

Deadly Viruses

Disease Lab 'Leak' Reported

New York [Newsday]

On a June afternoon in 1970, two cars collided at the junction of two roads that cross flat potato fields near Riverhead, a town on the eastern part of Long Island. One car was driven off the road and overturned. Its driver died a few hours later in a hospital.

The accident would have been entirely routine but for the identity of the fatally injured driver. The injured man, Alfred Von Hassel, was an employee of the Plum Island Animal Disease Laboratory. A container was in the back seat of the wreck. It contained "biologicals," still unidentified, intended for experimental work at the island lab.

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Plum Island is a mile and a quarter off Orient Point, the eastern tip of Long Island. Its 338 employees work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in research ~~on~~ in animal diseases. The work done at Plum Island, established by law to perform research on foreign animal diseases to protect the United States from possible epidemics, has been free from scrutiny, although not from speculation that biological or chemical weapons have been developed on the island.

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Although Plum Island officials say that no military funds are used there, the island laboratory apparently still operates under an agreement that binds it to the Army and has contracts that link it to the ~~xxxx~~ Naval Biosciences Laboratory in Oakland, Calif. The Oakland lab has been the Navy's chief biological warfare workshop, equivalent to the Army's chemical and biological warfare installation at Ford Detrick, Mo.

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[The Plum Island lab went into operation in 1954.]

Later clippings will be filed CIA (d). See also that

~~file 22 D 76, 1976~~

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that file 22 Dec 76, "Army Tested Biological War in S.F."

See also SFChronicle [Newsday], Jan 10, 77, "1971
Mystery - CIA Link to Cuban Pig Virus Reported." Filed
CIA (d).