

CIA (S)

## ARMY DISCLOSED 3 NEW COVER-UPS

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Concealed Cause of Deaths  
From Rare Diseases Being  
Studied at Ft. Detrick  
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WASHINGTON, Sept. 19—The Army disclosed today that it had covered up the cause and circumstances of the deaths of three civilian employes who in the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties died of rare diseases that were then being studied at Fort Detrick, Md., for possible combat use.

Two of the victims—a microbiologist and an electrician—died of anthrax, a bacteriological infection carried by cattle, but seldom found in the United States. The third, an animal caretaker, died of Bolivian hemorrhagic fever, a virus found in rodents in Bolivia.

Although the names of the victims had appeared in brief obituaries in local newspapers along with vague explanations of the deaths, the Army said today that it would not identify the men until the next of kin had been consulted and apprised of the latest disclosures.

In a press release reporting the death of the scientist on Nov. 25, 1951, the Army gave the cause of death as "acute bronchial pneumonia," and the death certificate read, "bronchopneumonia with gastric ulceration and hemorrhage," according to a "memorandum of record" dated Aug. 20, 1969, obtained by Representative Thomas J. Downey, Democrat of Suffolk County.

The cause of death of the electrician on July 5, 1958, the memorandum said, was given by the Army as "occupational death from respiratory disease." His death certificate read, "Myocardial failure with antecedent visceral anthrax," but there is no indication that this ever appeared in the newspapers.

In the death of the animal caretaker on Feb. 10, 1964, the memorandum does not state clearly what the Army told the press, but it says that The Frederick Post reported, presumably based on information provided by the Army, that the man had "died after an illness of two weeks." The death certificate, the memorandum says, listed the cause of death as "encephalitis, viral; etiology undetermined."

The memorandum indicated that it was not until several months later that the Army determined that the man had died of Bolivian hemorrhagic fever and says that this information was later published in a publication called "Anthrax-borne Virus Exchange Information Exchange."

Officials at the United States Public Health Service's Center for Disease Control in Atlanta said in telephone interviews that they were certain that one of the anthrax cases had not been reported to them—it is standard medical practice to do so—and there were indications that the two other deaths had gone unreported as well, they said.

One purpose for a such reporting is to enable the medical authorities to take precautions to head off the spread of infec-

tious diseases. Particularly since these diseases had been contracted by civilians who mixed with the general population off the military post, one senior doctor at the Disease Control Center said, it "would have been wise" to pass on the information.

It was clear from reading the Army memorandum that military officials and the Public Health Officer for Frederick County, Md., which encompasses Fort Detrick, had decided together what would be made public and how the death certificates would read in at least two of the deaths.

An Army spokesman said today that he did not know why the misleading information had been released earlier. But in referring to the death of the electrician, the memorandum said that "after a discussion of the security aspects," it was decided to issue the false statement.

Much of the work at Fort Detrick was classified as secret.

The names of all the military and civilian officials who had been involved in the three incidents were removed from the memorandum before it was given to Mr. Downey.

On Aug. 19, 1970, Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, in a strong defense of the Army's biological experiments, entered into the Congressional Record a report on safety at Fort Detrick that said that since 1943 there had been 422 laboratory-acquired infections at the post, and that three had resulted in death.

The report listed the name of the diseases, anthrax and Bolivian hemorrhagic fever, but gave no details other than the year in which the deaths occurred. The report said that these deaths represented a mortality rate "which compares favorably" with rates reported in a survey sponsored by the public health service.