

38 Horses Die At U.S. Test Site

Washington

Thirty-eight wild horses have died mysteriously next to a waterhole at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, the U.S. Army's test station for chemical warfare.

The horses were discovered dead or dying Sunday night during a routine security check next to Orr Springs in the Cedar Mountains of Western Utah.

Dugway Proving Ground was the site of a much-publicized 1968 accident in which a cloud of nerve gas floated out of the military reservation and killed 6400 sheep on nearby rangelands.

Dugway commander Colonel James Templeton Jr. said yesterday, however, that nerve gas or biological warfare experiments did not cause the horses' death.

"We can't connect the

deaths to anything done at Dugway previously or at present," Templeton said, adding that Dugway has not conducted open air tests with toxic agents or noxious materials since 1969.

The army said in a statement that "recent activity in the area (of Orr Springs) has involved the development of water sources for the wild horses."

About 250 wild horses roam Dugway. Herds outside the Orr Springs area appear to be healthy, the Army said.

Scientists and veterinarians from the Army, the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management and the Utah Agriculture Department are testing the spring water and the horse flesh for evidence of toxic chemicals or other cause of death.

Washington Post