

Second Skin

Although soldiers don special suits and masks $^{1)}$ to protect their skin and airways from toxic $^{2)}$ chemicals, these defenses are uncomfortable and don't provide sufficient protection against biological weapons. So the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency challenged Da Ingber, scientific founder of Molecular Geodesics Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to come up with $^{3)}$ an alternative $^{4)}$.

One of the problems with existing suits, says Ingber, is that they are too much like raincoats—that is, they prevent body heat from dissipating⁵⁾ into the air. Another issue: Existing suits don't allow the freedom of movement needed to perform such tasks as loading and firing weapons.

To create a better material, the company is testing different structures based on an architectural principle.

Since a pathogen⁶⁾ is most likely to enter the body via⁷⁾ the nose and mouth, the company is also devising materials for face masks that filter pathogens and allow soldiers to breathe normally. Existing masks feel like breathing through a blanket while exercising, says Ingber. The ideal material would mimic the porosity of biological cells to allow air in, while selectively filtering out hazardous⁸⁾ pathogens. The company is presently testing a prototype⁹⁾ materials.

第二种皮肤

所谓的"第二种皮肤",就是仿生皮肤。这种"皮肤"实则是一种近似人体"皮肤"的防生物武器的衣服,它的质地结构具有生物细胞的多孔性,但比生物的"皮肤"更胜一筹,因为它还能选择性地将外界有害病原菌阻隔在体外。美国研制这种"皮肤"已有很长时间,目的是防御生物武器。由此制成的防毒服,还可以保证士兵投弹和射击活动的自如。"9.11"事件后,美国的行政部门不断收到能引起炭疽病的孢子邮寄物。很显然,这种防生物武器的材料的研制步伐会因此而大大加快。这篇文章讲述了这种"皮肤"的一些性能,并未透露其材料的化学构成如何。但对国防事业无疑具有重要意义。

虽然士兵身穿特殊服装、头戴面罩,以保护他们的皮肤,防止空中的有毒化学物质,但是这些防御措施令人不适,而且也无法充分防御生物武器。所以,国防高级研究计划署向丹•因格博(马萨诸塞州坎布里奇分子测量公司的科学奠基人)提出研制替代品的新课题。

因格博说,现在的防毒服存在的问题之一是,它们太像雨衣,也就是说它们阻止了体温散出来。另一个问题是:现在的防毒服阻碍了像投弹和射击这类任务所需的自由活动。

为了制造一种更好的材料,该公司正在检测不同物质的结构,性能是以建筑学原理为基础的。

由于病原菌极大可能是通过鼻腔和口腔进入人体,该公司还在设计能过滤病原体的面罩 材料,以使士兵能正常呼吸。因格博说,现有的面罩一运动就会感到像透过毯子呼吸。理想 的材料应该是摹仿生物细胞的多孔性,使空气能吸入,并选择性地滤出有危险性的病原菌。 该公司现在正在测定这种样品材料。

NOTE 注释:

学英语,练听力,上听力课堂!

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- 1. mask [maːsk] n. 面具,面罩
- 2. toxic ['tɔksik] adj. 有毒的, 中毒的
- 3. come up with 提出,拿出
- 4. alternative [ɔːl'təːnətiv] n. 课题,可供选择的事物
- 5. dissipate ['disipeit] v. 驱散, (使)(云、雾、疑虑等)消散
- 6. pathogen ['pæθədʒ(ə)n] n. [微生物]病菌, 病原体
- 7. via ['vaiə, 'viːə] prep. 经, 通过, 经由
- 8. hazardous [ˈhæzədəs] adj. 危险的, 冒险的
- 9. prototype ['prəutətaip] n. 原型