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Pentagon Confirms That Justice Unit Gets Addict Lists

WASHINGTON, Nov. 23 (UPI) — The Pentagon confirmed today that for six years it had been giving the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs the names of thousands of men rejected for military service because of drug addiction.

The Defense Department said the information had been provided "with the understanding that [it] is not to be used for prosecution or investigation of any particular individual." The Narcotics bureau is a division of the Justice Department.

Asked whether officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Justice Department's criminal division could have the information for an investigation that might produce further evidence and lead to prosecution of any individual named a Narcotics bureau spokesman said: "If they wanted it, they would have to get it from the Defense Department. But they have not asked for it as far as we know. The Federal Government has little interest in prosecution of narcotic possession cases."

The first hint of such a practice came last week during a Congressional hearing at which witnesses from the Army Surgeon General's office testified that they turned the names of addicts over to the Justice Department, but did not know what happened to them from there.

Senator Harold Hughes, Democrat of Iowa who is chairman of a Senate subcommittee on alcoholism and drug abuse, said the practice might involve improper use of "confidential medical information." Defense Department officials withheld comment at the time.

The Pentagon said today that it started furnishing the information in 1964 at the request of the narcotics bureau and that the data had been provided on a monthly basis to assist the bureau with its efforts "to cope with drug trafficking worldwide, as it affects the United States and with major drug traffickers."

The Defense Department said the number of civilians rejected for military service because of drug use had increased from 391 in 1964 to 2,635 in 1969 and 1,124 during the first half of this year.