



The Ministry of Defence turned large parts of the country into a giant laboratory to conduct a series of secret germ warfare tests on the public.

A government report just released provides for the first time a comprehensive official history of Britain's biological weapons trials between 1940 and 1979.

Many of these tests involved releasing potentially dangerous chemicals and micro-organisms over vast swaths of the population without the public being told.

In most cases, the trials did not use biological weapons but alternatives which scientists believed would mimic germ warfare and which the MoD claimed were harmless. But families in certain areas of the country who have children with birth defects are demanding a public inquiry.

One chapter of the report, 'The Fluorescent Particle Trials', reveals how between 1955 and 1963 planes flew from north-east England to the tip of Cornwall along the south and west coasts, dropping huge amounts of zinc cadmium sulphide on the population. The chemical drifted miles inland, its fluorescence allowing the spread to be monitored. In another trial using zinc cadmium sulphide, a generator was towed along a road near Frome in Somerset where it spewed the chemical for an hour.

While the Government has insisted the chemical is safe, **cadmium is recognised as a cause of lung cancer** and during the Second World War was considered by the Allies as a chemical weapon.

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