

MAUI NEWS



SPUTNIK'S DOG NO PIONEER

Contrary to general belief, the little husky in Sputnik II is not the original pioneer into space from the canine world. As far back as 1951, dogs were being used by the Russians in space experiments, and successfully.

We have Dr. Grote Reber to thank for an interesting translation of a Russian scientific report, "Study Of The Upper Strata Of The Atmosphere By Means Of High-Altitude Rockets," by A. A. Blagonravov, published in August 1957.

In this interesting report, it was revealed that dogs were not only shot out into space several years ago, but they were brought back safely so that the experiment could be concluded by a study of the reactions of the subjects, in the post-flight period as well as during flight.

The animals were outfitted in "space suits" and otherwise given the protection that man himself will enjoy when he starts probing into the rare atmospheric world. They were parachuted to earth, much as man now drops from moving aircraft. Instruments recorded their behavior at all stages. No ill effects were noted.

"In the active part of the flight in the rocket there was sometimes an acceleration and sometimes a deceleration of pulse frequency; sometimes practically no change," the report stated. "In one and the same flight, moreover, different variations were found in different dogs; in repeated flights these same variations were repeated, a fact which proves that these variations depend not on the characteristics of the external stimuli but on individual characteristics of the animals. In the overwhelming majority of cases the respiration rate was at first practically unchanged, then fell slightly.

"According to the moving picture data (cameras and other equipment were installed in the rockets and recovered with the film story of the flight) the animals feel relatively at ease during the flight; a certain disquiet was manifested if the vibration level became high. In some cases the animal slept. The moving picture films made it possible to follow precisely the rotation of the cabin after separation from the rocket and it fell by parachute, thanks to the movements, on the wall, of the spot of light from rays entering through a port-hole.

(It is interesting to note that there was reported Wednesday what appeared to be a separation of the cabin from the rocket in Sputnik II. It may be that the cabin will parachute to earth much as the experimentals did in the initial tests).

"After the flight the animals felt normal; feeding relaxes were unchanged.

"In repeated flights, the animals did not react negatively to being placed in the rocket again!

"Thus it has been established that in a sojourn of duration up to one hour in the higher layers of the atmosphere, under conditions of rocket flight, there was no real disturbance in the behavior of the animals or in the state of the basic functions of their organism.

"The safety of such flights can be fully guaranteed," the report concluded.

This report was based upon experiments using dogs that began in 1951 behind the Iron Curtain. The first rocket went up in 1945!

If a guarantee was possible then, it is more than likely the Russians are ready now to project man into space for much longer durations, probably all the way to the moon and back!