

Westerly

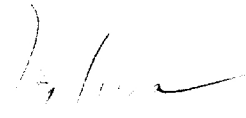
Bob-- the meeting was successful enough to be fun; Hibbs will send you a report and I will too.

The group felt rather stronger about contamination (including the moon) than I would have predicted. However, the suggested procedure for sterilization by Et:O gas should be simple and effective. For the planetshots, some more attention should be given to microbiology in the design stage to minimize inherent contamination and to facilitate fumigation.

By and large the substance of the preliminary report I sent you last week was adopted unanimously. However, while the moonshots should be sterilized (and they feasibly can be!) the tolerable levels of bacteria (before sterilization) that I quoted may be too stringent, and  $10^8$  per missile may be more reasonable than  $10^5$ . This goes to show how easy it is to carry heavy contamination. I think with some care you might be able to beat that tolerance.

One important and practical suggestion is the need to verify the effectiveness of sterilization procedures by microbiological control. Fort Detrick can help you a great deal on this (but don't let the papers learn you have BW in on the rockets!) Another useful suggestion is to get a resident microbiologist at the launch base so you know something of the local flora and to help keep an eye open on the whole proceedings. If you can interest and detach Otto Landman from Detrick to do this, it might work out very well! Army Medical (Walter Reed) also must have some talent in the area-- you might check with Lou Baron over there .

More to follow.....

Gene: Altman (5)   
Letter to Bob 2/21/59