



Ministry
of Defence

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Ref: FOI 29-01-2013-095832-007

Mr C Beswick
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22 February 2013

Dear Mr Beswick

Thank you for your correspondence dated 29 January 2013, which has been considered a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act). Your request has been passed to this department and I have been asked to respond.

You requested the following:

"Can you please produce evidence stating why gulf war servicemen and women are not allowed to have tests done for DU and for Squalene.

who gave authorisation for not allowing tests to be completed.

i believe there are now sufficient troops in the UK to conduct a full and concise independent research. this can be made up of non deployed, deployed and civilians"

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds this information. The information is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), because it is reasonably accessible to you by other means.

Several studies into Gulf Veterans' exposure and vaccinations have been conducted over many years, most notably by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Department of Defence, both of which have published extensive reports that emphasize that squalene is a chemical naturally occurring in the human body.

The WHO went further explaining that squalene has been present in over 22 million flu vaccines given to patients in Europe since 1997 and there have never been significant vaccine-related adverse events.

Please find below a link to the National Archives and a paper entitled "*Detection of Potential Squalene in Various Vaccines*". The paper states that due to concerns that vaccines used to protect UK Forces at the time of the 1990/91 might contain squalene the MOD contracted an independent laboratory to carry out an analysis of vaccines used for the presence of squalene using gas chromatography:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20051114233904/http://mod.uk/issues/gulfwar/info/medical/squalene.htm>

In the paper there is also a link to the final report produced by the independent laboratory in June 2001 as follows:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20051114233904/http://mod.uk/linked_files/gviu/squalene.pdf

In addition to these public domain documents, the fact that MOD undertook testing for squalene in vaccines has also been disclosed in a PQ response in the House of Lords dated 2 April 2009 to The Countess of Mar as part of an answer about research undertaken into Gulf War illnesses. The link is as follows:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldhansrd/text/90402w0003.htm#09040246000448>

You may also wish to be aware that questions about squalene usage have been answered on three occasions in the House of Commons. In a Parliamentary answer to Mr Hunter on 9 March 2000 the then Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Mr John Spellar, said that squalene was not 'added or used' in the anthrax vaccine used by MOD:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmhansrd/vo000309/text/00309w02.htm>

Parliamentary answers to Mr Steinberg and Mr Hancock on 5 May 1999 and 8 June 1999 respectively, by Mr Doug Henderson, who was Minister of State for the Armed Forces at that time, also made clear that none of the vaccines used in the medical countermeasures programme contained squalene:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmhansrd/vo990505/text/90505w02.htm>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmhansrd/vo990608/text/90608w01.htm>

The final report of the Depleted Uranium Oversight Board is in the National Archives and can be found at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121026065214/www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CABAB04E-3584-4234-A62E-C6034E543B6C/0/final_report_feb2007.pdf.

Further information about Depleted Uranium is available at:

http://94.236.30.88/NR/rdonlyres/A47F74A8-82C4-4FA9-8EF5-C2F40A3FEF8E/0/du_munitions_contamrisks.pdf

The Ministry of Defence sponsored research into the possible health effects of the combination of vaccines and tablets given as protection against the threat of biological and chemical warfare during the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict. Details of the MOD's programme to immunise UK troops against the potential threat posed by Iraq's biological weapons during the Gulf conflict were published in October 1997, in the following MOD paper "Background to the Use of Medical Countermeasures to Protect British Forces during the Gulf War (Operation GRANBY)". This is available on the gov.uk website at: <https://www.gov.uk/gulf-veterans-illnesses>.

Yours sincerely

Original Signed

Defence Personnel Secretariat

If you are not satisfied with this response or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact the Defence Personnel & Training Secretariat in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the **Deputy Chief Information Officer**, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB (e-mail: CIO-FOI-lx@xxx.xx). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach an informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.