

## **CHAPTER 9 MINOR SKIN INJURIES**

### **(NATO STANAG 2122, CENTO STANAG 2122, SEATO STANAG 2122)**

#### **Blister Beetle Burns**

Throughout the world, various insects (beetles, caterpillars, and moths) and plants (salt or fresh water and land plants) manufacture an irritating chemical that produces a bulls or vesicle if it comes in contact with human skin. One of these offenders is the blister beetle.

Often, several soldiers are attacked the same night. Some persons have suffered blister beetle burns while sleeping in small Navy boats which were anchored overnight to a river bank.

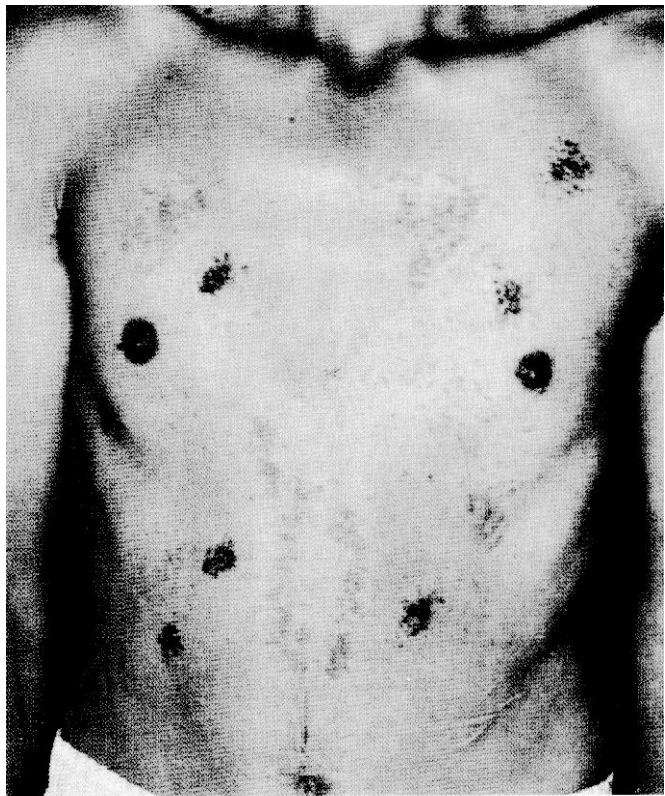
#### **DIAGNOSIS**

Part of the information needed for diagnosis is found in the patient's story of the lesion's formation. The following story is typical: "Yesterday, I rubbed mosquito repellent on my face and arms. Then, I went to sleep on the ground. When I awoke this

morning, I noticed this big, swollen, red spot on my arm, here by my elbow. By lunch time, the spot had turned into a big blister. That so-and-so repellent burned me!”

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Multiple blister beetle burns  
(used by courtesy of F. Kerdel-  
Vegas, Venezuela).

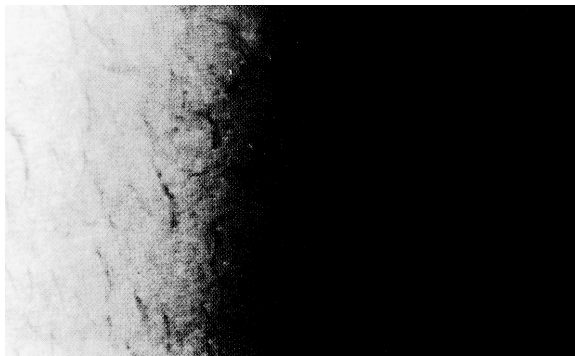


**Multiple blister beetle burns (used by courtesy of  
F. Kerdel-Vegas, Venezuela).**

The lesion resembles a large burn blister; i.e., a large bull's, filled with clear fluid. It covers the inflamed area.

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Early blister beetle burn (used by courtesy of F. Kerdel-Vegas, Venezuela).



**Early blister beetle burn (used by courtesy of F. Kerdel-Vegas, Venezuela).**



**Early blister beetle burn—Vietnam**

A streak is located on one side, presumably where the beetle's chemical irritant dripped on the skin.

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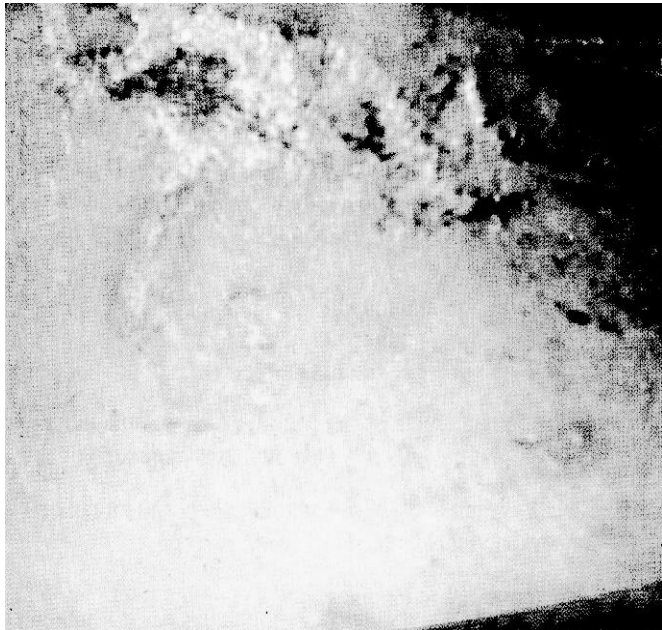
Early blister beetle burn in bend of elbow “kissing” lesions (note kissing lesions and streak) used by courtesy of F. Kerdel-Vegas, Venezuela.

Usually, the fluid blisters the skin through to the dermis; hence a third degree “burn” results. The lesion heals slowly, probably taking several weeks.

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4-day old blister beetle burn of waist--Vietnam  
(note the deep damage and streak).





**4-day old blister beetle burn of waist--Vietnam  
(note the deep damage and streak).**

## **TREATMENT**

To treat the blister beetle burn:

Drain the blister, using sterile technique.

Apply the antibacterial cream (Rx No. 3).

If the bull's head has broken, remove the top and have the patient apply the antibacterial cream, two to four times a day.

## **Minor Skin Injuries**

### **TREATMENT**

Treat minor skin injuries such as abrasions, cuts, and scratches in the following way:

Cleanse the wound with soap or surgical detergent (Rx No. 4) and water.

Remove any crusts.

Apply antibacterial cream (Rx No. 3).