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**HEADQUARTERS  
AIR FORCE BALLISTIC MISSILE DIVISION (ARDC)  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
Air Force Unit Post Office, Los Angeles 45, California**

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 695)

15 September 1960

Under the provisions of AFBMDR 11-6, the following named Officers, Hq AFBMD (ARDC), this station, are appointed a Board for the purpose of studying events involved in launch and recovery operations of Discoverer XV. The Board will meet at the call of the Chairman. A report will be submitted to the Commander, Hq Air Force Ballistic Missile Division, upon completion of the study.

BRIGGEN ROBERT E GREER, 1672A	Chairman
COL GWYNNE S CURTIS JR, 4088A	Member
COL RAY E SOPER, 4333A	Member

FOR THE COMMANDER:



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L. JACKMAN  
Colonel, USAF  
Dir of Administrative Services

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SUBJECT: DISCOVERER XV Recovery Operations

1. By SO #695 (incl 1) a Board of officers composed of Gen Greer and Col's Curtis and Soper was appointed to study and report on Discoverer XV recovery operations; primary purpose of the study being identification of actual or potential deficiencies.

2. In the conduct of study, Board member(s) reviewed records and held discussions with:

a. WZ project office. -

b. 6594th Test Wing -

c. Recovery Control Group

~~d. PMR~~

e. AFO/PMR ✓

d. Representatives of the Coast Guard in Hawaii  
e. Representatives of the Air Force Reserve Service

3. A summary of the sequence of significant events in the recovery attempt as identified by the Board is appended as incl 2. In its examination of the recovery plan and its execution, the Board concluded:

a. The plan was reasonably adequate for recovery w/in the 60x200 NM recovery area but inadequate for other than ~~very problematic~~ <sup>random</sup> success in the downrange area of actual impact.

b. With one notable exception the recovery attempt was executed in an appropriately ~~energetic manner~~ <sup>and well managed operation</sup>. The unfortunate exception, due in part to communication inadequacies, <sup>of withholding of authority from the on the scene Commander</sup> and ~~misdirected authority~~, prevented action which <sup>would most likely would</sup> ~~quite probably could~~ have resulted in capsule recovery. Particulars regarding this circumstance are set forth in incl 3. The fundamental problem was lack of <sup>on the part of the on the scene</sup> authority, <sup>a.o.</sup> to employ available <sup>para - drop</sup> personnel.

c. Future recovery plans, concerned w/both subsequent Discoverer capsules

as well as later Samos requirements, will require considerable flexibility and latitude to assure a degree of success. Assuming that the importance of recovery will dictate a requirement for a high measure of success, positive measures need to be taken immediately to augment and enhance the recovery capability. Measures which appear of apparent need to the Board are identified on incl 4.

4. It is recommended that:

a. The measures identified on incl 4 as immediate action items be promptly implemented. *investigated and implemented when possible.*

b. A more detailed study be initiated immediately to determine additional actions which should be taken to better assure recovery effectiveness.

c. Greater emphasis be placed on efforts to improve the performance of the satellite system(s) governing the accuracy and repeatability of the deorbiting and reentry operation.

d. ~~It~~ *It* be clearly understood by all echelons that, on the occasion of operations of this nature, the on-the-scene commander must have full authority for all decisions involving recovery at his disposal. Evaluation of his judgment must be made prior to the operation and not during it.

Discover XIV?

MATD

12<sup>th</sup> Capsule  
Air Recovery  
19 Aug 60

C-119 Recovery Aircraft Crew

Pilot	Harold E. Mitchell, Captain, 39402A ✓
Copilot	Richmond (NMI) Apaka, Captain, A03009748 ✓
Navigator	Robert D. Counts, 1st Lt, A03065536 ✓
Flight Engineer	Arthur P. Hurst, SSgt, AF34730693 ✓
Winch Operator	Louis F. Bannick, TSgt, AF17021127 ✓
<del>Pole Handler</del>	<del>Algaene (NMI) Harmon, SSgt, AF14363461 ✓</del>
<del>Pole Handler</del>	<del>George W. Donahou, A/1c, AF54048386 ✓</del>
<del>Pole Handler</del>	<del>Daniel R. Hill, A/2c, AF13606761 ✓</del>
<del>Pole Handler</del>	<del>Lester L. Beale, Jr, A/2c, AF11337082 ✓</del>
*Photographer	Wendell (NMI) King, SSgt, AF15536421 ✓

\*SSgt Wendell King is assigned to the 1365th Photographic Group, MATS, Orlando AFB, Fla.