

## MoD denies plans to destroy Porton Down archive

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**Autor:** jbg

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The Ministry of Defence is denying plans to destroy a film archive covering chemical and biological warfare volunteers at Porton Down.

More than 30 years ago tests were carried out on human volunteers and animals at the Wiltshire chemical and biological warfare centre.

Liberal Democrat MP Matthew Taylor has written to the Defence Secretary demanding a halt to any alleged destruction of films.

He has asked for Government money to fund a study into 450 reels identified as potentially historically important.

The films are understood to include colour footage of the Second World War as well as records of tests of biological agents such as anthrax and drugs such as LSD.

Mr Taylor says he has been informed that unless the Imperial War Museum agrees to fund the £12,000 study itself the destruction of films will begin.

Wiltshire police are currently carrying out a criminal investigation into allegations that the health of soldiers subjected to tests at Porton Down was permanently damaged, and there is also the potential for civil action from the volunteers themselves.

An MoD spokesman said: "There are no plans to destroy any films from the historical archive.

"There is no way we would destroy anything which could be part of a police investigation."

The spokesman added that films not deemed of historical interest were routinely destroyed on a daily basis, but this did not affect those identified by Mr Taylor.

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