Is the US Government Developing Real-Life Supersoldier, Wonder-Dog in New Research Program?

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Global Research, August 19, 2018
Zero Hedge 18 August 2018

Region: USA
Theme: Militarization and WMD

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The US army has announced a new proposal for what really looks like a program to develop supersoldiers and wonder-dogs capable of fast healing, optimized physiological and mental performance, withstanding extreme environments, and wearing high-tech bio-enhancements and other gear.

According to documents from the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the "primary emphasis of the USSOCOM Biomedical, Human Performance, and Canine Research Program is to identify and develop techniques... for early intervention in life-threatening injuries, prolonged field care, human performance optimization, and canine medicine/performance."

The project will allocate $15 million on bio-enhancement studies which could result in soldiers with "enhanced physiological performance" that require a fraction of a normal night's sleep, as well along with other "human performance optimization," according to documents from the Defense Department.

The scope of the project includes:

1. Damage Control Resuscitation
    - Global Treatment Strategies and Next Generation Wound Management
    - Analgesia
    - Far Forward Blood, Blood Components, Blood Substitute, & Injectable Hemostatic
    - Austere Surgical Stabilization
2. Prolonged Field Care (PFC)
    - Medical Sensors and Devices (includes rapidly deployable medical sensors and/or devices for extended care beyond initial trauma resuscitation; wireless biosensors that demonstrate physiological monitoring capabilities; see FOA for details)
3. Portable Lab Assays and Diagnostics
    - Occupational and Environmental Health (OEH) Hazards
4. Force Health Protection and Environmental Medicine
    - Optimal Acclimatization Strategy
    - Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE)

Rapid Diagnostics, Treatment, and Prophylaxis
        - Operational Monitoring (wireless biosensors in extreme environments and/or hazards materials exposure)
5. Medical Simulation and Training Technologies
6. Human Performance Optimization
        - Improve Sleep
        - Diagnostics for Performance Sustainment
        - Nutritional Status
        - Enhanced Physiological Performance
        - Enhanced Mental Performance
        - Optimal Performance Strategy
        - Pharmaceutical and Nutritional Supplement interactions
        - Wearable Devices
7. Canine Medicine
        - Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) Canine Decontamination, Treatment, and PPE from possible exposure
        - Sensory Optimization and Protection
        - Trauma Resuscitation
        - Non-Traditional Anesthesia Protocols
        - Optimizing Canine Performance and Nutrition
        - Pre and Post Trauma Training / Behavioral Issues
        - Environmental Extremes

This won't be the first such program to enhance the US military's assets. In 2017, DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) announced a plethora of plans to create an elite fighting force.

> One of the projects on the horizon is to create software which could be uploaded directly to the brain to give their soldiers heightened senses while also attempting to cure ailments such as blindness, paralysis and speech disorders creating an army of Captain Americas. –Express

Darpa said the program – known as the Neural Engineering System Design (NESD) "aims to develop an implantable neural interface able to provide advanced signal resolution and data-transfer bandwidth between the brain and electronics."

Program manager Phillip Alvelda said that the brain-computer interface (BCI) "program looks ahead to a future in which advanced neural devices offer improved fidelity, resolution, and precision sensory interface for therapeutic applications."

Another DARPA program aims to give super-human sight to soldiers.

> The Soldier Centric Imaging via Computational Cameras (SCENICC) program is attempting to create a small contact lens which would improve fighters vision tenfold.
>
> Research began on this project in 2011, and DARPA hopes to "develop novel computational imaging capabilities and explore joint design of hardware and software to give war fighters access to systems that greatly enhance their awareness, security and survivability." –Express

They're also working on exoskeletons, such as the XOS2 – currently being developed in conjunction Raytheon – which could make soldiers up to 17 times stronger.

Apparently battery technology is the limiting factor for now.

Business Insider also provides this list of 8 technologies the Pentagon is pursuing to create supersoldiers:

1. Bulletproof clothes made of carbon chainmail

Researchers tested the potential ballistic protection of graphene by firing tiny bullets of gold at it. They found that the material was stronger, more flexible, and lighter than both the ballistic plates and the Kevlar vests troops wear. And, a million layers of the stuff would be only 1 millimeter thick.

MIT's Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies is working on an effective manufacturing method for graphene-based chainmail, potentially giving troops better protection from a T-shirt than they currently get from bulky vests.

2. Synthetic blood

Synthetic blood would be much more efficient than natural cells. The most promising technology being investigated is a respirocyte, a theoretical red blood cell made from diamonds that could contain gasses at pressures of nearly 15,000 psi and exchange carbon dioxide and oxygen the same way real blood cells do.

Super soldiers with respirocytes mixed with their natural blood would essentially have trillions of miniature air tanks inside their body, meaning they would never run out of breath and could spend hours underwater without other equipment.

3. Seven-foot leaps and a 25 mph spring

Scientists at MIT and other research universities are looking for ways to augment the human ankle and Achilles tendon with bionic boots that mimic kangaroo tendons. Humans equipped with such boots would be able to leap seven feet or more, sprint at inhuman speeds, and run all day without wearing out their muscles.

4. Pain immunizations

DARPA's Persistence in Combat initiative aims to help soldiers bounce back almost immediately from wounds. Pain immunizations would work for 30 days and eliminate the inflammation that causes lasting agony after an injury. So, soldiers could feel the initial burst of anguish from a bullet strike, but the pain would fade in seconds. The soldiers could treat themselves and keep fighting until medically evacuated.

5. Freedom from sleep

Not all animals sleep the same way. DARPA wants to find a way to let humans sleep with only half of their brain at a time like whales and dolphins or possibly even skip sleep for long periods of time like ENU mice, a genetically-engineered species of mouse, do.

6. Telepathy

Not all brain implants look very comfortable.US Patent Application Richard A. Normann

Part of DARPA's "Brain Machine Interface" project is the development of better computer chips that can directly connect to a human brain via implants. In addition to allowing soldiers to control robotics with thought alone, this would allow squads to communicate via telepathy.

While the chips are already improving, the project has some detractors. One offshoot of the research is the ability to remote control mice via implanted chips, and some defense scientists worry about the risk of troops having their minds hacked.

7. Powered underwear

While the Harvard researchers working on it prefer the term "soft exoskeleton," the DARPA-funded robotic suit is essentially a series of fabric muscles worn under the clothes that assist the wearer in each step or movement. This reduces fatigue and increases strength without requiring the huge amounts of power that bulkier, rigid exoskeletons need.

8. Gecko-like climbing gloves and shoes

Geckos use tiny hairs on their feet to grab onto surfaces on the molecular level. While the "Z-Man" project wouldn't necessarily give humans the ability to crawl along a ceiling like a gecko, special climbing gloves and shoes would allow soldiers to easily climb sheer rock faces or up skyscrapers without any other equipment, drastically easing an assault on the high ground.

We can picture it now…

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