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### Chemical warfare 'more humane,' Utah veterinarian says at University of Montana

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# NEWS

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### CHEMICAL WARFARE 'MORE HUMANE,' UTAH VETERINARIAN SAYS AT UM

MISSOULA---

Chemical warfare, a subject of long-standing controversy, may not be so evil as many of the conventional methods of doing battle, according to Dr. D.A. Osguthorpe, a Salt Lake City veterinarian.

Dr. Osguthorpe, who is representing the Utah State Department of Agriculture in a study of the deaths of 6,000 sheep in desolate Skull Valley, Utah, discussed "Utah Sheep Deaths and Dugway Nerve Gas Tests" and related subjects Monday during a visit to the University of Montana campus.

Dr. Osguthorpe told an audience of 90 UM faculty members and zoology students that an organic phosphate compound referred to as "V.A." by the Army definitely is a factor in past and continuing deaths of 6,000 or more sheep in Skull Valley.

He said the chemical V.A. was released in aerosol form by the Army at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, on March 13 and the animals, grazing 20 miles north of the test site, began dying the next day. Other animals exposed to the chemical have been dying since March, Dr. Osguthorpe indicated, although most died within several days after release of the chemical.

Dr. Osguthorpe said Heptachlor, another hydrocarbon compound, also is suspect in the deaths. He said Heptachlor, an anti-bug spray, was ingested by the sheep on alfalfa they had eaten, making the animals' bodies more sensitive to the chemical V.A.

Concerning the financial losses to the Skull Valley ranchers, Dr. Osguthorpe said, "The Army has agreed to reimburse the sheep owners for loss of their animals and injuries suffered to their range."

He said the ranchers have tendered damage claims totaling \$1.2 million to the Army.

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Citing potential use of the chemical V.A. in wartime, Dr. Osguthorpe said lethal doses of the gas wouldn't be needed to overcome an army.

"Mustard gas used by Germany in World War I incapacitated the allied troops," he emphasized, "but the death loss was less than it would have been in conventional warfare."

Dr. Osguthorpe said the Army has conducted the tests at Dugway to determine the amount of the chemical V.A. needed to incapacitate, but not kill an enemy.

Dr. Osguthorpe said chemical research such as that conducted at Dugway "is very vital to our survival" because it has been proven that at least one nation had the capacity to destroy by using organic phosphate compounds such as V.A.

"Prior to World War II, we had no information on the organic phosphate compounds as used in this (V.A.) type of nerve gas," he emphasized. "At the close of World War II, we discovered that the Germans had conducted extensive research with this group of compounds and had perfected a nerve gas called Tabun, which was 30 times more toxic than the Phosgene or mustard gas used in World War I.

"The Germans had enough Tabun to have driven all our troops right off the beaches at Normandy, and why they didn't is more than we will ever know," Dr. Osguthorpe continued. "One theory is that the Germans thought we had a similar gas."

Dr. Osguthorpe said he feels that use of nerve gases in wartime "is more humane" than using rockets, flame throwers, and conventional bombs and shells, because a nation wouldn't have to be rebuilt after a war conducted with gases.

"And if you die from gas," he concluded, "there's not the suffering and pain as with other types of warfare."