**The Army’s Conquest-by-Cannabinoid Fantasy**

Tod Mikuriya had been told to believe by Van M. Sim, MD, a director of research at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland, that classified studies in the 1950s had established the anti-seizure properties of marijuana. (See graphic at bottom of page.) Gaining access to the marijuana studies done at Edgewood was one of many projects on the Walter Reed Army Hospital’s to-do list that Tod carried through life.

In 2004 he crossed paths with James Ketchum, a psychiatrist who led the classified research project at Ed- gewood in the ’60s. Although Ketchum, who had retired in 1976 as a colonel, didn’t shed light on the Army’s studies of marijuana as an anti-convulsant, he had other historical info of interest to Tod.

The U.S. Army, in a search for “non-lethal incapacitating agents,” tested cannabis-based drugs on GI volunteers at Edgewood throughout the 1960s accounting to Ketchum. Tod invited him to detail the experiment in a talk at the Society of Cannabis Clinicians meeting March 9, 2007, in Los Angeles.

**Camelot’s ideal weapon: one that leaves the infrastructure intact and the population manageable.**

Ketchum was a young captain finishing a residency at Walter Reed Army Hospital when he got assigned in 1961 to be the supervising psychiatrist at Edgewood Arsenal. The new president, John F. Kennedy, was enthusiastic about funding the search for non-lethal incapacitants (first authorized by Eisenhower in 1959). Camelot’s ideal weapon: one that leaves the infrastructure intact and the population manageable.

The synthetic analog of THC tested by the Army in pursuit of this goal, EA 2223, was developed by a chemist named Harry Pars employed by the Arthur D. Little company of Cambridge, Mass. It was a mixture of eight stereoisomers of the THC molecule (different arrangements of the same atoms). EA 2223 was ingested by 50 to 60 micrograms per kilogram of body weight. Although its effects lasted up to 30 hours, they were not potent enough for combat purposes.

Ketchum recounts an interview with a GI on EA 2223 in a self-published memoir. The responses are pretty much what you’d expect from someone who had ingested THC being questioned by an un-threatening authority figure:

**Q:** How are you?  
**A:** Pretty good, I guess.  
**Q:** Pretty good?  
**A:** Well, not so good maybe.  
**Q:** You’ve got a big grin on your face.  
**A:** Yeah. I don’t know what I’m grinning about either.

**Q:** Suppose you had to get up and go to work now.  
**A:** I don’t think I’d even care.  
**Q:** Suppose the place was on fire?  
**A:** I don’t think it would be—in it I would seem funny.  
**Q:** It would seem funny? Do you think you’d have the sense to get up and run out or do you think you’d just enjoy it?  
**A:** I don’t know. Fire doesn’t seem to present any danger to me right now.  
**Q:** Can you think of anything new which might be hazardous or worry you or are you just in—a.  
**A:** No. No. Everything just seems funny in the Army. Seems like everything somebody says, it sounds a little bit funny.

**The Dream Dies Hard**

When the eight isomers of EA 2223 were isolated and purified in the years following 1964 they were tested by an Edgewood doctor named Fred Siddell (while Ketchum focused on more promising incapacitants, namely a atropine derivative known as BZ, and LSD). Two of the THC isomers caused such a dramatic drop in blood pressure, according to Ketchum, that the lab stopped testing all of them.

Ketchum still wonders if one of the two potent isomers would work as an incapacitant. “The finding that isomers 2 and 4 possessed uniquely powerful postural hypotensive effects that prevented standing without fearing led Siddell to discontinue testing out of an abundance of caution for the welfare of the subjects. It later turns out that, in another non-lethal compound, might be an ideal way to produce temporary inability to fight (or do much else) without toxicological danger to life.”

**Major James Ketchum, MD, interviewing a test subject at Edgewood Arsenal.**

Evidently, the dream lives on!  
Ketchum’s presentation to the pro-cannabis MDs was followed by a succinct chemistry lecture by Alexander T. Shulgin, PhD. It was Shulgin who gave Harry Pars the idea to synthesize nitrogen analogs of THC back at the start of the ’60s. Later in life Shulgin gained renown for designing “designer” drugs, including MDMA.

The session was organized and moderated by SSC founder Tod Mikuriya, MD, who described the talks by Ketchum and Shulgin as “another chap- ter in our suppressed history.”

**Only a small fraction of Ketchum’s work at Edgewood involved THCderivatives.**

Ketchum says he was motivated to write his memoir to distinguish the ethical, scientific drug studies conducted by the Army on knowing volunteers from the extremely kinky, unsafe drug studies conducted by the CIA on unwitting civilians. “Chemical Warfare: Secrets Almost Forgotten” is published by ChemBook, 2304 Fairbanks Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Learn more at forgottensecrets.net

A chapter of Ketchum’s book is devoted to what we now call “informed consent.” GIs considered Edgewood Arsenal good duty and volunteered by a small fraction of the number of applicants to the number of recruits. By 1963 it was 50. When Ketchum arrived at Edgewood, the detachment of test subjects consisted of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50. When Ketchum arrived at Edgewood, the detachment of test subjects consisted of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50.

**Many soldiers considered a two-month stint at Edgewood Arsenal good duty.**

Some 7,000 enlisted men took part in the program in the 1960s. Volunteer did claim that the testing had caused them to suffer from some malady.

Those claims came from subjects exposed to agents other than EA 2233. Ketchum questions their validity, noting “None of the three careful follow-up studies found statistical evidence for any particular illness, and death rates were lower than expected for every drug tested, except for non-significant higher rates in those who received atropine or scopolamine.”

Ketchum said at the Society of Can- nabis Clinicians meeting that he and his staff at Edgewood Arsenal had no inkling in 1963 that the test subjects comprised of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50. When Ketchum arrived at Edgewood, the detachment of test subjects consisted of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50. When Ketchum arrived at Edgewood, the detachment of test subjects consisted of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50.

“Eventually a cohort of 60-80 arrived, curtailed as the number of applicants to the number of recruits increased progressively through the 1960s.” When Ketchum arrived at Edgewood Arsenal in 1961 the detachment of test subjects consisted of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50. When Ketchum arrived at Edgewood Arsenal in 1961 the detachment of test subjects consisted of 20 men. By 1963 it was 50.

“None, to my knowledge,” writes Ketchum, “returned home with a significant injury or ill- ness attributable to chemical exposure. Nevertheless, years later, a few former

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