

210 Fairchild Street
Lackland Village
San Antonio, Texas

7 July 1953

Sherman C. Grifford
Chemrephyll Associates
P.O. Box 8176
Washington 24, D.C.

Dear S. G.;

Thank you for your good letter of 2 July. I hope you had a pleasant vacation in Maine.

The information you requested about the important local individuals is as follows:

Brigadier General Wycliffe E. Steele 491A (born 11 September 1904)
Commanding General
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

Colonel Robert S. Brua 19063A (born 3 August 1906)
Commanding Officer
3700th Medical Group
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

Colonel Herbert N. Cowles 1003A (born 22 April 1908)
Commanding Officer
Human Resources Research Center
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas

This information is derived from the January 1953 edition of the Air Force Register.

You have asked me to clarify my attitude about remaining in the Air Force to work on these experiments. I believe a general statement about my feelings in this regard is probably in order.

It was necessary for me to accept a regular Air Force commission in order to take resident training in Psychiatry while a member of the military service. Theoretically I am entitled to submit my resignation at any time; the resignation can be accepted or rejected. In ordinary peacetime the resignation would be almost automatically accepted. However, resignations from medical officers are being accepted at a very slow rate at the present time. Also, there was an understanding at the time I took my commission that my resignation would not be accepted until I had spent a certain period of time on active duty. By this criterion, I have 3 years to go.

I have no desire, careerwise, to remain in the Air Force. I intend to get out at the earliest possible date in order to return to full-time academic work at a university hospital, probably Cornell in New York City, where I can pursue both clinical and research interests. It was at Cornell that my previous experimental work on hypnosis was done. I believe that they want me to come back and that they would support continued research along the same lines. My work in hypnosis there was done quite independently, and in many ways such a situation (working as a member of the Cornell staff) would be ideal for many of the experiments that I envision.

My only motivation to remain in the Air Force at the present time would be to satisfy the obligation which is "understood" as noted above. If my work on these experiments could be enhanced by a separation from the Air Force, or if remaining in the service meant the experiments would be retarded, I would happily return to civilian status with the feeling that patriotic obligations would be more greatly served in the work we have contemplated than in any routine military job. If the project were to be developed outside of the Air Force structure, I feel it would be important for me to be completely freed of further military obligations. Since I have over 8 years of active military duty in both enlisted and commissioned capacities, I feel no reluctance to return permanently to civilian life. My goal is to continue with academic pursuits with an eventual professorship in mind.

If I remain in the Air Force, and undertake the projects within the military setting (either here or elsewhere as necessity dictates), it will be with the definite feeling that sooner or later I shall submit my resignation, and that ultimately it will be advantageous to continue the experiments on a civilian basis.

I hope this clarifies my position, and makes it plain that I have no fundamental objection toward being (as you put it) maneuvered out of the Air Force, so long as it is a permanent-type maneuver, which will leave me free to make plans for the long-range pursuit of this entire body of research.

It makes me very happy to realize that you can consider me "an asset". My interest in the entire body of work on which you are engaged is a keen and perhaps even a relatively enlightened one. Any services that I can render, along the lines you have indicated or in any other way, are gladly and eagerly offered. Surely there is no more vital undertaking conceivable in these times.

I am looking forward to our next meeting with great interest.

Sincerely yours,

Louis J. West
Major, USAF(MC)
Chief, Psychiatric Section
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
3700th Medical Group
Lackland Air Force Base
San Antonio, Texas

Security will probably be best served if you address me at the military address as noted beneath my signature.