

Army denies use of Detrick *F Post 12/28/77* for nerve gas experiments

Any involvement by Fort Detrick personnel or facilities in the testing of nerve gas in 1961 on human subjects has been denied by scientists who worked at the biological warfare research center here at the time and by other U.S. Army spokesmen.

Ft. Detrick's contributions in chemical biological weaponry were solely in research of biological agents and not chemical agents such as nerve gas, the sources report.

The recent story, which originated in the Denver (Colo.) Post, reported that American soldiers were administered nerve gas at the Edgewood Arsenal in 1961 which is located north of Baltimore near the Chesapeake Bay. Two of the subjects reportedly suffered psychological problems because of the exposure to the war agents.

Local scientists explained that what Fort Detrick was to biological warfare, Edgewood was to chemical warfare. Both were primarily concerned with the perfecting and testing of specific agents and possible defenses against enemy capabilities. Edgewood, unlike Detrick, also stockpiled larger amounts of agents.

"I can say with certainty that Fort Detrick has not conducted any experiments in chemical warfare," Detrick public affairs officer Norman Covert said Tuesday.

"Chemical warfare research and development should not be confused with medical or biological research. They are quite different specialties. Our work through the years has been devoted strictly to medical technology."

Human testing has taken place in the past and continues to take place at Ft. Detrick under strict safety guidelines. All test subjects are made fully aware of the circumstances of the testing and are apprised of any potential dangers.

According to a Pentagon report released in February of 1977, the local United States Army Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMIID) continues to test human subjects in the effort to develop new defensive capabilities against a foreign biological warfare attack.

No open air testing of any agents are currently being conducted, according to local laboratory personnel at the federal installation.