

March 5, 1971

Dr. Eckart W. Schmidt
Senior Research Chemist
Rocket Research Corporation
York Center
Redmond, Washington 98052

Dear Dr. Schmidt:

The report to which the Largents, former members of the Staff of this Laboratory, referred in the article which you cited, was that of an investigation carried out in this Laboratory during World War II, at the request of a governmental agency, as part of a contract (we being subcontractors) with Mine Safety Appliance Company. It was declassified long ago, and it should have been published long ago. Certain colleagues of mine in the University of Cincinnati, College of Medicine were involved in the work, and since they had moved to another university, there was some difficulty in getting the report expanded somewhat, edited and published. I was very busy at the time, and I neglected to push the matter through, with the result that it has not been published.

I explain this because I am very sorry about it. The concern of this Laboratory has been for many years (while I was Director, and since) directed primarily to the promotion of the health and safety of industrial employees, and I am sure that most of the men who service refrigerating equipment and other equipment which makes use of Freon 12, believe that this material is essentially non-toxic. Most laboratory animals can live in the concentration of 20% of this compound in air. Man, on the other hand, is in real difficulties at half that concentration.

I have sent out some copies of this report to persons whose responsibilities are such as to need the information, but I have not made the information available by other means.

The work was done under my personal direction, except for the period of time when I (Subject K in the protocol) found it necessary to delegate responsibility to someone else. After a few preliminary tests on myself, I was not prepared to assume any further responsibility for my own safety while I was acting as experimental subject. On the other hand, it would have been very difficult to make use of an untrained person as a subject, because of the subjective aspects of the experience. The ebb and flow of alert consciousness was a strange phenomenon to experience, and I am certain that most subjects would be terrified by it. This cyclic phenomenon was one which, in some sense, I expected, and was curious enough about it to wish to experience it (I was prepared for it, to some extent, because of the striking cycle behavior of monkeys and dogs).

I merely mention these matters to you since there is no means of describing, adequately, the experience. I was not prepared, however, to expect the cardiac

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and encephalographic irregularities which developed in temporal association with the approach of unconsciousness, and I have no doubt that the actual advent of unconsciousness, although recovery was a matter of two breaths of fresh air after removal from the chamber, if persisted in for a somewhat longer period of time, would have posed a serious risk. As it was, the recovery was utterly complete, involving no fatigue and no hangover of any type.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wb