

Army's 239 Open Air Germ Warfare Tests

Washington

The Army disclosed yesterday that it secretly conducted 239 germ warfare tests in the open air between 1949 and 1969.

The tests, themselves conducted in such areas as San Francisco, New York City and Key West, Fla., had been made public in news reports in 1975 and 1976. The number of tests conducted apparently went undiscovered until yesterday.

The idea, according to a two-volume report the Army gave to the Senate health subcommittee yesterday, was to learn how to wage biological warfare and defend against it.

The Army listed 27 times that it tested simulated toxins in the open air on public property, including releasing spores in two tunnels on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. This type of test was made in Washington, D.C., and Panama City, Fla. as well as in San Francisco.

In addition to those experiments in public places, the Army secretly used military personnel and their families for experiments by spraying the simulated germs into the air at a number of bases, including Fort Detrick, Md.; Fort Belvoir, Va., and the Marine training school at Quantico, Va.

The Army said in its report that the tests were "essential" to "substantiate theories and fill knowledge gaps and to determine vulnerability to attack." The live bacteria the Army employed were deemed harmless at the time, the report said.

But Senator Richard S. Schweiker (Rep.-Pa.) told Army witnesses at the hearing yesterday that "it is very risky indeed to assume that any living organism, reduced to germ warfare size and released in a populated area, is ever safe."

In the 1950 San Francisco tests, the bacteria *Seriatta Marcescens* was used. Medical researchers suspect it may have caused 11 cases of pneumonia in the Bay Area, including one death, that of Edward Nevin, 75.

The Army report acknowledges that the service recognized in 1969 that the germ should not be used in experiments because large

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doses of it could produce disease.

The Army also listed yesterday the casualties among those who worked directly with the microorganisms. The Army said three laboratory workers at Fort Detrick died from anthrax or viral encephalitis contracted in the 1950s and 1960s, as had been reported previously.

An additional 504 workers connected with biological warfare activities at Ft. Detrick, Dugway Proving Ground and the Desert Test Center in Utah and the Pine Bluff Arsenal in Arkansas suffered infections.

In the tests, in addition to bacteria, three kinds of non-biological materials such as fluorescent particles, sulfur dioxide gas and soap bubbles were used. Thirty-one tests were to stimulate destruction of crops. Forty-eight tests, in the open air but in locations presumed to be safe, were made with germs known to be capable of causing disease. Finally, 160 tests using harmless bacteria, all presumably done in or near populated areas or near ships, were conducted at 66 locations within the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii.

The Army released its censored

report, believed to be the most complete official version of this nation's biological warfare effort, as chairman Edward M. Kennedy (Dem.-Mass.) of the Senate health subcommittee convened a hearing on the subject.

Kennedy released a summary of a separate CIA report that showed that the Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the CIA, used germ warfare against the head of Nazi Germany's Reichbank during World War II to prevent him from attending an economic meeting.

In what is believed the first official acknowledgement that the United States engaged in germ warfare, it was revealed that OSS agents managed to give Hjalmar Schact, Nazi Germany's leading banker, food poisoning to incapacitate him. The CIA summary did not supply the date or how the poison was administered. Schact died in 1970 at the age of 93.

The Army, in its two-volume report, traced the history of the U.S. biological warfare program from 1942 when President Roosevelt started it, to 1969 when President Nixon renounced the use of biological weapons. The military's effort since then, according to the Army, has been confined to study-

ing defensive measures against biological warfare.

The Army report said testing of biological warfare agents rose sharply after May, 1961, when then Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff to "evaluate the potentialities" of both biological and chemical warfare.

The joint chiefs, the report said, estimated it would cost \$4 billion to obtain "McNamara's complete spectrum" of biological and chemical warfare capability.

The Pentagon's research director at the time, Harold Brown, who is now secretary of defense, "strongly concurred in the joint chiefs' view that these weapons had great potential," according to the report, which mentioned Brown by position but not by name.

McNamara accepted the joint chiefs' recommendations as modified by Brown's office, the report said, and a detailed chemical and biological warfare program was laid down. "Overall," the report continued, "the project resulted in large increases in U.S. Army (biological warfare) programs."

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