
Chemical and Biological Warfare Testing

The Department of Defense (DoD) conducted certain chemical and biological warfare testing in support of Project 112 and Project Shipboard Hazard and Defense (SHAD). During testing, biological and chemical warfare agents, simulants, tracers, and decontaminates were used.

What Was Project 112 and Project SHAD?

Project 112 was DoD's comprehensive program of chemical and biological warfare vulnerability tests which were conducted to determine how to protect U.S. troops against these health threats. A series of operational tests were conducted from 1962 to 1973.

Project SHAD was part of Project 112. These tests were primarily *shipboard* tests and were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of shipboard detection of chemical and biological agents, the effectiveness of protective measures, and risks to U.S. forces. For the land-based tests, the purpose was generally to learn more about how chemical or biological warfare agents behave under a variety of environmental conditions.

Additional DoD information about Project 112/SHAD can be obtained by calling toll-free 1-800-497-6261 or by visiting DoD's web site at http://www.deploymentlink.osd.mil/current_issues/shad/shad_intro.shtml.

How Are Project 112/SHAD Veterans Identified?

DoD has collected, reviewed, and declassified many records. As medically relevant information was declassified, DoD provided VA with the test name, date, and location (for SHAD, the name of the ship). DoD also identified service members who participated in the tests, and may have been exposed to substances used. DoD reports that about 6,000 veterans participated in these tests. Most veterans only participated in the shipboard tests (SHAD).

Should Test Participants Be Concerned?

Protective measures were used when biological or chemical warfare agents were tested. Prior research suggests that the other agents, tracers, chemical simulants, and decontaminants tested are unlikely to cause long-term health effects without signs of acute toxicity soon after exposure. Most veterans were exposed to only one or a few of these agents, but some veterans may have been involved in multiple tests and repeated exposures.

DoD reports that no veteran is known to have become acutely ill from exposures during these tests. In a recent VA health care utilization review, no diagnosis stands out among Project 112/SHAD veterans. Therefore, there is no "SHAD test" or examination at this time.

What Is VA Doing About Project 112/SHAD?

VA is contacting veterans identified by DoD, and urging them to have a clinical evaluation at the nearest VA medical center if they have any health concerns. VA offers all Project 112/SHAD veterans a complete "Primary Care New Patient History and Physical Examination" even if the veteran has previously received health care from VA. Documentation of each veteran's health condition may be important should future information on Project 112/SHAD indicate a need for concern. Each VA medical center has a designated representative to provide information about Project 112/SHAD. Veterans will be exempt from co-payments for care or medications required for treatment of any health problem possibly related to participation in Project 112/SHAD. The initial clinical evaluation of health conditions possibly due to Project 112 is also free.

Additionally, VA contracted with the Institute of Medicine in September 2002 to conduct a three-year, three million dollar study of possible health effects associated with Project SHAD in order to ensure appropriate health care and assistance for veterans.

**For More Information, Call Toll-Free 1-800-749-8387
or Visit Our Web Site at www.va.gov/shad/.**