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MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, NATIONAL RANGE DIVISION, AIR FORCE
SYSTEMS COMMAND

SUBJECT: Ship Support for MOL Orbital Insertion

The Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program calls for an insertion ship on station south of Vandenberg for each launch. An NRD study for the ship support for MOL orbital insertion showed that the T-AGN-19 class, T-2, is the most attractive from the viewpoints of cost, technical support capability, and modification schedule. However, the availability of these ships to support both Apollo and MOL could be critical. Tight scheduling and close coordination of the test schedules of both programs will be required.

The joint use of the T-2 type ships for support of both Apollo and MOL was proposed informally by me to General Jones (NASA) on 4 October 1965. On that occasion it was pointed out that based on planned MOL and Apollo launch schedules and preliminary ship turn around criteria, some adjustment in the launch schedules may be required. Agreement in principle to the joint uses of the T-2 ships was requested to NASA.

These discussions with NASA in an effort to get a "yes" or "no" answer on the proposed joint use of these ships through judicious, cooperative scheduling have not been fruitful.

Since preliminary studies have shown that the T-2 ships can provide the technical support capability for MOL with only minor modification, the major obstacle in way of using these ships for support of the MOL program appears to be scheduling the ships to meet requirements levied on these resources from all sources. Specific MOL requirements have been provided to Headquarters NRD, Western Planning Office by the MOL Systems Office.

It is requested that NRD study the scheduling problem, and notify this office whether we should commit firm planning for T-2 support for MOL.

HARRY L. EVANS
Brigadier General, USAF
Vice Director, MOL Program

Major Merritt/26 Oct 65/bha

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