Flashback

GAS

Three London air raid wardens, taking part in a 1941 mock attack on London, wear a new type of gas mask designed for the elderly.

A warden, in standard mask, peers skyward.

English schoolgirls don masks while at play.

In World War II Britain, fear of poison gas attack was ever-present. Widespread use of gas in the 1914-18 Great War convinced many that a reprise was inevitable, and that cities would be the targets of the Luftwaffe. British citizens of all ages were issued gas masks of varying types, as seen in these images, and wore them routinely, at least for a few years. Germany certainly had large stockpiles and the means of delivery. However, Germany's fear of retaliation in kind was also great, and deterrence held.