

Salisbury Nerve Agent Attack Reveals \$70 Million Pentagon Program at Porton Down

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The Pentagon has spent at least \$70 million on military experiments involving tests with deadly viruses and chemical agents at Porton Down – the UK military laboratory near the city of Salisbury. The secretive biological and chemical research facility is located just 13 km from where on 4th March former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found slumped on a bench following an alleged Novichok nerve agent poisoning.



The Porton Down Lab is located just 13 km from the site where Sergei Skripal and his daughter were found and from where they were rushed to hospital.

Information obtained from the US federal contracts registry reveals that the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) has [funded a number of military projects](#) performed at [the UK Defence Science and Technology Laboratory \(DSTL\)](#), or Porton Down, over the last decade. Among them: experimental respiratory infection of non-human primates (marmosets) with Anthrax, Ebola virus, Marburg virus, Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus, Western equine encephalitis virus, and Eastern equine encephalitis virus. The US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) has also funded experiments on animals which were exposed to chemical agents such as Sulfur Mustard and Phosgene gas. Phosgene gas was used as a chemical weapon during World War I where it was responsible for about 85 % of the 100,000 deaths caused by chemical weapons.

DTRA has also been granted full access to DSTL scientific and technical capabilities, and test data under [a 2011 contract for the collaboration and exchange](#) of scientific and technical capabilities with the UK Ministry of Defence.

At least 122,000 animals used for military chemical and biological experiments at Porton Down

Animal experiments are classified as confidential in the UK. Under section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, it is a criminal offence to disclose certain information about animal experiments in the UK.

[Data obtained via the Freedom of Information Act](#) though gives an idea of the dimensions of military [chemical and biological experiments](#) carried out at Porton Down. A total of [122,050 animals](#) have been exposed to deadly pathogens, chemicals and incurable diseases over the last decade (2005-2016).



Monkeys being used in warfare agent testing at Porton Down in the past

Animals used include mice, guinea pigs, rats, pigs, ferrets, sheep, and non-human primates. Some of the deadly experiments have been sponsored by the Pentagon under contracts between DSTL and DTRA. Scientists at Porton Down have infected, or poisoned, animals in order to measure time to death and lethal dose of exposure. In practice, the possible use of the researched virus/chemical gas as a weapon.



Marmoset monkeys are experimentally infected at Porton Down with Ebola, Anthrax, Marburg Virus and other deadly pathogens. Scientists measure time to death and lethal dose of exposure to the bio agent.

Photo credit: Vic Pigula

Ebola as bioweapon

12 Marmoset monkeys were experimentally infected with the Ebola virus, via aerosol, at Porton Down under a Pentagon-funded project – [Experimental respiratory infection of marmosets with Ebola virus Kikwit](#) (the Zaire strain of the Ebola virus which killed more than 245 people in Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo, in 1995). The project was part of a \$6.3 million DTRA program running at Porton Down from 2012 to 2016 – [Development of common marmoset models for category A/B pathogens and product evaluation in marmosets](#).



Source: [Experimental Respiratory Infection of Marmosets \(Callithrix jacchus\) With Ebola Virus Kikwit](#), The Journal of Infectious Diseases, Volume 212, 1 October 2015

The experiment's stated goal was to measure the lethal dose of exposure and time to death meaning that the Ebola virus Kikwit was researched for its potential as a bioweapon. All infected marmoset monkeys died from 6 to 10 days after exposure to the Ebola virus.

The Pentagon also funded studies on the deadly Marburg virus: a [\\$2.6 million project](#) – [Experimental respiratory Marburg virus haemorrhagic fever infection in the common marmoset](#), and another [\\$1.4 million project](#) – Marburg virus model development, which were undertaken at Porton Down in 2017. This virus causes [viral hemorrhagic fever](#) and is listed as a [Category A Bioterrorism Agent](#). All infected monkeys died from 8 to 10 days. The aim of the studies was to examine the dose and time to death for animals exposed to aerosolized Marburg virus.



Source: [Experimental respiratory Marburg virus haemorrhagic fever infection in the common marmoset \(Callithrix jacchus\)](#), International Journal of Experimental Pathology

Under another [\\$4.8 million project, funded by DTRA](#), Porton Down scientists along with the Pentagon contractor Mapp Biopharmaceutical tested [Susceptibility and lethality of Western Equine Encephalitis Virus](#) in mice when infected by the aerosol route. Mapp Biopharmaceutical is an American [pharmaceutical](#) company, which has developed an Ebola vaccine from the tobacco plant. According to the study, aerosol infection is the likely route

of exposure to Western Equine Encephalitis Virus in a biowarfare scenario.

12 Marmoset monkeys were infected with anthrax at Porton Down during an experiment funded by the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The study, [Experimental respiratory anthrax infection in the common marmoset \(Callithrix jacchus\)](#), aimed at determining the lethal dose needed to kill 50% of the animals or the so called LD50 indicator. The value of LD50 for a substance is the dose required to kill half the members of the tested population after a specified test duration. Six of the monkeys died from anthrax from 40 to 140 h.



Source: [Experimental respiratory anthrax infection in the common marmoset \(Callithrix jacchus\)](#), US National Library of medicine

Chemical agent tests

British military scientists were funded by DTRA to perform [Chemical Agent system testing](#) as part of a [\\$39.7 million Pentagon program](#) (2012-2017) at Porton Down. Documents prove that the US Department of Defense Agency – DTRA funded animal experiments with chemical agents at the secretive British military lab.

In 2016 Porton Down scientists along with their colleagues from the US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense published the results of a joint study [Acute Gene Expression Profile of Lung Tissue Following Sulfur Mustard Inhalation Exposure in Large Anesthetized Swine](#). According to the funding information, this work was supported by [two contracts](#) with [the Defense Threat Reduction Agency](#) (US Department of Defense). During the experiment at Porton Down 16 pigs were exposed to mustard gas for about 10 minutes, at 12 h post exposure the animals were killed (three of them died during the experiment due to complications) and a full post-mortem examination performed in order to determine the lung damage caused by the sulfur mustard inhalation.

Sulfur mustard is a chemical warfare agent that was first used on the battlefield in World War I. It has been classified as a Class 1 human carcinogen, meaning that it can also cause cancer. Mustard agents were regulated under the 1993 [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) as substances with no use other than in [chemical warfare](#).

The last use of Sulfur mustard in battle was confirmed in Syria in 2016. [According to the BBC](#), Islamic State (ISIS) jihadists used mustard gas against government forces in Deir-ez-Zor. The same chemical gas was confirmed to have been used by ISIS against Kurds in Northern Iraq. [According to The Independent](#), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) confirmed that laboratory tests had come back positive for sulfur mustard, after around 35 Kurdish troops fell sick on the battlefield in August 2015.



Iraqi soldiers captured [a cache of chemical weapons from ISIS in Qayarah, Iraq](#), the rockets tested positive for sulfur mustard, October 2016. (Source: Ed Alexander/BLACKOPS Cyber)

According to information obtained from the US Federal contracts registry, Porton Down scientists 5 months ago completed a \$ 2 million military program involving chemical gas

experiments on animals. This program was funded by the US Department of the Army on behalf of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USAMRICD) and was [launched in 2008](#) and further [extended in 2012](#). The work on the program included Phosgene Gas tests. Amongst them - [Continued Model Development to Establish Reproducible Phosgene Injury at 24 Hours](#). According to the program documents, the purpose was to monitor the development of acute lung injury following phosgene exposure. Phosgene gas was used extensively as a chemical weapon, most notably during World War I.

Coincidence: Guinea pigs at Porton Down and at the home of the poisoned ex-spy

[Tests using nerve agents VX and VM on guinea pigs](#) were carried out at Porton Down in 2015. The project was funded by the UK Ministry of Defence. Interestingly, [guinea pigs were also found at Sergei Skripal's home](#) in Salisbury, just a few kilometers away from the secretive chemical and biological military lab. A photo of the Skripals' pets - a cat and guinea pigs, was posted by his daughter Yulia on Facebook.



Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, photos: Facebook



Guinea pigs were found in the house of the poisoned ex-spy in Salisbury, just a few kilometers away from Porton Down, where such guinea pigs were used for nerve agent chemical tests.

In [a 2015 report to the UK parliament](#) the UK Ministry of Defence does confirm the use of animals for military chemical and biological experiments. The ministry states: "DSTL is proud to deliver cutting-edge science and technology for the benefit of national defence and security. Part of its work is to provide safe and effective countermeasures against the threat posed by chemical and biological weapons and to enhance the treatment of conventional casualties on the battlefield, which could not currently be achieved without the use of animals".

Porton Down scientists test chemical gas on London Tube passengers

Chemical gas was released on thousands of unsuspecting commuters during a military experiment on the London Underground, documents reveal. These chemical tests were performed in 2013 by scientist from Porton Down.



Porton Down scientists released chemical gas on the London Underground in 2013.

The UK government never informed the British public of the military experiment on the London Underground. Thousands of people were exposed to chemical gas without their knowledge. Nor did the Ministry of Defence ask for their consent to participate in such military experiments. Information about the project can be obtained from a 2016 [US Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) document](#) entitled Environmental Assessment of Proposed NYC Subway Tracer Particle and Gas Releases for the Underground Transport Restoration Project.



5 PFTs, SF6 and Urea were released on the London Underground in 2013 in the form of liquid aerosol droplets. Source: US Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The document provides information about other programs running in the USA and UK from 2005 to 2016. Among them are the London Underground chemical trials. They were conducted by the Defense Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), also known as Porton Down.

Information obtained from the UK government contracts registry confirms that Porton Down scientists conducted a study involving access to the London tube under [a 3-year contract with the London Underground](#) (2011-2014). The content of the project is not specified though.

According to the contract documents, the London Underground cannot communicate “on these matters with any media representative unless specifically granted permissions to do so. In the event that the Contract becomes classified the Contractor must safeguard information. Before publishing information to the general public, Porton Down may redact any information that would be exempt from disclosure if it was the subject of a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act”.



The London Underground is prohibited from public disclosure of information about the Porton Down project without permission, according to the [contract documents](#). Source: data.gov.uk

The controversial military laboratory was investigated for chemical and biological experiments on humans in the past. Up to 20,000 people took part in various trials from 1949 to 1989. In 2008, the UK Ministry of Defence paid 360 veterans £3 million without admitting liability.



Ronald George Maddison was a twenty-year-old Royal Air Force engineer who died while undergoing tests with sarin at Porton Down in 1953, according to declassified military documents.

Powder dissemination of chemical or biological agents

Presently Porton Down scientists produce and test dissemination of biological and/or chemical agents as they did in the past, documents from the UK government contracts registry reveal. Although the information is redacted, it still raises questions as to why the UK military needs to develop a new technique for dissemination of chemical or biological agents via the inhalational route. [A private contractor – Red Scientific Ltd, was awarded a £50,000 contract](#) in 2012 “to explore techniques that could be used to manipulate the flow ability of dry powders, principally to understand the delivery of solid particulate by inhalation, and to apply a variety of innovative powder manipulation techniques to a specific irritant powder (provided by DSTL)”. If the work in 2012/13 proves to be successful there is potential for a second phase to be pursued in 2013/14 examining other powder materials with the same techniques, the contract documents reveal. The project’s stated goal is marked improvement in the efficiency of aerosolisation over current techniques used at DSTL.



DSTL has awarded a private contractor to explore more advanced techniques for powder dissemination of chemical/biological agents. [Source: data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk)

DSTL has also tested dissemination techniques in wind tunnels. A private company – [NIAB Trading Ltd, was awarded a £12,020 contract](#) to provide facilities and expertise to assist with wind tunnel assessments.

Such experiments involving the release of bacteria were conducted in the UK in the past during the joint UK-US military operation DICE. [A declassified US Army document](#) reveals that a series of 24 field trials took place off the coast of Portland and in Lyme Bay in the UK in 1975. Each field trial involved the spraying of massive bacterial aerosols from a converted Land Rover. Although the US and UK joined the UN Conventions on the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, documents prove that their military programs have never ended.



Porton Down scientists conducted field tests in 1956. The masks on their faces allowed the collection of warfare simulants which had been sprayed from aircraft. Photo credit: Imperial War Museums

US official lied in Brussels about the Pentagon biolaboratories

Robert Kadlec, Assistant Secretary at the US Department of Health, categorically denied the existence of an American bio-weapons program at a seminar on the threat of biological and chemical weapons. The event was organized by the European Parliament on 7th March in Brussels. Asked why the information about the US military bio-laboratories in 25 countries bordering on Russia, China and Iran (the Pentagon's main rivals) is classified, Kadlec responded: "They are not classified, they are openly available to anyone who wants to look at them."

[\(full video of Robert Kadlec's comment here\)](#)

Documents about the Pentagon offshore bio-laboratories prove him wrong though.



According to the 2005 [Agreement between the US DoD and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine](#) the Ukrainian government is prohibited from public disclosure of sensitive information about the US program. [The Pentagon has been operating 11 biolaboartories in Ukraine.](#)

Porton Down is just one of [the Pentagon-funded military laboratories](#) in 25 countries across the world, where the US Army produces and tests man-made viruses, bacteria and toxins in direct violation of the UN convention. These US bio-laboratories are funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) under a [\\$ 2.1 billion military program](#)– Cooperative Biological Engagement Program (CBEP), and are located in former Soviet Union countries

such as Georgia and Ukraine, the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa.

The Pentagon-funded military facilities are not under the direct control of the host state as the US military and civilian personnel is working under diplomatic cover. The local governments are prohibited from public disclosure of sensitive information about the foreign military program running on their own territory. Without being under the direct control of the host state, these Pentagon bio-laboratories put the health of the local population at risk and must be closed.

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