

British soldiers exposed to risky blood

by UPI

LONDON -- The Ministry of Defense in England said British soldiers who had emergency blood transfusions from U.S. donors were exposed to possible contamination. British Defense Minister Derek Twigg said "procedures weren't followed" by the United States and said improper screening exposed several British soldiers to blood contaminated with HIV, hepatitis or syphilis, the Times of London said Thursday. Twigg said the risk of infection was low but the matter was serious. "We are contacting every one of the very small number of U.K. service personnel whose transfusions might not have had a valid retrospective test," he said. The U.S. Defense Department said all U.S. donors to British soldiers tested negative for HIV and hepatitis, The Times reported. The blood transfusions took place under life or death battlefield conditions, a spokesman for the Defense Department said.

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