

Drug Test

Is Halted

By Army

Investigation Of Edgewood Program Set

By Bill Richards

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The Army temporarily halted its drug and chemical testing program at Edgewood Arsenal yesterday and said its inspector general was opening an investigation of the civilian head of the program.

Acting Army Secretary Norman R. Augustine said Edgewood's procedure of using human volunteers for drug and chemical experiments would be stopped and the 36 military volunteers waiting to take part in the program would be sent back to their home stations.

Augustine also directed the Army inspector general's office to begin looking into "some possible adverse information" concerning Dr. Van M. Sim, the program's civilian director for the last 19 years.

An Army spokesman said last night that the information "has to do with possible misuse of drugs and false reporting of drug use."

Sim appeared at a press conference called at the Pentagon last week to defend the chemical and drug experiments that have involved nearly 7,000 military volunteers since they began in 1955.

At that time he said the program would be continued "in the national interest" and that he was awaiting approval from the Army to begin new tests on the waiting male and female volunteers.

An Army spokesman said last night that the announcement to halt the testing and investigate Sim related to some of his reported activities before he took over the Edgewood program in 1955.

Sim could not be reached last night to comment on the reported allegations or the suspension of the program.

Before taking his position at Edgewood in 1956, Sim was a member of the Naval Reserve Medical Corps and chief resident physician at the Army Chemical Defense Experimental Establishment in England.

The Army made no mention in its announcement last night of the controversy surrounding its testing of LSD on 585 servicemen and civilians at Edgewood and other military bases and additional LSD tests it funded on about 900 civilians.

At his press conference last week, Sim said that he had taken LSD himself and that there was no drug or chemical tested on anyone in the program that he had not tested on himself.

Following the press conference the Army said that an additional 2,490 volunteers had been tested with other hallucinogens, some more powerful than LSD, including one that incapacitated volunteers in the program for three days or more.