



FACT SHEET

Office of the
Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs)
Deployment Health Support Directorate

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Version 10-09-2002

Deseret Test Center

Tall Timber

Shortly after President Kennedy's inauguration in 1961, the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, directed that a total review of the U.S. military be undertaken. The study consisted of 150 separate projects. The chemical and biological warfare review was known as Project 112. As part of the Project 112 review, the Joint Chiefs of Staff convened a working committee that recommended a research, testing, and development program for chemical and biological weapons. To oversee this program, the Deseret Test Center was established at Fort Douglas, Utah, in 1962. Both land-based and ship-based tests were conducted during the period 1962 – 1973. The Deseret Test Center closed in 1973.

The purpose of Tall Timber was to test the effectiveness of the M138 bomblet filled with agent BZ in a tropical forested environment. BZ is a code name for an ester of benzilic acid. The chemical affects the human mind causing those contaminated to be unable to perform an assignment or have a reduced will to resist for a short period of time.

M138 bomblets filled with agent BZ were statically-ignited in a test area in the upper Waiakea Forest Reserve, southwest of Hilo, on the island of Hawaii during the period April through June 1966.

The Department of Defense (DoD) is providing this information, at the request of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to assist the VA in providing healthcare services to qualified veterans and to assist veterans in establishing service connection for disability claims. The Deployment Health Support Directorate (DHSD) collected this information from multiple sources and requested that the military services declassify it to allow its public distribution. The VA accepts this information provided on location, dates, units and/or ships, and substances involved in this exercise, which DHSD extracted from classified DoD records, and will provide it to individual veterans as necessary, but the VA cannot verify its accuracy.

Test Name	Tall Timber (DTC Test 64-8)
Testing Organization	US Army Deseret Test Center
Test Dates	April – June 1966
Test Location	Island of Hawaii
Test Operations	To test the effectiveness of the BZ-agent filled M138 bomblet in a tropical forested environment.
Participating Services	Deseret Test Center personnel
Units and Ships Involved	Not identified
Dissemination Procedures	Statically-ignited M138 bomblets filled with agent BZ
Agents, Simulants, Tracers	Ester of benzilic acid (BZ)
Ancillary Testing	Not identified
Decontamination	Not identified
Potential Health Risks Associated with Agents, Simulants, Tracers	<p><u>Ester of benzilic acid (Agent BZ)</u> This chemical is an incapacitating agent designed to cause stupor, confusion, and hallucinations when inhaled or absorbed through the skin. It is a white powder and may irritate the eyes, skin, and digestive and respiratory tracts, if inhaled or ingested. While some effects may last several days or weeks, long-term or late-developing health effects have not been documented and seem unlikely.</p> <p>(Source: Incapacitating Agents (chap. 5), in US Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense, Medical Management of Chemical Casualties Handbook, 3rd edition, 1998; Ketchum JS, Sidell FR Incapacitating Agents (chap. 11), in ed. Zajtchuk R., Textbook of Military Medicine (part 1), Medical Aspects of Chemical and Biological</p>

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	<p>Warfare, 1997), Office of the Army Surgeon General, Washington DC, 1997. http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/cbw/jptac008_194001.html [as of September 25, 2002].)</p>
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