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*Use of human volunteers in experimental research by
the Department of Defense*
STATEMENT

BEFORE THE

INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES

BY

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Mr. Ablard was appointed General Counsel of the Army on 19 February 1975. In this capacity he serves as legal counsel to the Secretary, the Under Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries, and their staffs.

Mr. Ablard was born on October 25, 1930, in Enid, Oklahoma. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Oklahoma in 1952, an LLB from the University of Oklahoma in 1954, and an LLM from the George Washington University Law Center in 1959. He has been admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States, the Supreme Court of Oklahoma, the U.S. Court of Military Appeals and several lower federal courts.

Immediately after he graduated from law school in 1954, Mr. Ablard served as a judge advocate in the Air Force with duty assignments at Maxwell AFB, Oklahoma, and Itazuke, Japan.

From 1958 to 1960 Mr. Ablard was the Judicial Officer and Chairman of the Board of Contract Appeals of the Post Office Department. Mr. Ablard was in the private practice of law in Washington, D.C. from 1960 to 1963.

From 1963 to 1969 Mr. Ablard served as the Vice President and Counsel of the Magazine Publishers Association and the American Association of Magazine Editors, in Washington, D.C.

In 1969 Mr. Ablard became General Counsel and Congressional Liaison of the United States Information Agency, Washington, D.C., where he served until 1972. Mr. Ablard served as Associate Deputy Attorney General in the Department of Justice from 1972 until 1974. During 1974 Mr. Ablard was a Visiting Fellow of the Center of International Studies, Cambridge University, England.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

It is a privilege for me to appear before your subcommittee this morning to discuss the Army's Drug Testing Program; a subject which quite properly warrants your review. I am accompanied by Lieutenant General Richard Taylor, The Surgeon General of the Department of the Army. We welcome the opportunity to testify within the limits of our present knowledge.

Current interest in the history of Army drug testing using human subjects was prompted in part by the Rockefeller Commission Report's disclosure that an unidentified Army civilian employee had committed suicide several days after having been administered LSD. This individual was, of course, later identified as Dr. Frank Olson.

On July 21, 1975, the Acting Secretary of the Army directed the Army Inspector General to conduct a comprehensive investigation to establish the totality of historical facts and circumstances surrounding the Army's participation in drug testing, focusing particularly upon the testing of hallucinogenic drugs on human subjects. The Secretary also suspended all human testing, and ordered all volunteers to be returned to their regular duty assignment. The Inspector General's investigation which also encompasses the allegations concerning the

Chief of the Medical Research Division, is currently in progress.

Although substantial investigatory effort has already been expended, including formal interviews of over 55 witnesses, numerous informal interviews of other individuals, and review of thousands of pages of documentation, the bulk of this investigation remains to be completed. In the course of this investigation, one fatality has been identified as having occurred in connection with one of the contracts let by the Army for drug testing. This was Mr. Harold Blauer, who at the time of his death was a patient at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. The Department of the Army announced this information shortly after it was learned on 7 August 1975.

As the time period of the investigation dates back to the late 1940's many of the most knowledgeable witnesses are either deceased or have not as yet been located, and the memory of many of those who have been located is incomplete or imprecise. In addition, numerous pertinent records have not as yet been located, and many may have been routinely destroyed under standard procedures for destruction of all records. In my testimony today I will attempt to summarize the information that has thus far been developed as a result of the

Inspector General's investigation. However, I wish to emphasize that because this investigation is still in progress, and because of the problems that I have just noted with regard to locating knowledgeable witnesses and pertinent documentation, we have not as yet been able to reconstruct a complete account of the Army's participation in drug testing. There are substantial gaps in our knowledge, and much of the information that we have been able to assemble is incomplete. For this reason, there are many questions to which we simply do not have the answers at the present time.

Before discussing the specifics of the program, I believe it appropriate to provide insofar as security considerations permit, the factors which mandated that a program be initiated, and what we perceived as the objectives of such a program.

Starting in the early 1950's, intelligence reports which were received indicated large purchases by other governments of possible hallucinogenic agents which could be used as chemical warfare material. These reports also cited documented studies of research conducted by these countries in the 1940's and 50's with various psychochemicals, as well as references to the capture by U.S. or U.S. allies of foreign agents who were carrying syringes of fluid to

facilitate control of captives. Furthermore, on October 21, 1951, after communication with several European medical personnel concerning the effect of "ego-depressant drugs," a civilian doctor sent a report to The Surgeon General. In it he related reports of the utilization of drugs by foreign agents and indicated the need for further research to determine the possible effects such drugs could have on national security.

This information presented a serious threat -- it indicated that a major portion of our deterrent forces could be rendered helpless -- and defenseless -- by drugs which were odorless, colorless and tasteless. It also reflected that our most sensitive security matters could be unknowingly compromised. But perhaps of even greater significance, it indicated that an alternative to nuclear weapons might be available; a weapon which might render large forces helpless -- but only temporarily -- and without any permanent damage to those forces and none to their surroundings. These matters were covered in testimony by Major General William M. Creasy, former Chief Chemical Officer, U.S. Army, before hearings of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics on June 16, 1959, wherein he discussed

at great length the possible use of chemical agents as a substitute for nuclear weapons.

The program initiated at that time therefore had three specific objectives: to determine what hallucinogenic drugs might provide an effective alternative to more drastic weaponry; to ascertain the potential application of such drugs in intelligence operations; and finally, to attempt to develop an antidote to such drugs should they be used against U.S. or Allied forces.

Once decisions were made at levels above that of the Department of the Army to proceed with the testing of psychoactive and other drugs, the Chemical Corps, then a separate technical service of the Army, headquartered at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland, entered into a series of contracts with various universities, state hospitals, and medical foundations. Unfortunately, many of the early contracts are unavailable. Our best information is that many of these contracts were routinely destroyed some time ago. However, we have located some documentation, all of which indicates that the Army's primary interest was in acquiring the results of investigations and experimentations being conducted by these civilian research organizations.

Our review has encompassed a total of fifty-two contracts, starting from the early 50's and continuing to the 70's. I should like

to stress that of the fifty-two contracts of which we have knowledge, only a small number (13) involve testing compounds which might be described in a broad sense as hallucinogenic or deliriant. The 39 remaining contracts can all be placed into three categories: first, tests of various anticholinergic agents, such as atropine, and basic research into organophosphates, in a constant effort to refine antidotes to organophosphate nerve poisons; second, tests of various common drugs in medical use, such as morphine, and other analgesics as well as miscellaneous non-psychoactive drugs; and, third, non-drug tests of physiological functions, such as lung function or skin permeability. In the interest of time, I have not prepared detailed remarks on these contracts, but I have pertinent documents should you have any questions.

Turning to the research on hallucinogenic drugs, we discovered 9 such contracts. The first two of these were negotiated in 1951 with the New York State Psychiatric Institute, a leader in the field of the use of hallucinogenics in the diagnosis and treatment of the mentally ill. The subjects were psychiatric patients. The records are ambiguous concerning the matter of the consent of the patients. The drugs utilized included LSD, mescaline, and others. In the course of one of these contracts, a subject, Mr. Harold Blauer, then a patient at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, was administered a dose of a

mescaline derivative which proved fatal. Details of Mr. Blauer's death have already been made public and are available to the committee and are appended to my statement. The Blauer death is the subject of a pending claim by the two daughters against the Army.

A 1955 contract with Tulane University involved the administration of LSD, Mescaline, and other drugs to mental patients who had therefore had electrodes implanted in their brains as a part of their medical treatment unrelated to an Army contract. The electrodes were utilized to study the effects of the drugs on the brain's functioning. The methodology used might be subject to some criticism on the ground that a range of compounds was administered to at least one patient without apparent relation to therapy or diagnosis. However, work on the brain chemistry of mental illness was still pioneering work in 1955, and perhaps it is not surprising in the cool light of analysis 20 years later that some of the techniques then employed now appear less than perfect.

The five remaining contracts were with the University of Washington, the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, Inc., the University of Maryland and the Institute for Behavioral Research. Four of the five studied LSD, the remaining one studied many compounds including amphetamines. They covered the time period 1953 to 1965. None of them appears remarkable, but, again, I have more complete information should you desire it.

Although the medical profession has had ethical codes and procedural safeguards on the use of human beings in drug experimentation for over a century, I must in all candor admit that they appear not always to have been followed in these tests. These standards require, for example, that the individual be informed as to all aspects of the nature, methods and effects of the experiment, that he give his voluntary written consent before any testing and that he be free to withdraw from the experiment at any time. The Surgeon General will elaborate on these matters in his testimony. These are the obligations of the attending physician, or the researcher conducting the experiment. Our records, admittedly incomplete, do not reflect that these procedures were necessarily followed by the research organizations with whom we contracted. To insure compliance with these requirements, the Army has, since at least the early 60's, followed the practice of requiring contract clauses setting stringent controls over the use of human beings in experiments. Such a clause is present, for example, in our contract with the Institute for Behavioral Research.

Chemical Corps Testing of LSD

Based upon the results obtained under early contracts with civilian research organizations, military-related testing of hallucinogenics was initiated. Insofar as we have been able to determine, Army in-house testing of LSD on human subjects commenced some time in 1955 and was conducted intermittently through 1967 using military and Army civilian personnel recruited from the Army areas within the United States. Most of this testing was conducted at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland.

In addition, available information indicates that a number of field tests were conducted at certain other Army installations. The purpose of these field tests was to determine the effects of LSD administration on the ability of soldiers to perform various normal military functions. For example, in December 1957, 16 men were tested under LSD influence during operation of a radar van at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland. During this same period, at Edgewood Arsenal, 40 individuals were tested under LSD influence in the performance of such activities as rifle assembly and disassembly, masking and skin decontamination procedures, a volley ball game, and close order drill. Films were made of the latter test and used as a demonstration vehicle within the Army as to the effects of LSD.

In September, 1958, field tests were conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One of these tests involved administration of LSD to 20 Special Forces personnel engaged in a guard post exercise and a simulated interrogation exercise. In another series of tests at Fort Bragg, 59 men from the XVIII Airborne Corps Field Artillery were tested under LSD influence while engaged in a meteorological survey, a ground survey, a 40 mm artillery crew drill, and fire direction center and forward observer exercises. These latter tests were also filmed.

Available information also indicates other field tests involving personnel of the advanced officers courses at the Chemical Corps School, Fort McClellan, Alabama; four members of an instructor class at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah, in 1959; and approximately 34 members of an infantry advanced course at Fort Benning, Georgia, in January, 1960.

Available records characterize all of the LSD test subjects, both at Edgewood Arsenal and at the field locations, as volunteers. However, as I will discuss later in connection with testing of LSD, for intelligence purposes, it is not certain how much advance information was imparted to each prospective subject regarding the possible effects

of LSD or the exact nature of the experiments to be conducted, or whether some coercion may have been brought to bear upon prospective subjects by their superiors in order to obtain their participation.

Testing of LSD for Intelligence Purposes

During the period 1958 through 1962 a series of experiments were conducted specifically designed to evaluate potential applications of LSD to intelligence operations. In particular, these experiments focused upon the possible use of LSD as an aid in intelligence interrogations. In this regard it was desired to determine whether, as a result of the administration of LSD, a well-trained and experienced intelligence agent could be made to divulge classified information that could not be obtained from the agent solely through use of conventional questioning.

A series of clinical experiments were performed during the period 1958 through 1960 at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. These experiments, which were conducted as a joint project of the U.S. Army Intelligence Board and the Medical Research Directorate of the Army's Chemical Warfare Laboratories, used as subjects military intelligence personnel made available by the U.S. Army Intelligence Center. Subjects were specifically selected for a high degree of security conditioning and intelligence experience. In addition, preliminary mental and physical examinations were a prerequisite to acceptance into the program.

Available records indicate that approximately 31 Army intelligence personnel participated as subjects in the program. Because these records are incomplete, there are significant unanswered questions as to whether participation in the program was truly voluntary by today's criteria. Planning documents indicate that prospective subjects were to be advised generally as to the nature of the program, and that they could terminate their participation at any time. In particular, prospects were to be advised that the project would consist of a series of mental and physical tests of human reaction to a specific material which would be administered under in-patient clinical conditions. Prospects were not, however, to be informed as to the exact properties of the material to be administered or its potential intelligence application, nor, in connection with certain of the experiments, the time, location, or method of administration. This information was withheld in order not to prejudice experimental results by suggestion. Planning documents also indicate that each prospect who agreed to participation in the program was to sign a statement indicating in part that the general nature of the experiments had been explained to him from the standpoint of possible hazards to health; that he understood that the experiments would be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury; that he would be at liberty to request that the experiments

be terminated at any time; that he recognized that in the pursuit of certain experiments transitory discomfiture may occur; and that there had been no coercion, undue moral suasion or other adverse pressure brought to bear in his volunteering; and that he had done so of his own free will. Available records do not indicate, however, whether these procedures were in fact followed in each case, or exactly what information was imparted to the prospective subjects.

The experiments at Edgewood were conducted by qualified medical personnel of the Chemical Warfare Laboratories under controlled clinical conditions. Project officers of the U. S. Army Intelligence Center provided technical advice and assistance in the structuring of experiments. In addition to a number of standard tests of mental and physical abilities related to performance of intelligence tasks, conducted so as to compare pre and post drug administration results, the experimentation program included certain structured situations wherein the applicability of the drug for intelligence purposes was assessed. In these situations an attempt was made to overcome the security training and experience, principally interrogation resistance, of the subjects by exploitation of the effects of the drug. The structured situations consisted of: (1) Simulated social receptions where LSD was administered surreptitiously to the subjects (in cocktails);

(2) Simulated stress situations wherein subjects were given polygraph examinations after administration of LSD; and (3) Administration of LSD in conjunction with confinement in an isolation environment.

In each situation medical personnel were present at all times. Observation reports by those supervising the experiments, as well as subjective reports by the subjects themselves, were used in assessing the effect of the drug. In general, it was found that use of LSD, either alone or in conjunction with conventional interrogation techniques, could be effective in reducing the resistance to interrogation of well-trained and experienced intelligence personnel.

In view of the results of the clinical experimentation at Edgewood Arsenal, and in recognition of the limited capability to structure realistic interrogation situations in a laboratory environment using volunteers, a proposal was submitted by the U.S. Army Intelligence Center, in coordination with the Chemical Warfare Laboratories, to conduct field experimentation in conjunction with actual interrogation situations. This proposal was approved by the Army's Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, and subsequently two series of field tests were conducted.

Available records indicate that on 10 April 1963, the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence directed that no further field

testing of LSD be conducted. No records have been found to indicate that any Army intelligence testing of LSD has been performed since that time.

Available records indicate that approximately 600 individuals were administered LSD during the course of the Army in-house testing programs at Edgewood Arsenal and at the field test locations. There is reason to believe, however, that these records may not be complete, and that the total number of participants may have been somewhat higher. Hence, a priority effort is continuing as part of the Inspector General's investigation in an attempt to compile a complete listing of participants in the LSD testing programs. The names of all of the participants thus far identified have been forwarded to the Army's Surgeon General for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive follow-up medical evaluation program on all individuals who can be located. This effort, which is currently underway, will require the assistance and cooperation of at least two other agencies, the National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council Medical Follow-up Agency and the Veterans Administration.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I have attempted to describe within the structure of security considerations

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and the right of privacy of the individuals involved the external factors which caused our government to initiate a testing program; the manner in which the program was conducted; and the actions we have recently initiated in an attempt to insure that the participants in the program have and will continue to receive appropriate medical treatment.

Mr. Chairman, as I indicated at the outset, the Inspector General investigation has not been completed. As soon as any additional information is developed, it will be provided to you.

I will be pleased to attempt to respond to any questions you may have.