

Drug Fatal In 1953

Army Test

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A 42-year-old civilian mental patient died in 1953 after receiving drug injections being tested by the Army, Secretary of the Army Martin R. Hoffman said yesterday.

"We are temporarily withholding the name of the deceased out of consideration of the next-of-kin, whom we are making every effort to locate," Hoffmann said in a press release.

The statement said the male patient received the drugs during a test program administered by the New York State Psychiatric Institute under an Army contract.

The Army said the patient underwent five tests over 29 days involving injections of "various mescaline derivatives," hallucinogenic drugs taken from the mescal cactus.

"The first four tests produced mild or no effects on the patient," the Army said. "On the fifth test, in early January, 1953, the patient died about two and half hours after receiving an injection of a mescaline derivative."

It was the first death reported in Army-sponsored drug experiments.

Last month it was disclosed that the CIA gave LSD to several of its employees without their knowledge and that one employee, Frank Olson, plunged to his death from a New York hotel window on Nov. 28, 1953, shortly after taking the drug.

The CIA did not tell the

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family how Olson had died—a cover-up that prompted President Ford to apologize to the family in a meeting at the White House.

In the Army case, Hoffmann

said yesterday that "although our information is far from complete, I consider it mandatory to make public the basic facts we already have."

He said the Army's inspector general last Thursday looked at information found in

a manila envelope discovered among historical records of the Biomedical Laboratory at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. Additional information is being sought, Hoffmann said.

On the basis of information in the manila envelope, found

in a walk-in vault at the arsenal, the Army said it appears that its Chemical Corps Procurement Agency awarded the test program contract to the New York Psychiatric Institute in 1951.

The notes in the file indicate the patient who died af-

ter the injections was being drugged "for diagnosis purposes."

The Army promised to release additional information about the case "as soon as accurate information is available."