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Army 'Guinea Pig' In 1963-64 Tells Of 'Hallucinations'

By Stephen J. Lynton
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the early 1960s Wendell L. Queen Jr. spent four months as an Army volunteer—in his own words, a "guinea pig"—in a medical research program at Maryland's Edgewood Arsenal. He says the unidentified chemicals he was given caused days of hallucinations, alternately frightening and blissful.

Today, Queen, 36, a guard at the D.C. jail, is cheerful and apparently healthy. But the publicity recently given to the Army's research with the hallucinogenic drug LSD has brought back memories of his months at Edgewood Arsenal and given him a reason to worry. Queen says he once had "flashbacks" and now wonders whether the drugs he took more than a decade ago could some day come back to haunt him.

The Army acknowledged Friday night that it administered LSD to almost 1,500 persons between 1956 and 1967, including 323 at Edgewood Arsenal. The Army said it plans to give physical and mental examinations to find out whether any of them have suffered aftereffects.

It was not possible yesterday to determine whether Queen had been given LSD or other hallucinogenic agents. He said he was never told what the chemicals were and was given a "run-around" yesterday when he phoned Walter Reed Army Medical Center to ask whether he was among those whom the Army plans to examine for possible aftereffects.

An Army spokesman said the Army does not yet have a list of the people given LSD and could not confirm whether Queen was among them.

Joseph R. Blair, a retired Army colonel who directed the medical research program at Edgewood Arsenal during part of the time Queen was there, also said it was uncertain whether Queen was given LSD.

Of the 6,000 to 8,000 subjects in the research program, Blair said, only several hundred were administered LSD. He said that chemicals Queen took orally may possibly have been LSD, but that a chemical placed on Queen's arm, which Queen said caused a severe reaction, could not have been LSD because, "LSD does not go through the skin."

In an interview at his Northern Virginia apartment, Queen said he volunteered for the Edgewood Arsenal program in March and April of 1963 and again during the same two months of 1964. He displayed two Army certificates as evidence of his participation.

During the research program, Queen said, he was asked to swallow a variety of liquids and pills. Some caused no reaction, he said, while others resulted in hallucinations. These included a feeling of "floating through the air," Queen said, as well as fears that people were "chasing after me and shooting after me." Some drugs caused headaches, he added.

A tiny drop of a liquid

United States Army
Chemical Research And Development Laboratories
Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland



This is to certify that

WENDELL L. QUEEN
Specialist Fourth Class
RA 24 287 633

has participated in and successfully completed all phases of the Medical Research Volunteer Program for the period 1 March 1963 to 30 April 1963

Appropriate recognition of such outstanding performance has been made a matter of record.


F. L. BAUER, Colonel, MC
Director of Medical Research


JAMES A. HEBBELER, Colonel, CMIC,
Commanding

Certificate received by Wendell Queen for role in Army drug-testing program.

placed on his right arm a few inches above his wrist caused what Queen described as his most severe reaction—a period of four to six days of hallucinations. “I went into hallucinations and I started getting violent and everything and they had to put me under restraints,” Queen said.

He said he spent those days held down by leather straps in a hospital bed at Edgewood. At one point, he said, he “started tearing up the bed” and managed to escape temporarily. Attendants caught him before he could leave the hospital room.

Queen said his one period of “flashbacks” occurred several months after he completed the program in 1964. He had hallucinations of

fear and floating, he said.

At the time of the Edgewood Arsenal research, Queen was an Army instructor and drill sergeant, stationed at Ft. Knox, Ky. He joined the Army in 1959 and left in 1966. Now married, Queen said he has been a D.C. jail guard since 1970.

He was one of about 15 and given a battery of psychological tests before and during the program, and were told the research was classified.

Despite his lingering worries, Queen seems to look back on his days as a guinea pig with a mixture of fascination and pride. “I just thought it was a service to my country. I’m not ashamed of it. I’m proud of my service to my country,” he remarked.



WENDELL L. QUEEN JR.
... suffered ‘flashbacks’

volunteers from Ft. Knox who took part in the Edgewood Arsenal research, Queen said. They were interview-