

French Soldiers Used as Nuclear Guinea Pigs

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The French newspaper le Parisien reports that France used thousands of its soldiers as guinea pigs during nuclear tests.

Le Parisien bases its report on a secret army document from 1998. During tests in the Sahara desert and Algeria, soldiers were deliberately exposed to radiation to see how army units would react to a nuclear attack. Some of the soldiers were placed at a distance of just 275 metres from a radiation source. Many of the soldiers later developed cancer or other radiation-related diseases.

At the end of last year, the French government promised compensation to victims of nuclear tests in Algeria between 1960 and 1966. Defence Minister Hervé Morin says he has no knowledge of the secret document quoted by *le Parisien*. France has conducted a total of 210 nuclear tests, the last of which was held in French Polynesia in 1996.

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