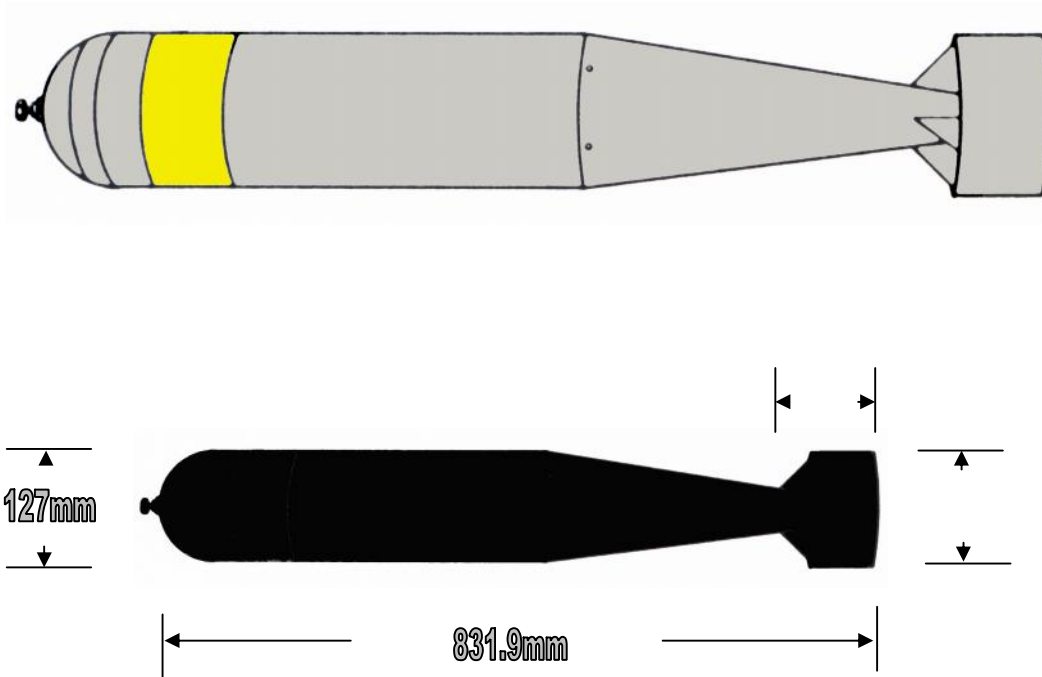


## 30lb gas bomb Mk I

This bomb was filled with mustard gas and it weighed 13.6kg.



The most widely reported and, perhaps, the most effective gas of the First World War was mustard gas, a vesicant, which was introduced by Germany in July 1917 prior to the Third Battle of Ypres. The Germans marked their shells yellow for mustard gas and green for chlorine and phosgene, so they called the new gas *Yellow Cross*. It was known to the British as HS (Hun Stuff), while the French called it Yperite (named after Ypres) Mustard gas was not intended as a killing agent (though in high enough doses it was fatal) but instead was used to harass and disable the enemy and pollute the battlefield. Delivered in artillery shells, mustard gas was heavier than air, settled to the ground as an oily sherry-looking liquid and evaporated slowly without sunlight. Once in the soil, mustard gas remained active for several days, weeks or even months, depending on the weather conditions

Blister agents or vesicants exert their primary action on the skin, producing large and painful blisters that are incapacitating. Although vesicants are classified as non-lethal, high doses can cause death. Common blister agents include Mustard (HD), Nitrogen Mustard (HN), and Lewisite (L). Although each is chemically different and will cause significant specific symptoms, they are all sufficiently similar in their physical characteristics and toxicology to be considered as a group. Mustards are particularly insidious because they do not manifest their symptoms for several hours after exposure. They attack the eyes and respiratory tract as well as the skin. Further, there is no effective therapy for mustard once its effects become visible. Treatment is largely supportive, to relieve itching and pain and to prevent infection.