

Headquarters I Armored Corps
Office The Quartermaster,
Fort Knox, Ky.

QM 463.7

November 18, 1940.

Doctor Willard Machle, M.D.,
University of Cincinnati,
College of Medicine,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Doctor Machle:-

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of November 16th. Mr. Gay a few days ago advised me that you would call on us shortly and, on receipt of his letter, I sent the attached memorandum to our Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4 (inclosure 1). I have been advised by our Chief of Staff, Colonel Brett and the I Armored Corps Surgeon, Colonel Duenner, M.C., that they would be very glad to see you and discuss this matter when ever you can come over here. Our office hours are from 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM on week days, except Saturdays when we close down at noon. Therefore any time that is convenient to you will be most agreeable.

Possibly it would be well to advise you in advance as to what this is all about so that you may be forewarned. First of all, I am no medical man and make no claim to any knowledge of such matters. My close association with the Ethyl clinic in San Antonio and my many discussions of gasoline with Mr. Gay and other representatives of the Ethyl Corporation have led me to assume that there was little or no danger of lead poisoning from the routine service station handling of leaded gasoline. When a memorandum was published by our headquarters, as per attached copy (inclosure 2), I considered it an unfortunate emphasis on this subject and wrote the memorandum of October 29th. (inclosure 3). The published memorandum of October 24th. (inclosure 2) was prepared by the I Armored Corps surgeon. Due to my protest of this memorandum I have heard it rumored that the medical service here is trying also to secure data on lead poisoning and it is this that probably caused Captain Swanson to write to you. I am told that inquiries have also been addressed to the Standard Oil Co. in Louisville. Hence this matter appears to be resolving itself into a "battle royal" between the medical corps and the undersigned!

One effect of the last paragraph of this published memorandum of October 24th. is that the Division Commander here has had large sign in red letters made to put up wherever gasoline containing tetraethyl lead reading; "DANGER-LEAD* POISON". To put it plainly, I believe they are making a mountain out of a mole hill and I need help in putting this idea

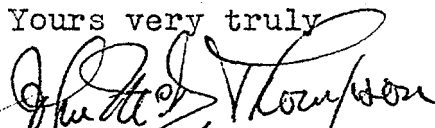
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over - if I am correct in my deductions, and if I am not correct, then I should like to know what steps are necessary to take to safeguard our personnel who daily come in contact with gasoline containing tetraethyl lead.

If there is anything else that I can furnish you on this matter before your arrival, please let me know. Also if you can give me as much prior notice as to the date of your actual arrival, I would greatly appreciate it so that I will be sure to be here when you do arrive.

Yours very truly



John McD. Thompson,
Lieut. Colonel, Quartermaster Corps
Quartermaster.

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