

Rep. Downey Sees Army Cover-Up in Drug Death

By JOSEPH B. TREASTER

Representative Thomas J. Downey, who has been investigating the military's drug experiments with humans, said yesterday that there appeared to have been a deliberate effort to cover up the death of a patient in an Army-sponsored experiment at the New York State Psychiatric Institute 22 years ago.

The Army disclosed last Tuesday the death of Harold Blauer, a 42-year-old tennis professional who had taught at the River Club in New York and the Piping Rock Club in Locust Valley, L.I. The disclosure came after the Army said it had "discovered" his records as part of an over-all investigation it is conducting into the human experiment program.

Mr. Downey, a Democrat of Suffolk County, said, however, that members of his staff had been told by Lieut. Gen. Herron N. Maples, the Inspector General of the Army who is in charge of the investigation, that the records had been read and initialed by an Army officer on at least two earlier occasions—in 1959 and 1967.

Furthermore, Mr. Downey said that, on the sealed manila envelope in which the records had been kept, someone had written, in effect, "Not to be opened without the authority

of Dr. Van Sim.

Legend on Envelope

From 1956 until last month, Dr. Van M. Sim was director of the Biomedical Laboratories at the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland, the center for the military's chemical warfare testing, and was in charge of the Army's human experiments. He was reassigned to other duties at the Arsenal as the Army suspended the experiments on humans and began an investigation into the program and into allegations that Dr. Sim had misused the pain-killing drug Demerol a few years before he went to work for the Army.

A Defense Department spokesman said yesterday that Dr. Sim was on vacation, and several attempts to reach him by telephone at his home were unsuccessful.

Mr. Downey mentioned no names in reference to his charges of a cover-up, but he said that it was "obvious that the Army has systematically kept this information from being made public.

"Clearly," he continued, "this has got to be explained. The Army's investigation has got to go into not only how the whole drug program was conducted, but why this information was not made public."

Joseph Laitin, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, refused to say whether the Army was investigating the possibility of a cover-up.

Instead, Mr. Laitin said, "The

Inspector General of the Army is looking into the whole matter. Whatever details he comes up with will be made public."

General Maples refused to comment on the investigation.

In a telephone interview, Mr. Downey said that the envelope containing the Blauer records had not been "discovered" by members of the Inspector General's team, as Army officials had initially suggested, but had been taken from Dr. Sim's walk-in vault at the Edgewood Arsenal by his secretary and handed to Col. Claude McClure, Dr. Sim's military counterpart.

Motive Not Known

Mr. Downey said that he did not know what had prompted the secretary's action, but that it occurred Thursday, Aug. 7, a day after he and his staff visited the Edgewood Arsenal as a part of his investigation.

Mr. Downey said that he and staff members had been told in response to questions that there had been no deaths or serious reactions in any of the drug experiments, which included nearly 4,000 subjects since 1955, both at the Arsenal and in experiments sponsored elsewhere by the Army.

Newsmen have repeatedly asked the same questions of Dr. Sim and military officers since the experiments first came to the attention of the public following the disclosure by the Rockefeller commission that a man who had surreptitiously been given LSD by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1953 plunged to his death from a 10th-floor hotel window in Manhattan.

He was later identified as Frank R. Olson.