

Thompson, Rehberg want Project SHAD investigation reopened

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WASHINGTON – Congressmen Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Denny Rehberg (R-MT) are calling on the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to reopen its previous investigation into the long-term health effects on veterans exposed during the operation of Project SHAD.

Project SHAD, or Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense, was conducted between 1962 and 1974 by the Department of Defense.

During Project SHAD, a number of weapons containing chemical and biological agents such as VX nerve gas, Sarin Nerve Gas and E. Coli were tested on unknowing military personnel.

A Government Accountability Office report (GAO-04-410) issued in May of 2004 concluded that a substantial number of veterans remain unaware that tests were conducted on them.

In a letter to the IOM, Thompson and Rehberg stated that the recent study of Project SHAD health effects was deficient because it failed to include information on key test participants, despite the fact that the names of many such participants were available. In light of this concern, they want the IOM to reexamine the study's results.

“We can't understand why a study of Project SHAD's health effects on veterans wouldn't include the very veterans that were used in the tests,” said Congressman Thompson. “These veterans deserve to know the truth about what these chemicals have done to their health. As a fellow veteran, I'm determined to make sure this study is done properly.”

“The veterans involved in the SHAD program deserve a thorough review of how these harmful chemicals may have affected them,” said Congressman Rehberg. “However, the work that's been done so far just doesn't cut it. Mike and I are sending a clear message that the valuable input these veterans can provide shouldn't be taken for granted.”

In 2003, Congress directed the IOM to conduct a study of the long-term health effects on veterans exposed during Project SHAD.

The study, which was released in June 2007, failed to link Project SHAD to the health problems experienced by veterans exposed to those tests.

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