

School, Army Tested LSD On Hundreds

By Bill Richards
Washington Post Staff Writer

7-17-75

The University of Maryland Medical School and the U.S. Army tested LSD on hundreds of civilians and soldiers—including some soldiers who did not know they were being given the drug—in experiments during the late 1950's, according to civilian researchers in the program.

The experiments were conducted under a contract between the Army's Chemical Center, now known as Edgewood Arsenal, in northeast Maryland and the university medical school's Psychiatric Institute in Baltimore. The researchers said LSD and even more powerful hallucinogens were tested on persons at both locations.

In addition to testing the drug on knowing volunteers in laboratory settings, Army experimenters gave LSD to at least one group of five to ten soldiers at Edgewood without their knowledge to test their reactions while under its influence. Several university researchers criticized this practice, one of the program's senior research officials said yesterday, but the program continued until at least 1959.

The research official, who asked that his name not be used, said the Army also tested LSD at its Aberdeen Proving Ground equipment testing facility in northern Maryland. LSD was given to soldiers there, the research official said, to determine their ability to handle complex equipment while under its influence.

The purpose of the testing at Edgewood and Aberdeen, the research official said, was to determine LSD's effectiveness as an offensive weapon in wartime. He said he was told several times by the Army's senior civilian official in charge of the program that the hallucinogens were being tested for use on "foreign individuals and populations."

An Army spokesman yesterday

declined to talk about the LSD programs, saying only that reports on them were still classified. He also declined to give dates of the tests or names of anyone involved.

Maj. Gen. Lloyd Fellenz, commander of the Edgewood base between 1956 and 1959, said this week LSD testing was conducted there and at Ft. Bragg, N.C., during that time. Fellenz said he could not recall a contract with the University of Maryland.

Some time during his command of Edgewood, Fellenz, who is now retired and living in St. Petersburg, Fla., said he was given LSD, on occasion, he said, was during a training exercise at Ft. Bragg, N.C.

"We didn't know when we were supposed to get it," he said, "but we were told it would be done. I was briefing a group of other officers when I realized it was taking effect." He said he had no adverse reaction from the drug.

A spokesman for the University of Maryland said records for the LSD-testing program were either turned over to the state for a routine audit and then destroyed, or, if the material was classified, turned back over to the Army.

Maryland was one of the four Washington area colleges or universities which denied in 1967 having any contracts at that time with Edgewood.

The denials were in response to a Science magazine report of university cooperation with the military in chemical and biological warfare projects.

The secret testing of LSD by the government first came to light last month with the release of the Rockefeller

See LSD, A9, Col. 1

LSD, From A1

Commission's report on domestic activities of the CIA. It said the CIA tested LSD on unsuspecting subjects on the West Coast beginning in 1955 and the East Coast beginning in 1961. One subject committed suicide after being given LSD, the commission said.

Last week, the family of a Frederick, Md., scientist said they were told by an official of the CIA's LSD testing program that the scientist, Dr. Frank Olsen, jumped to his death from the 10th floor window of a New York hotel in 1953 after being given LSD by the CIA without his knowledge.

Olsen worked as a civilian researcher at Fort Detrick, near Frederick, where the Army conducted secret biological warfare research during the 1950s and 1960s, and where secret LSD testing was carried out under contract with the CIA.

The Edgewood Arsenal facility was the Army's chemical warfare research counterpart to Fort Detrick. Several researchers who worked in the Army's LSD testing program at Edgewood said this week they were unaware of any CIA connection with that project.

The tests at Edgewood of LSD and other hallucinogens on humans began on a fairly large scale in 1956 and lasted through 1959, according to several of the researchers.

Dr. Enoch Calloway, a University of Maryland researcher involved in the tests, said this week that he recalled that one voluntary group of graduate nurses was given LSD at the medical school to determine whether a potential antidote to the drug was effective. The test, said Calloway, was given under laboratory conditions with the nurses' consent.

The results of some of the LSD experiments conducted at the University of Maryland were published by its Psychiatric Institute. However, most of the testing done at Edgewood was classified secret by the Army. According to one research official, several attempts to publish additional results of the tests were stopped by the Army.

Calloway, who now lives in San Francisco, said he was not aware of any tests made on unsuspecting subjects at the university. However, other re-

searchers said such tests were made on military personnel at Edgewood.

In one instance, a researcher said, a group of about a half-dozen soldiers was brought to Edgewood in 1958 from Ft. Holabird near Baltimore and told they would be part of a chemical test program to begin the next day.

"We had a party for them that night," recalled the researcher, "and during the party they were slipped an LSD mickey in their drinks. It was done by the Army people. I was there and didn't like it, but I thought I might be of help to the victims."

On other occasions, volunteers were brought to the base from other military installations and told they were to be part of a chemical testing program. Sometimes, according to another of the university researchers, the Army promised the volunteers rewards of furloughs for their participation. The soldiers were then slipped LSD unknowingly and their reactions were tested.

"The Army was always coming in with cockeyed schemes that we thought were either unethical or not scientifically valid," said a university researcher. "Toward the end of the program we simply would say 'no,' and let them go ahead without us."

The Army members of the research group were not academically prepared to handle experiments with humans, the researcher said. "They provided us with volunteers, facilities and support personnel," the researcher said, "and sometimes they did their own things. Any time they wanted to experiment on troops in the field we just kept out of it."

At the beginning of the testing program on human subjects, said the researcher,

there were "some close calls," including one man who had to be hospitalized and who remained in serious condition for several weeks.

"We had a few people who showed homicidal or suicidal tendencies. But we had people to handle them, and we didn't have any who became violent and tried to kill anyone or themselves in front of us. The reactions from the LSD were very strong. It is a very powerful substance and we sometimes gave it in very large doses."

Dr. Walter Weintraub, another member of the medical school research group, said yesterday that some participants in the tests had been given LSD doses as high as 1,600 micrograms. An ordinary dose of the drug purchases on the street, he said, would be around 100 micrograms.

Weintraub said he did not see any actual administration of the drug to unsuspecting persons but had heard reports of such testing.

Weintraub said the Army offered such inducements as extra leave to soldiers who volunteered to take part in the tests. "I don't recall we told them they would get LSD," said Weintraub, "but it probably wouldn't have meant anything at that time anyway. The tests were conducted, he said, well before LSD became well known in either research or drug culture circles.

Some of the test subjects showed what Weintraub said were short-term reactions, lasting a few days or hours after they got the drug. "Some became very frightened for several hours and there were a few who had delusions of conspiracy against them — in one or two cases this may have lasted for a few days."

Weintraub, who is still on the faculty of the medical school, was reached in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., yesterday.

Like other members of the research team, he said he was unsure whether the Army followed up on the soldiers who were given the hallucinogens at Edgewood. A number of these soldiers, according to other researchers, came from bases scattered around the country.

"We had no opportunity to follow them up after they left. They were required to stay for a month but after that I just don't know if anyone followed up on them," he said. "I assumed that we would have been notified if there had

been any trouble but I just don't know."

While the purpose of the research was not explained to the group formally, said Weintraub, "my understanding was that they were interested in developing a chemical weapon to disorganize an enemy but not cause permanent damage or death."