

Army Names 3 Who Died At Germ Warfare Installation

By Bill Richards

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Army released the names yesterday of three Frederick men who became infected with disease and died between 1951 and 1964 while working at the secret biological warfare installation at Fort Detrick, Md.

In a fact sheet on the three deaths turned over to Rep. Thomas Downey (D-N.Y.) the Army said that in at least two of the three deaths Army officials and the Frederick County health officer agreed to withhold the actual cause of death from local newspapers.

After a microbiologist died in 1951, the fact sheet said, the county health officer and the Army listed a false cause of death—rather than the actual cause of the highly infectious disease anthrax—on the county death certificate.

In an interview yesterday, the daughter of the microbiologist Dr. William A. Boyles said it was not until eight years after Boyles' death that his family learned the actual cause.

The Army's fact sheet said Boyles' death had been given to local papers and listed on the county death certificate as "bronchopneumonia with gastric ulceration and hemorrhage" instead of anthrax.

In a newspaper interview in 1969 the county health officer Dr. Forbes H. Burgess said he had falsified two anthrax deaths and two cases of bubonic plague, which did not prove fatal, at the request of officials at Ft. Detrick. Burgess died in 1972.

Boyles' daughter Patricia Kephart said yesterday that it was not until she went to work at Detrick eight years after her father's death that she learned the real cause from officials there.

Mrs. Kephart said on Nov. 22, 1951, when Boyles became ill with anthrax the family's doctor spent an entire day fruitlessly trying to get per-

ceive compensation for the death, she said.

The other two names—which an Army spokesman said were in the local newspaper although with inaccurate or incomplete causes of death—were Joel Eugene Willard, an electrician who died of anthrax in 1958 and Albert Nickel, an animal caretaker who died of a rare strain of encephalitis in 1964.

Willard's widow said yesterday that she had been told the cause of his death when he died and that she had received compensation for the death from the Army. She declined to discuss his death saying it still upset her to talk about it.

According to information supplied by officials at Detrick to former Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine) in 1970 there were 422 cases of laboratory infection at Detrick between 1943 and 1970. The Army disbanded its program of biological warfare development at Detrick under presidential order, shifting about a dozen and a half types of poisons and toxin-producing bacteria to Edgewood Arsenal or what the Army said was defensive research. Other poisonous materials were distributed to several government agencies for research purposes.

An Army spokesman said yesterday that the Army is still working on getting the entire list of biological poisons and bacteria that it possessed

at Detrick in 1970 declassified along with the amounts with the amounts it did not destroy after the order to end the biological warfare program by President Nixon.

The Army said yesterday that none of the three disease victims were among about 225 volunteer subjects who were used by the Army in biological experiments at Detrick. Most of the subjects were Seventh Day Adventists and others who were conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War. The Army spokesman said no volunteers died in the program.

Downey, a member of the House Armed Services Committee who has been conducting an independent investigation into chemical and biological testing by the military on humans, angrily charged yesterday that the Army had "systematically" withheld information about deaths and injuries resulting from the program and called for a reopening of hearings into the testing programs conducted by the military.

mission to have Boyles admitted to the Army's hospital at Detrick. Boyles was finally taken to Frederick Hospital and transferred to Detrick later that night, she said.

"The Army compensated us for his death but we were never told anything at the time except that he had contracted an illness," Mrs. Kephart said. Boyles' wife, a retired schoolteacher, still re-