Meteorological Office, Stonehouse, Glos.

2/11/43

Dear Fisher,

I trust you are in Cambridge—on at leastilestone will be forwarded. I am now a research
job in Met. But before that was in R.A.M.C. I was to
have gone to a Mobile Hygiene Lab., but then
was considered too old & sent round testing
writings in Nov–May '42, when resigned.
Actually, I was trying to ascertain the vitamin
reserves of troops—see Nature 2/11/43. I did
about 5000! I thought the thing absurd, and I was wrong. L.F. Harris now tells me the
C— even when it is present in amounts for
removed from scurvy—may still be important
for wound healing. But I found one green
thing. At a military hotel. I tested 50 R.A.M.C.
50 infantry. Some were in sections say A&B,
merely for A.R.P. duties—they served together.
When I walked out recently I found that A was saturated about two days before B. The peak of the curve was that, there is always a good scatter. I could see no reason for it. Actually on account of various casualties there were 21 in A & 22 in B, a nice versa. I just had to confess I was unable to account for it. But four months later I returned for another survey and on enquiry I found that the soft dispenser had dosed (3/4 g. ascorbic acid) say B, then infantry arrived & being visitors he dosed them. A slipped away for breakfast & had interfered on him that the test should be repeated exactly each day, so he kept up this order - so it was held - actually he had left before second visit, infantry who had been dosed before infanty had breakfasted before coming.

It pointed therefore to the fact that the
ascorbic acid (vitamin C) was better utilized - or less destroyed - after food. This indicates that it is best to eat dessert after one's meals - the grapefruit before meals would be diethetically wasteful. I suggested in my report that this should be tested by direct comparison. As far as I know no tests were taken to do so. It has occurred to me that you could apply your statistics to say whether my conclusion had any validity from the one trial. At home I have the full results - the table and the curves plotted therefrom, something like this:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Men</th>
<th>Days of Dosing</th>
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very roughly.
It seems to me that with that number of men the chance of the peak of one lot being well away from that of the other is likely to be small. But one can of course get an individual dose after breakfast showing up worse than another dose before.

If your results show something definite I should feel the D.C. A.M.C. (St. Gen A. Hood) would be interested and we might submit a note on the matter to the J.R.A.M. Corps. It would be rather amusing to get definite evidence for "doe taken after meals". Remember you had two sons who stayed on the Salpa. It is a hard time for us, so I hope both are well. Mine is still at school. My brother (De A.M.C.) lost his only boy, Capt. R.A. in Tunisia - he got M.C. posthumously.

Yours sincerely, 
W.R.G. Atkins.