NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
MANNED SPACECRAFT CENTER
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77058

REPLY REFER TO: AB

March 30, 1967

Dr. George E. Mueller
Associate Administrator for Manned Space Flight
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D. C. 20546

Dear George:

We have received your message on the subject of designations for Apollo missions starting with Apollo 4. Unfortunately, the scheme for designating missions as stated in your message does not yet solve the problem of reserving the Apollo 1 name for Spacecraft 012 and its crew. As we have discussed with you and General Phillips in the past, the wives of the three deceased astronauts have made a special plea to reserve this Apollo 1 designation for Spacecraft 012 and the Grissom, White and Chaffee crew. Their request stems primarily from the fact that this is the name that they had used publicly and on their patch; the patch with the Apollo 1 insignia had previously been approved by NASA Headquarters.

We have two suggestions to offer; both are in keeping with the intent of your message and yet reserve the Apollo 1 designation:

1. Consider the 201, 202 and 203 missions part of the Saturn I (as opposed to uprated Saturn I) series. Start the new scheme with Apollo 1 and reserve that designation for Spacecraft 012. The next flight then would be Apollo 2, etc., in essentially the manner outlined in your message.

2. Designate the next Apollo 4, as indicated in your message, but apply the new scheme somewhat differently for those missions that have already been flown. Specifically, put the Apollo 1 designation on Spacecraft 012 and then, for historic purposes, designate 201 as mission 1-A, 202 as mission 2, and 203 as mission 3.

Either one of these systems would meet the intent of your designation pattern, while at the same time meeting the wishes of the widows. The second proposed approach is perhaps the preferable one, and really does not change things insofar as future application is concerned. It only makes the deviation in the application of the pattern to previous missions which were flown or scheduled to fly at a time when the mission designation system did not yet exist.

We realize, of course, that this problem is relatively unimportant insofar as the total program is concerned. However, it is of prime importance to Betty Grissom, Pat White, and Martha Chaffee. We strongly urge you to consider their wishes in applying any mission naming pattern to flights.

Sincerely yours,

George M. Low
Deputy Director

cc:
NASA Hqs, Maj. Gen. S. C. Phillips, MA