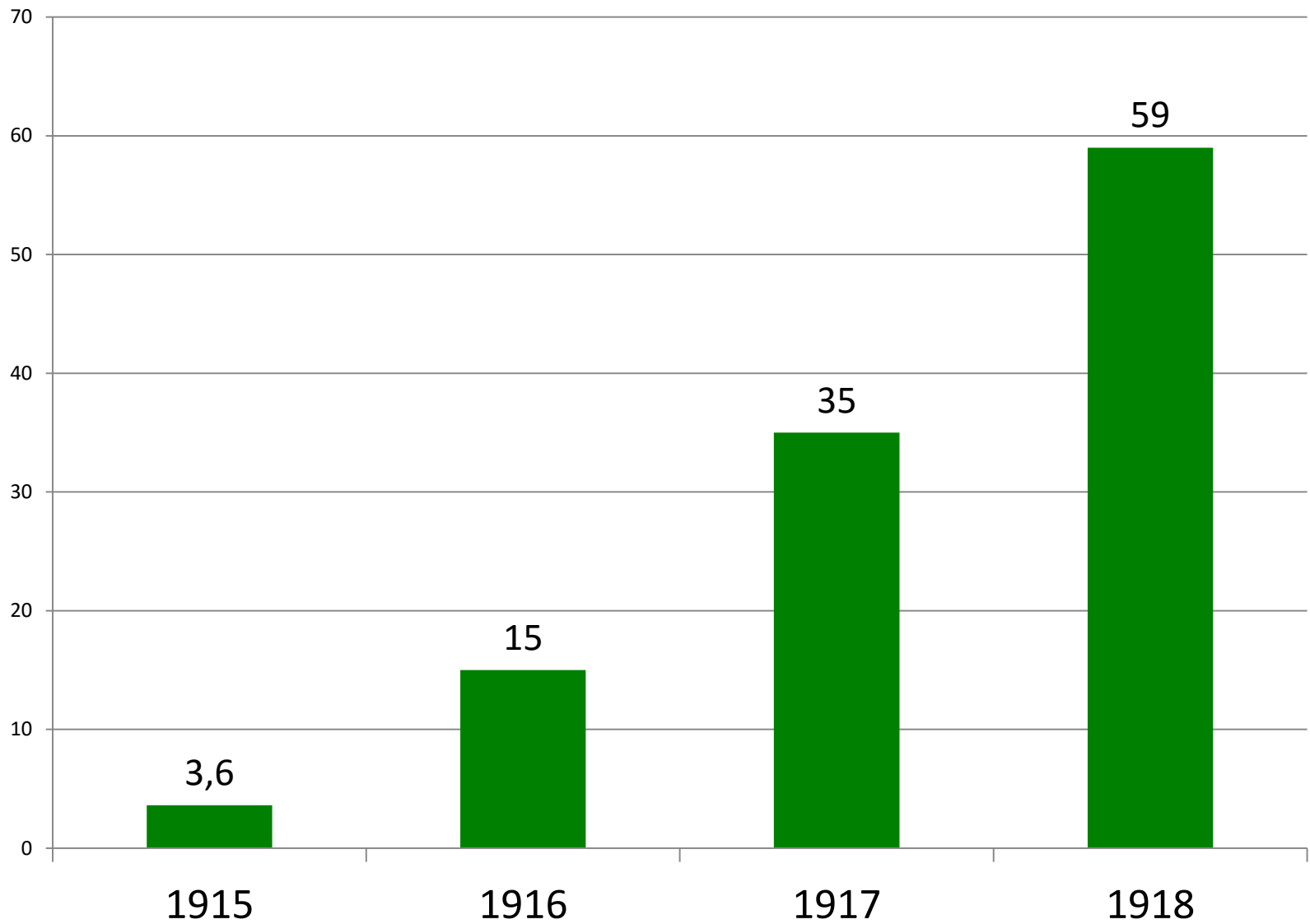


Livens projectors

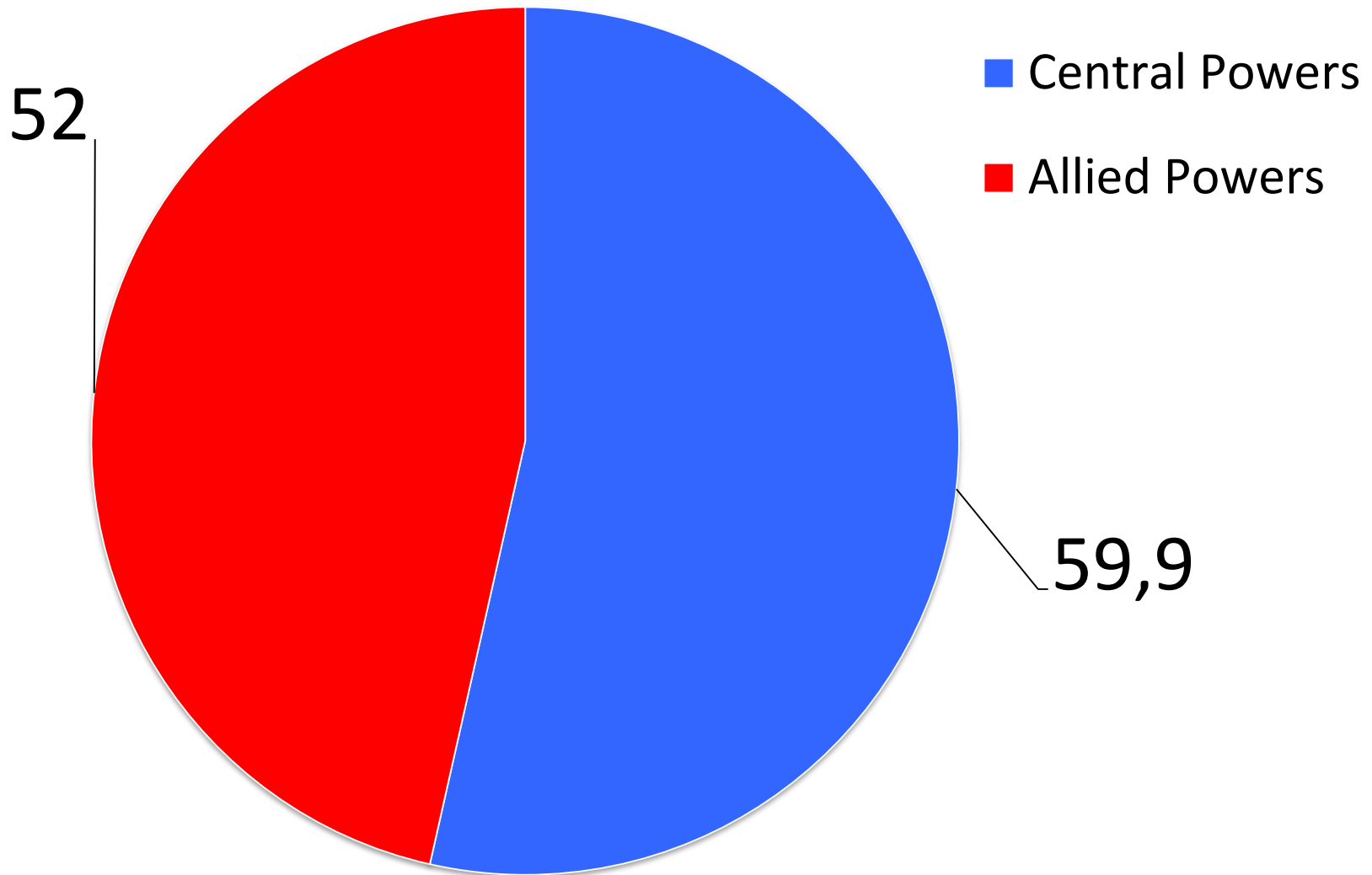


Gaswerfer

3. Quantitative improvement



Thousands of tons (N=112,6)



Thousands of tons (N=111,9)

4. Tactical improvement



Georg Bruchmüller



Green cross – Yellow cross – Blue cross

Second trend:
copy each other

Conclusion

Si dans l'imaginaire collectif la guerre des gaz est restée le symbole le plus fort de l'horreur du conflit,

- ses conséquences stratégiques ont été pratiquement nulles,*
- ses conséquences tactiques limitées,*
- ses conséquences humaines plus faibles que l'on ne l'a cru longtemps.*

(G.-H. Soutou)