

UFOs:

KENNETH ARNOLD, 1947

A

CHILES—WHITTED, 1948

HISTORY

THE MANTELL CASE, 1948

Vol. 1: July 1947 – December 1948

by

Loren E. Gross

GREEN FIREBALLS, 1948-1951

Starchild '82

UFOs: A HISTORY
1947, JULY-DECEMBER

A minor catalogue of UFO reports and notations on various unofficial inquiries by individuals and privately funded organizations, as well as commentary on military investigations and governmental policies. Presented in chronological order.

by

LOREN E. GROSS

Copyright © 1980

FREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Other works by the author:

Booklets:

The UFO Wave of 1896

The Mystery of the Ghost Rockets

Charles Fort, The Fortean Society, & UFOs

Six articles in The Encyclopedia of UFOs, Edited by Ronald D. Story, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1980:

- Airship Wave of 1896
- Charles Fort
- Fortean Society
- "Flying Saucer"
- Ghost Rockets of 1946
- War of the Worlds Broadcast

A research paper for a 1976 conference on UFOs organized by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Director of the Center for UFO Studies:

"UFO WAVE OF 1947: CALIFORNIA, JUNE 25 - JULY 16, 1947"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Vincent H. Gaddis for the gift of his UFO newspaper clipping collection that proved invaluable; and Dr. Herbert J. Strentz for the loan of microfilm he used to write his dissertation in journalism and public affairs: "A Survey of Press Coverage of Unidentified Flying Objects, 1947-1966." Dr. Strentz' research was in part supported by the 1968 Colorado UFO study and the microfilm he made available included: Air Force Blue Book reports, Letters from the public to the Air Force about UFOs, and the UFO newspaper clipping file of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena. Dr. Bruce Maccabee's work on obtaining FBI UFO documents was critical, and while the data has been already widely published, it was indispensable to the success of this history. He also added his personal encouragement and made available detailed notes of his personal UFO investigations. Brad C. Sparks, who is proving to be the best of a new generation of UFO researchers, helped correct some errors in dates and names and in general gave excellent advice.

Most of all, I would like to single out Stanton Friedman. His positive attitude and his suggestions were vital to the final completion of this research work, to say nothing of his allowing me access to his extensive collection of UFO material.

Fremont, California

October 10, 1980

Loren E. Gross

Alerts

Planes on
W. Coast

'May Be Something'
To Flying Saucers

SAN FRANCISCO—(P)—
The Army Air Forces alerted
jet and conventional fighter
planes on the Pacific Coast
yesterday

ing and e:
tery of th
which in
enged the
Gen. Carl
commandant
northwest v
strange
on.

An Air-
ash
ore
ma
ne
A
in
nd,
a
in
eat
to
om
de
for
at

ARMY SET TO C

Myster Report

NOVA
change
service
types of
of the s
tonville,
at an all

He d
with a
silver
it appe

with a
center
an air
First
phenom
Kenneti

'Discs' Seen Near Ocala, Orlando

TAMPA, Fla., July 5 (AP)—The
first report from Florida of flying
discs similar to those seen in
Western skies in recent days turn-
ed up today.

Mrs. J. E. Harp of nearby Lutz
said that on March 30, as she was
driving between Ocala and Or-
lando she saw several silvery
discs keep appearing and disap-
pearing. It was about 11 a.m. of a
clear day.

Her seven-year-old daughter

Flying Saucers Sailing Through Th Puzzle Hundreds Of Amateur Obs

See Local Story on Page 29

in the center and are partially
rocket propelled on the takeoff."

Falls, Idaho. And in Portlan-
Ore., so many residents w

'Flying Disk' Discovery Turns Out To Be Dud

Nashville, Tenn.

Object Found In New Mexico Weather Device

FORT WORTH, Tex.—
(AP)—The discovery of a
"flying disk" reported by an
army public relations officer
proved a dud yesterday
when the object was identi-
fied as a weather balloon.

Warrar

Newton, a
army's F
weather sta
ject found n
a ray wind
mine the di
winds at hi
He said
weather sta
States using
and that it
any one of

High Altitu
"We use
go to much
can see."
rider set is
ball on and
translation
chartel, he
W. rig
object looks

report of
nic ener-
fed at by
m scien-
e metals,

manding
engineer-
ic north-
t sai-
ed,
cor
there
or so
the I
said
he k
under
the I

duce
their

STRANGE FL Myster

See story on page 1 also
OKLAHOMA CITY, Jun
(AP)—Don't sell those str

WHAT IS THIS Discs My

See story on page 1 also.
By ROBERT W. FENWICK,
Rocky Mountain Empire Editor of
The Denver Post.
(Copyright, 1947, by The Post Printing and
Publishing Company.)
Does cosmic cataclysm ride the
brilliant wings of those strange

Whizzing 'Pie-Pan'

PENDLETON, June 26 (AP)—A
tale of nine mysterious objects—
big as airplanes—whizzing over
Western Washington at 1200 miles
an hour got skepticism today
from the army and air experts.

The man who reported the ob-
jects, Kenneth Arnold, a flying
Boise, Idaho, businessman, clung,
however, to his story of the shiny,
flat objects, each as big as a
DC-4 passenger plane, racing over
Washington's Cascade mountains
with a peculiar weaving motion
"like the tail of a kite."

V-2 rockets would not resemble
the objects reported by Arnold
and that no high-speed experi-
mental tests were being made
in the area where Arnold said the
objects were.

A civil aeronautics administ-
don inspector in Portland, added
"I rather doubt that anything
would be traveling that fast."
Arnold described the objec-
as "flat like a pie-pan," and
shiny that they reflected the su-
like a mirror.

When first sighted at 10.00



FORT WORTH—Maj. Jesse A. Marcel, intelligence officer of the
509th Bomb Group, is shown above examining the "flying saucer
dud" found on a New Mexico ranch.

CHASE 'SKY DISKS'

'Flying Discs'

ed in 31 States

Air With The Greatest Of Ease rvers And Scientists In 28 States

from Mrs. E. J. Harp, of Lutiz, who said she saw the objects in Boise, Idaho, on Independence day indicate "directed motion, rather than chaotic." eastern states had their reports. Observers, earlier all from west

NG OBJECTS ALSO REPORTED SEEN OVER OKLAHOMA CITY

Spreads as Second Pilot Tells of Sky Ghost

remember," said Byron Savage, 38, Oklahoma City businessman pilot. "I was standing in my front yard very big—and was moving at a terrific rate of speed. "The funny thing about it was that it made no noise. "I know that boy up there (Arnold), really saw them." Savage said he told his

MYSTERY OF THE SKIES?

Justify Scientists, Laymen

of fear—only a burning, mingled with some ap- puzling aspect of the na- watched enigma of the was a meeting in New of Los Alamos officials and In the United States, however, efforts were being made to get an official photograph of the discs. Col. Al Dutton of the Oregon National Guard said the guard's squadron had six P-51 fighter planes equipped with guns and She said they were circular and silvery but at one time appeared like a long pipe, thin. "There was a blood-red flash at the rear of the disc like a flame or a bright light," she said. Mrs. McLeod said she saw the disc at

Disk Tale

'No Sale'

In Europe

LONDON—(AP)—Don't mention those flying saucers on this side of the Atlantic unless you're pre-

Plane Report Gets Army Skepticism

By his plane's clock he timed them at 1:42 minutes for the 47 miles from Mount Rainier to Mount Adams, Arnold said, adding that he later figured by triangulation that their speed was 1200 miles an hour.

"I could be wrong by 200 or 300 miles an hour," he admitted, but I knew I never saw anything so fast."

He said at first he thought they were geese, but quickly saw they were too big—as big as a DC-4 but was about 20 miles away, he

were—unless they were guided missiles," said Arnold, who continued here on a business trip.

"Everyone added rusef say it too if ed those th watched th impossible.

Arnold s miles west route from when he si explained h

for a marine corps plane, miss- ing since last December, while he

from which he viewed the ob- jects would make difficult a pre- cise estimation of their speed.

Flying Saucers; Divorce.

Pittsburg, July 8.—Connie Dun- bar told Judge Harry H. Rowand in divorce court yesterday there was no mystery about the flying saucers in his home—they were wife-propelled. The judge granted Dunbar, 35, a divorce.

ne also said they flew on the west side of Rainier and Adams

the objects after rolling it down.

He also described the objects as "saucer-like" and their motion "like a fish flipping in the sun."

Mostly, he said, he was surprised at the way they twisted just above the higher peaks, almost appearing to be threading their way through the mountains. "Ten thousand feet is very low for anything going at that speed," he said.

Arnold was flying a three-pas- senger, single-engine plane at

... if super-vessels, or super-vehicles, have traversed this earth's atmosphere, there must be mergers between them and terrestrial phenomena: observations upon them must merge away into observations upon clouds and balloons and meteors. We shall begin with data that we cannot distinguish ourselves and work our way out of mergers into extremes.

-- Charles Fort

The Book of the Damned

1919

INTRODUCTION

During the last months of World War II Germany bombarded the Allies with V-1 flying bombs and V-2 high trajectory rockets. While these weapons were developed too late to play a significant role in the outcome of the conflict, it was apparent such weapons would prove to be a vital part of the future arsenal of the major powers particularly with the advent of the nuclear age.

The emergence of the Russian menace soon after the defeat of Hitler meant that any rocket research conducted by the Soviets was of intense interest to the United States. Drawing on the British experience in dealing with the Nazi V-weapon threat, the American government established a special Intelligence committee empowered to extract data from a wide variety of sources.

The need to accurately assess Russian rocket hardware and technical competency was demonstrated by strange "ghost rocket" reports from the Baltic region during the Summer and Fall of 1946.

Two secret documents, now declassified, illustrate the concern of the American High Command with suspected "guided missile" activity in the skies of Europe.

One is a four page document prepared by an American "Central Intelligence Group" which detailed radio reports of the unexplained "flying projectiles" seen flying over nations like Sweden. Copies of the secret document were distributed to the U.S. Departments of State, War, and the Navy, on April 9, 1947.

The other document is a single sheet Intelligence Summary stamped with the date: June 10, 1947. This Summary referred to the sighting of mysterious "silver balls" speeding through the heavens over Hungary.

The "ghost rocket" story* and recently declassified official file records prompt some spectacular conjecture:

1. The investigation of high performance aerial objects of unknown origin by the U.S. government was evidently in progress well before the Summer of 1947.
2. The investigation of such objects was a highly scientific and highly classified effort separate from any U.S. Air Force Intelligence activity and continues to be so right up to the present day.
3. There exists some tantalizing information that strongly suggests that there is some "hardware" that proves the real nature of UFOs.
4. A program of debunking UFOs by the High Command in Washington was started in July, 1947, right after the "Roswell Incident."

*The reader is referred to the author's booklet: The Mystery of the Ghost Rockets.

THE UFO MYSTERY: 1947, JULY-DECEMBER

Independence Day, 1947:

The National Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Louis E. Starr, presiding over the annual convention, gavelled his audience to order. After idle chatter died down and all eyes became fixed on the podium, Starr solemnly announced to the 1947 Columbus, Ohio, encampment that he had expected an important telegram from Washington to arrive at 3 p.m. EST. Having contacted persons of influence in the Pentagon, he had waited for an explanation of the mysterious flying objects being sighted in the sky all over the country. He noted that it was now well after 3 p.m. and nothing, not a single word, had been received to alleviate the concern of the veterans about the apparent potential threat to the security of the United States. Vexed at the failure, Starr roared: "Too little is being told to the people of this country." 1.

Just what was registering on the retinas of the witnesses across the nation? Well it is a matter of record that descriptions given by observers shared similar traits with the things generally being termed: "round, flat, and shiny."

After a man named Kenneth Arnold reported strange flying craft over the State of Washington on June 24, 1947, the nation's press responded by turning out reams of copy commenting on bizarre circular "missiles," or "flying saucers" as the aerial phenomenon became popularly known. According to news accounts the "saucers" would zoom across the sky extremely fast, and on occasion perform violent acrobatics. Often the objects travelled in formation and maneuvered in such a way to suggest intelligent control. Where the objects came from, and where they were going, was enshrouded in mystery. Newspaper editors from coast-to-coast loved the pixyish phenomenon on these slow summer news days since the saucers were being spotted everywhere it seems making the excitement both a local and national news story, yet evidence of the tangible quality of the objects was so elusive the often used appellation "Sky Ghosts" seemed almost apt.

The newspapers headlined almost daily the military's embarrassing inability to explain the riddle, quoting Kenneth Arnold's original report repeatedly about the strange objects skipping down the hog's back of the Cascade range, about how the saucers flashed in the sun when they tilted back and forth in flight. The objects, Arnold remarked, were "flat like a pie-pan," and were moving in a peculiar weaving motion "like the tail of a kite," looking something like geese yet far bigger than birds, Arnold, with a wrinkled brow, talked with one reporter and said: "...their motion was wrong for jet jobs. I guess I don't know what they were unless they were guided missiles." 2.

Most Americans didn't know what to make of the business, being both amused and bemused except for a few men with military experience. Here and there across the country those with a hitch overseas during the war were set to thinking. No better example can be given than that of a young ex-Air Corps officer who was taking

a vacation from his studies at Iowa State College where he was working toward a degree in aeronautical engineering. No better because, of the millions of those in the U.S., this particular individual would be one of those whom the "Sky Ghosts" would haunt in a personal way. This gentleman, Edward J. Ruppelt, was spending the last week of June, 1947, loafing about in Yellowstone Park when he happened upon the world's first frisbee competition.

One afternoon Ruppelt noticed some kids sailing paper plates over the Lodge while screaming: "saucer, saucer!" Perplexed, he asked around and learned of a news account about some sort of unexplained saucer-like missiles or aircraft seen over Washington State, but even his college courses in aeronautics failed to incite any further interest although for a moment he recalled that some strange lights had stalked his B-29 while on bombing missions over Japan during the war. The "saucer story" which Ruppelt brushed off so lightly, would eventually intrude on his life massively. Because of the "saucers" Radio Moscow would accuse Ruppelt of trying to start WW III, while fellow Americans would lambaste him as being either smooth-brained or a villain concealing the "greatest event in scientific history," of being the Pentagon's Charlie McCarthy. In the line of duty he would solemnly inspect a meadow muffin to ascertain if it had any exotic qualities, while at a more serious moment he would be required to brief the White House on the safety of the Nation's Capital. Ruppelt would confer with some of the best scholars in the country, and on the other hand, in the line of duty, would have to hear out some of the weirdest screwballs outside a mental ward. All this would come about some five years after that lazy summer at Yellowstone. 3.

As the days passed the enthusiasm mounted. Kenneth Arnold complained: "I haven't had a moment's peace since I first told the story." 4. The Boise flyer's friends continued to suggest that he had probably seen a secret new aircraft or missile with some of them favoring an American origin but there were also those who feared Russian devices coming from the direction of the Arctic, a theory that began to weigh heavily on military minds at the Pentagon as the weeks progressed.

Meanwhile, official reluctance to make public statements merely curtailed a panicky scramble for a measure of certitude about what would become the supreme mystery in military annals.

A confrontation:

After thorough interrogations by various government scientists (including a psychologist), the Air Corps pilot remained adamant. One can well imagine the one-star General stomping into the interrogation room and giving the pilot a cold, hard stare. Brigadier General George F. Schulgen, Chief of the Requirements Division of Air Corps Intelligence, was both frustrated and intrigued. People were seeing strange visions in the heavens and now it seems delusions were even sweeping through military ranks. The General believed that a frank face-to-face talk with a trained military observer, who had apparently succumbed to the hysteria for some reason, would help define the problem. At the very least, before he put his imprimatur on any document about the subject, he wanted to hear testimony with his own ears. 5.

For days wild stories about aerial phenomena had been receiving extensive coverage in the press and on the radio, but whether such improbable tales were due only to pranks of nature or just fevered imaginations, was difficult to diagnose with just the unsubstantiated testimony of the public to catalogue and analyze. Plain old Joe Doakes may report "seeing something fantastic" and have his sobriety and wits called into question, but when authorities were contacted by highly regarded military personnel about perplexing airborne "things," the reports could not be simply cast aside.

Exactly what transpired during the cross-examination of the Air Corps pilot by General Schulgen is not available in open official files, but we do know the aviator was not intimidated by his high ranking inquisitor, for he clung to his conviction he had seen something flying in the air unlike any aircraft known, something that must have utilized a completely novel aerodynamic concept. Unable to shake the pilot from his opinion, General Schulgen was left to ponder what measures he should recommend be implemented by the military. 6.

The first few days the military gave the saucer story scant notice and then on June 28th an official Intelligence report that had moved through official channels gave military Intelligence something to think about. There is no certain evidence the following account is that which absorbed General Schulgen's attention but it would seem it was that particular incident.

A Lt. Armstrong of the Army Air Corps had seen something odd and felt compelled to file an official report. While piloting a P-51 to Portland, Oregon, on June 28th, Lt. Armstrong saw something approaching his aircraft he could not identify. The time was 3:15 CST and he was maintaining an airspeed of 285 mph at 10,000 feet altitude. His position was some 30 miles northwest of Lake Meade, Nevada. It was then a half dozen white, round, objects, that moved smoothly through the atmosphere doing about the same speed as his P-51, passed him at an angle some 4,000 feet below. The things were about three feet in diameter and were not birds or anything Lt. Armstrong had seen before. 7.*

*This case information was taken from official Air Force files. The records of the military's UFO investigative project Blue Book are available on microfilm. For information on ordering, one should write the General Services Administration, Modern Military Archives Division, Washington DC 20408. Lt. Armstrong's report is listed as number 53. Further footnotes referring to Air Force Blue Book file cases will be given as: "Blue Book File #53."

On December 17, 1969, it was announced that the Air Force was terminating its investigations of UFO reports. A grand total of 13,000 cases were on file with 701 still listed as unexplained. The collection of data amounted to 84,000 pages of documented data, various photographs, sound recordings, film strips, and other material. The collection was first stored at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, where access was restricted. In 1976 the National Archives in Washington DC put the UFO cases on microfilm so they could be made available to scholars

What strikes home instantly was the uncanny similarity to the Kenneth Arnold's encounter! Needless to say this fact did not escape official attention. Belatedly the Air Force began to compile reports for its reference but oddly very few found their way into official file cabinets out of the hundreds available.

Here is a sample of what did make the file folders:

A bus driver claimed that on a run a few miles out of Clarion, Iowa, 4:45 p.m., June 29th, he noticed a strange object fly by his vehicle approximately 1,200 feet high. Within moments four more such objects flashed by. The driver braked to a stop and stepped out of his bus to take a look around. It was then, he said, when he sighted 13 more objects approaching at a speed he estimated to be 300 mph. The objects were oval-like in shape and flew in single file. They appeared to be quite large. He reckoned that the dingy-white ovals were some 12 feet thick and some 200 feet in diameter. After the objects disappeared to the north, the bus driver became aware of a hum like an electric motor that had been audible during the sighting. 8.

While the military was getting off to a slow start, public excitement had already reached full throttle. Phones jangled off their cradles in newsrooms, police stations, and airport offices, as agitation increased at an alarming rate. Some semblance of a real panic loomed as major newspapers splashed huge scare headlines across their front pages: DISCS MYSTIFY SCIENTISTS, LAYMEN. Newsmen were frantic to get the real lowdown. In Santa Rosa, California, a phone call to the newsroom of the local newspaper alerted the staff to the presence of one of the mystery discs doing a sky dance over the downtown business district which set off a mad rush by everyone to the rooftop. Surging up the stairwell, the frenzied newspeople collided with a couple of janitors manhandling a heavy sofa to a lower floor. It was a scene worthy of Laurel and Hardy.

A good photograph would have been dandy but so far there had been a puzzling lack of success. This poverty of pictorial confirmation was exasperating. Anyone who could throw a net over one of the elusive objects would have had his fortune made, yet with not even a good picture of a saucer, a capture seemed very remote indeed. Washington could only hope, and until then authorities would have to continue with the routine gathering of reports like the following:

Philadelphia, PA, July 5th: Paul Moss, 14, said Saturday (4th) he saw a flying saucer about 40 inches in diameter following a transport plane crossing the Delaware River.

Moss said he was playing baseball with a group of other boys when he saw the disk, orange in color, at one time out distance the plane. 9.

but only after a team of Air Force Reservists deleted some names from the records. Critics have claimed that UFO reports are still being compiled by other Intelligence commands and that many old reports cannot be accounted for. (It is believed by some that there were documents never filed with the Air Force that contain significant UFO information.)

ARE THEY JET PROPELLED?

Woodland Man Sights Disks at Close Range

The far-famed "flying objects" were seen at close hand over Woodland, Wash., Friday afternoon.

In two groups, numbering either 9 or 10 in all, and soaring between 1000 and 2000 feet, they skimmed silently as clouds from north to south—making a southeasterly turn as they disappeared.

There was no sound, no vapor trail, only the very thin, pie-plate affairs now reported as having been seen in several Western states, which, as they "undulated" in the air, flashed the rays of the sun like the reflection from mirrors.

REPORT TELEPHONED

This is the report, telephoned in a matter-of-fact tone to The Journal late Friday by Clyde Homan, who lives in Woodland and is manager of Tulips, Inc., a bulb-growing property about two miles south of that city in Southwestern Washington.

Homan said the objects also were seen by the farm foreman who was in a warehouse but ran to the door as Homan called and glimpsed them just as they were disappearing in the southeast.

"I was sitting at my desk in the office when a bright flash came in the window," Homan reported. "I looked up at the sky and saw these things in two groups pretty close together. I didn't get an exact count—there were four or five in the first bunch, and the same number in the second, which was behind the first some 400 or 500 yards.

"I couldn't see shapes much either because they were very

bright, reflecting the sun like from metal—not glass mirrors—and the flash was so bright I couldn't make out the shape behind it.

"They were going fast, but not any 1200 miles an hour. I'd say about twice as fast as an ordinary airliner, maybe 600 miles an hour. There was no particular formation except that they were bunched.

"The peculiar thing was the way they moved along—tilting back and forth, tipping up and down, undulating—and every time they reached the right reflection angle, the flashes came."

Homan ventured the opinion the objects might have been the new type of tailless aircraft known as flying wings.

DAY WAS CLOUDY

Homan was reminded that the day was mostly cloudy and he replied, "It was partly cloudy here, with sunshine occasionally through the clouds. There were 'holes' of blue sky. And, anyway, the clouds were high, and these things weren't over 1000 to 2000 feet up and were flying under the clouds.

"And there wasn't a sound, not a trace of vapor trail—just these things sailing along. As soon as I saw them, I ran to the warehouse and called the foreman, and he got to the door just in time to see them. They came over the hill back of us here from the north and they were following straight along the Pacific highway. Just south of here they veered off sharply to the southeast.

"Shape? Very flat, very, very thin, particularly when you saw

them on edge as they were banking, and very bright."

Homan said he had flown many times, feels he knows pretty well the speed of planes, and is confident these "objects" were going just about twice as fast as airliners and judged them to be jet-propelled, but he was puzzled by absence of the vapor trail.

"And I am not too excitable and I have good eyesight and I know what I saw this afternoon," he said in conclusion. "I'm surprised you don't have reports from others of having seen them today."

Meanwhile, other reports of the flying saucers continue to come in.

United Press reports that Charles Kastl, railroad engineer of Joliet, Ill., said he spotted "about nine" of the things as he walked along a highway at 1:50 p. m. Central standard time Tuesday. If these are the same ones seen by Kenneth Arnold, Boise, it means they must have covered the distance from Seattle to Chicago—about 2000 miles—in 50 minutes.

FLIPPED TOGETHER

Kastl said he could see no connecting link between them, but they acted as though the leading disk had a motor in it to power the others because when it flipped, the others would to. When it would right itself, the others would right themselves.

Archie Edes of Wenatchee said he saw one explode about 200 feet from the ground near Moses lake last Friday night. He said there was no blinding flash, but a great shower of sparks and flames seemed to hurtle to the ground.

June 24, 1947

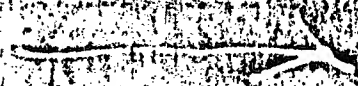
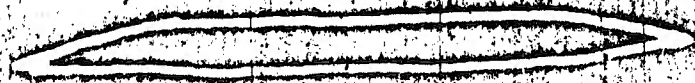
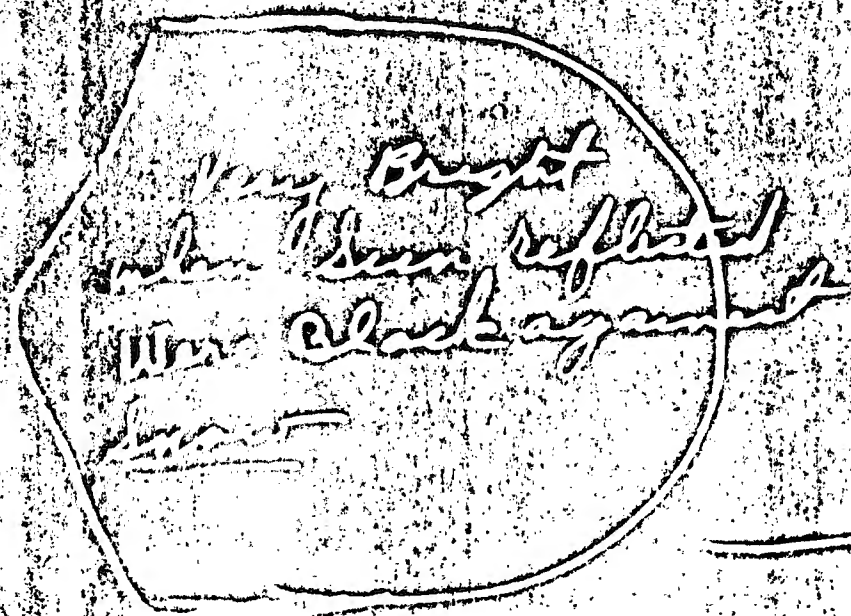
Sydney
Kenneth Arnold

Box 3 & 7

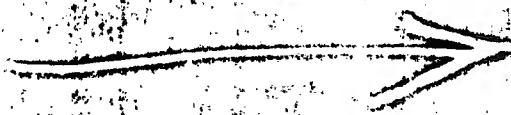
Barre, Idaho

Top View

Side View



moving in way



Springfield, IL, July 5th: A group of motorists reported Saturday (4th) they had glimpsed the mysterious "flying saucers" ...one Claude Price, superintendent of concessions at the Illinois State Fair said the group stopped their cars on a road two miles west of Decatur and watched the discs shoot across the sky. 10.

Augusta, ME, July 5th: The Civil Aeronautics Administration office said it had received a report that a dozen of the mysterious sky discs had been seen over this city.

The CAA said Dan Kelly, program director at radio station WRDO here, advised that he saw about 12 objects believed to be discs.

Kelly said the objects were travelling northerly very fast. 11.

Kansas City, MO, July 6th: At 1:45 p.m. a Major A.B. Browning AC/A3, Pentagon, saw a bright, silver, disc-shaped object while flying at 10,000 feet in a bomber. Visibility was unlimited. 12.

Phoenix, AZ, July 7th: A former Naval Ordnance Laboratory employee photographed an object making circles in the sky (no copies of the pictures are in the official files). 13.

Mt. Baldy, CA, July 7th: At 3:50 p.m. a 1st Lt. A.E. Moorman, while flying with his squadron at 20,000 feet, reported a flat object with no wings or vertical fins flying above the flight at about 35,000 feet. 14.

A photograph showing a small white dot was obtained in Seattle but a better chance to get their hands on a definite photo came at Alabama July 6th. That night over Birmingham UFOs buzzed about and a picture taken of them showing a pair of light colored dots leaving a short vapor trail. The film was sent to the Birmingham Army Air Field authorities where professional photographers confirmed that the images were not due to a flawed negative. Moreover, as the Commanding Officer of the Air Base noted, it was the general consensus of the citizens of Birmingham that "something was in the air" over the city that evening. Newsclippings of civilian UFO reports and one made by a military observer were forwarded to the 14th Air Force Headquarters, ADC, at Orlando, Florida. 15. Orlando relayed the case to the Continental Air Defense Command at Mitchel Field, New York, with the remark that the 14th Air Force: "...has made no investigation of 'flying discs' reports because this is an isolated case[!]." 16.

The military witness had observed the saucers over Birmingham at 11:45 p.m. travelling southeast. The saucers were two feet in diameter and were rushing along at about 500-600 mph. As soon as one disappeared, another came into view, until about eight in all had passed silently overhead. 17.

The first wave?

The platter puzzled nation continued to "see things" as reports peaked July 8th. Not everyone was buying it however. Some airline pilots at Atlanta, GA, on standby between flights, told the press they termed the sky enchantment mere imagination. One blamed clouds and another quipped that "a lot of folks must have had too much to drink." Finally a chief pilot snapped that unless he could get a better explanation or see one himself, he wouldn't accept reports without qualification, and he continued: "It certainly doesn't seem to be the first wave of an invasion from Mars." 18.

Kenneth Arnold was at long last interrogated by Pentagon agents (his report is listed as case #17 in official files). The military officer that questioned Arnold came away impressed by the Boise flyer's sincerity and made the notation for the official record that if Arnold was making the story up he was in the wrong business and should do story plots for the Buck Rogers comic strip. 19.

As these events took place, General Schulgen secretly conferred with various government officials and was repeatedly assured that the strange flying objects were not American experimental devices. If this was true and the phenomenon could not be attributed to mass hysteria, then the airspace over the United States was being infiltrated by spy craft of another country making the mystery an Intelligence problem of the first magnitude. Naturally General Schulgen's mind initially occupied itself with scenarios of Russian mischief and to deal with that possibility he sought the assistance of J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation. Bureau files show that the first interest in the UFO riddle by Hoover's men was on July 6th when the following brief message was forwarded to Washington from a district office in Dixie:

"About 12 so-called flying discs passed over Darlington, South Carolina approximately 5:30 p.m. today. Advise if wish details. 20.

And on the West Coast an urgent teletype message to FBI headquarters from an agent in Burbank, California, related the alarming report that one of the strange flying objects had plowed into a nearby forest area igniting a roaring inferno (the object was a hoax device that started a small fire). 21.

FBI help was needed as stories became more interesting and the human element more prominent in evaluations.

"Come in planet X." "Come in planet X."

"Let me speak to Ray Palmer."

The above was how a columnist for a Phoenix, Arizona, newspaper introduced a news item about the alleged seizure of 64,000 copies of the July 9, 1947, issue of the Arizona Republic, but let's start at the beginning. First the supposed UFO sighting that got things rolling.

Storm clouds scudded across the sky over Tucson, Arizona, as lightning flashed followed by loud cracks of thunder. On the wet afternoon of July 7, 1947, at about 4:00 p.m., a W.A. Rhodes took advantage of a brief break in the downpour to dash to his workshop at the rear of his property. As he crossed his yard he thought he heard an odd noise that drew his attention to the eastern sky. He thought a jet plane was approaching but for several seconds nothing was visible and then to his surprise a bizzare elliptical object about 25 feet in diameter and making about 500 mph came into view at 5,000 feet. A grey color, the UFO did not show much contrast with the clouds, but it was so low it was clearly visible and began to get even lower. As Rhodes watched the thing started to spiral downward making two complete orbits about a half mile wide until it reached an altitude of 2,000 feet. A camera was just inside his workshop door so he grabbed it and snapped a couple of pictures before the UFO suddenly

soared upward at a 45 degree climb, plunging into a towering cumulus cloud. The object had approached near enough for Rhodes to discern a small, flat feature in the middle top he surmised was a "nonprotruding canopy" for the pilot of the craft. Other than that the UFO was smooth surfaced. It had a definite front and rear that gave it the appearance of a shoe heel, something of a U-shaped configuration. The trailing edge tapered to two pointed ends and seemed to be tapered also from "wingtip to wingtip." The shape thus encouraged a belief in him he was gazing at a new aircraft patterned after the U.S. Navy's "flapjack" fighterplane that had been featured on the front cover of the May, 1947, issue of the magazine Mechanix Illustrated, but Rhodes was puzzled since the UFO had no propellers or landing gear like the Navy plane.

This case is interesting even without the artificial intrigue later injected by Mr. Ray Palmer, an editor of a magazine published long after the 1947 July days of saucer sensations. Palmer, as editor of Flying Saucers, was a lively and controversial personality in saucerdom for decades, churning out essays by the dozen about the supposed goings-on behind the curtain of secrecy erected by the powers-that-be in Washington which contained little fact but seemed to manage to fill his publication from cover to cover. He also had much to say about the "Shaver mystery," and always found space to print the opinions of borderline authorities on the UFO riddle. All in all, much of what Palmer said and did can be ignored.* Concerning the Rhodes affair Air Force records since declassified tell us that letters were actually exchanged between Rhodes and the military, moreover; the Pentagon was fascinated enough to do some follow up, but Palmer asserted that government agents not only commandeered the Rhodes negatives, they collected every copy of the Arizona Republic that showed the Rhodes' pictures on the front page which meant a house to house canvas of the City of Phoenix on July 9, 1947. Palmer may have sold a lot of magazines but that number couldn't have matched the amount of laughs the claim got in the newsroom of the Republic. 22. Actually, military records show that Intelligence personnel picked up the negatives right after the Republic went to press the evening of July 8th but there was no way authorities were going to play paperboy in reverse. 23.

*Ray Palmer hired Kenneth Arnold to investigate the Tacoma, Washington, saucer fragment incident of July, 1947. This story is told in great detail in a book co-authored by the two gentlemen titled The Coming of the Saucers.

As early as 1946 Palmer published UFO reports in the letters to the editor column of the science fiction pulp Amazing Stories. The Wisconsin editor even suggested a conspiracy of silence concerning the UFO mystery long before the expression "flying saucers" was even coined. Later, saucer skeptic Dr. Donald Menzel would even attempt to pin the disc outbreak on Palmer who no doubt would have been greatly flattered, but only a very weak case could be made for that assumption. Palmer was something of a character, but a harmless one, though he did get into the hair of Donald Keyhoe and NICAP on a few occasions.

With that out of the way, we can ponder an aspect of greater import.

Rhodes and the Russian rumor:

Authorities continued to pry into the Rhodes affair for months engrossed with the possibility that it might be an authentic event, because other than the curious photos, apparently there existed two more reasons for the High Command to remain heedful of the Phoenix case.

Three days before Rhodes took the pictures of the supposed flying craft, a letter was sent to the Los Angeles Examiner (that was sufficiently credible to earn the attention of government agents) and in that note to the editor there was detailed some unguarded conversation uttered by an officer on shore leave from a Russian tanker that had recently docked at Long Beach Harbor. According to the Soviet merchantman, the boys in the Kremlin were perfecting a saucer-like aircraft powered by atomic energy, and once boosted into the air, soared along the "earth's gravitational contour lines," whatever that meant. This devilish disc-like machine could spew controlled radioactive clouds fatal to animals, birds in the air, and by Jove, even the worms in the ground.

The similarities between the images in the Rhodes' photographs and the touted Russian "invention" are fairly marked. The alleged Russian device was said to be only 18 inches thick and of a kidney-shape outline with the pilot in a prone position while guiding its flight. Generally, this matches Rhodes' U-shaped object with the "nonprotruding" canopy, thus was it an accident that the first good saucer photo compared so well with the supposed Communist design? This could confirm the Russian rumor, or it could mean Rhodes faked his story and pictures since the Soviet missive saw print the same day as the claimed Phoenix UFO flyby (July 7th). 24.

The latter idea is attractive to the skeptic, yet Rhodes was buttressed by none other than Kenneth Arnold who belatedly made a single change in his original saucer account, stating that one of the nine UFOs he saw had a different outline than the rest, appearing crescent-shaped with a dark spot (a canopy?) in the center. 25.

Mindful of the foregoing, alarmists could make something of a curious Independence Day sea alert in Pacific waters when a forest ranger noticed what appeared to be a "ship on fire" just off the coast near San Francisco during the afternoon of July 4th, when saucers in the air were as thick as gnats on a summer's eve. No ships sent out an S.O.S. and the only vessel in the exact area at the time, which just happened to be of a Russian nationality, reported everything was hunky-dory. Was that ship launching the saucers being reported that afternoon?

A night to remember:

Lightning clawed the dark night heavens. Eerie glows and shattering booms disturbed the peace of the desert. At a remote sheep ranch some 30 miles south of Corona, New Mexico, a W.W. Brazel tossed and turned on his bunk in a tiny primitive cabin he called home while a rare summer storm spent its fury outside.

Rain tapped on the window. More booms and flashes continued to ruin his sleep. One explosion seemed a lot louder and stranger than the others.

At sunrise Brazel ambled out the front door to smell the clean, rain-washed air. He looked around. An amazing sight met his eyes. There strewn over a wide area of desert was an enormous amount of metallic fragments. He hadn't the slightest idea what the mess could be but he didn't have the time to look too close because he had to leave for town on business.

Out on the ranch Brazel was out of touch with civilization and it was only after being in Corona awhile did he hear some people talking about the latest national excitement called flying saucers. It immediately occurred to Brazel that perhaps something of that nature may have blown up near his cabin the stormy night July 3rd. He decided that once he returned to his ranch he would peer closer at the strange metal and finally make up his mind if the fragments warranted the notification of authorities. 26. When Brazel arrived back at his place in the desert, he checked the metal again. Just the amount of the debris justified an investigation. Soon after he left for Roswell, New Mexico, to make inquiries about buying a new truck but he also promised himself he would approach someone in authority about the mysterious crash. Brazel rolled into town on Monday, July 7th. 27.

Meanwhile, a Major Jesse A. Marcel stationed at Roswell Air Army Air Force Base happened to look up one evening early in July while driving near Roswell. Speeding lights in the dark heavens were visible and Major Marcel was astounded by the velocity of the glowing points as they swept overhead for he was familiar with the very latest in advanced aircraft. He hesitated to speak about it but later he received confirmation of the odd aerial phenomenon from another military observer. Little did he suspect he would be party to something far more fantastic. Before long Marcel would be talking to Brazel. 28.

"If anyone wants me, tell them I've gone fishing."

Approached by reporters, the VFW Chief Louis E. Starr backed away from revealing everything he knew, but he did say he was given to understand General Spaatz had fighter craft out on saucer hunts. Was that true? Where, pray tell, was the Commandant of the Army Air Forces during the platter paroxysm? General Carl Spaatz turned up in the Pacific Northwest, and when brought to bay by the press on July 7th, he shrugged and said: "I've been out of touch with things for—four or five days." Flying saucers? Never heard of them. After denying any knowledge of the country having an aerial problem or pursuit planes ordered aloft to bring down mysterious unexplained objects, General Spaatz asked to be excused because he was going fishing at Medford, Oregon! 29.

On a national level the saucer enigma still resisted explanations. Fully aroused, the International News Service dispatched its newsmongers to the White House only to have them turned away at the door by official spokesmen with unequivocal denials ringing in their ears that President Truman knew anything about the sky phantoms.

A conference of atomic experts meeting at Lake Success, New York, expressed a mild interest in the saucers but of course mere

spoken words could not entice the scholars to drop everything. 30. Now if one were to crash?

"We interrupt this program to bring you a special bulletin."

"The Intelligence office of the 509 Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force, Roswell Army Airfield, has come into the possession of a disc through cooperation of one of the local ranchers and the sheriff's office." 31.

Listeners around the nation turned up their radios and stopped what they were doing. Hanging on every word, those fascinated by the saucer mystery concentrated on the disembodied voice that read off a couple of brief paragraphs. It went like this. A supposed disc had crash landed on a ranch near Corona, New Mexico, around the first of July. A Mr. W.W. Brazel of the Poster Ranch had discovered the remains. Eventually Mr. Brazel showed up at the sheriff's office at Roswell which in turn contacted Roswell Army Air Base. The military sent a Major Jesse Marcel of the Roswell 509th (atomic) Bomb Group Intelligence Office to ascertain the importance of the find. The fragments were deemed of sufficient interest to be taken to the Air Base where the public information officer, Lt. Walter Haut, told the Associated Press: "The many rumors regarding the flying discs became a reality today." Lt. Haut added that the material evidence in their possession was being forwarded to higher headquarters at Fort Worth. The Base Commanding Officer at Roswell, Colonel W.H. Blanchard, was quoted by the press as: "...specifically describing the discovery as a flying disc." 32.

The news media received very few details as strict security was immediately imposed. It was officially rationalized by insisting that the flying discs were: "...high level stuff." 33. Meanwhile, wireservice teletype machines and radio stations spread notice of what the newspeople termed: "a momentous discovery."

Bedlam.

Washington was caught flat-footed. So many reporters jammed the Pentagon press room one would think money was being given away. Lt. General Hoyt Vandenberg, Vice Chief of Staff, Army Air Corps, dashed to the press room to take charge personally and bring some order out of the chaos. Fending off the pad and pencil boys, General Vandenberg got Forth Worth, Texas, Eighth Air Force Headquarters, on the phone and conferred with the officer in charge, Brig. General Roger Ramey. Nearly every major American newspaper, plus some foreign ones, tied up the phone lines to the Roswell Sheriff Office of George Wilcox. The San Francisco Examiner, however, correctly surmised that the Commanding Officer of the Eighth Air Force was its best bet and got through just ahead of its competitors.

After Vandenberg hung up, General Ramey made himself available to the press. The San Francisco Examiner, a Hearst paper, was the first to get through to the General. The Examiner found General Ramey in a seemingly jocular mood whose first words when picking up the receiver were: "Everybody in the country is trying to get through on this telephone." His statement on the saucer matter was less sensational than those coming from Roswell. The fragments, General Ramey said, were "flimsy," of a foil construction of some

sort. The General had the word of Warrant Officer Irving Newton, the Fort Worth Air Base forecaster, that the thing was only a beat up weather balloon radar reflector. The Fort Worth commander expressed his consolations that he had to disappoint the news media by stripping the "saucer" find of its glamor. 34.

The tumult had lasted an hour.

After the capture story had swelled and then burst like a bubble, military officers at Roswell Field received, according to sources known to United Press, a "blistering rebuke" from Army Air Corps Headquarters in Washington for their part in the panic. 35.

The day after the Roswell uproar Kenneth Arnold submitted a formal written report of his June 24th experience "that suppositively started it all," an affidavit requested by the military. Besides his testimony, Arnold added comments about the tardy acknowledgement by the government of the aerial mystery and his belief the objects were some sort of aircraft of an advanced design. The military wrote back several days later asking for permission to quote from Arnold's account of the saucer sighting but refrained from making remarks about the flyer's opinions. 36.

Kenneth Arnold was receiving 18 letters a day about UFOs in 1967, some twenty years later. He was 57 years old by that time and had run for public office twice without success on the Republican ticket. In 1967 he was still receptive to press inquiries and said he leaned toward the theory that UFOs may be "living organism of an unusual kind." Questioned by UPI he expressed unhappiness with the news media over what he believed was poor reporting on the UFO subject. Arnold insisted he had made his original report for patriotic reasons and not for notoriety. 37. By 1973 Kenneth "Saucers" Arnold, as some less than polite persons had tagged him, was still living in Idaho, driven into seclusion with an unlisted phone number after being annoyed by skeptics and believers alike. Not helping matters any were personal problems unrelated to the saucer mystery. 38.

The same day as the Roswell excitement another downed saucer story came out of Louisiana. According to press accounts an alleged flying disc, a 16 inch aluminum platter, had spun out of control and slammed to earth outside the city of Shreveport breaking up on impact. Discovered by a local auto salesman, the battered object was promptly located by a military Intelligence team from nearby Barksdale Air Field and spirited away. 39.

The so-called crashed disc at Shreveport turned out to be a hoax but it had ramifications that were all too real for the FBI. Hoover's agents sped to Shreveport a step behind the military and were left out in the cold. Hoover bristled at the affront and immediately interpreted the snub as an important challenge to the Bureau's jurisdiction. General Schulgen attempted to soothe Hoover by calling in a FBI representative for consultation on July 9th. The General, acting on the Pentagon's behalf, told Hoover's man the military was utilizing the full extent of their scientific manpower in the effort to unravel the tangle of data on the discs. Moreover, he said Army Air Bases across the nation were on the alert to check flying disc reports in their respective areas. These investigators were only following orders in their

speedy gathering of evidence. In the future, he continued, all information would be shared with the Bureau. As for a specific role in the study, it was felt that the Bureau should question persons reporting spectacular sightings to ascertain whether or not such individuals were: "...prompted by a personal desire for publicity or political reasons." 40. By political the General meant: "...individuals of Communist sympathies with a view to causing hysteria and fear of a secret Russian weapon." 41. Hoover, his organization given a vital assignment, was appeased.

In due time Hoover would find his vital assignment a series of blind alleys. There were no Communist inspired schemes to ferret out. The real story was contained in the reports like the following where the witnesses were above reproach.

A "Lt. J.C.M." stationed at Muroc AFB July 9, 1947, was one of those persons who had only scorn for "silly saucer sighters" who would say anything to get their name in the papers. In the Post Exchange building that afternoon of July 9th, the young officer had nothing favorable to utter about "saucers" blasting the reports as nonsense and expressed such sentiments as "I gotta see it to believe it" as he walked out of the door. He had just taken a few steps when an aircraft noise attracted his gaze skyward. He saw a plane and to his shocked surprise two other objects that shouldn't be there in the shape of silver discs hurtling overhead. Quickly the lieutenant summoned three others to confirm the sighting, a woman base employee and two sergeants. His formal report on the episode reads:

"I pointed in the direction of the objects and asked them the question 'Tell me what you see up there,' whereupon all three, with sundry comments, stated, 'They are flying discs,' To further verify my observance, I asked them to tell me in what direction the objects were travelling, without indicating the direction myself, and again all three, in a consistent nature, stated that the objects were moving toward Mojave, California.

I had time to look away several times and renew my vision of the objects to make sure that they were not any result of eyestrain, or in any nature an optical illusion. The objects in question were not, repeat, were not, aircraft and the objects could not have been weather balloons released from this station since they were travelling against the prevailing wind and since the speed at which they were travelling and the horizontal direction in which they were travelling disqualified the fact that they were weather balloons.

After the observance of this phenomenon, hoping that I might have time to enlist further witnesses, I immediately ran into the dispensary to get personnel who are medical officers to verify, for my own curiosity the actual observance of these objects but by the time I reached the back porch of the dispensary...the objects had by that time disappeared due to the speed with which they were travelling.

Upon further investigation, two of us at the same time sighted another object of a silver spherical of disc-like nature at approximately 8,000 feet travelling in circles over

the north end (of the field). I called the objects to the attention of ----(name deleted) and the other personnel standing nearby. All of us saw the objects, with the exception of two out of the seven personnel. All of us looked away from the objects several times to make sure it wasn't an optical illusion.

From my actual observance the object circled in too tight a circle and too severe a plane to be any aircraft that I know of.

It could not have been any type of bird because of the reflection that was created when the object reached certain altitudes. The object could not have been a local weather balloon for it is impossible that a weather balloon would stay at the same altitude as long and circled in such a consistent nature as did the above mentioned object.

I am familiar with the results of too constant vision of the sun or any bright object and I am aware that optical illusions are possible and probable. I wish to make this statement, that the above mentioned observance was that of actual subject matter." 42.

Affidavits were also obtained from the two sergeants which confirmed the lieutenant's observations.

A scientific advisor under contract to assist the Air Force in evaluations two years after the forementioned report was filed found the document impressive but the military didn't seem to think it warranted much concern, but then things had changed after the passage of a couple of years for reasons to be explained later. The scientist wrote of the case: "The witnesses were certainly excellent, independent military men describing the most unusual sighting on a clear day. What more could the Air Force want?" 43.

A scan of declassified files covering this period, while revealing no detailed official judgments of the UFOs by the High Command, does not, nonetheless, indicate much wrangling over whether or not the flying saucers were "real," that they had weight and solidity and existed in a physical matrix. Instead, at this point in time, there seemed to be enough acceptance to give the military investigations a more ordered direction. With all the UFO reports available, official attention zeroed in on the danger of the penetration of American airspace by foreign missile-like devices from the Arctic and sea approaches. One would like to foil penetration, but one would also like to back-track the objects and find out something about their origin.

Journalist Sidney Shalett, after being briefed by military Intelligence early in 1949, wrote of the military's impressions during this period, mid-July, 1947, thusly:

"We knew that the Russians had scooped up all the German scientists they could corral. We knew that the Russians, with the help of German scientists, had developed some small disks with explosive edges, launched by a compressed-air catapult, for possible use as an ordinance item. We knew that the Russians were hot for developing snorkel submarines capable of launching buzz bombs; our own Navy has been able to fire the Loon, its version of the German buzz bomb, from

submarines off Point Mugu, California. And we remembered the Japanese wartime stunt of letting free balloons drift over to this country as a possible means of initiating incendiary or germ warfare; it was a slightly screwball undertaking, but some of the balloons did get here." 44.

Thus experts in the Wright Field Intelligence Center sat up and took notice when messages marked "Canada" hit their desks, and by July 9th some interesting ones had arrived.

A Canadian constable and others in the community of Grand Falls, Newfoundland, vouched for the fact that, as one of them put it, a phosphorescent aura accompanying a "barrelhead-like thing" shot past at 11:30 p.m. on July 9th. Four round-shaped objects flying side by side were also seen. 45.

Almost exactly 12 hours later a UFO again lit up the countryside of Newfoundland, a case that produced some absorbing data. At Harmon Air Field, Newfoundland, a number of people, including some airline mechanics, saw a high speed, round-like, object the apparent size of a transport plane. It glistened in the sun and left behind a trail of bluish-black smoke approximately 15 miles long while it zoomed northeast on a horizontal trajectory. The object cut through some clouds, boring a "hole," a gap which was photographed twice by a witness using an Argus with a 50 mm F-2 lens. The two Kodachromes were rushed to the Intelligence Chief of Staff at Newfoundland Base Command and then hurried on to American authorities.

The following is the story given by the three principle witnesses, a J.N. Mehrman, a R. Leidy, and a J.E. Woodruff. The trio was returning from a fishing trip July 10th and were driving up a mountain road near Stephenville Crossing. It was Woodruff who became excited first: "Look at the cut in the sky," he yelled. Mr. Mehrman glanced at the scattered clouds at 8-10,000 feet and then also detected a bluish-black vapor trail that apparently had made a knife-like "cut" through a cloud formation. The edges of the "cut" he described as: "...feathered similar to a weld, as if you cut a weld in half." 46. Mr. Leidy, like Mehrman, did not spot the phenomenon immediately, yet Woodruff's actions called for a look so the car they were riding in was brought to a halt so they could give their attention to the sky. Leidy said he remembers: "It was a definite trail and caused the clouds to break open as it went through. It cut a clear path through the clouds and you could see the trail right through the cloud, it looked to be travelling in a big circle and it left sharp edges to the clouds." 47.

Mr. Woodruff observed what had made the "hole." He stated: "I saw the object break out where the clouds opened and it left its trail behind it...the object appeared to be a translucent disk-like wheel travelling at a terrific rate of speed and opened the clouds as it went through the air. The disk was travelling horizontal. It appeared to be about the size of a C-54." 48.

The U.S. Army Air Corps Technical Analysis Division at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, was enthralled. The experts said:

"The bluish-black trail seems to indicate ordinary combustion from a turbo-jet engine, athodyd motor, or some combination of these types of power plants. The absence of noise and apparent dissolving of the clouds to form a clear path indicates a relatively large mass flow of rectangular cross section containing a considerable amount of heat." 49.

Witnesses were questioned more closely, especially Mr. Woodruff who confirmed that the gap in the cloud was clean in shape and as wide as the UFO. Also, all of the witnesses asserted they had seen the smoke trail leaving the cloud and extending to the horizon. No explosion was noted. Both points were not favorable to a meteor explanation, moreover, Intelligence agents discussed the case with the Commander of Harmon Field and received assurances no British or Canadian aircraft had been in the area at the time of the sighting. Weather records were examined and they confirmed the witnesses testimony about the sky conditions: cumulus clouds at 8-10,000 feet.

Mr. Woodruff left for Gander AFB but military investigators tracked him down to obtain any amplifications. Anxious to help, Mr. Woodruff met the investigators plane, and when questioned again, reiterated his previous statements, adding that the "hole" remained in the cloud for well over an hour and that the vapor spewed out by the UFO was a bit darker than the sky, a flat, ribbon-like, bluish-black smoke that reminded him of an exhaust gas of a diesel engine. The UFO itself he described as a "translucent disk shape" that appeared to have little depth and produced no audible sound. He was firm about these aspects.

A military analyst lamented the fact that the film was a little overexposed but conceded, as they were doing now with UFOs in general, that: "...it is evident that some such phenomenon did occur." 50.

A summation tainted with strategic considerations spelled out the belief they were not dealing with an ordinary aircraft. It read that it was their: "...conclusion that a body having terrific heat or other power to split a cloud had passed through." 51. Moreover: "It was very noticeable that the course of the phenomenon was approximately 30 degrees east of true north which could be an indication that it did not originate from a foreign country." 52. A meteor seems to be the only thing that could give off such heat but, as the experts remarked, the low altitude and apparent horizontal course would rule it out. 53.

The passage of another 24 hours brought with it a UFO report from Elmendorf AFB in Alaska. This time the UFO was seen speeding from north to south, a more "pro-Russian" trajectory. Various military officers at Elmendorf watched the thing which resembled a grayish balloon, about 10 feet in diameter, following the contour of the nearby mountains. Since the object moved into a strong headwind, a balloon theory was not considered. The report was flashed southward with priority clearance straight to the Chief of Intelligence. 54.

UFO reports in the press, particularly on the national news wires, had greatly abated by the second week of July. This happy

happenstance eased public pressure on the military and defused their more acknowledgeable critics. Already the influential Joseph and Stewart Alsop, writing on July 13th, were taking aim at the military for its impotent handling of the flying saucer problem. To the columnists the confusion displayed by the military during the height of the flap, combined with the nagging residue of unexplained sightings, made plain that the U.S. had no adequate early warning system against surprise attack. Swayed by flaring Cold War tensions, the Alsop brothers suggested that the Nazi developed A-9 winged rocket may have been responsible for the "ghost rocket" phenomenon in the skies over Sweden in 1946, a supposed achievement of German-Soviet collaboration. The journalists lectured the Pentagon on the Swedish occurrences: "The rockets were timed to disintegrate in the air before contact but small parts of the weapons were discovered on the Swedish ground." 55.

Official records show that a representative from J. Edgar Hoover conferred with Intelligence experts other than General Schulgen to pursue all possible leads as to whether or not the saucers were Uncle Sam's, a notion the Bureau had trouble shaking off. One such expert, Col. L.R. Forney of MID, strongly assured him the objects were not a War Department project and gave additional encouragement to the proposal of FBI involvement.

When FBI official D. Milton Ladd received the initial paperwork on the flying saucer business, he offered a disparaging appraisal since the Bureau had already spent a considerable number of valuable man hours checking idiotic practical jokes, nonetheless another Bureau bigwig, a Clyde Tolson, who also happened to be Hoover's personal friend, penned some favorable marginalia on the Army Air Corps letter requesting aid in its UFO investigations, a missive dated July 15th. Hoover, stung by the quick grab of the alleged saucer by the military team at Shreveport, was only too ready to give final ratification. 56.

By the third week in July the lower echelons of the Army Air Corps received official notification of FBI help and of the agreement that the recovery of any downed disc would be a cooperative venture with mutual access to any and all artifacts. 57.

Fully committed, the Bureau assumed a cloak and dagger attitude with teletype messages to FBI headquarters and documents pertaining to the subject of flying saucers labeled variously: "Security Matter-X," "Internal Security," or "Sabotage." 58.

FBI Bulletin #42 disseminated in late July officially alerted local Bureau offices to conduct background checks of UFO witnesses, however it soon became apparent there was no Communist plot behind the saucer sightings. 59.

Public concern continued its decline. Newsweek magazine, in its July 14th edition, observed that to vast throngs from New York to San Francisco the saucers had substance because people believed they had seen them with their own eyes. As for the War Department, Newsweek delightedly passed along a punnish remark originating from that sober source which stated that the saucer matter remained: "...up in the clouds." 60.

Some citizens were still hoping for a break in the mystery

but little did they know they had a rather extended wait. An anonymous college student quoted in the Portland Oregonian may have been more right than he knew when he blurted out: "It would be terrible if we have to worry along for the next 100 years without knowing." 61.

With the slacking off of reports came an increasing decline in the numbers of people venturing to make such encounters public. E. Page of Konnewick, Washington, was an example. While over Utah Lake on July 12th a half dozen of the famous shiny platters sped past his single engined plane, fluttering and stabilizing, fluttering and stabilizing, over and over. This amazing flock of "nervous somethings" was a sight to behold, but upon landing Mr. Page found that even his best friend now considered the saucers as probably just a silly fad that had run its course and no longer a fit subject for conversation. As a result he didn't get around to telling the press or authorities. 62.

This lassitude was not shared, however, by those in responsible positions. The vanguard attempt to put the pieces together was born in Army Air Corps Intelligence, an analysis of 18 of the better saucer reports on file by the last week of July, 1947. Since all the reports were obtained from technically trained observers, enough reliable detail was available to determine the "typical" flying saucer report. The outline that emerged forced the Intelligence expert doing the evaluation (his name is not mentioned) to the conclusion that: "...something is really flying around." 63. Whatever the phenomenon was, he stated, it had a metallic appearance and was circular with a flat bottom and slightly domed top surface. In size, it compared favorably to a large aircraft (actually many other reports indicate much smaller objects) and could do 300 knots—plus. Whatever controlled them, he surmised, must be a highly efficient system for the unknown objects maintained excellent formations (aircraft in 1947 were flown by manual control. The automatic pilot devices at that time were crude and slow in operation. The tiny, light weight, and lightning fast electronic computers in use today had not yet been invented. The discs may have used such computers but the military at the time had no way of imagining the existence of such efficient gear.). Occasional oscillation were noted but the expert made no attempt to explain it (this may be due to automatic corrections by the forementioned "efficient control system."). Blue-brown vapor trails associated with some saucers was attributed to a power plant consisting of a liquid fuel rocket engine. 64.

It can be said, then, that very strong ideas about Russian snooping was now being entertained in the Intelligence analysis section. How would the High Command respond to such an analysis? Did it call for a crash program? Should there be an allout military alert?

A "peculiar rift," a mystery wrapped inside an enigma.

In spite of the assessment, a "peculiar rift" had developed between Army Air Corps Intelligence and the higher ups in Washington, which the forementioned expert said took the form of the: "...lack of topside inquiries when compared to the prompt and demanding inquiries that have originated topside upon the former events (ghost

rockets), give more than ordinary weight to the possibility that this is a domestic project, about which the President, etc. know." 65.

The unexplained lack of interest by the topmost military chiefs crops up again in an FBI document that relates an exchange between Special Agent S. Wesley Reynolds of the FBI Liaison Section, and a Lt. Col. George D. Garrett of the Army Air Intelligence. While Reynolds was questioning the Colonel about the possibility that the discs were highly classified domestic experiment, Colonel Garrett remarked: "...when flying objects were reported over Sweden (in 1946), the 'high brass' of the War Department exerted tremendous pressure on the Air Forces Intelligence to identify these sightings." Colonel Garrett went on to state: "...that in constrast to this, we have reported sightings of unknown objects over the United States, and the 'high brass' appeared to be totally unconcerned ...this led him to believe that they knew enough about these objects to express no concern." 66.

The experts at Wright-Patterson, Ohio, couldn't afford the luxury of pondering the queer actions of Washington for it had to get on with the business of gathering data and interpreting any threat from the Soviets. They proceeded with their time-honored methods.

Meanwhile, at a hotel in downtown Portland a prospector by the name of Fred Johnson rested his weary bones after spending weeks tramping around the rugged crags on the slopes of Oregon's Mt. Adams. He purchased a newspaper and took it up to his room so he could catch up on current events. One front page item snagged his eye instantly, an article about "flying saucers." He soon learned about a pilot named Kenneth Arnold that had reported spotting a strange formation of "tailless jets" soaring down the length of the Cascades from Mt. Rainier to Mt. Adams. Mt. Adams? Johnson thought hard, comparing the date, time, and location, with a recent extraordinary experience of his own unequaled in his 30 years of gold hunting. According to the press this fellow Arnold was catching hell from critics. Everyone was finding it hard to believe the Boise pilot, but Johnson did, and for a very good reason. The prospector followed the tribulations of Arnold for awhile until he was moved to post a letter to the military. Authorities quickly had some men knocking on Johnson's hotel door.

Johnson told military investigators he had been working the Mt. Adams area on June 24th, the same day as the Kenneth Arnold saucer sighting. Poking around the rocks at the 5,000 foot level that afternoon he stopped to read his watch and noticed that the compass attached to the timepiece was twitching for some unexplained reason. Shortly thereafter a flash of light dazzled his eyes. He glanced upward. Approaching in the sky was an unusual object. Using a small telescope he always carried, Johnson peered at a strange shape as it drew near out of the northwest. He then became aware of more such objects banking in the sun 1,000 feet above him near the peak of Mt. Adams. The objects moved silently and in appearance seemed to be: "...30 feet in diameter tapering

sharply to a point in the head and in an oval shape, with a bright top surface." 67.

One of the UFOs looked different resembling: "...a big hand of a clock (this may have been cigar-shaped 'mother ship') shifting from side to side like a big magnet." He said he lost sight of the objects when, while banking on edge, they slipped into a cloud. 68.

West Coast Intelligence Headquarters at Hamilton Field, California, telegraphed Army Air Corps Headquarters in Washington to say: "...your attention is invited to the similarity of statements by Mr. Johnson and Mr. Arnold." 69.

While mulling the idea of unidentified missiles being catapulted out of the Arctic from some unknown Communist base, it came to the attention of military experts that there existed an interesting civilian UFO report in the press that warranted a closer inspection. Famous private pilot, Richard Rankins, had stepped forward with his own flying saucer sighting that appeared in the Portland Oregonian. To the experts certain elements stood out like neon. For one thing, Rankins had an outstanding reputation in aviation so if he said he saw something flying he couldn't identify, it was no doubt he viewed something significant. Also, the Rankin sighting was said to have taken place before Kenneth Arnold's June 24th report. Finally, Rankin claimed that the formation of saucer-like objects he observed, some 7-10 in number and flying in a "V" formation, swept overhead at high speed headed north, and a half hour later evidently the same group of UFOs was seen again by him coming out of the north headed in a southern direction. Rankin told reporters he knew about the Navy's test plane, the XF5U-1, or the "Flying Flapjack," so he believed the objects were probably a secret military craft of a similar design. The implication of the coming and going of the formation was not lost on Rankin for he suggested that the craft may have a base nearby. The location of the Rankin sightings was Bakersfield, California, in early June. Bakersfield is almost due south as the crow flies from Mt. Rainer-Mt. Adams trajectory taken by the UFO formation reported by Kenneth Arnold later that month that caused a national sensation. 70.

Naturally there was some wondering about the possibility Rankin and Arnold had observed UFOs traveling a Pacific Coast route.

The secret summary of July 16th:

An attempt to synthesize seemingly unrelated events into a believable rationale was prepared for circulation within Air Corps Intelligence, a summary dated July 16th and stamped SECRET. It dealt with the Canadian UFO reports from Newfoundland and American ones from Alaska, which in turn was joined with references to the silver-colored objects sighted over Hungary on June 10, 1947, emphasizing that the European mystery, the ghost rockets of 1946, were recorded before similar manifestation kindled apprehensions in the "Zone of the Interior" (North America). The implication lent further evidence to the idea that the UFO phenomenon was independent of mass hysteria and possibly tinted a Russian red. 71.

The Hungarian episode had had some subsequent support that is even more favorable to the flying saucers being interlaced with UFO

activity overseas, for if the following account can be verified, there were more than "silver balls" in the air over Hungary. The report follows:

On June 10, 1947, at about 3:30 p.m., a Mr. Gyorik Ference, a Hungarian citizen, was waiting to cross Areana Street in downtown Budapest when something up in the heavens attracted his gaze. Other people on the sidewalk were likewise tilting their heads in response to something unfamiliar moving in the sky. Some sixty degrees above the horizon strange yellow-red platter-like objects hove into view. There were four of the objects trailing one another in an in-line formation, making their way through the atmosphere in an odd "swimming" motion. The flat, round, aerial things passed out of sight to the northwest over Varosliget Park after having been in sight for 30 seconds. 72.

More speculation:

The district FBI office at New Haven, Connecticut, forwarded a document of special interest to Bureau headquarters in Washington on July 18th about the remarks volunteered by a scientist with an excellent background in wartime government work and currently employed at a research laboratory in Stamford. The document reads:

"Mr. --- (deleted) stated that the topic of 'flying saucers' had caused considerable comment and concern to the present day scientists and indicated that he himself had a personal theory concerning the 'flying saucers.' Prior to advancing his own theory, Mr. --- remarked that immediately after the conclusion of World War II, a friend of his, Mr. ---, allegedly observed the 'flying saucers' from an observatory in Milan and Bologna, Italy. He stated that apparently at the time the 'flying saucers' had caused a little comment in Italy but that after some little publicity they immediately died out as public interest. Mr. --- stated that it is quite possible that actually the 'flying saucers' could be radio controlled germ bombs or atom bombs which are circling the orbit of the earth and which could be controlled by radio and directed to land on any desired target at the specific desire of the agency or country operating the bombs. He stated that one of the items of interest which he personally has observed is the fact that the saucers have been observed in Mexico City, New Orleans, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Halifax, Newfoundland, Paris, Milan, Bologna, and Yugoslavia as well as Albania. By placing a string around the globe of the earth it would be noticed that all of the above mentioned cities form a direct orbit or circle around the earth and would be more or less in line of any path in which the saucers could be circling.*

*Dr. David Saunders, using documented observations of UFOs in Ted Bloecher's book, The Report on the UFO Wave of 1947, claims that a straight plot of 36 sightings existed between Monterey, California, and Baltimore, Maryland, with an average deviation of 1-1/4 miles for the period of time July 3rd to July 16th. For more details consult the Santa Ana (California) Register of October 2, 1974, which has the article: "UFO Data Computer Study—Key to Sightings Prediction?" by David Branch.

Mr.--- further states that he had recently talked with ---, one of the owners of --- Company in Glenbrook, Conn., and had been informed by --- that his company is making a large powerful telescope to be used in searching the stratosphere for atom bombs. 73.

Still another document that contained a special element of particular fascination to military Intelligence, which was indications of flying saucer sightings prior to the Kenneth Arnold June 24th report, arrived at Air Corps Headquarters in the form of a letter on July 21st. Authored by a couple of Virginian meteorologists, it is worth quoting at length:

"...Mr. Walter Minezewski has observed this strange metallic disc on three occasions through the theodolite while making his pibal observation during the last six months (November, 1947 - April, 1947). Miss Baron's report agrees with Mr. Minezewski observations except as to the color which she reported as a dull metallic luster. Mr. Minezewski last observed this disc in April, 1947, at the 1100 E Pibal Observation when the balloon was at 15,000 feet. The disk was followed for 15 seconds, apparently moving on level flight from east to west to the far north of the station. The object was a metallic-like chrome-shaped something like an ellipse with a flat level bottom and a dome-like round top. The disc appeared below the balloon, was much larger in size in the instrument, and shined like silver.

It was impossible to estimate the height or speed of the disc except that it appeared to be moving very rapidly. Miss Baron observed the disc when her balloon was at about 27,000 feet. All of the days in question were either clear or with very few clouds and good visibility." 74.

The direction given for the April sighting is east to west indicating a possible origin off the Virginia coast. Of similar interest was a report dated July 23, 1947, from a fisherman sailing off the coast of Belgium in Europe telling of a "flat, spherical, greenish-colored body skimming across the sky spewing out a trail of white smoke." 75. Such reports might give some credence to ship-launched missiles, or so military Intelligence might surmise.

During these developments the average American had no way of knowing about the official goings-on at military Intelligence, FBI Headquarters, or at the Pentagon. All the man-in-the-street knew was what he could glean from the news media and there was darn little to be found. At the end of July one peerless source of public information, Life Magazine, complained about the meager supply of photographs, none of which met their exacting standards, therefore, one supposes, the magazine felt safe when it published a full page cartoon ridiculing the "hysteria" instead. Similarly, the Baltimore American typified editorial mood generally prevalent to many newspapers that had been wavering which were not giving into disbelief producing story headlines like: FLYING DISCS JOIN OTHER MASS HOAXES. Newsweek had to really scratch around for a comment by this time. It printed: "A few disc-shaped shadows linger. A Nashville radio station played 'Flying Saucer Blues.' A Chicago tavern advertised a Flying Disc cocktail." 76. It seemed that the discs had whirled on into the summer's heat where whence they came.

The FBI investigation floundered, being reduced at times to passing on reports that dribbled in by circuitous channels. On July 7th an Air Corps Captain observed from the air over southern Wisconsin a saucer-shaped object that: "...descended vertically edgewise through altocumulous clouds, stopped at 4,000 feet, and assumed a horizontal position and proceeded in a horizontal position for 15 seconds covering 25 miles and again stopped and disappeared..." 77. The observation was written up the day of its occurrence and turned into the Commanding General office at Bolling AFB. It then was forwarded to the Wisconsin Civil Air Patrol, finally it was passed on by them on July 24th to FBI headquarters (17 days later). There didn't seem to be much urgency to send data the Bureau's way! 78.

In order to clarify the American secret weapon theory even further, the representative of the FBI, Special Agent Reynolds, went to one of the "topside" persons in the military, General Curtis LeMay, Chief of the Research and Development of the Army Air Corps. The agent went through General Schulgen who drafted a memorandum addressed to General LeMay, which requested an answer to the question of whether or not the discs were a secret military experiment. Since an affirmative reply would certainly render useless any FBI involvement, Hoover's man hoped for a speedy acknowledgement which would set the Bureau free to attend to more vital matters with its limited manpower. 79.

If the saucers were not due to Communist agents making false reports, there wasn't much to keep the FBI busy. Military Intelligence, however, pressed on with its intercontinental missile/plane hypothesis. July 31st military Intelligence made additional inquiries into the episode about the UFO that "bored" a hole in a cloud over Newfoundland. During discussions with the Commanding Officer of Harmon Field, a Mr. Larkin, a businessman from Kansas City, Kansas, sat in on the talks and suggested that the experience of a Captain Gullage, Master of the steamship Burgse, might be of some import for it seems the Captain had sighted some mysterious flashes in the sky while at sea off Newfoundland July 15th. Moreover, Mr. Larkin said he had been aboard the Burgse in the same area on July 20th chatting with Captain Gullage about the weird aerial lighting display when the Captain pointed in the same direction and to the astonishment of both the phenomenon chose that very instant to reappear. There were four flashes of light this time about one second apart crossing from the northeast to the south-southwest at high velocity at a 30 degree angle to the horizon. Mr. Larkin, familiar with Aurora glows was certain the flashes were not the Northern Lights. 80. Was this phenomenon a high speed projectile arcing through the ozone toward U.S. targets? Elsewhere two reports came in to military Intelligence on July 29th and are of some interest.

Hamilton AFB, California:

A Captain Ryherd spotted a pair of strange objects in an in-line formation approach Hamilton Field. Stunned he tapped the shoulder of a Lt. W.L. Stewart who had just piloted an aircraft to a landing and was taking his leave of the runway. Ryherd pointed out the weird intruders. Both officers watched as one UFO stalked

a P-80 in a landing traffic pattern as its companion UFOs flew cover in a weaving motion. Captain Ryherd said the UFOs were about 20 feet in diameter, were circular in shape with a bulge on the bottom, and of a whitish tint. We know what that meant but Captain Ryherd refused to use the expression: "flying saucer" protesting any attempt to drag the words out of him. Anyway, the two "nonsaucers" broke off their tracking of the jet fighter and raced away: "...so fast they made the P-80 look like it was standing still," said one eyewitness. 81. What flies that fast?

Canyon Ferry, Montana:

Three men were motoring to Helena, Montana, on July 29th and were 25 miles from the city when one of the fellows shouted: "See it! See it! There's a flying saucer!" The sedan slid to a halt as a meteor-like thing at 3,000 feet elevation approached the witnesses. The UFO, which the men termed a "disc-shaped machine," slowed to a stop and remained stationary except for a slight fluttering, then it began to rise and fall straight up and down. Seemingly three feet across and only inches thick, the object glistened, and shimmered as it danced in the sun's rays. Not knowing just what they were observing the men could make no accurate estimate of the UFO's true size. After a brief time the UFO shifted gears at the top of one of its high bounces, zooming away at an amazing velocity: "...after only traveling a quarter of a mile the craft 'melted into thin air' as if because of tremendous speed." 82. What flies that fast???

Yet another case, not in official files, surfaced in an Associated Press dispatch dated July 29th. It seems that the day before a twin-engined United Air Lines passenger plane, Flight 105, the same regularly scheduled run often piloted by Captain E.J. Smith whose saucer sighting back on July 4th had captured so much press notice, was preparing to descend for a landing at Boise, Idaho. The pilots, Captain C.F. Gibian and First Officer J. Harvey, were stunned as a disc-shaped thing swept into view and approached the airliner head on. Before the danger of a collision became acute, the onrushing UFO changed course and fled the area. The duration of the encounter exceeded two minutes. 83.

Flying cigars, cigarettes, and firecrackers:

Some reports that were compiled dealt with an odd configuration. Amid the novel sightings of "flying saucers" there were a few of "missile-like" profiles.

August 4th:

At 4:00 p.m. near Everett, Massachusetts, a pilot and his navigator sighted an object that was bright orange zooming along at a lower altitude than their aircraft. The navigator, Mr. White, was the first to see it and told the pilot to peer out the side-window. There, about a mile away something approximately the size of a fuselage of a fighter plane and resembling a 15 foot, shiny cigarette of a deep gold color with blunt ends, was zipping through the air pushed along by a glaring jet exhaust. Moving at around 150 miles per hour, the UFO remained visible for half a minute until a cloud screened it from further observation. 84.

August 6th:

An ex-bomber pilot was talking with neighbors about six o'clock in the evening in Philadelphia when an object spewing a blue-white flame flashed overhead at about 450 mph. A slight hissing noise was heard. One witness said the thing looked like a giant firecracker leaving a fiery trail 100 feet long. Another denied that the smoke trail was anything near that long, saying that the vapor dissipated after only two seconds. The official report mentions: "Both the offices of Naval Intelligence and Army Intelligence were requested by the Philadelphia office to ascertain if either the Army or Navy was doing any experimental work on new types of planes or equipment in the vicinity of Philadelphia." 85.

Also on August 6th:

A flying disc was reported maneuvering in the heavens over Robert Lee, Texas. Five citizens swore they had watched as an object shifted positions in the sky. The thing zoomed out of sight northward in the direction of the town of San Angelo. After some 15 minutes the thing returned to the area of Robert Lee and resumed its sky antics. When half an hour had elapsed the disc began to change, becoming more like a thin cigar-shaped object emitting vapor in the process. Eventually the aerial maverick receded over the horizon. 86.

The Madagascar monster:

There might be some hesitation about the inclusion of the following case since it appeared in a popular book, but military Intelligence thought it of enough value to be made part of official UFO files. A Mrs. A.M. King of Nairobi had taken passage on the S.S. Llandoverly Castle and in early July was taking a stroll on deck about midnight as the ship navigated the Straits of Madagascar. She and her escort were attracted to a "bright star" that approached in the dark sky. She later wrote:

"Suddenly a searchlight appeared which flashed a strong beam of light on the water within 50 yards of the ship. It (the object) descended, its beam shortening and becoming brighter as it neared the water, and the next instant there was no more light, but an object appeared apparently made of steel and shaped like a cigar cut at the rear end. It remained in the air about 20 feet above the sea, parallel with the Llandoverly Castle, and traveling in the same direction.

Gaining a little in speed, after a second or two the whole shape disappeared without a sound, from the rear issuing fierce flames which shot out to about half the length of the object. It appeared that there must be something like a huge furnace inside the thing, but still we could hear no noise from the flames. No windows could be seen, only a band of metal round the entire thing, which, if it had been a complete cigar-shape would have been centrally situated.

The object was very large, about four times the length of the Llandoverly Castle, and about four times as high.

We had a wonderful view, but in a few seconds it disappeared. No light was seen forward as it left; it just vanished soundlessly in the darkness." 87.

At the beginning of August an FBI agent by the name of J. Patrick Coyne composed an essay on the disc problem in the form of a memorandum addressed to the Assistant Bureau Director D.M. Ladd. Agent Coyne compared the contemporary riddle with the wartime problem of the trans-Pacific fireballoons launched by the Japanese against the United States. After helping the Army at the outset to establish the character of the strange objects, he wrote, the military dismissed the Bureau without so much as a thank you or proper credit. From what he could determine, Coyne continued, the discs were a similar military weapon of some sort that called for none of the Bureau's expertise, and as a result agents were probably wasting their time in a thankless task. He noted that the military was doing its own interrogating so why use the FBI? 88. Why indeed?

Still around:

August (exact date not recorded).

Near Los Angeles at 10:00 a.m. while hiking in the mountains a man reported seeing a small object on the ground that suddenly took off and "knocked him to the ground." 89.

August 7th:

Judge and Mrs. Albert Turner reported sighting seven (saucers) in the sky east of Red Mountain (near Randsburg, California). Describing them as silver in appearance the Turners state that the saucers hovered in the area for a period of fifteen to twenty minutes. 90.

On that same August 7th day a R. Hatfield of Roseburg, Oregon, was mystified by something, a "mysterious object," he said, that put in two appearances over Myrtle Creek Airport. Being manager of the facility, he commandeered an aircraft and took up pursuit after the thing hove into view the second time. Climbing to 50,000 feet Hatfield sighted the object and tried to close in but his quarry "woke up" and left in such a hurry there was no chance to get near. 91.

Intelligence authorities in the lower echelons became curious over classified orders finally urging a maximum effort, for the Russian theory seemed to hold little promise and Air Corps Intelligence advisers shook their heads over reported UFO maneuvers, doubting anything human could pilot the saucers.

Apparently it was these feelers that produced a secret cypher message from London dated August 8th which informed American Intelligence that months earlier, on January 16, 1947, to be exact, a Mosquito fighter of the Royal Air Force on a training flight was diverted to a target picked up on radar which could not be identified. The British plane started its run on the UFO when the fighter was over the North Sea about 50 miles from the Dutch coast. Roaring through the sky at 22,000 feet the Mosquito fighter leaped ahead as its pilot shoved the throttle wide open to take up the chase. The UFO darted away like a startled rabbit toward England leaving the fighter laboring to keep up. For a half an hour the pursuit lasted until the English countryside appeared below, the pursuit ending in the Norfolk region with the object fleeing over the far horizon. The secret cypher on the incident says of the UFO: "...the strange object seemed be be efficiently controlled in

its evasive actions." 92.

Although classified, accounts of this "ghost plane" (there were a number of these that spring, all of which went from east to west, none returning) and the military's futile attempts to bag one, were reported in the press so why the "secret" stamp? Apparently it was the renewed official concern about the incidents that was being concealed.

Reports still continued although they were not often nationally publicized. The regional director of the weather bureau at Anchorage, Alaska, was a recipient of a strange report on August 4th by some pilots employed by a regional flight service. Why the aviators contacted the weather bureau is a mystery itself nonetheless the forecasters in Anchorage forwarded the report to the Alaska Military Communication System at Seattle, Washington, thus getting it into Intelligence channels. As for the sighting, it seems that a Captain J. Peck and his co-pilot, V. Daly, were flying their plane near Bethel, Alaska, a small town in the western part of the state not far from the mouth of the Kuskokwim River, when the pilots radioed the regional weather station something was dead ahead of them they couldn't identify (perhaps the flyers first believed the thing to be a weather instrument?); anyway, the object was silhouetted against the sky which was lit brilliantly by the sun low on the horizon. Captain Peck hauled back on his controls to bring his plane up to a safer altitude. Now a thousand feet higher, the pilots glanced downward and spotted the UFO closer but on a changed course. Still dark against the sky, it looked to be as large as a C-54. Intrigued, Captain Peck dived on the object as it pulled away doing his best to get a better view, but it speeded up to an estimated 500 mph and was lost to view in four minutes, a fantastic performance for something smooth surfaced with no apparent engines of any kind. 93.

As previously stated, August UFO activity passed unnoticed by the vast bulk of Americans and as for official investigations, they were well cloaked by security, however a bizzare hoax concerning alleged fragments of a flying saucer at Tacoma, Washington, received extensive news coverage. The merits of the case are minimal but it did put a spotlight on the military's unseemly haste to get their hands on something that "didn't exist." After the Tacoma hoax had run its course, a spokesman for the Fourth Air Force (covering the Western U.S.) addressed a gathering of reporters explaining that the much-heralded "saucer fragments" had turned out to be just common slag (this was confirmed by an independent civilian source), and what's more, he snapped, as far as the military was concerned, flying saucers still being reported elsewhere around the nation did not have: "...any basis in fact." 94.

This fervent castigation of the saucers put a certain Signal Corps operator in Seattle in a vacillating mental state, for he was sitting on the UFO report from the weather bureau at Anchorage, Alaska, concerning the sighting made by Captain Peck. The Captain was well known in the Northwest because he was the chief pilot for a regional company air service, a 17 year veteran of flying and definitely a no nonsense guy. The Signal Corpsman wondered: should

he send the report to Washington or not? Hesitating only briefly, he passed it along to higher headquarters with a personal note attached in which he did his own castigating by insisting that Captain Peck's observation was of "national interest." 95. This caused some perturbations in Washington when the message arrived in the offices of the High Command, but for the moment that story will have to wait.

More items of "national interest."

Near Silver Springs, Ohio, August 10th, at 9 o'clock at night, a Lt.Col. F.L. Walker, GSC, of the Air Force's Scientific Branch Research Group spotted an object crossing the sky on a straight course from north to south leaving a long thin trail of flame and smoke like: "...a tracer bullet." The object abruptly vanished in midflight. 96. It might have been just a meteor and probably was, but the fact that the observation was put in Air Force files indicates how hypersensitive the military had become to "missile-like" phenomenon.

August 13th:

Near Twin Falls, Idaho, at 9:30 a.m., a county commissioner and an ex-sheriff reported an "inverted pie plate" 20 feet across and ten feet thick passing over at a great height and making a roaring noise. 97. More on this case later.

August 14th:

At Guam in the western Pacific at 10:40 a.m. some enlisted men saw a number of crescent-shaped objects on a zig-zag course moving twice as fast as an airplane. 98.

FBI agents were sent to the home of a R. Switzer in Sacramento, California, to ask questions about something seen August 14th in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Switzer told the agents he had been driving along Cedar Ravine Road that day with his wife and kids when a smoke trail appeared. At the head of the smoke was an object about five feet long and fourteen inches wide (he estimated), and of a metallic appearance that flashed in the sun. While in view the mystery cylinder was suddenly: "...engulfed in a puff of dark grey smoke about ten feet in diameter." 99. He said he had turned to say something to his wife but it was obvious that she had seen the whole thing for her mouth hung open and she was waving a finger at the lingering smoke cloud. No particles were detected falling out of the vapor. Mr. Switzer guessed the thing had exploded fairly low and about 800 yards from the road. An air search was conducted but nothing out of the ordinary could be detected in the area. No more was attempted since the terrain was too broken for an exacting ground inspection. 100. With that the inquiry was ended.

What was approaching? Bombers? There were no contrails and no sound. Were they ducks? No, they were heading the wrong way for this time of year and were in too perfect a formation. These thoughts coursed through the mind of the observer, a veteran commercial pilot who later became an A&E mechanic with aviation inspection authorization. He was seeing some dark specks growing larger in the sky, moving South and North in a vertical Vee formation with one on a point and the others stepped above and below in trail. The location of the sighting was the outskirts of

St. Louis, Missouri, on August 11, 1947, during a softball game.

The objects were soon discerned as disc-shaped, nine in number, approaching at some 25,000 feet and doing about 1,000 mph in the cloudless, cobalt-blue heavens. At arm's length the discs appeared to be the size of a grape. Dark on one side and light colored on the other, the objects flipped in unison every two seconds.

Both teams and some 25 spectators watched with great interest. The ballplayers were an excellent collection of witnesses with one team consisting entirely of aircraft ground instructors and the other team made up of pilot and aircraft mechanic students. 101.

Teletype report:

ATTENTION: DIRECTOR, FBI

ATTENTION: SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE, BUTTE, MONTANA

SUBJECT: FLYING DISCS

These signals led off an alert sent out by FBI agents in the Idaho area after a story appeared in the Twin Falls Times-News concerning a "vision" of a "saucer-jet." The thing was reported flying "in" a canyon. Could it have been trying to sneak into the U.S. under radar coverage?

The Air Force's official file on the case is faithful to the newspaper account with the exception of being lean-worded:

"...(deleted) had sent his sons to the river for some tops from his boat. As they were overdue he went to look for them, when he noticed some 300 feet away some 75 feet in the air a sky-blue object silhouetted against the steep walls of the (Snake River) canyon on the far side. (The canyon is about 400 feet deep and 1200 feet across at this point.) The object was traveling 75 feet in the air (300 feet below the rim of the canyon) and so was plainly visible. --- states that the sky-blue color would probably not be noticed against the sky. He states that 'It did not spin like a top.' However, he did say that the trees over which it passed almost directly did not just bend with the wind as if a plane had gone by but that they 'spun around on top as if they were in a vacuum.' (Air Force emphasis).

Keith ---, a son, eight years of age said he saw the machine coming down the canyon heading from east to west and following the contours of the ground. Billy, age ten, another son, saw it almost immediately. Both watched it fly out of sight behind a tree in a matter of moments. 102.

Of special interest, of course, were what the two children said of the pair of apparent smokeless turbine, or red rocket, exhaust flames through which: "...could be seen daylight..." as the craft zoomed by with a swishing sound. 103. The jet-like knots on the UFO's side are depicted as emitting puffs of smoke in the drawing done by an artist on the staff of the Times-News but according to the eyewitnesses, such detail was not apparent during the sighting and the puffs had been penciled in as an explanatory emphasis. 104. 105.

One other point that should be touched upon here was the sky-blue color. This hue may have been the reflection of the atmosphere

off a mirror-like finish, but officially this was not considered. 106.

An Air Force scientific advisor some months later, grading the case on its merits as being a possible inexplicable event, reduced the report to the mere sighting of an "atmospheric eddy." The military people went along: "It seems logical to concur with (the) ...deduction, that this object was simply a rapidly moving atmospheric eddy." 107. We have to put off any debate with this seeming bias attitude here and instead continue with the attitudes that were contemporary with the sighting date.

Some thought on the matter shows that there may have been some similarity with the glistening rocket-like thing that split the clouds over Newfoundland back on July 9th. Was this an inter-loper that was sneaking under radar coverage by flying down a canyon, some sort of jet-assisted craft on a spy mission originating from Canada or beyond? The Twin Falls witness did not lack an opinion: "The canyon floor is rough at that particular point and it rode up and down over the hills and hollows at a speed indicating some type of control faster than the reflexes of man. It is my opinion that it is guided by instruments and must be powered by atomic energy as it made very little noise..." 108.

Military agents that went to Twin Falls were interested enough to check out another report in the Salomon Dam area that occurred at the same time. One of these witnesses was County Commissioner, L.W. Hawkins, who with a former county sheriff, told the Times-News that: "...a sound resembling the echo of a motor caused him to look upward, and there he saw two circular objects that reflected light. They were traveling at a great speed and higher than most airplanes ..." 109.

Do saucers burn their bridges behind them?

A case not to be found in the FBI files "pertaining to UFOs" but having something eerie about it nonetheless, is the fate of the Salmon River Bridge linking Warm Springs, Idaho, with the city of Riggins, a 400 foot-long structure spanning a 90 foot gorge. A wood trestle bridge supported by steel cables, it seemed secure enough on the clear, warm, afternoon of July 24, 1947. Three people, a Mr. and Mrs. William Bowman and a friend, Mrs. Isabel Swope, left Warm Springs that day and drove the lonely highway to Riggins. Approaching the Salmon River, they caught sight of a towering column of smoke ahead. Arriving at the bridge the trio was absolutely amazed to find the entire structure ablaze. Even the steel cables that could resist temperatures of 2,800 degrees were melting from the heat. Mr. Bowman took two photographs and then notified authorities.

Nothing else in the canyon was disturbed which raised questions about possible sabotage. The local FBI office conducted an investigation without results, at least none that were shared with the newsmedia. The most profound question was how the heat could reach temperatures in excess of 2,800 degrees outside the confines of a furnace? Oregon Forest Rangers could only suggest lightning as the cause although they admitted the weather was hardly conducive to electrical discharges. The Rangers did, however, relate the fact there had been an unusual number of "meteors" setting fires that summer. 110.

Terror near Tamarack:

What causes enough heat to melt steel cables on a quite ordinary day? Perhaps, if we are a bit daring in our thinking, it can be postulated that something quite out of the ordinary passed that way, that something flew by spouting jets of fire.

There is another story from the same region that might help to explain the blazing bridge or at least expand on possibility that things were not normal. On July 30th a John Ostrom of Nissa, Oregon, an elderly gentleman highly regarded by friends and neighbors, wheeled his heavy Army surplus truck out on the highway leading out of Tamarack, Idaho, and accelerated to 45 miles per hour. A mile from town, Ostrom joined the ranks of UFO sighters when a "silver ball" of blinding brilliance came into view. At this point the 66-year-old Ostrom could only claim an "ordinary" UFO experience, but then the baseball-like UFO apparently decided whoever was driving the truck rated a closer look so down it plunged at a 30-degree angle aiming its dive directly at the windshield. Ostrom, terror stricken, let go of the steering wheel and covered his face. The "ball" hit the truck with a bang, glancing off the top-forward edge of the vehicle's cab. Everything happened so quickly Ostrom was able to regain control of his truck and bring it to a safe stop. He got out and examined the metal body and found a dent that showed a "weld-like" surface as if the flying ball had been intensely hot. 111.

America had succumbed impressively to the saucer story in a few respects, according to the Gallup Poll of August 15, 1947, which found that public awareness of the aerial mystery had reached 90% leaving such famous newsmakers like the Marshall Plan and the Taft-Hartley labor bill far behind in the ratings, but when tested about the possible explanations to the riddle, prosaic answers claimed a lion's share of the percentages. Most took a liking to possible secret weapons, balloons, hoaxes, etc. Nothing was said about "alien visitors," not even a measurable 1% toyed with the concept. 112.

If "they" existed, where did they come from? From what point of the compass did they arrive? This is granting that the things were artificial solids and not to be numbered among the less spectacular prosaic answers the public favored.

The UFO that dropped in for a visit:

A forest ranger on fire watch in a high wooden tower atop Mt. Josephine, Skagit County, Washington, had more than smoke plumes to report on August 17, 1947. A "thing" dropped straight down out of the sky to the northeast of the lookout. The "thing", shaped like a huge clam, fell tipped at an angle, slowed to a stop, leveled out, and then "floated leisurely as if suspended on a cord" for a few minutes before whizzing off to the southeast with ever increasing velocity. 113.

For some reason UFO reports over the Northwest remained numerous. On the 19th, strange objects suddenly filled the skies over Twin Falls, perhaps seeking their companions of six days before. Witnesses first spotted a single disc zooming in a northeasterly direction followed a short time afterward by a flight of ten disc-like objects in a triangle formation. Within minutes a trio of discs, also in a triangle formation, came into sight on the same

course. Almost before witnesses could catch their breath, another triangle formation, this time consisting of 5-6 objects, traced a path across the heavens going in an identical direction as their fellow sky travelers. On the heels of this manifestation, one of the largest flights of UFOs ever reported soared overhead, thirty-five to fifty in number, lined up in a triangle formation. This group also proceeded northeast. The weird sky show had still not ended for within a half an hour small groups of discs came over the horizon at short intervals returning from the northeast and fleeing in a southwest direction. 114.

Approximately the same date, the exact day is not recorded, an Air Force Major beheld a tight formation of elliptical objects said to be a brilliant yellow-white in color, approaching Rapid City, South Dakota, swooping down out of a dark night sky at an estimated 350 mph. They then pulled up and climbed away, accelerating rapidly, all the while remaining equally spaced in their maneuvers. 115.

FBI agents finally found their way to Phoenix on August 29th to question W. Rhodes exhaustively about the saucer pictures taken back in July. The FBI also checked a news story in the Wilmington (Delaware) Morning News that referred to a local resident who claimed the sighting of a strange object twice, once in September, 1946, and another in October the same year. He described one of the objects as a sort of "flying tube" some 15 inches in diameter zipping through the air at 1,000 mph. It was jet powered and travelled west to east crossing the coast in Rehoboth beach area. 116.

"Buzzed by a buzzsaw:"

News item datelined Seattle, Washington, August 30th: "Three mountain climbers said today they were buzzed by a flying saucer that was 'round, almost transparent and sounded like a buzzsaw.' Roger Hamilton, his wife, Patricia, and Dick Hamilton said they sighted the object near Snow Lake on the Snoqualmie Pass Sunday. The trio said it went so fast 'none of us had time to take a picture.'" 117.

The haunting of Holloman:

The greatest concentration of atomic and missile research installations in the world in 1947 was to be found in the state of New Mexico. The experts that lived and worked in the region were not given to casual interpretations of the unusual, yet the UFO malady would infect the eyes of these men, and even the equipment they used, nonetheless producing the eerie suspicion the research being done there might be subject to a reconnaissance by something beyond comprehension.

The start of a long series of odd visitations is mentioned in an official statement drawn up by the Holloman AFB Operations and Projects Group, Electronic and Atmosphere Division. Prepared by the Communications Officer, it read in part:

"During the latter part of August, 1947, this organization was carrying on several test runs with a modified SCR-270 at this base. I had released a corner reflector and two balloons and was watching them in their flight as they drifted to the southeast from this base. While watching the balloons through a pair of ten power binoculars, a white object, appearing to be round, came into my field of vision. I followed the object as

far as possible but lost it within seconds after picking it up. The object was traveling at an unprecedented rate of speed and appeared to be several thousand feet over the top of the Sacramento mountain range, traveling in horizontal flight south to north....it was definitely not a balloon and apparently not manned judging from the violent maneuvers which were performed at a high rate of speed." 118.

Still trying.

The FBI, still active, notified the U.S. Department of Justice, Communications Section, Washington, in a message marked "urgent" that a resident of Oswego, Oregon, had, on September 3rd, at about noon, sighted 12-15 round silver objects in the sky high over the city. The local Bureau office said it would interview the observer. Washington later commented that no conclusion could be reached since the report contained "insufficient data." 119. This would be a typical brushoff for more than one case.

The report of Captain Peck, mentioned earlier, finally forwarded by the Signalman in Seattle, passed through a few hands and its sentiments produced frowns. Air Defense Command at Mitchell Field, New York, sent what amounted to a rebuke to its West Coast department. Addressed to Fourth Air Force Headquarters at Hamilton Field, California, a message dated September 3rd, stated that the Air Defense Command wished: "...to correct the impression of the Signal Corps officer submitting the Bethel, Alaska, report that the Fourth Air Force 'claims there is no such things as flying discs...' Also, there was: "...some misinterpretation of an utterance by a public information officer about a collision of a flying disc with a boat in Tacoma harbor, an incident whose existence was found to be false." The message was signed by the Assistant Adjutant General. 120.

During the routine exchanges of documents among government departments an FBI man in San Francisco happened across one piece of paper that made his eyes pop, a "restricted" message dated September 3rd. It was typed on an Army letterhead and indicated that the FBI's true investigative role was other than the Bureau was led to believe. Actually the Air Corps did not want to be encumbered with certain aspects of UFO investigations so the FBI was steered to taking on: "...the task of tracking down all of the many instances which turned out to be ashcan covers, toilet seats and whatnot." The missive was to be forwarded to: "...certain Commanding Generals in the Army Air Forces from a Col. R.H. Smith, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence Headquarters, Air Defense Command, Mitchell Field, New York." 121.

In writing to the Assistant Bureau Director, D.M. Ladd, in Washington, the San Francisco agent termed the military letter as: "...tending to indicate the Bureau will be asked to conduct investigations only in those cases which are not important and which are, almost, in fact, ridiculous." He went on to say he believed his superiors should take up the matter with the Air Corps concerning the: "...scurrilous wordage which, to say the least, is insulting to the Bureau." 122.

Ladd alerted Hoover to the outrage, asking that a protest be lodged with the Assistant Chief of Staff-2, to break off field interrogations, and act henceforth as a mere information channel

to the military. 123.

At this inopportune moment, on September 5th, General Schulgen finally got General Le May's official answer to the FBI's earlier insistence to knowing absolutely if the discs were American: General Schulgen had Le May's declaration that: "...a complete survey of research activities discloses that the Army Air Forces has no project with the characteristics similar to those which have been associated with flying discs." 124. By now the Bureau wasn't sure it cared.

In the field FBI agents carried on unaware Hoover was boiling mad over the whole business.

Yet another lead cropped up in the Salt Lake Tribune. A Utah case that occurred on September 10th, some two days earlier, was dispatched to FBI headquarters in Washington. Local agents in Utah questioned the witnesses who said they had taken a break from a card game and were standing on their porch at their home in Logan, Utah, when they noticed some light colored objects circling overhead. Other witnesses around town claimed there were five groups of yellow-white objects, each group numbering 35-60, in orbit over the community. Speculation at first mentioned lights on airplanes or even "groups of morning stars." These snap explanations were discarded just as quick. Whatever they were, they were too fast to be birds and during the whole passage no wing movements were detected. 125.

Even remote locations came under consideration. Word was flashed from the Air Sea Rescue Operations at the Hawaiian Sea Frontier Headquarters to Navy Intelligence office of the 14th Naval District concerning an unusual incident on September 13th, involving a Pan American airliner enroute from Midway Island to Oahu, Hawaii. On arrival in Hawaii a Lt. Comdr. M.A. Young questioned both the pilot and co-pilot to ascertain what had occurred. The pilots said their plane had been droning along uneventfully only a few miles out of Midway flying at 3,000 feet and doing 205 knots. Things were so routine at this point the airliner was put on automatic pilot. It was just after dusk and an occasional towering cumulus cloud populated the sky. The tiny speck of Necker Island had just passed below when what was at first believed to be the lights of another aircraft appeared with an exceptional brilliance. The light suddenly turned on an intercept course with the Pan American craft. As it sped up, it divided into a pair of lights and took on an ominous crimson hue. The lights winked out abruptly and nothing further happened. The pilots were alarmed at the high velocity, estimated to have been over 880 knots, and baffled at the course change and level flight of what would ordinarily be shrugged off as a meteor. Military interrogators tried repeatedly to get the pilots to say the horizontal flight path and veering motion were imaginary but the aviators turned back these efforts. Since both flyers had exceptional service records their testimony was finally accepted. Fleet Intelligence Office, Pacific Fleet, and A-2 of the 7th Air Force at Hickam Field, were alerted. What further action was taken, if any, is not disclosed. 126. Perhaps the forementioned case lacked the startling credentials of others but it does serve to illustrate the existence of possible UFO activity and military concern far

from the shores of the U.S.

General Schulgen now felt it was time to get some substantial assistance. He pleaded his case to the Commanding General of the Air Force* Air Material Command, Lt. General Nathan F. Twining who heard out General Schulgen and agreed to call a conference to consider the matter.

When the conference convened no Schulgen people were present but many others from other departments were there. Some were from the Air Institute of Technology, Intelligence T-2 Office. Chief of Engineering Division, and the rest from the Aircraft Power Plant and Propeller Laboratories of the Engineering Division T-3. This panel of judges pondered the interrogation reports and preliminary evaluations submitted by General Schulgen's Intelligence and Technical experts. It was felt that the accumulated data should be examined in a statistical study armed with the knowledge that one could expect the numbers to follow normal probability curves. Allowing for the fact that natural phenomenon must be responsible for some disc reports and that much of the unexplained residue could be attributed to that which was "visionary" or "fictitious," the Air Force experts were still left with an impressive stack of paper. What was in those remaining files was pure dynamite. The key sentence in this exchange of views went: "If certain characteristics appear repeatedly in reports from different people it may be possible to infer causal factors." Realizing, however, they lacked vast numbers of UFO reports in coded form, only a "considered opinion" seemed realistic.

Taking the data at face value, the expert's opinion merely amounted to an amplification of the quick estimation given the phenomenon by one of General Schugen's advisors back in late July based on just 18 flying disc reports. There was a concession that meteors misinterpreted could account for some sightings. Other than that they were forced to conclude that the "phenomenon was real" and not misinterpretations or hoaxes. The reported high speed, amazing agility, excellent control, and usually silent operation, were taken into account. The original "flying saucer" expression continued to hold up as preponderant numbers of witnesses described shiny circular, or elliptical, flat objects. The experts left the door opened a crack to the possibility the U.S. was conducting a high security test project in spite of repeated official assurances to the contrary. Considering the general physical features reported for the flying saucers, it was assumed that given enough time and money an aircraft of a 7,000 mile range might be perfected but due to the difficulties of such an undertaking it was believed such an effort would be massive enough to be independent of existing programs and thus an endeavor unknown to

*Aircraft had long played a support role to land troops and were considered an integral part of the Army organization, hence the title: "Army Air Corps." With the introduction of long range bombers, air warfare achieved an independent strategic importance sufficient to warrant the creation of a separate service branch. The Army Air Corps became the "Air Force" on September 18, 1947. General Carl Spaatz became the first Air Force Chief of Staff.

many acknowledgable Air Force authorities. (The development of the atomic bomb was an example they could have used.) This liberal interpretation, it goes almost without saying, left an allowance for a technical breakthrough by a foreign power, a worry serious enough by itself to earn the saucer stir a full fledged investigative project.

Amid all this intellectual surrendering to the improbable, the experts tossed in one cautionary sentence: "Due consideration must be given (to)...the lack of physical evidence in the shape of crash recovered exhibits which would undeniably prove the existence of these objects." 127.

Acting on these recommendations, General Twining requested that the investigation of the flying saucers be given a code name, a security classification, and a priority rating. A monthly detailed compilation of data was to be disseminated to the following organizations for comments and recommendations: the Army, Navy, Atomic Energy Commission, JRUB, the Air Force Scientific Advisory Group, NACA, RAND Corporation, and the NEPA. The forementioned conclusions about the saucers reports were not actually that, they were only "considered opinions" with specific directives yet to come, but when General Twining's letter containing the "opinions" arrived at General Schulgen's office dated September 23rd, it gave immediate respectability to the subject that had been meeting with uneven acceptance in many quarters.* Air Material Command Intelligence was ordered by General Craigie to: "...continue the investigation within its current resources in order to more closely define the nature of the phenomenon." 128. The solitary word "phenomenon" implied a vagueness not evident in the "considered opinions," as the Air Force, it seems, now sought to corral a mysterious "super-airplane."

*This official document with General Twining's signature first achieved public attention in 1956 in a book authored by Edward J. Ruppelt which referred only to the September 23rd date and the statement that: "the reported phenomenon is real."

Later, in 1960, the head of the Air Force's UFO investigation at the time, Lt. Lawrence J. Tacker, vigorously denied the document's existence challenging Pentagon critic Donald Keyhoe's faith in Ruppelt. Two years before, on January 22, 1958, during the television show, "UFOs: Enigma of the Skies," produced by CBS' Armstrong Circle Theatre, Keyhoe was censored on the air when he tried to mention this document, and others; the sound portion was cut off by technicians in the control room. The program staff simply wanted no confrontation with the military. The program, put together with military cooperation and participation, was not a free debate but a carefully scripted presentation much to Keyhoe's disgust and subsequent rebellion. His vital evidence was crossed out in the script in spite of Keyhoe's preprogram protests.

One of the few positive results of the 1968 "Condon Report" was a declassified reproduction of the "Twining Letter."

On the saucer scene things maintained a steady pace. On September 11th UFOs again visited Portland, Oregon, at 5:15 p.m. when police and many others spotted a silvery object approach and then circumnavigate the city. The local FBI office routinely filed the reported information. 129. Meanwhile, things came to a head in Washington at Bureau headquarters.

J. Edgar Hoover, who had taken umbrage at the Air Force's "ashcan lid and toilet seat" document, fired off a note to Major General George C. McDonald, Assistant Chief Air Staff-2, across town in the Pentagon. Knowing Hoover, the wording was remarkably restrained:

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been requested by your office to assist in the investigation of reported sightings of flying discs.

"My attention has been called to instructions disseminated by the Air Forces relative to this matter. I have been advised that these instructions indicate that the Air Forces would interview responsible observers while the FBI would investigate incidents of discs found on the ground, thereby relieving the Air Forces of running down incidents which in many cases turned out to be 'ashcan covers, toilet seats and whatnot.'

"In view of the apparent understanding by the Air Forces of the position of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this matter, I cannot permit the personnel and time of this organization to be dissipated in this manner.

"I am advising the Field Divisions of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to discontinue all investigative activity regarding the reported sighting of flying discs, and am instructing them to refer all complaints received to the appropriate Air Force representative in their area." 130.

Within days, on October 1st, FBI directives ordered:

"All future reports connected with flying discs should be referred to the Air Forces and no investigative action should be taken by Bureau agents." 131.

When one ponders the expense, effort, and the tough attitude Hoover had about the image of his FBI, it is small wonder involvement with hoaxes irritated, and during the summer there had been some corkers. Some samples:

Saucer secret solved (for 50cents):

Word of a discovery of a silver saucer at Black River Falls, Wisconsin, on July 11th, by a member of the Civil Air Patrol, reached Colonel De Ford, Chief of Staff, Second Air Force, who had investigators telephone Black River Falls to question the finder. Failing to locate the disc discovery, investigators dialed the city's Chief of Police who, as it happened, verified the existence of a strange saucer-like object that had been viewed by hundreds of townsfolk and was being kept in a bank vault for safe keeping. FBI agents chartered an airplane and quickly arrived at Black Falls to inspect the fantastic "find." When they saw the thing they pronounced it a fake. Determined to pursue the matter regardless, a Colonel Sanders of the 137th AAF at World Chamberlain Field was

ordered by his superiors to bring the device to the Headquarters of the Second Air Force. When the thing arrived the Commanding General and his staff peeked at and poked at the 16-inch plywood and cardboard saucer stuffed with old radio tubes and sporting a crude propeller. The big brass finally agreed with the FBI. The finder (and apparently the creator of the disc) had charged Black Falls folks 50 cents a look. At least Uncle Sam was spared that expense. 132.

Another hot case:

The 15th of July an object ended up on a housetop in Seattle Washington, where it set the roof afire. The thing was a 28-inch hollow wood disc drenched in turpentine. Once in flames, the disc was evidently tossed wildly in the air. Someone, perhaps in the Seattle Fire Department, detected a hammer and sickle symbol on a portion unaffected by the heat and that's all it took. The FBI in Seattle wired Washington immediately with a cable marked: "Urgent." Navy bomb and electronic experts raced to the site. A quick glance told them the device couldn't possibly be enemy secret weapon. A mite embarrassed one supposes, the FBI terminated its interest in the incident with: "No publicity thus far and no comment being made in the event press inquiries are received." 133.

The fate of fakes:

When one of these phoney platters got as far as Air Defense Headquarters at Mitchel Field, New York, July 23rd, an official acknowledgement of the fact contained language of undisguised distaste. The "saucer" was not to be: "...dignified by any further consideration" ...and that Headquarters would hold it "...for a reasonable length of time and then dispose of it in the nearest ash receptacle." 134.

After the October 1st Hoover directive, the FBI was spared participation in such nutty aspects of the aerial controversy. The Bureau files dried up from this point on indicating that there was good compliance to the Chief's orders.

The Air Force, however, was stuck for better or worse but luckily the decline of press coverage of the controversy kept cases down to substantial events of possible scientific interest.

A vertical loop:

Something flew a giant vertical loop in the sky over the Southwest U.S. on October 8th leaving a trail of smoke so thick it was mistaken for a sky writer when first sighted. Near Mt. Charles, Nevada, a smoky "something" had soared in a slight rising course and then reversed itself without a turn (a 40 degree angle). An Air Force Reserve Officer had stopped his car to take an earnest look. Shortly thereafter he drew the course of the object on a scrap of paper because he was convinced there was something utterly strange about the thing which was so small it was undetectable, yet left a bellowing vapor trail. 135.

A horizontal loop:

Although no exact date is available, perhaps the inclusion of this October case is appropriate here. It seems that over Dodgeville, Wisconsin, at about midnight, a civilian observer saw

something come out of the northwest. He claims it was: "... moving slowly to the south. All at once in a sudden burst of speed it circled from right to left in a huge circle and moved toward the south at the same time. No sound, smell, or trail noted. A very high rate of speed was maintained in making the circles." 136.

"Flying Quien Sabe."

Another tiny "missile" terrorized the border country around El Paso, Texas, several days later. It produced a mystery October 12th which one newspaper called a "Flying Quien Sabe"—the Spanish equivalent of "who knows." That particular morning something "cigar-shaped and two feet long," blue and silver in color, flashed over the farm of Savas Aranda just outside the Mexican village of Casta in Chihauhua some 30 miles southeast of El Paso. The thing passed from east to west, and because the general description matched that of a rocket (an American missile had swerved off course and impacted south of Juarez earlier in the year on May 29th), it was first suspected to be a wayward U.S. Army device of some sort. Aranda, a reserve officer in the Mexican Army, spoke with U.S. Custom officials at the border town of Fabens, Texas, telling them the strange object apparently came down somewhere in the Zanalayuca mountains. Major General J.L. Homer, Commandant of Fort Bliss, Texas, questioned Aranda and was satisfied that the object in question was not an errant V-2 from White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico. Many Mexicans reported an explosion and felt some quaking of the ground so General Homer organized and led a search party into the Zanalayucas. Officially nothing was found. Mexican search teams likewise had no luck, at least that was all that was announced. 137.

A priority message sent over the Air Service Command Teletype Network, dated 14 October 1947, from Col. W.R. Clingerman, of Alamogordo AAF, Alamogordo, New Mexico, spelled out: "REQUEST ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING UNIDENTIFIED FLAMING OBJECT REPORTED TO HAVE CRASHED INTO THE ZANALAYUCA MOUNTAINS OF MEXICO AT APPROXIMATELY 9:30 PM ON 12 OCTOBER 1947 PD THE ORIGIN OF NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THIS INCIDENT APPARENTLY ARE FROM EL PASO TEXAS PD SIGNED ANALYSIS DIVISION T-2." 138.

Alamogordo soon tapped back: "LAST MISSILE LAUNCHED FROM THIS STATION 8 OCT AND RECOVERED IMMEDIATELY PD LAST MISSILE LAUNCHED BY WHITE SANDS PROVING GROUND WAS 9 OCT AND RECOVERED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY PD THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT FROM MEXICO CITY CMA MEXICO RELEASED A WNHIS MORNING THAT THE UNIDENTIFIED FLAMING OBJECT THAT LANDED ABOUT 35 MILES FROM JUAREZ MEX DEFINITELY A ROCKET AND WAS ASSUMED TO HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED FROM SOME TEXAS BASE. 139.

On October 15th the War Department's Classified Message Center passed further information on to the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., from Fort Sam Houston, Texas: "REFERENCE PREVIOUS UNVERIFIED REPORT OF AERIAL OBJECT LANDING IN MEXICO OPPOSITE TOWN OF FABENS, TEX, REPORTS RECEIVED THIS DATE FROM CG AAA AND GMC AND BRANCH INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FT BLISS TEX TO THE EFFECT MEXICAN GAR-RISON OF JUAREZ STILL SEARCHING SUSPECTED AREA OF IMPACT. NO RESULTS REPORTED. NO VERIFICATION OF REPORT. INVESTIGATION CONTINUING." 140.

Final official word termed the Mexican incident a "false report." 141.

Strange meteor-like UFOs pose a question that challenges even the most rabid UFO buff: "If UFOs are machines, what conceivable value are devices that destroy themselves after so brief a sojourn in the atmosphere?"

Candidates for "meteor-like" unexplainables are not all that rare. Popular Astronomy commented in its June, 1947, issue: "...the occurrences of undulations, spirals, abrupt curves in the motions of meteors, while reported from time to time for visual observations, has never been recorded photographically... since they appear impossible from a physical consideration... it is necessary to regard visual reports of such motions with suspicion." 142.

Military people cared only about postulations derived from their own concerns. Could there be something sinister aloft?

Scores of witnesses sighted an unusual "meteor that dipped" passing over Manitoba, Canada, October 13th. One of the many accounts reads: "A blue glow became visible moving eastward at high speed throwing a brilliant red-tinged flame forward and downward. A silent explosion occurred." The official report on this "meteor" was stamped SECRET and was examined carefully by Canadian experts from the Guided Missile Section of the Defense Research Board. A preliminary analysis suggested: "...a super step rocket and that the sudden dip and explosion was the cutting in of a second stage." 143.

A study of the commotion in the Canadian city of Hymers on October 25th certainly gives the impression something odd had indeed arrived:

"Fifty townspeople saw an object sweep over their town, then hover for 15 minutes, after a time it returned to its same direction from whence it came. In moving it looked like a long streak of fire, but was dark at the front end. Most of the object was as bright as the sun and hurt the eyewitnesses eyes to look at it. The eyewitnesses also noticed that the mystery object was giving off heat waves." 144.

"Plotting and charting:"

When a professor of Aeronautics stopped by at Air Force Intelligence at Wright Field, Ohio, in early November, he let it be known that he had watched an extremely unusual object put on a high performance show in the skies of the U.S. Southwest. Dr. Wood (no first name is given) fascinated the military with his scholarly evaluation of the UFO's animated behavior. The Intelligence people became convinced that correlations existed with other such incidents and took down the details for: "...plotting and charting for important Intelligence purposes." 145.

To pursue this point further, there is a paragraph in Air Force files which seems to be the sole other reference to a "plotting project." It reads: "It is further requested this office (Air Material Command, Wright Field) be advised as to progress being made on the plotting of all flying disc incidents to date (The date of this document is November 18, 1947), particularly in North America. It was understood that Dr. Carroll (?) was going to plot these incidents, but no further word was

received regarding this effort."* 146.

Map work contributed toward an understanding of the termination of a track as well as its origin. The significance of the former aspect may have had great importance in the commotion at Four Corners, a desolate place so undistinguished it is best described by a coordinate. On October 30th a Lt. Young of the New Mexico Wing of the Civil Air Patrol relayed an alarm over the CAP communications network to Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque, about an: "...airplane falling in flames." This was the point at which all four states are contiguous. Major Charles L. Phillips, AF, CAP liaison officer at Kirtland, and Captain John Featherstone and Lt. Allen Bolles, CAP communications officers, cooperated in analyzing the flaming object as something other than an aircraft so they contacted Dr. La Paz at the New Mexico Meteorite Institute according to a prearranged plan. Due to the remote area and winter weather, no immediate follow up was initiated by Dr. La Paz. 147. Months would pass before anymore would be heard of this fall, in fact well into 1948.

Meanwhile, public awareness grew languid. This is mirrored in the modicum of information in the media and magazines. Science Digest, in its October, 1947, issue offered a tiny, half-hearted, obituary under the heading: "Remember the Flying Saucers?" In this small mention of the big turmoil the problem was reduced to one of public gullibility. On the other hand, Argosy magazine came closer to the mark because it had sniffed around a little and in its November issue told its readers that the flying saucers were being taken seriously by certain military people and scientists.

Besides Argosy, Dave Johnson, the aviation editor of the Idaho Statesman, the city newspaper of Boise, had maintained a healthy respect for the aerial mystery. When an unusual case saw print in the Portland, Oregon, Oregon Journal, November 13th, Johnson learned of it and placed a phone call to Air Force authorities just in case the news story had eluded official notice.

The story in the Journal detailed an incident 120 miles off the Oregon coast where a pair of "somethings" spewing jet-like streams of flame were seen by some officers on the bridge of the U.S.S. Ticonderoga. The officers used a radio-telephone hookup to alert the hydrographic station in San Francisco because: "...of a request by that office for any sightings of Flying Discs." 148. The Second Officer aboard the tanker Ticonderoga was one of the most surprised sailors sailing Neptune's realm when the two "flying question marks" came over the watery horizon. Momentarily stunned, he eventually yelled: "There goes some flying discs!" The objects soared across the sky in a low arc doing an estimated 800 mph going from horizon to horizon in about 45 seconds. It was hard to tell of course but it was thought the objects were about 36 feet in diameter. 149.

The military officer that took Mr. Johnson's call expressed

*A fragment found in official files devotes the following to the plotting business: "Extract from Report No. 1, Project No. 364, Contract No. W33-038-1118, Mapping, Charting, and Reconnaissance Research Laboratory."

his gratitude and assured the Idaho Statesman editor that orders to formally investigate the UFO problem had recently come down from the highest official level (General Twining's September 23rd letter). During the telephone conversation Mr. Johnson happened to say something about an "unusual meteor" witnessed by CAA officials over southern Idaho, mentioning that the fireball was a pulsating blue-green color that left an odd luminescent smoke trail which persisted for some time. The "meteor" crossed from the southwest to the northwest above the mountain terrain between Boise and Mountain Home after dark (no date was given). The Air Force Intelligence officer was all ears much to Johnson's surprise, and the military agent hinted that the "meteor" may not have been a natural phenomenon. 150.

According to a source other than Mr. Johnson or the Air Force, more than one "meteor" visited the northwest at that time. A military cargo plane had been flying at 11,000 feet above Walla Walla, Washington, when a bright flash startled the pilot. A fireball-like object had shot up with an enormous height-scaling power coming from somewhere below the aircraft and just missing the nose of the Army transport. The glowing object, a blue-green blob, flew out of sight on an upward slant. Hardly 20 minutes had elapsed before three other aircraft flying over southern Idaho sighted the same UFO or something a close kin to it. Casting off a brilliant blue-green ray of light, a large fiery sphere zoomed across the vault of the heavens horizontally, leaving behind a ribbon of green vapor four miles long. One pilot confessed he had been nearly frightened out of his wits by the unexpected pyrotechnics. 151.

Intense forensic contests about the UFO problem were still in the future yet there were stirrings as the year came to a close. In fact a writer named Lionel Shapire charged in November that the mysterious saucers were being built in Spain by ex-German rocket experts. This drew comment from the Air Force Chief of Intelligence at Wright Field, Col. H.M. McCoy, in a letter to the Pentagon office of the Director of Intelligence, which declared:

"The story by Lionel Shapire regarding war weapons developed in Spain evidently was printed in a number of leading newspapers throughout the country. The significance of this article will be dependent upon certain essential elements for such alleged important developments, such as funds, materials, experimental testing facilities, and technological 'know-how'. The latter is supposed to be supplied by German scientists. The German scientists at this Hq indicate that no important scientists from Germany are working in Spain, and those mentioned in this article are not known to them.

If possible, therefore, an effort should be made to obtain names, qualifications, or any information that might help to identify the alleged German scientists working in Spain." 152.

For some reason Colonel McCoy followed with a brief note five days afterward requesting that the previous "UFOs made in Spain" letter be classified: "Secret." 153.

Overseas, the riddle of UFOs had acquired a limited notoriety but not reaching the scope of the "ghost rocket" excitement of the

year before. Greece, with its troubles with political tensions and rebel activity along its northern border in 1947, experienced sightings of mysterious "missiles" over the country's northern provinces. The Greek government assigned its top physicist, Dr. Paul Santorini, a man so brilliant he was a personal friend of Einstein, to look into the possibility Russian missiles were being used to intimidate the Greek army. Government technicians were made available to assist professor Santorini, who, with such help, quickly established to his satisfaction that the mystery was not due to Soviet devices. The U.S. State Department was following the political situation in Greece closely and Athens looked to Washington for guidance in its weak and divided condition, thus during the course of these bilateral consultations word reached the Pentagon of Dr. Santorini's work for the Americans immediately instructed the Greek government to order the termination of the professor's studies. Later, American scientists flew to Greece and interrogated Dr. Santorini in some detail on his findings. The episode left the Greek pedagogue convinced of the super-secret nature of the UFO problem. 154.

That we are dealing with possible flying saucer activity in this part of the world is supported by a Persian Gulf incident of November 5th. As the story goes, crewmen aboard the oil tanker Chipola were said to have sighted eight saucer-shaped objects whizzing through the air a mere half mile away while the vessel made its way through the warm waters off Arabia. As the sailors watched, the objects in question climbed out of sight gaining height while in an echelon formation. 155.

December brought with it some UFO reports from northern Germany where odd objects leaving green-colored wakes were seen. This area was sensitive militarily and unusual aerial activity there enhanced the Pentagon's anxiety over possible Soviet intrusions. On the evening of December 12th a young girl in Oslo, Norway, perceived what seemed to be a regular falling star, yet even this put the military into motion. The U.S. Air Force typed up the account the crux of which states:

"The object which appeared unusually bright in comparison to other falling stars the witness had observed, traveled from right to left on an arc of a circle, the curvature of which was very great." 156.

The writer for the North American Newspaper Alliance, that had expressed a hunch the flying discs might be Nazi devices perfected in Franco's Spain, came under fire from Air Force General Carl Spaatz who granted an interview to the Boise, Idaho, Idaho Statesman in the middle of the month, at which time he blasted the Spanish-Nazi idea while voicing his dissatisfaction with UFO evidence so far accumulated insisting that the public continue to pass on reports of anything unusual in the air. Pressed for his own feelings on the mystery, the General muttered a little about the "fact that none of the famous discs had been detected on radar" and if the things were real then their origin was beyond his ken. This, however, did not prevent General Spaatz from warning in stern tones that there was no reason for authorities tapping their heads and looking smug until there is a definite

improvement in international relations. 157.

On the 22nd of December the Associated Press quoted a legislator from Oregon, Congressman Harris Ellsworth, who insisted: "...he had received reliable information concerning the development of high-velocity missiles by Soviet scientists." The AP article was titled: "Mystery Discs Again Linked to Russia." Specifics were lacking. 158.

Just days later the American Association for the Advancement of Science held its annual winter meeting and during the opening sessions Dr. D.C. Wylie of the University of Iowa read a paper to a gathering of astronomers echoing the concern of the Alsop brothers while proposing that a nation-wide "sky patrol" be established to check on unexplained phenomenon reported in the atmosphere. He cited the failure of science to explain the flying saucers and stressed that this lack of success could lead to an erosion of public confidence in authorities and the danger of another Pearl Harbor if vigilance remained relaxed. At the very least, he pleaded, science might gain scientific knowledge by a complete investigation into the flying saucer controversy, charging that there seemed to be no provision for determining if there was any factual basis to the flying discs and for all he knew: "...present national policy was to ignore UFO reports." 159.

As we have seen the UFOs were not exactly being ignored. In fact, General L.C. Craigie, Air Force Director of Research and Development, had just then given authorization to the establishment of an investigative project to collect data on: "...reports of sightings and phenomena in the atmosphere." On December 30, 1947, the project was set up and the code name "SIGN" conferred on the effort and a security priority of 2A assigned, the second highest possible. 160.

The quiescence in the public sector, now only disturbed by occasional voices like those of Shapire, Ellsworth, and Wylie, would prove a lull; already the irrepressible Ray Palmer had pushed plans for more visibility of the flying saucer problem imagining a full issue of Amazing Stories carrying a non-fiction treatment. This scheme, however, ran afoul of the Ziff-Davis publishers still smarting from Palmer's "Shaver Hoax" of the previous years. Undaunted, his small frame packed with enthusiasm, Palmer quit his editor's job on Amazing Stories' staff to launch his own literary effort which he proposed to fill with messages about the enigma of the skies. He would go on to earn credit as the subject's earliest publicist as well as the most consistent one. 161.

For six months military Intelligence at Wright Field had compiled files, consulted various experts both American and foreign, especially German, and made computations on their slide rules while mulling imagined explanations. By the end of 1947 the verdict leaned toward an aerial machine that greatly surpassed all conceivable designs known to science, something that confirmed early "considered opinions" of September. Project SIGN was just a new-born babe but its conclusions were already beginning to mature. The flying saucers, the Air Force experts surmised, must

be a product of a: "...highly developed state of technology." 162. From this point on a single question transcended all others: "Whose technology?"

So much for the public sector, and so much for declassified Air Force files, but let's ask another question in capital letters: "WHAT HAD REALLY HAPPENED AT ROSWELL?"

Returning to that morning of July 7, 1947, we find the New Mexican rancher W.W. Brazel driving his pickup truck over to the sheriff's office at Roswell to tell about the "mess in the desert." The sheriff, after listening to Brazel, assumed that something had come to grief so he dialed Roswell AFB. It was about noon at the time and the previously mentioned Major Jesse Marcel was caught eating his lunch when the phone rang. The sheriff started his conversation with a puzzled drawl which related: "...that a rancher told me something that's weird you ought to know about..." Major Marcel asked to speak to Brazel for a first-hand account on the "weird" occurrence and then he hung up and went to his Commanding Officer Colonel William A. Blanchard who urged further onsite investigation. Later in the day Major Marcel and a CIC agent by the name of Cavitt set out in a 1942 Buick staff car, with a small jeep trailer in tow, across the expanse of rock and sand that lay between Roswell and Brazel's place. Since it was after dark when they arrived, the two military officers spent the night with Brazel in the small cabin where the trio feasted on a can of cold pork and beans.

The rays of the morning sun of July 8th revealed that the trip had not been for naught because spread before their eyes lay a strange assortment of metal-like material: 3/8-inch square beams with odd heiroglyphic markings, tough brown-colored parchment-like material, sheets of "tinfoil" of extreme strength, and black, brittle, plastic-like residue. Major Marcel remembers he also found what looked like a small box several inches on a side that may have been an electronic device. The two military officers loaded what they could into the trailer, which was far less than the total, and then drove back to Roswell AFB. 163.

Major Marcel stopped at his home in Roswell on the way to the air base and brought some of the mysterious material into the kitchen where he tried to piece together something recognizable. As Marcel's son remembers it, he was just twelve at the time, the small room couldn't begin to hold the metal junk thus the original dimensions of the object had to be quite large, furthermore he recalled the pinkish characters stamped on some remnants. 164.

The material was baffling. It wouldn't bend or break and had practically no weight to it. The surfaces had a wood-like feel but the low density did not mean it would respond to heat. No scorching resulted when a cigarette lighter was held close to the material. One of the first things Marcel decided, using his knowledge of military equipment, was that the pieces were not from an airplane or rocket. Strange stuff indeed and there was much more scattered over an area of 250 feet by 4,000 feet in a NE to SW direction near Brazel's cabin.

Having no luck assembling the puzzle, Major Marcel tossed the material back into the jeep trailer and continued on to the

air base. After Marcel arrived at the military installation, the public relations officer of Roswell AFB, Lt. Walter Haut, learned of the find and made the public announcement that excited the nation. Major Marcel's superior, Col. William Blanchard, ordered the material put aboard a B-29 and flown directly to Carswell AFB, Headquarters of the Eighth Air Force, just outside Forth Worth, Texas. The Major and P/R officer Lt. Haut accompanied what was being touted by the news media as a "momentous discovery" on the flight east. 165. So far, so good.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon was in an uproar. At Carswell AFB reporters lay in wait for Major Marcel, a cluster of micro-phones all set up for a news conference starring the Major from Roswell. He, however, stayed out of sight while he waited for word from General Roger Maxwell Ramey, Commander of the Eighth Air Force, as to what he should say or do. General Ramey at the time was on the phone discussing the situation with General Vandenburg at the Pentagon. What did General Vandenburg tell Ramey? Nothing of this conversation is available in open official files.

After consulting with Vandenburg General Ramey summoned Major Marcel, telling him to bring some of the mystery metal. In General Ramey's office Major Marcel spread out a tarp and placed some samples on top. Outside the press was clamoring for a peek at the "wreckage." At this point the General made a strange decision. General Ramey had an old weather balloon radar reflector brought in and the mysterious metal removed. The reflector bore a crude resemblance to the material found by Brazel and it was this shiny metal sheet that the reporters were allowed to see and photograph. The newspeople were assured that the forwarding of the material to Wright Field Laboratories for tests had been cancelled. 166.

After the press had left Major Marcel was sworn to silence. The B-29 from Roswell returned home but Marcel was kept off the flight and the aircraft was filled with armed guards escorting the mysterious metal back to New Mexico. Subsequent investigation determined that a military team was sent out to Brazel's ranch where they located the remainder of the metal and picked the ground cleaner than a hound's tooth. 167.

Brazel was instructed by the military to say very little to the newsmedia, nonetheless he couldn't resist snapping: "I am sure what I found was not any weather balloon..." 168. This makes sense because downed balloons were a common occurrence in the New Mexico area and a reward was given to ranchers that returned the instrument package to authorities, but then there is no need to resort to guesswork or the testimony of any civilian because there is some official documentation that discredits the balloon idea!

The Brad Sparks discovery:

While Air Force records evidently have been purged of references to the Roswell incident, UFO researcher Brad Sparks happened on a critical bit of evidence in a stack of otherwise unimportant declassified FBI documents. It reads:

TELETYPE

FBI DALLAS 7-8-47 6-17 P.M.
 DIRECTOR AND SAC, CINCINNATI URGENT FLYING DISC,
 INFORMATION CONCERNING...(deleted), HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH
 AIR FORCE, TELEPHONICALLY ADVISED THIS OFFICE THAT AN
 OBJECT PURPORTING TO BE A FLYING DISC WAS RECOVERED
 NEAR ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO, THIS DATE...(deleted) FURTHER
 ADVISED THAT THE OBJECT FOUND RESEMBLES A HIGH ALTITUDE
 WEATHER BALLOON WITH A RADAR REFLECTOR, BUT THAT TELE-
 PHONIC CONVERSATION BETWEEN THEIR OFFICE AND WRIGHT
 FIELD HAD NOT BORNE OUT THIS BELIEF. DISC AND BALLOON
 BEING TRANSPORTED TO WRIGHT FIELD BY SPECIAL PLANE FOR
 EXAMINATION. INFORMATION PROVIDED THIS OFFICE BECAUSE
 OF NATIONAL INTEREST IN CASE AND FACT THAT NATIONAL
 BROADCASTING COMPANY ASSOCIATED PRESS AND OTHERS ATTEMPT-
 ING TO BREAK STORY OF LOCATION OF DISC TODAY....(deleted)
 ADVISED WOULD REQUEST WRIGHT FIELD TO ADVISE CINCINNATI
 OFFICE RESULT OF EXAMINATION...WYLY
 END. 169.

Meanwhile, official press handouts wrapped up the case.
 The Dallas Morning News was one of those newspapers that printed
 the military's final say:

"Maj. E.M. Kirton, Intelligence Officer at Forth Worth
 Army Air Field blew the disc theory sky high at 5:30 p.m.
 when he told the Dallas News 'there is nothing to it.'

'It is a Rawin high altitude sounding device,' Major
 Kirton said. He described such an instrument, when un-
 damaged, as of a design resembling a six-pointed star.

The Army and the Weather Bureau use the device, attached
 to a balloon, for gathering high altitude data. It is made
 partly of tinfoil-like material, the officer said.

The identification at Forth Worth is final, Major Kirton
 said, and it will not be necessary to forward the object to
 Wright Field, as originally planned. What will be done with
 it?

'I suppose we will throw it away,' Major Kirton ventured."
 170.

Residual fascination was hopefully dispelled by General
 Ramey who made a radio broadcast the evening of July 8th to deny
 again the "hasty" official statement made by Lt. Walter Haut of
 the 509th (atomic) Bomb Group that the flying saucer mystery had
 been solved at last. 171.

Still some reporters were not quite satisfied and General
 Ramey had a few sharp words for the nosey members of the Fourth
 Estate when requests were made to examine the "weather device"
 themselves. The General growled: "It's in my office and it
 will probably stay there." 172. And: "The special flight to
 Wright Field has been cancelled, gentlemen. This whole affair
 has been most unfortunate, but in light of the excitement that
 has been stirred up lately about these so-called flying discs,
 it is not surprising. Now let's all go home and call it an
 evening." 173.

Just suppose the Roswell object was some sort of mysterious machine. If so, the authorities were not inclined to share the knowledge with the public or just anyone in the military. The day Brazel brought the crash occurrence to the attention of the Air Force, an Albuquerque radio station learned of the metal debris being recovered at the Brazel ranch and attempted to teletype word to other affiliated stations but as the electronic pulses raced through the cables, the message was abruptly interrupted by a security override evidently originally meant to safeguard the classified activities of the Los Alamos and White Sands installations. A line of type intervened that commanded: "DO NOT CONTINUE THIS TRANSMISSION." 174. Shortly thereafter the station manager received a phone call from an individual named "Mr. Slowie" who claimed to be the Secretary of the Federal Communications Commission in Washington. He ordered the Roswell story killed. Also, New Mexico's Senator Dennis Chavez phoned the manager and thundered over the line: "I don't know what you're doing but you better stop it." 175, 176.

This outright censoring of information was still not enough for the High Command. The decision was made to go on the offensive against those who dared entertain thoughts that there was something to the UFO riddle:

"Ramey's A-2 Division (Intelligence) Chief, Colonel Alfred E. Kalberer, began making public appearances at meetings of several civic organizations around the Fort Worth area with a presentation designed to 'counteract the growing hysteria toward flying discs.'" 177.

Thus by the time 1947 passed into history the public was still ignorant of what was behind UFO reports; and Air Force Intelligence, having been handed this hot potato, would have to find out what it could by checking sighting reports, the High Command being unwilling to let any low level personnel see any really good evidence. Even before the Air Force's investigative effort was formally launched, the powers-that-be apparently saw the project as a public relations move, nonetheless the engineers at Wright Field assigned to Project SIGN would become convinced enough eventually to firm up some definite opinions without metal debris.

The year 1948 wasn't very old before the "official policy" to "counteract growing hysteria toward flying discs" seemed justified. There was another crash but this time it was one of the military's own machines. Worse yet, a pilot was dead.

To be continued in the next booklet in this series:

THE UFO RIDDLE: 1948, JANUARY - JULY.

UFOS: A History

FOOTNOTES

1. Columbus, Ohio, 5 July 47, (AP).
2. Pendleton, Ore., 26 June 47, (AP).
3. "Why Don't The Damn Things Swim- So We Can Turn Them Over To The Navy?" by Edward J. Ruppelt. The TRUE Report on Flying Saucers, #1, Fawcett Publishers, Inc., Louisville, Ky., 1967, pp.39,57. (Article first published in 1954).
4. Pendleton, Ore., 27 June 47, (UP).
5. "UFO Related Information from FBI Files," by Dr. Bruce S. Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, Published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, 3535 University Blvd. West, Suite 23, Kensington, Maryland 20795, November, 1977, p.2.
6. Ibid., FBI Document filed 10 July 47, p.24, (AP).
7. Blue Book File #53.
8. Blue Book File #47.
9. The Portland (Ore.) Oregonian, 5 July 47, p.24, (AP).
10. Springfield, Ill., 5 July 47, (INS).
11. Augusta, Me., 5 July 47, (AP).
12. "UFO Information from the FBI Files," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, December 1977, Part II, p.2.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Blue Book File #56.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Atlanta, Ga., 8 July 47, (UP).
19. Blue Book File #17.
20. "UFO Information from FBI Files," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, November 1977, Part I. Document filed: 6 July 47.
21. "UFO Information from FBI Files," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, December 1977, Part II, p.2.
22. "Coffee Break," by Don Deder, Arizona Republic, 18 November 58.
23. Blue Book Files. No case number or other designation given. The data can be found on reel number two of the microfilmed records.
24. San Francisco Examiner, 7 July 47, p.2.
25. Coming of the Saucers, by Kenneth Arnold and Ray Palmer. Privately published at Amherst, Wisconsin, 1952, pp.53,162.
26. "Ref. Information from Major Jesse Marcel, USAAG(Ret.) via telephone interview," 2 January 79 (Document from Stanton Friedman files).
27. Ibid.
28. "UFO Crash," Document #948438. Pratt for Levy. 17 December 79, p.11 (Stanton Friedman files).
29. San Francisco Examiner, 7 July 47, p.1, (AP).
30. Washington D.C. Post, 8 July 47, p.3.
31. "AAF Flying Saucer Exposed as Box-Kite Weather Balloon," by John G. Norris, Post reporter, Washington D.C. Post, 9 July 47, p.8.

32. Washington Post, 9 July 47, p.8.
33. Ibid.
34. "Flying Disc Found By Air Corps Only a Weather Balloon," by Dick Pearce, San Francisco Examiner, 9 July 47, p.1. (Picture of General Ramey and Col. T.J. Dubose with the balloon radar reflector is on page 3.)
35. Washington Post, 10 July 47, p.2-B.
36. Blue Book File #17. (A controversy over the distance and size of the objects seen by Kenneth Arnold still continues. The objections had arisen very early and had been brought up by Dr. J. Allen Hynek in his April, 1949 report to Project Grudge. See Hynek's book: The Hynek UFO Report, p.99.)
37. Flying Saucers, by the Editors of Cowles and UPI, The Cowles Education Corporation, New York, N.Y. 10022, pp.36-38.
38. "Whole Flock of 'em Flew Over Again," by Ed Wilks, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1 April 73, p.11F.
39. "AAF Flying Saucer Exposed as Box-Kite Weather Balloon," by John Norris, Washington D.C. Post, 9 July 47, p.8.
40. "UFO Related Information from the FBI Files," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, November 1977, Part I, p.2.
41. Ibid.
42. Blue Book Files: #1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, and 1F.
43. The Hynek UFO Report, by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Dell Publishing Company, New York, N.Y. 1977, p.97.
44. "What You Can Believe About Flying Saucers," by Sidney Shalett, Saturday Evening Post, 30 April 49, Part I, p.138.
45. Blue Book File #39.
46. Blue Book File #27.
47. Blue Book File #26.
48. Blue Book File #27A.
49. Blue Book File #26 and #60.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Blue Book File #42.
55. "Matter of Fact," by Joseph and Stewart Alsop, Washington Post, 13 July 47, p.5B.
56. "UFO Related Information from FBI File," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, November 1977, Part I, p.3.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., Part II, p.2.
59. Ibid., Part I, p.3.
60. "Spots Before Their Eyes," Newsweek, 14 July 47, p.7.
61. "Flying Discs Still Excite," by J. Hugh Pruett, Astronomer Extension Division, Oregon Higher Education System, Eugene Oregon, Portland Oregonian, 19 July 47(special).
62. "The Scientist and the UFO," by Frank B. Salisbury, Bioscience, January 1967, p.21.
63. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, APRO Bulletin, November 1977, Part II, pp.7-8.

64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Blue Book File #68.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Blue Book File #29.
71. "Flying Objects Reports Summary," Extract from Weekly Intelligence Summary, ATIC, 16 July 47. Blue Book Files.
72. "UFOs Behind the Iron Curtain," by Joe Brill, Skylook, #76, March 1974.
73. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, APRO Bulletin, December 1977, p.7.
74. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, December 1977, Part II, pp.1-2.
75. Belang Van Linburg (a Belgium newspaper), 6 August 47.
76. Newsweek, 21 July 47.
77. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, December 1977, Part II, p.2.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Blue Book File #26.
81. Blue Book File #52.
82. Blue Book File #63. This report can be found in the August 7, 1947 issue of the Spokane, Washington, Spokesman Review, p.1.
83. Boise, Idaho. 29 July 47, (AP).
84. Blue Book File #73.
85. Blue Book File #70.
86. Coming of the Saucers, p.137. Most of the historical UFO reports in this book were contributed by author-researcher Harold T. Wilkins. This book has an impressive photographic section which includes the following UFO pictures:
 - A reproduction of the front page of the Toronto, Canada, Globe and Mail which shows an alleged saucer trailing yellow vapor. Date given is September 14, 1947. Quality of reproduction: poor. Page 170.
 - The photo taken by a Boise, Idaho, resident Charles Shangle on August 13, 1947. A luminous object high in the sky that showed up on film as a faint gray dot. Quality of reproduction: very poor. Page 171.
 - Al Hixenbaugh's famous photo showing two broad streams, or vapor trails, that appeared over Louisville, Ky., on July 7, 1947. Quality of reproduction: good. Page 174.
 - An interesting picture showing a formation of four round, white things passing over Morristown, N.J. at 10 a.m. on July 10, 1947. The picture was taken by John H. Janssen. Quality of reproduction: good. Page 174.
 - Something that showed up as a dark lens-shape when the negative was developed, which may be of interest since the person who handled the camera, Robert W. Kirk, claims that the object in question was "transparent like glass," and seemed to be twenty feet in diameter. Since the distance to the object

- was unknown, the size estimate was only a very rough guess. (The reader is referred to the July 10, 1947, Newfoundland case and the words of J.E. Woodruff used to describe his UFO: "A translucent disc-like wheel.") Quality of reproduction: good. Page 176.
- The "first" saucer picture, a snapshot by Yeoman Frank Ryman showing a white, round, object over Seattle, Washington, on July 4, 1947. Quality of reproduction: good. Page 181.
 - The two William A. Rhodes photos taken on July 10, 1947, at Phoenix, Arizona. Quality of reproduction: good. Page 164.
 - More UFO photos are reproduced but they are either undated or deal with incidents in another time period.
 - Other photos of interest included: John E. Ostrom of Nissa, Oregon, pointing to the welt-like dent in the top of his truck cab after his vehicle was hit by a "silver ball" on July 30, 1947. Page 168.
 - Two photos taken by William Bowman of the bridge that spanned the Salmon River in Oregon that mysteriously caught fire on July 24, 1947. Pages 188-189.
87. Clipping in Air Force Blue Book Files—no reference given.
 88. "UFO Related Information from the FBI Files," Maccabee, APRO Bulletin, November 1977, Mailer 2.
 89. Ibid.
 90. Randsburg Times, Randsburg, California, 7 August 47, p.1.
 91. Roseburg, Oregon, 7 August 47.
 92. Blue Book File #54.
 93. Blue Book File #58.
 94. San Francisco Chronicle, 9 August 47, p.6.
 95. Blue Book File #58, "Letter: Harold D. Johnson T/4 Signal Corps, CIC, Bethel, Alaska to CO, Alaska Communication System 550 Federal Office Building, Seattle, Washington, 5 August 47.
 96. Blue Book File #67.
 97. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, APRO Bulletin, December 1977, Mailer 2.
 98. Ibid.
 99. Blue Book File #67.
 100. Ibid.
 101. Letter to the Air Force, 8 December 1966, St. Louis, Missouri. Name of correspondent deleted. Air Force Files.
 102. Blue Book File #75.
 103. Ibid.
 104. "Flying Saucer Reported Flashing Down Canyon at 1,000 Miles Per Hour: Two Others Are Seen," by John Brosman, Twin Falls, Idaho, Times-News, 15 August 47, p.1. Drawing of saucer by Vic Goertzen of the Times-News staff.
 105. "Snake River Canyon Sighting," by Thomas M. Olsen, The Encyclopedia of UFOs, Edited by Ronald Story, a Double Dolphin Book, Garden City, N.Y., 1980, pp.337-338.
 106. Blue Book File #75.
 107. Ibid. (The scientific advisor was J. Allen Hynek.)
 108. Twin Falls, Idaho, Times-News, 15 August 47, p.1.
 109. Ibid.

110. Coming of the Saucers, pp.188-189.
111. Ibid., p. 168.
112. "Gallup Poll," by George Gallup, Director, American Institute of Public Opinion, Princeton, N.J., 15 August 47.
113. Letter to ATIC, 17 June 47, by observer Richard Eaton. Air Force Files.
114. Blue Book File #64.
115. Blue Book File #135.
116. Blue Book File #65.
117. Seattle, Washington, 30 August 47 (UP).
118. Statement filed by---(deleted) Communications Officer of Holloman AFB, Alamogordo, New Mexico, Operations & Projects, Electronic & Atmospheric Division, 3-4 June, 1948. Supplement to trip report to Watson Labs, 3-4 June 48, p.2, by James C. Beam, Lt. Col., USAF Project Officer Tech. Intel. Director. Blue Book Files.
119. Blue Book File #51.
120. Blue Book File #58.
121. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, APRO Bulletin, December 1977, p.6. Document filed: 19 September 47.
122. Ibid.
123. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, The Mufon UFO Journal, December 1977, #121, Part III, p.11, Document filed: 25 September 47.
124. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, The UFO Investigator, December 1977, Part II, p.4.
125. Blue Book File #62.
126. Blue Book File #59.
127. Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects, Edward U. Condon, Project Director, Bantam Books, New York, N.Y., 1969, pp. 894-895. Further references will be listed as the Condon Report.
128. Ibid.
129. "UFO Related Information from the FBI File," Maccabee, APRO Bulletin, December 1977, Mailer 2.
130. Ibid., pp.6-7.
131. Ibid., p.7.
132. Letter: To Commanding General, Air Defense Command, Mitchel Field, N.Y., from Colonel W.R. Sweeley, Asst. Chief of Staff, A-2, Headquarters, Second Air Force, Fort Crook, Neb., 16 July 47. Blue Book Files.
133. FBI letter dated: 16 July 47. The letter originated from Seattle, Washington. Blue Book Files.
134. Letter: To Commanding General, AAF Washington 25, D.C., from Headquarters ADC, Mitchel Field, N.Y., Colonel R.H. Smith. Dated: 23 July 47. Blue Book Files.
135. Blue Book File #71.
136. Listed on Blue Book Project 10073 file card. No case number given but has a number notation: 7-3712-4. Blue Book Files.
137. El Paso, Tex. 13 October 47 (AP), and 16 October 47 (AP).
138. Teletype message, Air Command Teletype Network. To: Commanding Officer, Alamogordo Army Air Field, Alamogordo, New Mexico, ATTN: Col. Paul F. Helmick. From: W.R. Clingerman, Colonel, Air Corps Chief, Analysis Division Intelligence (T-2). Date 14 October 47. Blue Book Files.

139. Teletype message. To: C.G. AMC Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. ATTN: TSNAD, ANALYSIS DIV T-2. From: Helmick CO AAFLD Alamogordo, N.M. Dated: 15 October 47. Blue Book Files.
140. War Department Classified Message Center. To: Chief of Staff US Army, Washington, D.C. From: COMGEMARMYFOUR, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Dated: 15 October 47. Blue Book Files.
141. El Paso, Tex. 16 October 47 (AP).
142. "A Sinuous Photographic Meteor Trail," by Carl August Bauer, Popular Astronomy, Vol.IV, No.6, June 1947, p.1.
143. Blue Book File #34.
144. "Project Saucer to Project Grudge," by George D. Fawcett, Flying Saucers, September 1963, pp.12-13.
145. Blue Book File #31.
146. Letter: To: Chief of Staff, U.S.A.F., Washington 25, D.C., Office Director of Intelligence, Lt. Colonel Garrett, Jr. From: H.M. McCoy, Colonel, Air Corps, Chief of Intelligence. Dated: 18 November 47. Blue Book Files.
147. "The Achondritic Shower of February 18, 1948," by Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Journal of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, September, 1948.
148. Blue Book File #35.
149. Ibid.
150. "The Mystery of the Flying Disks," by the Editors, Fate, Vol.1, Spring 1948, pp.27-28.
151. Flying Saucers on the Attack, Harold T. Wilkins, 1954, Citadel Press, New York, pp.84-85.
152. Letter: From H.M. McCoy, Colonel, USAF, Chief of Intelligence. To: Chief of Staff, USAF Washington 25, D.C. ATTN: Office Director of Intelligence, Lt. Colonel George Garrett, Jr., 18 November 47. Blue Book Files.
153. Letter: From: H.M. McCoy, Colonel USAF Chief of Intelligence. To: Chief of Staff, USAF Washington 25, D.C. ATTN: Office Director of Intelligence, Lt. Colonel George Garrett, Jr., 24 November 47. Blue Book Files.
154. "Greek Scientist Backs UFO-Connected Blackout Theory," The A.P.R.O. Bulletin, March-April, 1967, p.9 (originally a statement to the annual conference of the Greek Astronautical Society).
155. Coming of the Saucers, p.132.
156. Intelligence Report: "Luminous Object," date recorded: 25 March 48. Blue Book Files.
157. "The Mystery of the Flying Disks," Fate, Vol.I, #1, Spring 1948, pp.27-28.
158. (AP) 22 December 47.
159. New York Times, 27 December 47, p.28.
160. "What You Can Believe About Flying Saucers," by Sidney Shallet, The Saturday Evening Post, April 30, 1949, pp.137-138.
161. "Raymond A. Palmer," by Daniel Cohen, The Encyclopedia of UFOs, p.259.

162. The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, by Edward J. Ruppelt, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1956, pp.46-47.
163. Ref: Information from Major Jesse Marcel USAAF(Ret.) via telephone interview 2/79 (Stanton Friedman files).
164. Letter: To: William Moore from Jesse Marcel, 18 April 79 (Stanton Friedman files).
165. "Transcript of Interviews," Jesse Marcel, pp.32-34, May, 1979. (William Moore Files).
166. Ibid.
167. Letter: Jesse A. Marcel to William Moore, 18 April 79 (Stanton Friedman Files).
168. The Roswell Incident, by Charles Berlitz & William Moore, 1980, Grosset & Dunlap, New York, p.41.
169. Personal interview between the author and Brad Sparks, 24 December 80 (photocopy of document in Brad Sparks' files).
170. The Dallas Morning News, 9 July 47, p.2.
171. Ibid., p.1.
172. Roswell Incident, pp.28-29 (Roswell [New Mexico] Daily Record).
173. Ibid., pp.29-30 (Roswell [New Mexico] Daily Record).
174. "UFO Battles the Air Force Couldn't Cover Up," by Ann Slate and Stanton T. Friedman, Saga's UFO Report, Winter, 1974, p.60.
175. Personal interview between the author and Stanton Friedman, 6 April 80.
176. The Roswell Incident, p.42.
177. Ibid., p.88.

UFOs: A HISTORY

1948, JANUARY - JULY

A minor catalogue of UFO reports, and a few notations on various unofficial inquiries by individuals and privately funded organizations, as well as commentary on military investigations and governmental policies.

by

Loren E. Gross

Copyright © 1980

Fremont, California

1948: January - July

On New Year's Day, 1948, a New York Times editorial conceded that a review of the previous year called for a comment or two about the weird phenomenon that had become known as "flying saucers," a mess that meant a double gulp of aspirin for the military.

Referring to a Dr. C. C. Wylie's address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science a few days earlier, the Times found itself agreeing with the professor's sentiments that the confused conditions that prevailed during the previous summer were apparently due to the laxity of government agencies. The Times editorial expressed a prejudice in favor of the idea that the "saucers" were simply ordinary objects or natural processes erroneously perceived and warned authorities to handle future sightings more promptly and efficiently. This criticism was tempered, however, by a rather confident feeling that the "saucers" were now old stuff, the Times deploring any hint that the "problem" might somehow survive its apparent death, the corpse given a faint pulse by a smattering of "fanciful literature."¹

The great New York paper would have been shocked if it could have foreseen the tidal wave of "fanciful literature" just over the publishing horizon. The first real ripple was the maiden issue of a magazine titled Fate that had just gone to press and was due to hit the newsstand early in the spring, a publishing event that would be the vanguard of many more magazines, books, television shows, and even motion pictures, that would excite, puzzle, inform, and too often misinform, persons the world over, and accompanying the increase in fame would be the growth of intrigue concerning the official investigation of the strange aerial objects.

The numerous inquiries made by Air Force Intelligence during 1947 had been conducted under increasing difficulties. The skills of the military experts relied on known technology and could not cope with anything that could perform like the reported flying discs. Official investigative actions pertaining to the saucer matter limped along in a condition of "organized confusion."² Moreover, uncertainty about the European "ghost rockets" (a mystery apparently a close kin to the saucer riddle) and the phenomenon's possible relationship with a potential Russia threat, were depths of strangeness that continued to bemuse penetration as more such "missile" activity was reported. On January 3rd a brief message from Finland about a fiery object in the sky over that country produced this snippet by U.S. Air Force evaluators:

"Information given here is not sufficient to establish even vague identification.

"The object seen could have been a fireball, although the length of time of observation seems unduly long. Perhaps this is subject to considerable error?"³

The actual report follows. The unusual grammar is characteristic of official teletype messages:

"Helsinki press 10th January reports observation of light phenomena vicinity Vaasa 3rd January. A brightly shining object with long tail moved west to east visible for 30 seconds. Another shining object seen Pietarsaari 5th January observed 10 seconds from north to south. Eyewitnesses state flames were ejected and grey streaks left in sky."⁴

The American military had these additional comments:

"Finnish press now using term flying saucer reference light phenomena. Last report was 20th December in Utsjoki northern Finland near Norwegian border.

"Evaluation press reports impossible however press claims many witnesses. May be revival of another series of alleged flying phenomena."^{5*}

On a national level the UFO subject had not received a significant treatment in the American press since July of 1947, which was a good thing with military Intelligence in disarray over the mystery, however, abruptly the saucers were news again in a big way. Even the New York Times, with its branding of the aerial platters as ludicrous delusions only a week old, ran the news story on the saucer's reappearance under the sensational headline: PILOT KILLED IN PURSUIT OF FLYING SAUCER.

For an incident that had the experts puffing their cigarettes with chain-frequency, it had an innocent beginning.

Four P-51s of the Kentucky National Guard had been grounded at Marietta Army Air Base in Georgia on December 30, 1947. A week later some Kentucky Guardsmen volunteered to fly the four fighters back to their home base at Standiford Air Field in northern Kentucky. The leader of this ferry mission was a Captain Mantell who filed a visual flight plan for the trip north and about midday January 7, 1948, took off from Marietta in his Mustang warplane leading three other similar fighters. The flight of four P-51s formed up into two pairs and took up a northern course. The flight planned to maintain a low 4,000 foot altitude for the entire trip so nothing was done about the oxygen supply aboard the aircraft. Captain Mantell's wingman was a Lt. Hendricks. Close by were the other two P-51s piloted by a Lt. Clements and a Lt. Hammond. Support personnel returning to Standiford left Marietta Army Air Base shortly thereafter in a slow C-47 transport that had airlifted all the Guardsmen to Georgia the previous afternoon.⁶

At 4:15 CST the support personnel arrived at Standiford Field and were startled to learn that three of the P-51s in the ferry mission had not yet landed. Instead the aircraft were engaged in a chase of a strange object in the sky above the southwest

*The reader is referred to the author's booklet: The Mystery of the Ghost Rockets.

horizon. That's all the airmen knew until 5:00 p.m. when Major Doyle of the Air National Guard unit received a phone call from Standiford Operations. The Major was stunned to find out that Captain Mantell was dead!⁷

Just before Captain Mantell's flight crossed the Kentucky/Tennessee State line, a UFO alert had electrified the Blue Grass State. The Indianapolis News described the commotion thusly: "Dozens of persons on the ground in the area of Madisonville, Ky., had been telephoning police to report seeing a circular object hovering overhead and giving off a brilliant red glow."⁸ Civilians had notified the Kentucky State Police at 1:00 CST to report something odd soaring over Elizabethtown, Ky. Some ten minutes later phone calls from more excited witnesses came in from places like Lexington which suggested a high altitude for the UFO due to the widely scattered points reporting sightings at approximately the same time.

State police contacted military police at Fort Knox to tell them an "unusual aircraft or object, circular in appearance and over 250 feet in diameter," was speeding through the air on a westward course at a "pretty good clip" just south of the military installation. The MPs dialed the orderly room of Godman Field, Fort Knox's airstrip, to inform the commanding officer there, Colonel Hix. The clock on the wall showed 1:20 p.m. when the phone rang in Godman Tower. Chief Control Tower operator T/Sgt. Blackwell answered. A Sgt. Cook of Colonel Hix's office was on the line and he told Sgt. Blackwell about the UFO and requested a check with Flight Test Operations at Wright Field, Ohio, to determine if there was anything experimental in the air that might correlate with the reported aerial object. When contacted, a Captain Hooper at Flight Test Operations replied in the negative, saying that the only thing in the region they had was a conventional aircraft on photomissions, however Flight Service did provide Sgt. Blackwell with more UFO reports from cities west of Fort Knox, Irvington and Owensboro, that matched the previously mentioned sightings in regards to size and appearance.

About 15 minutes to two o'clock, Sgt. Blackwell caught sight of something in the Southern heavens and turned to the other man on in the tower, PFC S. Oliver, to ask for confirmation. Private Oliver saw it, whatever it was, but could not believe his eyes. Sgt. Blackwell urged a closer look. The Private did and became convinced he wasn't imagining things. The two enlisted men then summoned their Detachment Commander, 1st. Lt. Orner, who was working in a ground level office. Lt. Orner was just finishing discussing the UFO in question with Kentucky State Police when Sgt. Blackwell called, so the Lieutenant didn't have to be asked twice to go and take a peek at the sky enigma. Lt. Orner went quickly to the tower and peered to the southwest where there was a "small white object" apparently stationary in the sky. Using field glasses, Lt. Orner was still unable to tell if the object was generating its own light or reflecting it. Of the image, he said: "...it partially

appeared as a parachute does with the bright sun shining on the top of the silk, but there also seemed to be red light around the lower portion of it."⁹

Downstairs at the traffic desk was the Operations Officer, a Captain Carter, who heard Lt. Orner excitedly announce over the teletalk box at 2:07 p.m. that more observers were needed in the tower. Captain Carter rushed upstairs and took his turn with the field glasses. The commotion also attracted a Mr. Duesler and a Lt. Col. E. G. Wood. The two joined the others already in the tower. This was at about 2:20 p.m.

Captain Carter said of the object: "...it appeared round and whiter than the clouds that passed in front of it and it could be seen thru circus clouds." PFC Oliver remembered that there was speculation over what the sky object could be. To him the thing appeared like: "...an ice cream cone topped with red."¹⁰

Since no one could come up with an adequate explanation, it was finally decided that the Commanding Officer of the Air Base should be summoned. The CO, Colonel Hix, quickly arrived and took a look for himself. He would say:

"It was very white and looked like an umbrella. I thought it was a celestial body. I can't account for the fact it didn't move. I just don't know what it was. It appeared about $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the full moon and white in color. Thru the binoculars it appeared to have a red border at the bottom at times, a red border at the top at times. It remained stationary, seemingly for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours."¹¹

At this time those in the tower heard Captain Mantell's four plane flight roar pass Godman Field on its way to nearby Standiford. Captain Mantell had switched from the radio channel his wingmates were using, which was "C" channel, over to "B" channel, so he could contact Standiford Tower for landing instructions. At that moment Godman Tower's radio was open to "B" channel and Mantell's voice boomed out of the loudspeaker. Colonel Hix and the others stopped their scanning of the southern horizon to listen.

Captain Carter suggested that the passing P-51s be asked to investigate the UFO. No one offered any objections, so Sgt. Blackwell grabbed the radio mike and began to talk to Mantell, telling the National Guard aviator about the strange target to the south and requesting an aerial check on it if the P-51s had the fuel. Mantell replied: "Roger I have the gas and I will take a look if you give me the correct heading and any information you have on locating it."¹²

Although Mantell was agreeable to a little side trip after the humdrum flight up from Georgia, his wingman, Lt. Hendricks, was very low on fuel and begged to be excused so he could land at Standiford as scheduled. Permission was granted and Lt. Hendricks broke off from the formation.

As for the other two pilots, they were unaware of what was happening. Lt. Clemments could see his flight leader's lips moving but had heard nothing of what Captain Mantell had said over "B" channel, and was still ignorant as Sgt. Blackwell gave Mantell a course heading of 210 degrees. Capt. Mantell banked to the southwest and "poured on the coal," with his two bewildered wingmates, Lt. Clements and a Lt. Hammond, lagging behind. Immediately Mantell started a sharp spiraling climb at 14,000 feet to zoom straight and steep on a 220 degree heading.

About 2:45 p.m. Mantell radioed Godman Tower that he had spotted the UFO ahead of him and above, so that more climbing was necessary. One of the other pilots broke into Mantell's radio transmission to ask: "What the Hell are we looking for?"¹³ As the trio of fighters gained altitude, the air began to thin out. Either Clements or Hammond, official records do not identify which, was overhead on the airwaves to say: "This is 15,000 feet. Let's level out."¹⁴ Instead Mantell stepped on the gas, maintaining a climb heavenward at 360 miles per hour while radioing Godman Tower that: "The object is directly ahead and above me now moving about half my speed or approximately 180 miles per hour."¹⁵ Godman Tower could hardly make out the dark specs of the P-51s and Lt. Col. E. G. Wood noticed that the UFO seemed to be at least a tenth the size of the full moon, a huge thing compared to the shrinking dots of the P-51s approaching it.

Mantell now felt he was no longer closing on the UFO to his reckoning. He radioed his opinion that the: "...the object was going up and forward as fast as he was... (and that he was) going to 20,000 feet and if no closer would abandon the chase."¹⁶ Those are the last words uttered by Mantell heard by personnel in the tower that can be found in Air Force files. Captain Carter is the reputed listener.

Mantell's radio transmissions were being piped north by Godman Field to various Air Force Commands, an unusual procedure. Many Air Force personnel eavesdropped on the excited voices, which at times were mixed in an incoherent babble. Some said they discerned: "I'm closing in on the object. It's gigantic and it's metallic."¹⁷

Another radio transmission rarely quoted and of uncertain origin states that Mantell said the UFO would "rest" and then put on a "burst of speed." This enabled the UFO to stay ahead of his straining P-51. If true, it would explain why Mantell kept attempting to close the distance since he was being "lured" on ever upward.¹⁸

Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond grew very concerned. They looked down and recognized the city of Bowling Green which indicated the extent their little side trip was assuming. Passing 22,500 feet altitude the pilots found breathing very difficult. Lt. Hammond just happened to be equipped with an oxygen mask because he preferred the mask radio mike to a throat mike, however there was little oxygen in the system. Lt. Clements, like Mantell, had no oxygen at all and 20,000 feet was the danger limit for flying without breathable air. Lt. Clements urged an end to the pursuit.

Mantell answered back, asking that they chance a climb to 25,000 feet, there level off for 10 minutes, and only then start down. This didn't sit well with Lt. Clements who, with Lt. Hammond in agreement, nosed back down when they reached 23,000 feet. Mantell said something but his transmission was garbled indicating that brain numbing anoxia (lack of oxygen in the blood) may have already started to take its toll of the flight leader's judgment. As Lt. Clements dived, he glanced back at Mantell's P-51 still climbing at full power toward a shiny spot in the sky near the sun.

As Lt. Hammond and Lt. Clements approached Godman Tower at 3:20 p.m. on their way back, they radioed that the UFO: "... appeared like the reflection of sunlight on an airplane canopy."¹⁹ The four to midnight Control Tower crew began to arrive at this time and swing shift supervisor, Captain A. T. Jehli, was briefed that a "disc," or balloon, or some sort of strange object, witnessed by many personnel, including the CO, Colonel Hix, was being hunted down by military aircraft.

Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond landed at Standiford where the former refueled and took on supply of oxygen, lifting off again at 4:05 p.m. Setting his P-51 on the original 210 degree course, he requested the latest information from Godman and was informed that the base weather station theodolite had lost track of the mysterious UFO behind some clouds. Zooming to 33,000 feet, Lt. Clements raced southwest for a 100 miles trying over and over to raise Mantell on the radio. Reaching the Bowling Green area he contacted Godman Tower and reported no visual confirmation of anything strange in the atmosphere. There was no sign of Mantell's aircraft either. What had happened to Mantell?

A Mr. W. C. Mayos, living on Lake Spring Road outside Franklin, Ky., heard an odd roaring at 3:15 p.m. that sounded like an aircraft engine under great stress. He put his head back and gazed up into the azure where he saw a P-51 circling in a lazy fashion. The plane was so high he could hardly make it out. One expert would later surmise that Mantell had blacked out, and was close to death having succumbed to suffocation. On the ground, Mr. Mayos watched in fascination as Mantell's plane faltered, slipping into a dive, the aircraft doing a slow rotation on the way down. At full throttle the P-51 gained more and more velocity in its earthward plunge. The scream of the dive increased as the pursuit craft's speed approached the sound barrier. About half way to the ground the stress was too much as the P-51 tore apart with a loud boom. The tail section and one wing ripped free.

A Mrs. C. Phillips, a resident of a farmhouse just outside the city of Franklin, bolted from her chair in her living room and rushed to the window at the sound of the explosion. She watched in horror as a big mass of metal slammed to earth just 200 yards away.

Witnesses dragged Mantell's body from the wreck. The pilot's shattered wrist watch had jammed to a stop at 3:18 p.m. Patrolman J. Walker of the Franklin Police Department rushed to the scene and took charge.

It took over an hour for word of Mantell's fate to reach Standiford Field, at which time news of the tragedy was relayed to Maxwell Flight Service and the rest of Mantell's unit. Air Force investigators immediately arranged for a flight to Bowling Green where, when they arrived, a State highway patrol car whisked them to the crash site five miles southwest of Franklin. Witnesses were rounded up and questioned while their memories were still fresh. It was now 6:15 p.m. At this stage there was no way of knowing if Mantell had met death by accident or by a hostile act. Was Mantell "shot down?"

A Lt. Col. J. F. Brady who drew up the report on the Mantell crash leaked a little emotion in an otherwise straight-laced summary with the following line: "So much for the accident-- now hold on to your hat!"²⁰ What he was referring to were some events reported just after the crash at Franklin. About 230 miles northeast of the site of Mantell's wrecked plane and some 150 miles northeast of Godman Field, two other UFO incidents were to cause some excitement that evening.

Near Wilmington, Ohio, is the Clinton County Air Base. At 7:35 p.m., on January 7th, the same day as the Mantell UFO chase, a S/Sgt. J. P. Haag was walking near the Clinton Control Tower when he became aware of an unfamiliar point of light in the southwest. He checked the weather and noted a low velocity southwest wind was blowing. The sky to the southwest was overcast, but right overhead it was clear of clouds. He guessed the overcast height at 5,000 feet and the cloud layer some 1,000 feet thick. Seen with the naked eye the puzzling light appeared to be about five miles away and between 15,000 to 20,000 feet high. It looked to be stationary and appeared to be casting off a crimson glow that resembled a plane on fire. This possibility sent him scurrying to the control tower. Upon reaching the control room, atop the tower, he used field glasses to take a better look at the red light. A careful observation convinced him the phenomenon was not a comet or a meteor; furthermore, the light was now "dancing," an odd straight up and down motion that occurred some three to four times. A color change from red to green, when the thing moved, was also discernible. After it stopped "bouncing" the light sped to the southwest on a course of 210 degrees. It was screened momentarily by clouds but the phenomenon could still be discerned since the rays of light it threw off were strong enough to penetrate the overcast. It paused a few moments on its way to the southwest and then it fled quickly over the horizon at 7:55 p.m. No sound was heard.

A Cpl. J. H. Hudson, on duty in the control tower, also watched with binoculars and in a signed affidavit detailed his own version of the UFO's appearance and motion. He estimated, for example, the UFO's nearest approach at four miles and stated that the UFO was white in color when first sighted, but soon changed to a red hue. No shape was discernible until the UFO suddenly dropped down, at which time it assumed a cone-shape with the point-end down. The dimensions of the object appeared to be some 40 X 100 feet. When it ascended, the UFO reversed its position to a point-end up, or "pyramid" configuration. The shifts of position left

a green mist trailing behind. The whole UFO seemed to have a glowing aura of burning light. There was no argument among the witnesses as to the fast elevator-type motion of the UFO. One witness compared the sight to a flare being violently tossed about by a thermal air current. When compared to the stars, there was a decided difference, the object brighter and of a distant hue.

T/Sgt. Le Roy Ziegler on duty in the tower basically agreed with the other witnesses calling the UFO a "circular thing, bright and star-like, only bigger than a star."²¹ Not sure of its exact size, he still felt it to be very large. He said he noticed red and yellow colors. Surprised at the motion he said that it: "... seemed to go up and down and side to side at what seemed to be very great speed."²² He also saw a faint exhaust trail which was visible only when the UFO was moving.

Since 4:35 p.m. news of the Mantell crash had flashed over the communications network in the Kentucky/Ohio region. Control tower personnel all over were eavesdropping on official exchanges of information about the disaster. At 7:45 p.m. Patterson Operations was on the air to Olmstead Flight Service discussing the Mantell case when two air traffic observers at Lockbourne Tower at Columbus, Ohio, to the southwest of Clinton, interrupted to say that something strange had appeared near their airbase and had just left the area. Godman Tower, wide awake after the events of the afternoon, heard that remark and intervened itself over the interphone to announce they now had visual contact with something too.

The Lockbourne story:

A R. L. Stirr spotted what he thought to be an emergency flare to the southwest seemingly hovering over the Lockbourne Power Plant. The light also caught the eye of a civilian technician by the name of Boudreaux at about 7:15 p.m. It seemed odd and Boudreaux observed it carefully for 15 minutes. The thing left "bluish streaks" to one side and briefly vanished while an aircraft had landed. The VHF/DF operator at the end of the one runway saw the thing too and listed its first appearance as 7:25 p.m. Prior to its departure, the thing was noticed to have dropped very close to the ground at a local geographical feature known as Commercial Point, hovering there for about ten seconds and then shooting skyward back to its original altitude where it leveled off and became obscured by some clouds in the overcast, but not before taking up a heading of 120 degrees as its departure course. The speed of the UFO was estimated to have reached 500 miles per hour. It was as silent as a night hawk. The color of the thing was amber and the glow was so intense it tended to block out the object's profile. An exhaust trail of amber hue was left behind when the UFO moved forward.

Another person who rushed to the Lockbourne Tower was F. Eiseler, an airways operator, an official that kept tabs on the weather and position reports of aircraft. When the light had vanished momentarily and reappeared, Eiseler saw it at its new position some 15 degrees above the horizon in the southwest. It was his opinion that the UFO was outshining any of the stars being equal to a runway light in brilliance. Moreover, he said

he saw the "tail," a thin ruddy red wisp that changed to an amber-yellow at various times. The UFO seemed round and shifted in an elliptical clockwise course. He agreed that it seemed to be five miles away.

All of the Lockbourne observers were mistified because the cloudy overcast prohibited the possibility any celestial body was responsible for the light.²³

Their concern gained credibility when the voice of Air Force Flight #9944 boomed out of the radio speaker at Lockbourne Tower at 7:53 p.m. A C-45 over Columbus, cruising at 5,000 feet, reported something odd. Air Force records state:

"Lt. C. W. Thomas and Lt. Sims were making a regular cross country flight. They reported in to Columbus Airways who asked them if they saw any unusual object in the sky. They could see a large bright light off to the west. They estimated it to be below them, or about 3,000 feet. It seemed stationary. The light was amber and looked like a large star or planet. It was about 15²⁴ miles away from them. The night was dark and overcast."

Helping to add to the strangeness of the episode was a report from another aircraft in the same area which was in the landing pattern for the airstrip. The aircraft in question was piloted by a Captain McGee who told authorities:

"At about 7:25 p.m. on January 7, 1948, I turned to runway 23 for a overhead approach at traffic altitude (1,800 feet). Just prior to break away, I saw a very bright white southwest of the field. I began my 360 degree approach. It struck me that the light was very unusual and it was not on the ground so I looked in its direction again from my base leg position. It appeared the same as though it were about 3,000 feet in the air. While on my approach it flashed on and off again immediately."²⁵

After deplaning Captain McGee went to Lockbourne Operations where he heard of the Eisele and Boudreaux sightings. He then contacted the two men in the tower and was told the light had reappeared after his C-45 had set down. McGee went to the door and looked out. Sure enough the light was there.

Besides the pair of aerial sightings, the most damning testimony to a conventional explanation was that of the previously mentioned A. Pickering, Lockbourne's VHF/DF operator.

His affidavit tells us that the UFO made three 360 degree turns and then glided over to another position where it resumed its circling. Each orbit took half a minute and compassed a couple of miles in diameter. When the UFO shifted to a new position, it left a visible trail that streamed behind approximately five times the object's diameter which was believed to be the size of a C-47 transport. Now a critical element in these accounts is the estimates of distance between the observers and the UFO. Without reference points and not

having the slightest idea of what was being observed, any guesses would be highly inaccurate. This bears heavily on a possible celestial explanation, to say nothing of an aerial flare, a reflection, or an aircraft. Subsequent interviews, long after the dust had settled on this case, tend to resolve the distance question and contribute to the high strangeness of the UFO incident.

Pickering granted an interview in 1977 and dwelled at some length on his experiences that January evening in 1948. He described his duties, one of which was the monitoring of electronic devices in a small shack way out at the end of one of the runways at Lockbourne. He recalled the blackness that night due to the heavy overcast that lay like a dense lid over the airfield some 1,200 feet high, the ebony effect increased by the need to work without interior lighting that would only bleach out the phosphorescence glow of the dials and meters on his VHF/DF equipment. With the limited air traffic that night due to the poor weather, Pickering laid down to rest on a cot and idly gazed up through a skylight at the black swirling vapor of the overcast some 1,000 feet above. Suddenly to his astonishment something huge, round, and a glowing red color, popped through the cloud ceiling almost directly overhead. Instantly he feared a falling, flaming aircraft. Reflexes had him up off the cot at once and fumbling with his radio mike, but Lockbourne Tower was alert and a voice abruptly yelled over the "swank box" the exclamation: "What the Hell is that?"²⁶ Within seconds Pickering realized that no aircraft was in trouble but that something very weird was out there in the darkness. The "thing" hovered, then it began to maneuver in the manner previously described. Pickering watched the show with gooseberry eyes.²⁷

After the fantastic ball made a high speed, six mile circle of the entire airbase, it returned to its original position over the runway where it drifted around awhile and then dipped down touching a grass strip that was a cleared extension of the runway.

When the UFO entered the overcast for a time, Pickering felt it may have wanted to hide from an aircraft that had just arrived in the area.²⁸

Officially it was later suggested that the planet Venus had danced over Columbus that night because: "...it is incredible that it could have been anything else."²⁹

By this time official apprehensions surfaced. Air Force files reveal that investigative agents: "...contacted Olmstead Flight Service Center and gave them all the information available to deliver to the Air Defense Command at Mitchell Field, Hemstead, New York.

"Later we received a call from St. Louis, /Missouri, Tower advising that a great ball of light was passing directly overhead--Scott Tower also verified this."³⁰

"We then received a call from Air Defense Command through Olmstead Flight Center advising us to alert Coffeerville, Kansas

Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, and that they had plotted the object as moving WSW at 250 miles per hour."31

In addition an unofficial source was referred to:

"St. Louis ATC advised of an article printed in the Edwardsville Intelligencer, Edwardsville, Ill., describing an object over the town at 0720 of aluminum appearance without wings or control surfaces which was moving southwest. This object remained visible for about 30 minutes. This article went on to describe the amazement and wondering of the editor regarding this object..."32

The forementioned Lt. Col. Brady who was typing out this document added: "...and you can bet he (the editor) was no more confused than I am at this moment."33

Hopes for an easy solution were slim, it seemed. Any information of possible use was pounced on. An article in the local newspaper about the recent appearance of a comet was given a mention and then discarded. A better lead was provided by the Maxwell Flight Service that learned: "...a Dr. Seyfert, an astronomer at Vanderbilt University, had spotted an object SSE of Nashville, Tennessee, that he identified as a pear-shaped balloon with cables and a basket attached, moving SSE, at a speed of 10 miles per hour at 25,000 feet. This was observed between 1630 and 1645 (4:30 - 4:45)."34

Similarly, a resident of Madisonville, Ky., had contacted Godman AFB to say that he had used an eight inch Finch telescope to inspect a cone-shaped object over the city he estimated was a 100 feet from top to bottom and some 43 feet across, sailing southwest at a slow 10 miles per hour at 20,000 feet altitude. The time was given as 1:10 p.m. (There may have been some confusion with Dr. Seyfert's report.)"35

As it turned out the very first wire story on the incident ignored balloons and leaned toward a planetary rescue of officialdom's peace of mind. According to the Associated Press dispatch dated January 7th, personnel at Godman Field, including the base commander, Colonel Hix, had seen a "UFO," quoting the CO as saying: "It was to the south and near the sun, very white and looked like an umbrella."36 Another quote attributed to an unnamed Army officer stated that the UFO "didn't move."37

Annexed to the story was a statement by a University of Louisville professor, Dr. W. L. Moore, who had made it known38 the planet Venus was near the sun when the UFO was reported.

With so many sightings of a bright light low in the southwest, Venus was a prime candidate. On the other hand, the "cone-shaped" descriptions lend themselves to a balloon explanation but such plastic giants were not well known at the time.

Pickering, like the other witnesses at Clinton, was ordered to Wright-Patterson Air Force Intelligence headquarters for intensive questioning. This happened to Pickering three times. Agents at Dayton asked him questions in relays and often used

tricks to trip him up. Hassles often developed over minor discrepancies and when it was all over, Pickering was warned not to discuss the UFO incident with anyone. Since he was in the Civil Service at the time, he meekly complied with the imposed censorship.³⁹

It goes without saying there was a startling alternative to balloons or comets. Perhaps a super machine had lurched about the heavens that day, ducking in and out of the clouds, a hostile device of a mysterious origin?

The next day a note of caution was evident in a wire service story:

"National Guard Headquarters emphasized, however, that in its opinion there was no connection between the plane's explosion and the flying object it was seeking to investigate.

"Meanwhile, Godman Field Commanding Officer, Col. F. Hix, revealed a group of Louisville scientists will join him in watching the skies for a possible reappearance of the 'flying saucers' reported over Kentucky Wednesday."⁴⁰

And watch they did, for at least six more months when another UFO paid a visit, but that is an August story and will not be discussed here.

Meanwhile, the UFOs popped up elsewhere in a continuing mystery.

Buzz bomb?

A call to the FBI office in Atlanta, Georgia, detailed a "buzz bomb" encounter in the air by an Eastern Air Lines passenger plane, midnight, January 9th, over Acworth, Georgia. The EAL DC-3 en route from St. Louis was droning along an airplane at 3,000 feet when something resembling a concentrated mass of blue flame in a circular shape, except for the top quarter which was flat (i.e., pot-shaped), crossed the airliner's path on a course of about 10 degrees below the horizontal and at a speed of about 400 miles per hour. After crossing in front of the airliner, the "blue flame sputtered and turned immediately earthward...and died altogether." The pilot of the EAL plane, who had wartime experience in England, said the thing may have been a "buzz bomb" like that formerly used by the Germans.⁴¹

The United Press asked: "Flying Saucers Again?" This was in reference to a spectral spectre over Wilmington, Ohio, and then the newsservice threw in some similar news from Youngstown:

"Lt. Col. F. Pierce of the Army Reserves said he saw orange-yellow lights which appeared to converge from the north and the northeast toward the center of an imaginary circle..."⁴²

Profusions of Illusions?

Early in January, a pencil-shaped thing, spewing smoke and sparks like a beautiful fireworks display, bolted straight across the heavens dazzling two witnesses in Danville, Ky.⁴³

Elsewhere a Captain Kenneth Helton and a Captain James Pargoe of Squadron "D" of a unit designated Air Evacuation, Atlantic

Division, Air Transport Command, were at the controls of a transport aircraft flying over Hartford, Connecticut, on January 11th when in broad daylight they witnessed the passage of a strange object diving down through the atmosphere at a 45 degree angle. Although the thing flashed by at a high velocity, the pilots said they made out a red colored, disc-shaped craft with a blue tinted central portion. No vapor trail was noticed.⁴⁴

Northern Denmark experienced "visitations" on January 19th when objects immersed in halos of blue light that tapered off into green wakes soared over Hjørring, Hjørrup. Some witnesses termed the phenomenon rocket-like in appearance. While under observation one of the mystery objects came to a halt and then suddenly exploded.⁴⁵

An Air Force comment, evidently written much later in 1948 when unexplained "aerial flares" appeared in the skies of the U.S. southwest, stated:

"There is nothing in the meager description of this incident that precludes the possibility of the objects being meteors. The description would also allow for their being rockets. However, the explosion of the objects favors the meteoric hypothesis.

"It might be well to note the similarity of this and other Scandinavian reports of the 'green flash' objects reported from New Mexico."⁴⁶

"Green flash" objects over New Mexico???

Project Sign became completely activated January 22nd.⁴⁷ If there was any inclination to jump to conclusions in the months ahead, it would be hampered by a planned compartmentalization. An official spokesman admitted later:

"All told, at one time or another, some two hundred people were engaged on Project Sign. It was agreed among them that they would not pool their ideas. 'We didn't want them influencing each other...(because) we had enough suggestibility on our hands as it was.'"⁴⁸

This resurgence of official activity produced a directive on February 4th from Air Defense Command, Mitchel Air Force Base, New York, to FBI headquarters in Washington, which read:

"Investigations will be coordinated with the FBI office concerned in accordance with instructions contained in letter, this headquarters, D 333.3 Ex, subject, 'Cooperation of FBI with AAF on Investigation of Flying Disc Incidents,' 3 Sept. 1947."⁴⁹

The Liaison desk at the FBI manned by Special Agent S. Wesley Reynolds put through a call to Lt. Col. C. P. Martin of Air Force Intelligence to remind the military Hoover wanted no part of the saucer business.⁵⁰ Col. Martin was apologetic and explained: "...apparently the Air Defense Command at Mitchel Field was not aware of the fact that the Bureau was no longer conducting investigations regarding flying discs."⁵¹

January 21st the Danish newspaper Aftenbladet reported a sighting made by three farmhands near Vejle of a high speed silvery thing that zipped overhead only 600 feet high. No

other verification of the low altitude sweep was forecoming. The American military attache, Colonel Earl C. Ewert, forwarded this evidence of continued European UFO activity to the Pentagon.⁵²

Further word from Europe caused more than coffee-cup commentary at Air Force Intelligence, although the data did not arrive through official channels, but in a rather mundane way--a newspaper clipping:

"ROUEN, France, Jan. 29--(UP) Police said today they were investigating peasants' reports that mysterious white balls of light, airplane flights and descents by parachutes had been seen in the neighborhood of Rouen."⁵³

A. C. Loedding, the technical expert at Air Force Intelligence, immediately dispatched instructions to military agents in France asking:

- "(1) What were the exact purposes of the parachute descents? State number of personnel involved and equipment carried.
- "(2) What type parachutes were used? Obtain design and construction details.
- "(3) What type aircraft were used? Troop, transport, etc.
- "(4) What caused the 'mysterious white balls of light?'
 (a.) Is there any information connecting this incident with the flying discs? If so, state the exact location, date, time, weather, number, shape, color, and size. Any photographs or sketches should also be furnished, along with information regarding any sound, exhaust trail or effect on the clouds that were observed."⁵⁴

Meanwhile, with the UFO in the Mantell case only provisionally identified as Venus, other saucer shenanigans in the region delayed the Air Force's recovery of its composure.

Three weeks after Mantell's death, on February 1st, a metallic looking disc some 60 feet across and generating a bright orange glare, was supposed to have been seen hovering over a farmhouse just outside Circleville, Ohio.⁵⁵

The saucer situation up to February 17th was the pursuit of an elusive "super airplane" or a "step rocket." Air Force Intelligence evaluation teams consisted just of engineers even though they were authorized to enlist aid from other sources. Edward Ruppelt once clarified this point a bit:

"...the primary function of the Air Technical Intelligence Center is not, as some people believe, analyzing the UFO mystery. It is charged with the prevention of technological surprise by a foreign country. It studies all the data it can get on enemy aircraft, guided missiles, and technological advances on anything that flies. It got the saucer project because the one thing that every observer agreed on was--the things flew."⁵⁶

There seemed no pressing reason to call in scientists to help at this time. It was true there had been reports of some odd "meteors" but they were very liberally interpreted as natural phenomenon. The flying saucers were thought of as something of a conventional missile or aircraft within the understanding of the military experts. This comfortable arrangement didn't last.

The heavens torn asunder, panic in the hen house, and a "crack-pot" letter.

February 18, 1948:

The Earth hung securely on strands of attraction and counter-attraction in its stellar region. The sun shone down upon the green terrestrial orb as it had done for eons. A pleasant panoply of blue hung over the American midwest, the inhabitants going about their business with a sense of security with expectations of yet another commonplace day. And then out of the whirlpools of darkness that fills the infinitudes, it came.

BOOOOOM!

The concussion terrified residents in a wide area. Many fled their homes as windows shattered. Throughout six states, buildings swayed and the ground shook. A vast blue-tinted cloud billowed out 35 miles above in the upper atmosphere. The editor of the Weekly Norton News at Norton, Kansas, at first thought a gas station on the corner had blown up. Numerous small detonations rumbled about the heavens after the initial violence just like a thunderclap. Stunned people stood in the streets of communities like Norton and stared up at an evil-looking vapor trail twisting over upon itself in crooked spirals high in the atmosphere. Airfields sent search planes aloft believing that an airliner had exploded in their vicinity. Near Norton and Norcatur, Kansas, close to the actual point of the aerial blast, a pair of Army B-29 bombers circled in the sky until sundown while country roads leading to the area filled with autos carrying the curious as rumors of a major catastrophe spread rapidly. A frightened few were very vocal about their fears that the "flying saucers" were responsible for the sky blast as they gazed at the B-29s flying orbits around the lingering cloud of smoke.⁵⁷

Since no meteor fragments were immediately discovered, the tremendous explosion came under suspicion. The military took instant interest in the aerial spectacle and sought testimony from various witnesses. Most gave meteor-like details, however, some accounts were quite odd. One man living east of Norton said that just prior to the big blast: "...he heard something roaring in the sky to the west of him, far away and very high... (and) that it resembled a rocket traveling northeast toward Norton."⁵⁸ Similarly, another person at the time that was 14 miles east of Norton, testified that he was:

"...riding his horse in a pasture, when he heard something queer, a sound coming from the sky. Looking up to the southwest, he saw what appeared to be a rocket

(emphasis the Air Force), just like he had seen during the war in Europe. It startled him, and he jumped off the horse. He then remounted, watched its course, almost on a level but losing altitude a little, and then it exploded with a big cloud of smoke, apparently over Norton, from where he was, south of Prairie View..."⁵⁹

An additional note related that an: "eastern Kansas newspaper carried a story about six days ago of one just like this (above mentioned object), coming from the south to the vicinity of Iola, Kansas, where it turned west and disappeared into the sky."⁶⁰

The next story is simply fantastic:

"My name is...(deleted), and I live on a farm 14 miles west of Stockton and 1 mile north, off US 24.

"On February 18 at about 5 p.m., I was standing near my hogpen about 100' east of my house, when I heard the pheasants raising a disturbance and the chickens all rushed to the henhouse. I looked around toward the house to see what was causing it and saw something hovering just above the house. I ran toward the house, and it then lowered over the north end of the house, and settled toward the ground. I was then very near it, approximately six feet, when it stopped about level with my face, and just wobbled around for an instant, fire belching out of it and sucking back in. The thing was about 4 feet long, shaped something like a funnel. There was a pipe sticking right at my belly. Suddenly there was a lot of sparks showering from it, and the fire increased as if a fuse might have lighted, and it took off in a northwesterly direction very fast, gaining altitude as it went. My wife heard it leave and ran out where it stood, and we watched it go, leaving a trail of smoke all the way. Suddenly there was a great cloud of smoke in the sky, not more than 40 seconds after it left my yard, and in a second or more, we heard an explosion. I then stepped off from my house to where it had been, and it was five steps. Yes, it was hot, I could feel the heat from it. Had I not been washing my car prior to the occurrence, wetting the ground, there would have been a bare spot in the yard where the thing started up because there was a great rush of fire from it when it left. It must have been quite high when it exploded."⁶⁰

Aside from the forementioned astonishing story, at the outset it was clear the Air Force was dealing with something from the very depths of space, as far as the majority of accounts indicated, since the mushroom of smoke had been calculated to have had been at a height of 30 to 35 miles.

On February 20th an individual living in Pueblo, Colorado, composed a long letter to the U.S. Army Chief of Staff in Washington, whose office in turn forwarded the missive to Wright-Patterson for consideration. Oddly enough the fellow's ideas got a hearing. His fundamental assertion was that the Norcatur object was anomalous. He then proceeded to build a series of suppositions.

In the first postulation he dwelled on what he reckoned to be an odd peculiarity. Apparently military Intelligence shared a somewhat similar feeling, otherwise the ramblings of this layman would no doubt be found preserved in Air Force files for that period. This missive from Pueblo read:

"A sketch-diagram of the earth and moon's orbit reveals a peculiarity in connection with the object's appearance, which may be significant.

"If a line is stricken at right-angles across the meridional position of the site of explosion of this meteor at the hour angle four o'clock local time and this line be considered the west-to-east course of the object, then it will be seen that if this line is continued outward into space toward the orbit of the moon it will intersect the lunar orbit at a place near to where the moon would be at from 80 to one hundred hours after the explosion took place."62

At this point he makes his sensational suggestion:

"If this thing is a rocket of some kind headed for the moon, it might first have been seen as a streak of smoke, then later as a ball of fire, and lastly as a tremendous explosion when it at last reached sufficient speed and elevation for take-off.

"The writer has in mind the various and unexplained reports on 'flying saucers,' and bases this speculation upon a long consideration of various oddments of reports whose significance might be of space-craft from other worlds of space."63

As an example he pointed out the "rigid formation" of the famous meteor passage of February 1913 over the northeastern part of the United States, a series of star-like dots that sailed majestically through the heavens like, as some described it, "an airplane race." With that case in mind, he proposed yet another scheme:

"If a line is projected backwards along this line of flight it will be seen that this line 'comes out' at the position of the moon at the time. The 1913 phenomenon occurred in the mid-period of a series of reports on dirigible aircraft of appearance like zeppelins which were seen over England and whose appearance terminated--or reports on the appearances stopped--just prior to the inferior conjunction of Venus of April 24, 1913."64

More of his moon ship mullings:

"This is of course speculation. But has anyone yet explained the 'flying discs' in terms of all the pretty-well proven facts in connection with them? I submit that the Army needs men who are capable of recognizing the anomalies beforementioned when they occur, even if only to aid in speculation regarding them."65

Oddly enough the "moon-ship" idea could conceivably explain some otherwise strange sightings. The experts may have actually asked themselves whether or not mysterious craft were making round trips from the moon to the earth and back, dipping into the earth's atmosphere for awhile and returning to their home port. There had been reports of inexplicable "ghost rockets" accompanied by explosions over Scandinavia during the summer and fall of 1946, and again early in 1947. Now, a year later, more such activity was being reported. During the week of February 25 - 26th, enigmatic activity took place in the skies of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Air Force Intelligence said of the European phenomena:

"Information given here is too limited for any conclusions to be drawn. The stated heights, the occurrence at the same time each night, and their specific direction makes explanations of the objects as meteors unlikely. The green tails are also not characteristic of typical meteors, but would fit into a description of rockets or flares."⁶⁶

More specifically, the Air Force experts stated:

"Some of the data on the case reads that the 'flying missiles,' emitting a green flame but leaving no trace in the sky, have been reported recently over Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, coming from the direction of Peenemunde, generally at 2130 hours, at altitudes ranging from tree-top level to 20,000 feet, at an estimated speed of one to two miles per second."⁶⁷

Edward Ruppelt, whose writings on the UFO mystery are widely considered authoritative, named the UFO encounter in the night sky over Alabama on July 24, 1948, as one of the all-time classic cases and leads up the episode by referring to a UFO flap in Europe early in 1948. However, he avoided dwelling on European sightings of mysterious rocket-like objects, and instead chose to emphasize European reports of strange "balls of fire" in the air.⁶⁸ Yet, the lone available reference in the English language press makes no mention of fiery "balls" but uses the term "rocket" instead. In the London Times it was announced:

"Scandinavian visitors to this country report that rockets have recently been seen traveling at very high speed over Sweden, Norway, Denmark and coastal waters, coming from the direction of Peenemunde, the German experimental centre where V-1 flying bombs and V-2 rockets were developed. Peenemunde is now in the Russian zone. The missiles are almost invariably seen at 9:30 a.m.

"The rockets have been seen at various heights, ranging from just over the tree tops to 25,000 feet. They emit a bluish-green flame, but unlike the V-2 rockets--leave no trail in the sky. Their speed is estimated at between two and three kilometers a second, equivalent to about 4,500 to 6,750 m.p.h. Observers say that their trajectory appears to follow the curvature of the earth's surface.

"Such missiles have been noticed three times in recent weeks by pilots of D.N.L., the Norwegian Air Lines. One

was seen a few days ago off Skagen, the most northerly point of Denmark, by the pilot of a D.N.L. aircraft, Captain A. Harvedt, president of the Norwegian airline pilot's association, who during the war served with the Royal Norwegian Air Force from British bases. He and his co-pilot noticed a missile flying at between 20,000 and 22,000 feet. They timed it with a stop watch, it disappeared over the horizon in four seconds. Peenemunde is on the Baltic coast of Germany, about 60 miles northwest of Stettin and 25 miles northwest of Swinemunde, opposite Rugen Island."⁶⁹

Within a week, on March 1st, further information arrived from overseas, this time through official channels:

"An ONL plane en route from Aalberg, Denmark, to Oslo, Norway, sighted a projectile coming from the southeast, passing along the Swedish Coast and disappearing over Norway. The missile was at 20,000 feet and disappeared over the horizon in four seconds. It emitted a bluish-green flame but left no trail in the sky. The projectile seemed to follow the earth's surface.

"Similar missiles have been observed at Hjuken and Finge, Norway.

"In this connection, it is interest to know that heavy water is currently being produced in Hjuken."⁷⁰

The military experts penned:

"The description given here is entirely too fragmentary for any conclusions to be drawn. The object sighted could have been a meteor, a rocket, or a guided missile. The fact that it left no trail in the sky argues against its having been a meteor."⁷¹

Another story, that may or may not have had a bearing on the mystery, was contained in an official summary late in February. It read:

"A British European Airways Plane, flying from London to Lisbon, was hit in the air by a 'fireball' which hit the nose of the aircraft, shook it violently, and made a hole in the elevator."⁷²

What about Europe anyway? So far relatively untouched by the aerial controversy compared to America, hardly a word was heard from that side of the Atlantic. An exception could be found in an English journal.

"Brain Trust."

At a meeting of the British Interplanetary Society on March 5, 1948, a series of questions were put to some members of the Society of superior reputation dubbed the "Brain Trust." One of the posers went: "What are the views of the Brain Trust on flying saucers?" Supposedly the answers given represent the most informed opinion in the British Isles at the time. Of the five members of the "Trust," three chose to answer. Briefly put, Ovenden, B. Sc., F.R.A.S., warned that it was unwise to be dogmatic and that some reports may have a concrete basis, although

he personally leaned toward physio-psychological delusions. R.A. Smith, another illustrious member of the Society, gave the longest reply, which said in part: "I prefer to keep an open mind on matters where I do not have sufficient evidence to form an opinion..." He, however, conceded the possibility that the saucers could be "reconnaissance tenders" of visitors from deep space which he understood to be the proper course of action for a Martian general. He found the greatest favor, none the less, with the idea that the sky furor was simply a "silly-season" journalism antic. The name most Americans would recognize, Arthur C. Clarke, gave the third and last comment. For some reason many of the biggest names in science fiction, for which Clarke is world famous, have always been adamantly anti-saucer and Clarke is no exception. In this instance Clarke expressed an unqualified preference for the mass-suggestion theory illustrated so aptly by H. Cantril's classic study of the 1938 Orson Wells "Invasion from Mars" broadcast, for he saw as a prime anti-saucer argument the apparent fact that 90 percent of the flying objects were being reported over America and not over the rest of the planet, an unlikely condition for an alien visitation.⁷³

The question of distribution was compounded by an odd frequency on occasion. A March 5th case at Bakersfield, California, illustrates this. Military experts commented:

"While this report taken alone, with allowances made for subjective reporting, could be considered as applying to a disintegrating meteorite, the occurrence of at least three very similar incidents at the same location, over a time interval of a few days, is sufficient to make this hypothesis completely untenable.

"The description applies more closely to the 'star shell' (a projectile which after disintegration emits a parachute to bring instruments safely to the ground), with which this investigation was familiar during the war, than to anything else."⁷⁴

By March 13, 1948, military Intelligence sought advice from a scientific authority after having reached an impasse using only engineering expertise. It was something of a milestone.

Major Melvin Faulk interviewed the Secretary of the National Meteoritical Society, Oscar B. Monnig, and zeroed in on the sky explosion of February 18, 1948. The Major broached the subject using the words "supposed meteorite" since as yet no evidence in the way of recovered fragments existed to the military's knowledge. Mr. Monnig examined photographs of the fireball's dust cloud and read eyewitness accounts. This evidence was sufficient to convince him that a meteor was responsible for the aerial blast. To explain his stand, he described the fiction-heating process, air pressures involved, and the gases that produced the atmospheric explosion. As for fallen particles, or meteorites, he related how to calculate impact ellipses which depended on the inclination of the meteor's flight path. That nothing had been recovered so far did not surprise him since the residue of such a fall, he said, usually consisted of silicates the size of stones on the order of just a few ounces.

Major Faulk made a note recommending the acquisition of known photographs of meteor trails so Project SIGN would have some reference material for future comparative purposes. Before terminating the interview, Mr. Monnig:

"...quoted the book, 'The Book of the Damned' by Charles Fort as an interesting collection of unexplained aerial phenomena. He said that the incidents are authentic, but that Mr. Fort's conclusions and interpretations are fantastic."⁷⁵

Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Director of the Institute of Meteorites, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, was contacted on March 30th concerning the "crackpot" moon rocket letter received by the military late in February. The person forwarding the mis-sive to La Paz was the Deputy Executive Director of the Committee on Geophysical Sciences, Research and Development Board. Excerpts of La Paz's comments are part of the Air Force's investigative files. They are summarized here.

The University of New Mexico professor termed certain aspects of the letter as fantastic, as one would expect, based as they were on untrustworthy newspaper accounts, however, he allowed that perhaps one percent of the flying saucer reports may be "real." The fireball procession of 1913 he identified as a rare but not unknown type of meteor fall. That creatures from Venus, and/or the Moon, were invading, he refused to take seriously and doubted any others of his profession would do so either. He then agreed with Monnig that the exceptionally large sky blast of February 18th would in due time be proven to be a conventional meteor event, although admitting that the rocket hypothesis had the support of three control tower men at McCook Field in Nebraska that perceived the fireball as: "...a black object with an extremely bright jet of flame pouring out of the rear."⁷⁶

As for the Stockton, Kansas farmer* who had rubbed his eyes in disbelief when he (allegedly) came face-to-face with a "flying funnel" that belched fire and frightened his chickens, La Paz remarked: "A determined effort is under way to check up on --- (name deleted) veracity (and sanity!)." Confessing that he had not personally talked with the farmer, La Paz related the impressions of a colleague that had done so and had considered the farmer sincere and very badly frightened by the experience.

La Paz wrapped up his opinions with: "While I still cling to the meteorite hypothesis (concerning a number of extraordinary falls in the previous few years), it is clear that which ever alternative is the right one, the situation cries aloud for thorough investigation."⁷⁷

*An uncensored document elsewhere in Air Force files names this witness as a "Norman G. Markham." There is also a "Norman G. Markham" listed as a Fortean Society member who authored speculations about alien spaceships visiting the Earth and apparently lived somewhere in mid-America since he corresponded with Texas newspapers quite often.

The official creation of Project SIGN must have been welcome by Air Force investigators even though it was only funded at a mere \$34,000,⁷⁸ for it came just in time to help head off adverse public reactions to the Air Force's handling of the UFO problem.

Outside the offices of Air Force Intelligence the first few speculations since the Summer of 1947 from civilian sources appeared. UFO speculations would prove to be potent literary material for every kind of book, magazine, or tabloid. A good start was a short piece in Sir magazine by Fortean Vincent H. Gaddis, a specialist in offbeat topics who submitted an essay to the publication which was printed in the March 1948 issue under the title: "Apparitions of the Atomic Age." Gaddis, a writer-investigator who eventually was termed an able and conscientious disciple of the famous UFO pioneer Charles Fort by Fort's biographer Damon Knight, felt compelled to bring to the American public the subject of the sightings of strange "burning plane" type meteors seen over the nation during the 1940's, the weird foo fighters that stalked Allied aircraft during the war, the ghost rockets reported in the skies over Scandinavia in 1946, and accounts of a night flying "ghost plane" that baffled England in the early Spring of 1947. He suggested that all these different riddles were blood brothers. In his summation Gaddis penned:

"All conceivable explanations are startling. If secret flying bombs and rockets experimentation is taking place, we are experiencing a minor preview of what will occur in the next great conflict; if mass hallucination or hysteria is responsible, we see reflected in these visions the universal fear and worry that lies like a heavy, dark cloud over the people of earth.

"And if the final report of the Swedish government, as well as numerous American observations are correct, then we are witnessing an unprecedented shower of visitors from the vast void beyond--meteors that are novel and refuse to obey the known laws of celestial mechanics."⁷⁹

From major articles it wasn't long until whole issues of various periodicals were given over to the UFO subject, like the Spring of 1948 issue of Fate magazine. Oriented toward what the editors considered the strange and the unknown, the first issue of the periodical splashed the flying saucer mystery over its front cover. Ray Palmer had joined forces with a Curtis Fuller to start Fate after departing the publishers of Amazing Stories, Ziff-Davis.⁸⁰

Here, in this first issue of Fate, was a complete rundown on the Kenneth Arnold sighting, a fairly reasonable analysis of experimental aircraft that might explain the sky riddle, and a discussion of the mystery's implications.⁸¹ It marked the beginning of a heated and enduring debate that would quickly gain notoriety on a deserving scale.

Another article in the same issue written by the editors strongly suggested the possibility that excessive official censorship existed although not much evidence of that could be gathered at this point.

Fate's treatment of the mystery was fleshed out with a 30 page account of UFO sightings made during the Summer and Fall of 1947.⁸²

Yet another assessment of the UFO problem came from a tiny group based in southern California headed by a Mr. Meade Layne,* that called itself the "Borderland Science Research Associates." As small as it was, the band had nonetheless done some limited data gathering and interpreting portending much bigger efforts by civilian organizations. Findings by some of BSRA's members were made public in the early part of 1948, although the publishing was such a limited affair such material would be collector items if found today. In June 1948, BSRA published a booklet titled: "The Mystery of the Flying Disks." Also, in certain 1948 issues of the group's newsletter, Round Robin, there were articles like: "A Study of Aerial Phenomena" by a Vaughn Green, and "A Graph of Disk Flights" by a Max Freedom Long.

A more substantial group, the Fortean Society, with its nationally distributed newsstand magazine Doubt, could have had some impact on public opinion if it hadn't been for its editor, Tiffany Thayer. As editor of Doubt, a publication devoted to the unexplained and the criticism of conservative thought, Thayer should have considered the saucer mystery just his cup of tea, yet he took a dim view of the aerial fuss. He was besieged with mail from the readers of Doubt about saucers but early on Thayer had become enamored with some speculation that blamed the UFO business on the Pentagon, the so-called mystery just an invention of some generals. Anti-war, anti-Pentagon, and "anti" a lot of things, the idea that "the powers that be" were trying to put something over on the American public was an idea that suited him fine. He admitted, nevertheless, that many credible people were on the list of saucer sighters, thus at various times he gave grudging notice to some strange incident. His readers carried the ball from there, showering him with letters proposing an array of theories. To stem the tide, Thayer decreed that the Fortean Society would not take sides and conduct no crusade, in short, would pay little heed to the excitement. It was, perhaps, an unfortunate decision because a freewheeling debate on UFOs within the pages of Doubt might have turned up some interesting information during an otherwise little-covered period of UFO history. Only occasionally would Thayer relent and make brief acknowledgments that the UFO story continued to make news. Late in June, for example, eastern Texas was visited by "phantom lights" in the sky and Thayer would give the readers of Doubt little more than that in the way of detail.⁸³

The Forteans could have taken advantage of the first signs of public unrest. An irate reader of the Oakland (California) Tribune wrote the editor of that paper to complain about the lack of follow-up on such mysterious phenomena as the huge sky blast of February. The writer surmised that the UFO situation must be: "...so grave that 'hush! hush!' had been applied to it."⁸⁴

*Meade Layne, founder and first director of the organization with its journal Round Robin, set up the group in 1945. A Riley Crabb assumed directorship of "BSRA" on June 1, 1959, when Layne became ill. Layne died on May 12, 1961, at the age of 78.

This concern was understandable for little of anything remotely substantial had appeared in the press, radio, or other sources. The prestige of the military was at one of its historic highs just after World War II, however, so generally it was thought that the UFO problem could be no more than a mere thorn in the side of the Pentagon. What slight comment there was available in national publications was tiny indeed. Coronet magazine in its February 1948 issue carried a small contribution to UFO awareness with its article: "Mystery Stories of the Sky," by Joseph A. Murphy, an essay devoted primarily to reports of strange lights and aircraft over the United States between 1908 to 1910. So diminutive was the article and so dated the material, its influence on the public could not have been anything but ineffectual. On the other hand, sensational UFO events in large doses would prove heady stuff but much of the more important information remained hidden from public view being contained in confidential official reports, messages, and letters, exchanged between military and government agencies.

The Haunting of Holloman (continued):

Right in the middle of the Air Force's meteor musing, sky ghosts appeared over Holloman AFB, New Mexico, the 5th of April, which drew attention to the U.S. Southwest. Word had been received of unexplained objects at an altitude of 200 miles above Holloman! Here was a breed of UFO that merited measurements by a meteor yardstick. Two of Wright Field's top people left for New Mexico immediately. They were Lt. Col. James C. Beam and civilian technical advisor/investigator Alfred C. Loedding. A teletype message was flashed on ahead by Col. Clingerman of ATIC to alert Col. Paul Helmick, Commanding Officer of Holloman, that representatives of the Air Force's Project SIGN were on the way by military air because: "Mr. Zabriski of this HQ indicated that Dr. J. W. Peoples of the Watson laboratories has information that would be of vital importance to the Intelligence department."⁸⁵

After their arrival at Holloman, Col. Beam and Mr. Loedding learned that Professor Peoples had been transferred to Maxwell AFB at Montgomery, Alabama. The two ATIC representatives had departed Wright Field so quickly word of Peoples' unavailability had not reached them in time to abort the trip, but while at Holloman they did obtain the names of various witnesses to the UFO activity in the New Mexico region before enplaning for a short air hop to Phoenix, Arizona, to fill out the file on the July of 1947 Rhodes saucer photos. At the Rhodes residence in Phoenix, Col. Beam and Mr. Loedding talked with the man to ascertain his sincerity and to examine the fellow's "panoramic Research Laboratory and Observatory." Mr. Rhodes made a good impression personally and the "laboratory" with the fancy name turned out to be a well equipped facility for its size. Was Rhodes on the level?

The three men stood in Rhodes' backyard as the man that had taken the two famous 1947 saucer pics made gestures to describe the exact paths of approach and departure of the flying craft that July afternoon nine months before. Rhodes had the following to incorporate into his original report: "...when the object turned directly away from him, he observed what appeared to be one large opening, or vent across the entire trailing edge."⁸⁶

On a later trip to the Southwest, Col. Beam had a chance to speak with three employees of Watson Laboratories that had done the actual observing of the strange objects over Holloman (Dr. Peoples having been erroneously identified as a witness). The trio had seen something odd but not 200 miles up. The names are deleted from official files but we know that two of the men worked for the Watson Radar Laboratory Section and the remaining one for the Watson Radar in some other capacity. The viewing of the UFOs occurred the afternoon of April 5, 1948, during a search for an experimental balloon. All three men were emphatic that the UFOs were not balloons. Paragraphs listed 3 - 6 in the official document on the case contain the meat of the report:

"Mr. --- (deleted) was the only one of the three who saw two objects. When he first perceived them they were going straight up, then one veered to the right, started down, and was lost to view. Directing his attention to the other object, Mr. --- (deleted) saw it arc into the west at terrific speed and disappear suddenly. Mr. --- (deleted) described the object as being of a golden hue, rather indistinct in outline and possessing somewhat the appearance of a major's insignia, that is, irregularly rounded and slightly concave on top.

"Mr. --- (deleted) saw only one object which was evidently the one that veered to the right and down. He was able to keep it in sight longer than did Mr. --- (deleted) and described its maneuvers as completing a large loop after its downward descent, then soaring upward and disappearing suddenly. To him it appeared gray-white in color, its vaguely defined form giving the appearance of a large object at a great distance.

"Presumably Mr. --- (deleted) saw the object that did not veer to the right. He stated that this object made three vertical loops upon completion of which it disappeared in a large arc to the west at tremendous speed. He admitted that at first glance it seemed to resemble a balloon but in his considered opinion it was definitely not that. He stated that it was absolutely silent on the desert that afternoon and that no audible noise was heard from the object. Neither was any signal nor atmospheric noise heard on the 400-meter receiver to which he was listening at the time. He further stated that the wind at high altitude that day was very calm being only 10 to 15 miles an hour from the west at 65,000 feet. As for analogous size, if the moon were considered the size of an orange, the object would approximate the size of a dime.

"All agreed on the following: the object was very high, moved faster than any known aircraft, possessed a rounded, indistinct form, and disappeared suddenly rather than fading away in the distance. It was definitely not a balloon and apparently not manned judging from the violent maneuvers which were performed at a high rate of speed."87

Although he had not observed the UFOs himself, Dr. Peoples placed great credence in the witnesses and urged the establishment of a radar/optical watch at Holloman in case of repeated appearances of the UFOs, but Col. Beam did not feel the frequency was sufficient enough to set up the required instrumentation and the assignment of personnel. Dr. Peoples promised to keep Wright Field advised of further manifestations and Col. Beam countered with assurances that if UFO reports intensified he would reconsider the professor's suggestions.⁸⁸

Before moving on we should say that the story of something 200 miles high was contained in a statement prepared by an Air Force communication officer which detailed the spectacular claim:

"... the objects seen were not moving at an excessive speed, but rather were motionless at an altitude somewhere in the vicinity of 200 miles. When these were seen on the radar scope of the CPS-4 (Modified) the angle of elevation of the radar antenna was approximately 70 degrees from horizontal.

"During the latter part of August 1947, this organization was carrying on several test runs with a modified SCR-270 at this base. I had released a corner reflector and two balloons and was watching them in flight as they drifted to the southeast from this base. While watching the balloons through a pair of ten-power binoculars, a white object, appearing to be round, came into my field of vision. I followed the object as far as possible, but lost it within seconds after picking it up. The object was traveling at an unprecedented rate of speed and appeared to be several thousand feet over the top of the Sacramento mountain range, traveling in horizontal flight south to north.

"There have been other times when manning the M-2 Optical Tracker, that I have seen round or flat-round objects that were unexplainable."⁸⁹

A follow-up put a damper on things and the Lieutenant's statements took on less of a mysterious aura which probably contributed to Colonel Beam's lack of enthusiasm for a special effort in the area:

"Mr. --- (deleted) of the Radar Laboratory was interviewed on June 4, 1948. His statements do not check very closely with those contained in Lt. --- (deleted) who was one of two observers on a modified CPS 4 Optical Tracking Device. The observations Lt. --- (deleted) reported seeing on this equipment could not be confirmed at any time by the other tracker, Mr. --- (deleted) who passed off the 'ghost pip' he personally observed on the radar equipment as merely the illusion of the equipment. He explained that this 'ghost' did not move, and was possibly the echo from a distant mountain on a side wave of the radar equipment. He also spoke of 'crazing' which is the effect on radar by the white gypsum sand in the area directly west of the Air Base. He also mentioned another form of 'ghost' called 'Angels' which

have been detected and which are believed to be caused by changes in air density. Such phenomena have been observed and reported from Camp Edwards."⁹⁰

Impressive or not, the UFO reports coming out of the New Mexico region would have at least one strong characteristic. They would occur again and again.

Meanwhile, back East things were astir. Indiana State prison had a UFO visitor April 28th, and six more of the rascals were sighted over Homer, Michigan, the same day.⁹¹ But, to back up a bit, something of greater interest erupted some two weeks prior to the forementioned cases.

More and more mystery spindles:

Persons living in Ashley, Ohio, on April 12th, sighted something in the blue sky they described variously as: "... a long cylindrical body like a stick of firewood ... (and) but when the sun was shining on it it looked opalescent like Mother of Pearl."⁹² Another person said it: "... looked like a vertical cylinder, larger at the bottom and narrow at the top with streamers or streaks of vapor attached to it."⁹³ Still another witness remarked: "... it looked to me like a spherical 'blob' with streaks above it. It was white and clearly outlined but it did not look like a balloon."⁹⁴ One witness was a Protestant minister who stated:

"My first reaction was that it was a plane on fire as it seemed to be an object surrounded by a vaporous substance. After studying it for a few seconds, it became clearly outlined and looked like a vertical cylinder, larger at the bottom and narrow at the top with streamers or streaks of vapor attached to it. It gave the appearance of a white cloud but it did not behave like a cloud as it retained its shape and maintained a steady movement on a straight course against the wind."⁹⁵

Finally, a woman in Delaware, Ohio, testified:

"It was very white and there were no shadows on it, and it was so unusual that I called to my husband to come out and see it. It was cylindrical in shape and seemed to have vapor around it at the top. When I first saw it, it appeared to be leaning at an angle and then it seemed to right itself and moved along perpendicular to the ground."⁹⁶

The military evaluation disregarded testimony that the object in question moved against the wind (surface winds at least) and filed this statement: "... one can surmise that there is a strong possibility that the object was nothing more than a short, vertical daytime meteor trail. These trails are known to persist for half an hour or more, and drift with prevailing winds aloft."⁹⁷

Speaking of meteors:

An otherwise routine request to a news service for copies of the February 18th smoke cloud made by Col. W. R. Clingerman, Chief,

Technical Intelligence Division, Wright-Patterson AFB, on April 15th, contains this sentence: "This Command is currently engaged in an intelligence study involving the identification of meteors and meteorites."⁹⁸ Apparently ATIC was taking reports of meteor-like objects very seriously. And while we are on the subject, the first tangible evidence establishing the true nature of the February 18th phenomenon was the discovery of four and one quarter pounds of meteorites which was soon followed with the find of another big batch of space rock weighing 109 pounds in a clover field in Kansas on April 24th. H. H. Nininger had made the first ground surveys that helped to pinpoint the fall area, while Dr. Lincoln La Paz followed up by examining the finds of stony debris.⁹⁹ All this confirmed Dr. Monnig's judgment that the spectacular sky blast had only been a big meteor yet, while this demoted the February episode to an explained UFO case, there continued to be "meteor mysteries."

The Memphis "meteors."

Col. Beam had no sooner returned to Wright Field from his trip to the southwest when the teletype machine at HQ began a nervous rapping. Fort McPherson, Ga., was alerting its Air Force comrades to the passage of mysterious aerial bodies over Memphis, Tennessee:

"The display was described essentially as small shiny star-like objects moving at high altitude in a straight line from west to east with the apparent velocity of shooting stars. Occasionally one would deviate (?!) from its course making sharp angular turns. They seemed to disappear in the distance rather than burn out and disappear suddenly. The witnesses believed they had observed a meteor shower."¹⁰⁰

Estimates given mention the number of objects at between 50 to 60! ¹⁰¹

For once civilian guesses were even more conservative than the military's. While Memphis citizens thought meteors, the Air Force experts sought more advice before jumping to that conclusion. Checks were made with military installations in the region to rule out any mass flights of aircraft. After that, only one possibility seemed logical; the one the folks in Memphis were entertaining.

Typing up his memo on the case later, Col. Beam explained why he stopped in to see a Dr. Paul Heget of the Cincinnati Observatory in Ohio:

"This visit was made in an effort to ascertain the possibility and the probability of individuals sighting meteors during daylight hours with the unaided eye. Dr. Heget stated that such sightings were a very rare occurrence and when it did take place it almost invariably occurred in the afternoon with the observer looking toward the west. This time and position assured the most suitable conditions and the relatively slow speed occasioned by both earth and meteor traveling

in the same direction. The meteor would appear as a dark spot in the sky for a period of two to four seconds. Dr. Heget expressed serious doubt that the 50 or more objects observed 7 May 1948 in Memphis were meteors. He was unable, however, to offer any explanation as to a possible identification of the objects."¹⁰²

Dr. Heget suggested that the Air Force seek the continued cooperation of Dr. Lincoln La Paz because of that expert's outstanding reputation in the study of meteors, moreover the Cincinnati astronomer recommended another scientist the military might find especially valuable.

Enter J. Allen Hynek:

Dr. Heget wanted the Air Force to consult with J. Allen Hynek of Ohio State University who was already conducting photographic studies for the Air Force in an attempt to take pictures of stars during the daylight hours.¹⁰³

Not only would Dr. Hynek be signed to an Air Force Project SIGN contract, he would find himself still laboring on the UFO problem some 20 years later. Once while reminiscing, Dr. Hynek characterized himself as "the innocent bystander that got shot."¹⁰⁴

Redundant Russian rumors and dead dogs in Turkey:

The U.S. Air Force attache in Ankara had a note delivered to him from the Pentagon requesting that he investigate fully, with the help of the Turkish General Staff, the death of a dog in a village near Adapazari. An item in the Istanbul newspaper Yeni Sabah on May 5th told of strange doings in the sky over the countryside:

"There have been reports lately to the effect that shining objects like meteors have been sighted in various parts of the country. Some people suggest that these might be rockets. Information received from authorized circles reveals that such a thing passed over Adapazari and was seen to explode in the air. Parts of it fell into a village nearby and killed a sheep dog. The thing was found to be a rocket and the debris will be inspected by experts.

"Observers say that the rocket which is claimed to have come from the Northwest was flying at an altitude of 200 meters over Adapazari before it fell.

"According to rumors, it is possible that the rocket is connected with the 'flying disc' experiments being conducted by the Russians at the station on Mt. Alagos close to the eastern frontier."¹⁰⁵

Classified "secret" the episode was named the "Adapazari Incident" in an information request to the Air Force Chief of Staff, which asked that inquiries be made concerning rumored: "... experiments by Russians on Mt. Alagos."¹⁰⁶

*Nothing further on these supposed Russian saucer experiments is contained in Air Force records for this period.

On the other hand:

In an Intelligence message from Moscow originating from a source merely designated as "The Friend," and classified: SECRET, was data that had the effect of putting Soviet saucer speculators at sixes and sevens. Was Moscow just as mystified as Washington about UFOs? The date of this message was June 10, 1948. It read:

"MOSCOW, USSR, 'WHILE IN MOSCOW THE FRIEND HAD MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE MOSCOW IZVESTIYA EDITORIAL STAFF, AT WHICH TIME HE HAD LEARNED THAT THE CENTRAL PARTY COMMITTEE IS MAKING A SPECIAL SECRET STUDY OF THE AMERICAN 'FLYING SAUCER' STORY AND THE 'ROCKETS OVER SWEDEN' INCIDENT. SOURCE HAD NOT HEARD OF THE 'FLYING SAUCERS' IN AMERICA AND SO WAS COMPLETELY IN THE DARK AS TO WHAT THE 'SECRET STUDY' MIGHT IMPLY."107

Air Force Intelligence urged the following: "Request AMC continue any followups deemed necessary by headquarters, USAF, regarding followups on Turkish, report will be forwarded to Air Material Command (Classification of these remarks: SECRET.)."108

What the Pentagon didn't know:

"That Incident."

Another strange story from Russia, which reached Western news journals three decades later, tells of a Soviet aircraft--UFO encounter that took place on June 16, 1948, near the Caspian Sea. Russian combat veteran Arkadiy Apraksin was stationed at Kapustin Yar, also near the Caspian, where he put the latest turbo jet fighters through flight tests. He was doing this when at 15,000 feet he caught sight of an "incomprehensible type" of flying object which he described as resembling a "cucumber" with trailing light beams. The thing crossed the sky ignoring Soviet ground station radio warnings to declare its intentions. Apraksin was ordered to attack the intruder. After closing within a few miles, the light beams emanating from the rear portion of the "cucumber" flashed over his plane. At the same time his plane was bathed with the light, all electrical circuits in Apraksin's jet went dead disabling his craft. While the Russian pilot glided to a landing, the UFO was seen arcing upward into a cloud, but things weren't over for Apraksin. He was questioned extensively by experts from the Soviet Air Force Directorate, Ministry of Defense, in regards to "that incident" as the encounter was referred to. During these interrogations, Apraksin said he was shown a report about an identical aerial encounter by another Soviet pilot with an "elongated," or "dirigible-shaped" craft.109

While the Pentagon went in ignorance of Apraksin's ordeal, it did receive word from south-central Europe, specifically a report from the Yugoslav-Greek frontier dated May 7th. Air Force experts noted however: "Information given here is entirely too limited for any conclusions to be drawn. Possibly the object was a meteor."110 It was hard to evaluate events so far from home but there was no lack of interesting reports close at hand.

"Graf Zeppelin:"

Halfway between Westfield and Clare, Indiana, on May 12, 1948, a private pilot found that he was sharing his air space with something unknown but resembling, he said, the "Graf Zeppelin" in appearance, but slightly smaller in size. It had a bright finish and zoomed faster than an airliner.¹¹¹

An "oblong oddity:"

Over Wilmington, North Carolina, May 31st, a woman viewed an "oblong object" emitting smoke and traveling at an "awfully high speed." It came from the direction of Blumhenthol Field at great speed to a point over Cape Fear River where it veered, slowed down, and left in the direction of Wrightville. The CAA discredited suggestions an airplane had been in the area.¹¹²

The Air Force felt inclined to explain the case as a meteor sighting. The reported shape, however, seemed to give the military experts some trouble. They wrote: "The apparent oblong shape might have arisen from persistence of vision of a rapidly traveling bright object. Is there a government testing field for guided missiles near by?"¹¹³

Within two months another such case would occur in this region of America that would excite the nation. At the moment the public had been lulled into a tranquil state by the lack of information.

When the calendar showed June 24th the UFO mystery, or to be more accurate, the expression "flying saucer" had its first birthday. The aviation editor of the Bosie, Idaho, Idaho Statesman, Dave Johnson, demonstrated once again his unflagging curiosity in the aerial enigma by writing an anniversary article.

Another personality one might note was the newsman and radio commentator Frank Edwards who would help blow the UFO story wide open the following year. Edwards was a persuasive showman and had an access to the media that would give him influence far exceeding the value of his personal research and conclusions. Books later authored by Edwards on the UFO subject would achieve best seller ranking. They would be done in a popular writing style which breezed to sensational conclusions, but one has to seriously credit him with generating public concern about the UFO problem over a period of many years when other newsmen looked down their noses at the whole business.

Edwards' personal introduction to the sky mystery came early in 1948 according to his account. He happened to be vacationing in Alaska in January photographing the beauties of nature, and while engaged in such endeavors, he happened to learn from some bush pilots a bizarre story of how they had sighted and chased a strange, wingless, flying spindle. Always curious, it being second nature to a man of his profession, Edwards questioned Alaskan military authorities only to be told that the unusual craft he had sighted must have been something the Pentagon was secretly testing and unknown to the Alaskan command. Much later Edwards admitted he had accepted the explanation that January in 1948 at face value and only after two years had passed was he able to make amends for not checking further into the queer story.¹¹⁴

UFOs and the press circa: June 1948:

Perhaps a single case can be isolated and used to generalize about the press in the country. Project SIGN conducted interviews concerning platter-like things soaring over Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The case boiled down to this:

"At approximately 11:00 p.m. on the 29th of June, --- (deleted) saw a luminous oval-shaped object similar to a meat platter rolling along on its edge. It appeared to be going very fast since it disappeared in about 5 to 10 seconds. It was without sound or odour but seemed to have a tail which extended about a yard or so. Five minutes later, witnesses saw a second object and after another five minute interval a third object was observed. They appeared in the Southwest and flew to the Northeast. The weather was cloudy with lightning and rolling thunder. The objects flew over the Oakland St. area or just to the side of it. They traveled at about 1,000 feet and then disappeared behind the houses across the street from the witnesses."¹⁵⁵

When Air Force investigator Lt. Wallace Shirey appeared at the door of the office of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette asking about the Uniontown sky objects, the editor seemed about as astonished as if one of the famous overgrown manhole covers had flown in the window. The editor, evidently one of those who considered talk about the mystery as more loose than lucid, was attentive when the Lieutenant remarked that cooperation would be appreciated since such investigations cost big hunks of the taxpayers' dough. The head boss of the Post-Gazette made some rough mental computations and came to the conclusion that aviating discs were indeed a very expensive joke if they were not the real McCoy.¹¹⁶

UFOs were being taken very seriously by the military at this juncture. Events were building up to a climax and the next case would have contributed had it been known outside of Finland:

"... a Finnish Army Officer, Major Vaine Perri, and his wife, saw a large cigar-shaped object. The time was between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. local time (mid July 1948) but it was still bright, the sun being just on the horizon. The object passed over the Perris at moderate speed, and was seen to be like a thick cigar with shiny metallic sides and enveloped by a reddish-bluish glow. It was as large as an airliner, but had no wings, and made no noise. It was traveling on a west to east course across 130 - 145 degrees of sky, and remained visible for 25 - 35 seconds."¹¹⁷

Not knowing about the above Finnish episode, the U.S. Air Force nonetheless casted nervous eyes in the direction of Europe. On June 29th Chief of the ATIC's Operations Section, C. A. Griffith, notified the military's representatives in Norway to state: "It

is requested that the employee of the Office, OMA, Oslo, Norway, be interrogated as to the 'falling stars' she observed the night of 13 December 1947."118

Moreover:

"Should any other phenomena be observed the questions itemized could form the nucleus of future reports. Any comments by qualified personnel--particularly from the University of Oslo--both in regard to the incidents of 12 and 13th Dec. and any possible future would prove most helpful."119

Ever since the ghost rocket mystery of 1946 the theory of Russian machinations loomed large, but by mid-1948 the concept had worn pretty thin. A report from Holland in July finally tipped the balance in favor of another consideration.

If Moscow's missiles were cruising around and causing the UFO reports, why would the Kremlin generals pick American airspace, or in the following case, the sky over Holland which was right in the lap of the Western Powers? Certainly Dutch territory was no place for their secret craft to run out of gas or to have engine trouble. It seems that in air over Armheim, The Hague, on July 20, 1948, at 1:30 in the afternoon, two Dutch citizens sighted a strange spindle-like airship. The incident report reads:

"One observer saw an object intermittently through clouds four times. The object had two decks and no wings, was said to be very high, with speed comparable to a V-2."120

Official comment took a negative shading:

"The information given here is too limited even for guess work. It is extremely difficult to take at face value the report of an aircraft with two decks and no wings traveling with supersonic speed, even if 'seen four times through clouds' by the Chief of the Court of Damage and his daughter. It seems much more probable that the observers had a subjective impression of ordinary aircraft or a fireball. Even though these two items are at opposite ends of the scale, there is nothing in the evidence to favor one or the other."121

For the Project SIGN people this latest series of UFO reports was the camel-breaking straw in spite of the skeptical tone of the official solutions to the reports. A communique was dispatched immediately through the RAND organization. The message, designated as Air Force Letter No. 80-10, and dated July 21st, authorized a contractual arrangement for the hiring of scientists to: "... evaluate the remote possibility that some of the observed objects may be space ships or satellite vehicles."122

Ghost Rocket!

It's early morning on July 24, 1948. A DC-3 with 20 passengers aboard drones through the darkness at 5,000 feet altitude. The sky is clear with a bright moon peeking through broken clouds (4/10th coverage) forming a layer 1,000 feet above the cruising airliner. The pilot, Captain Clarence S. Chiles, gazes straight ahead into the blackness. Suddenly he sights what he at first believes to be another aircraft approaching out of the ebony depths. Captain Chiles quickly nudges his co-pilot, John B. Whitted, as he exclaims: "Look, here comes a new Army jet job." The next 5 to 10 seconds, however, were instead like something out of a Halloween eve.

Because of the controversial nature of the forementioned few seconds, the exact statements of both aviators will be reproduced as they are preserved in official records:

Captain Chiles:

"At 2:45 a.m., we were cruising at 5,000 feet when there came what looked like a jet type aircraft to our right and slightly above meeting us. It was a clear moonlit night with the visibility excellent; therefore, we were able to view the ship as it passed for a period of around ten seconds. It was clear, there were no wings present, that it was powered by some jet or other type of power shooting flame from the rear some fifty feet. There were two rows of windows, which indicated an upper and lower deck, from inside these windows, a very bright light was glowing. Underneath the ship there was a blue glow of light.

"After it passed it pulled up into some light broken clouds and was lost from view. There was no prop wash or rough air felt as it passed."123

Captain Whitted:

"I was flying co-pilot for Capt. Chiles on Trip 576 which left Houston, Texas at 8:40 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Friday night July 23, 1948. At 0245 EST, we sighted a strange object coming toward us at a high rate of speed. We were at 5,000 feet and our position was 25 miles southwest of Montgomery, Ala. The strange object had a stream of red fire coming from its tail. I assumed that it was a jet type airplane of the Army or Navy but as it came nearer I could see that it was much larger than any Army or Navy jet that I have ever seen or read about. It passed us on the right side of our DC-3. I estimate its speed in the neighborhood of 700 mph but this is purely a rough estimate. We were holding a compass heading of 50 degrees and the object passed us going in the opposite direction. To me, the object seemed about a half-mile from us, flying straight and level. I could see no wings supporting the object.

"The object was cigar-shaped and seemed to be about a hundred feet in length. The fuselage appeared to be about three times the circumference of a B-29 fuselage.

It had two rows of windows, an upper and a lower. The windows were very large and seemed square. They were white with light which seemed to be caused by some type of combustion. I estimate that we watched the object at least 5 seconds and not more than 10 seconds. We heard no noise nor did we feel any turbulence from the object. It seemed to be at about 5,500 feet (This would put it about half way between the airliner and the layer of broken clouds at 6,000 feet.)."124

After the "thing" had whizzed past, the pilots had the following reaction. Chiles remarked: "After it passed us we must have sat there for five minutes without saying a word, we were so speechless."125

Also, another quote given in the press stated: "The light of the plane (UFO) and its jet flames was so bright it almost gave them 'lightning blindness,' they said, and they had to turn up their instrument panel lights in their cockpit."126

Whitted shattered the silence asking Chiles what sort of eye-popping stratospheric Loch Ness monster was that. Chiles, no less baffled, clicked his mike and tried to explain what had just happened to the Eastern Airlines radio post at Columbus, Ga., requesting that Lawson Field at Fort Benning, Ga., be contacted about a possible experimental aircraft trespassing in commercial airplanes. Within minutes Lawson Field replied that it was ignorant of any such military air traffic. More puzzled than ever, Chiles chatted with Columbus explaining that: "... it looked like some type of rocket ship."127

Whitted later would be quoted as saying: "If you look at one of those fantastic Flash Gordon rocket ships in the funny papers you've got a picture of what we saw."128

After the pilots regained their composure, they left the DC-3's controls and went to the passenger cabin to seek other witnesses, finding only a C. L. Mc Kelvie awake.129 Mc Kelvie later told military Intelligence that: "... the pilots seemed quite excited and they appeared nervous over the episode."130 An Air Force interrogator filed the following report on Mc Kelvie:

"He was occupying the 5th or 6th seat from the front of the plane on the right and would periodically glance out the window. There was a full moon which illuminated the ground and skies and the ground could be clearly seen. Frequently they passed cumulus clouds. On one occasion as he was looking out he observed a sudden streak of light moving in a southeastern direction across the airway above the plane. He wondered if it were lightning but observed the flame moved in a straight line and not in a flare(?). The color was bright flame--he thought it was probably a light cherry red--although the edges were more of a yellow flame. He shifted his position in his seat for better observation, momentarily losing sight of it. Then he saw it again. He estimated the flame

to be about one-half as far above the plane as the plane was above the ground. He saw no physical shape--only a streak of flame moving in a straight line. The whole experience was momentary so that detailed observation was absent. He heard no sound but stated that the vibration of the plane was much greater than normal and that it was not possible to hear any sound from the outside."¹³¹

After landing at Atlanta at 3:49 a.m., the pilots attempted to impress others with the strangeness of their experience, but those who listened remained incredulous. The aviators were emphatic when they said they had observed a machine. They were quoted as stating: "It was a man-made thing all right."¹³² And: "... they were certain it was not a meteor or comet, because they had seen them before in the air."¹³³

Chiles and Whitted checked into Atlanta's Henry Grady Hotel but they got little rest. The two were soon in the radio studio of Atlanta's WCON being interviewed by the station's news director, Lockwood Doty. The next day the city's newspaper, the Atlanta Constitution, splashed a big headline across its front page: "ATLANTA PILOTS REPORT WINGLESS SKY MONSTER." Other newspapers around the country picked up on the story and followed suit.

Reaction was rapid. Response came in from various quarters. A Washington Air Force spokesman remarked: "... obviously this country has no plane resembling a double-decked, jet-propelled, wingless transport shooting a 40-foot flame out of its back end."¹³⁴ Another: "Out at Santa Monica, California, the famous Gen. George C. Kenney, Chief of the Strategic Air Command, was bearded in his den. His eyes twinkled. No, he said, cautiously, it wasn't one of his planes. The Army as yet hasn't got anything like the thing seen over Montgomery. 'I wish we did,' the General said wistfully. 'I sure would have liked to see that thing.'¹³⁵ From a civilian source came this remark: "William M. Allen, President of the Boeing Aircraft Co., up at Seattle. 'I'm pretty sure it wasn't one of our planes,' said Mr. Allen, modestly."¹³⁶

Incredibly, authorities momentarily tried to fall back on an old standby to explain the sky bogey as both the Pentagon and the local Weather Bureau at Maxwell Field at Montgomery, Alabama, were quoted as asserting: "... that the Atlanta pilots had flown past an air radar weather observation balloon. Those things, they explained, are 10 feet in diameter and have square, tinfoil boxes fastened to them. The boxes reflect light and 'give strange illusions' as they twist and turn."¹³⁷

The fact that wasn't:

One aspect that was sure death to the meteor theory was the estimated closeness of the aerial monster. Chiles: "It passed us about 700 feet to our right and about 700 feet above us..."¹³⁸ Whitted: "... within a one half mile."¹³⁹ Unfortunately some early statements offering definite proof of a near brush with the aerial monster which turned up in the first news accounts was later declared false by the two pilots. How or why the

statement came to be is not clear. Early press stories credit Captain Chiles as saying: "As the aircraft (the sky monster) passed them, their DC-3 fluttered in the prop-wash, jet-wash, or rocket-wash. It sent out tremendous shock waves."¹⁴⁰ The subsequent denial of such statements was double checked by the late Dr. James E. McDonald. The denial still stands.^{141*}

The "rocket shock waves" was an aspect seized upon by Donald Keyhoe, an author that used the assertion with great effect in his writings to build up the mystification of the Chiles-Whitted incident as late as 1960.¹⁴² Keyhoe cannot be faulted too severely since the same bit of data was included in an official memorandum released in April 1949, which reads: "... its prop wash or jet wash rocking our DC-3."¹⁴³ The exact words of Capt. Chiles taken down on August 3, 1948, and since preserved in Blue Book files, states: "There was no prop wash or rough air felt as it passed."¹⁴⁴ Whitted: "We heard no noise nor did we feel any turbulence from the object. It seemed to be at about 5500 feet."¹⁴⁵

The final official evaluation resorted to the meteor hypothesis, as did an arch-foe of UFO apparitions, Dr. Donald Menzel, who displayed a rooted aversion to the sensationalism surrounding the Chiles-Whitted episode. Menzel wrote:

"There can be no doubt that Chiles and Whitted misinterpreted the appearance of an unusually brilliant meteor, its body glowing white (the momentarily persisting luminous train of a meteor often has a veined or fibrous structure that could easily have suggested the 'lighted window' and 'cockpit') and blue incandescence (the glowing 'undercarriage') as it rushed through the atmosphere some fifty miles or more away, shooting off flaming gases (the 'exhaust') and vaporizing from the friction of the atmosphere. Flashing beyond their range of vision ('pulling up into the clouds'), it probably burned and disintegrated before it reached the earth."¹⁴⁶

The weakest part of Menzel's explanation is the last point he referred to. Could the departure upward have been an illusion? Chiles was not fuzzy on this as he plainly stated: "After it passed it pulled up into some light broken clouds and was lost from view."¹⁴⁷ Interrogated again on November 2, 1948, Chiles said the object's departure in more precise terms: "Excellent--well coordinated gentle climbing turn into clouds prior to disappearance."¹⁴⁸ To make sure a special sketch was drawn of the object's climb and made part of Air Force records (see the illustration accompanying this text).

More questioning obtained other details not found in the first accounts. Chiles: "... thought it had a 'snout' similar to a radar pole on the front and he had the impression there was a

*Ruppelt states that the DC-3 hit an air pocket immediately after the "sky monster's" pass at the airliner. This writer has not found this mentioned in the official files or newspaper accounts.

cabin with windows above--much like a pilot compartment--except that it appeared brighter he saw no occupant nor did Whitted. Visible from the side only was an intense, fairly dark, blue glow running the entire length of the object beneath the fuselage.¹⁴⁹

Moreover:

"The exhaust was described as a red-orange flame, the lighter color (orange) being predominant about the outer edges. Chiles thought the flame flared out from a nozzle in the rear which he thought he perceived. The flame extended some 30 to 50 feet behind the object and became deeper in intensity (redder) and increased in length as the object pulled up into a cloud."¹⁵⁰

Whitted's version of the exhaust went:

"He saw the 'exhaust' as a parallel wide flame which appeared to come from the entire rear of the object rather than from a nozzle never growing any wider than the width of the object itself, although he noticed the increased length of the flame as the object 'pulled up.'"¹⁵¹

An Air Force officer associated with the Pentagon's UFO investigation in the 1950's revealed:

"According to the old timers at ATIC this report shook them worse than the Mantell incident. This was the first time two reliable sources had been really close enough to anything resembling a UFO to get a good look and live to tell about it."¹⁵²

Before the military investigators could become embroiled over the subtleties of the Chiles-Whitted encounter in the sky, a ground report came to their attention providing some thought-provoking, supporting evidence that enhanced the strangeness of the "sky monster" mystery.

The Robins Air Force Base Incident:

"At 0945, 10 August 1948, Lt. Colonel Cropper, Acting District Commander, 6th District Office of Special Investigations, interrogated Mr. --- (deleted), Robins Air Force Base employee, regarding an aerial phenomena witnessed by --- while on duty at Robins Air Force Base on the night of 23 July 1948. The following is a transcript of this interrogation:

Q. 1. What is your name, age, address, and employment?

A. 1. --- (deleted). I am 23, unmarried, and live at ---, Macon, Georgia. I am a member of the Transient Maintenance Alert Crew on the midnight shift - 2400 to 0800 hours.

Q. 2. Do you recall the date and the time you saw this object?

A. 2. It appeared on Friday night, the 23rd of July 1948, between 0140 and 0150 hours, Eastern Standard Time. I was standing fire guard on a C-47, directly across from Operations, and I had to take down the take-off time which was between 0140 and 0150.

Q. 3. What was the weather condition?

A. 3. Good visibility and no clouds.

Q. 4. Were there any lights around you? Outside lights or beacons?

A. 4. I am not sure whether the flood lights on the hanger were on or off. I was facing the north looking away from any possible lights.

Q. 5. In what direction did you see this object?

A. 5. It was coming out of the north. I was facing the north and actually didn't see it until it got overhead, but it came out of the north and was in my view for about twenty seconds. The last I saw of it the object was taking a southwest course.

Q. 6. Describe in your words what you actually saw from the time it appeared until it disappeared.

A. 6. The first thing I saw was a stream of fire and I was undecided as to what it could be, but as it got overhead, it was a fairly clear outline and appeared to be a cylindrical-shaped object, with a long stream of fire coming out of the tail end. I am sure it would not be a jet since I have observed P-84's in flight at night on two occasions.

Q. 7. Approximately what was the height and altitude of this object?

A. 7. Three thousand feet--it could be lower or higher, at night it is difficult to judge distance.

Q. 8. What was the size and shape in comparison to the trail of fire?

A. 8. The trail of fire was longer than the cylindrical shape of the object.

Q. 9. Was the entire object illuminated? Describe its shape.

A. 9. I noticed a faint glow on the belly of the wingless object--a phosphorescent glow.

Q. 10. Are you familiar with shooting stars?

A. 10. Yes sir. I thought at first it was a shooting star or meteor, but a shooting star falls perpendicular. This object was on a straight and level plane. When it disappeared it disappeared from sight due to distance, than drop.

Q. 11. How did it differ from a shooting star or meteor in size and shape?

A. 11. I have only seen one or two meteors and they appear to be round or more or less ball-shaped and this object was long and cylindrical in shape.

Q. 12. What was the color of the light?

A. 12. It was a trailing faint blue flame.

Q. 13. Was there any moonlight at this time?

A. 13. I didn't pay too much attention to the moonlight. I wouldn't say for sure whether there was a moon.

- Q. 14. Where did the light that illuminated the shape of the object seem to come from?
- A. 14. It looked like it was close to the bottom deck.
- Q. 15. Did it give you the impression that there were windows or holes and did the decks appear to be divided into sections?
- A. 15. I am not sure. It would be hard to tell if there were windows and a divided deck could not be recognized from the ground.
- Q. 16. Did you read the newspaper account of the civilian pilots who saw this strange object about the same time and did the paper's description seem to refer to the object you saw?
- A. 16. I read the write-up about the rate of speed. I don't see how they could tell if it had square or round windows but the description seemed to fit my impressions.
- Q. 17. Was there anyone with you when you saw this object?
- A. 17. No sir. I was standing in front of No. 2 engine and I tried to call the co-pilot's attention to the object in the sky. He had already put his headgear on before I could get his attention and the object was gone.
- Q. 18. With whom did you first discuss this matter?
- A. 18. I called the tower and asked them if they saw it. They didn't.
- Q. 19. What was their reaction regarding this object?
- A. 19. They thought I was drunk or seeing things.
- Q. 20. Were you unusually fatigued at this time?
- A. 20. No sir. I had been merely reading Air Force magazines prior to this time.
- Q. 21. Have you ever had occasion to read much or study Air Force magazines, experiments with guided missiles objects, or similar material?
- A. 21. No sir, only what I could get out of Air Force and Aviation magazines.
- Q. 22. Were you in the Air Force during the war?
- A. 22. Yes sir. I was an Aircraft Engine Mechanic with a rating of Buck Sergeant in the Ninth Air Force.
- Q. 23. Is there anyone else on the Base who saw this particular object that you know of?
- A. 23. No sir.
- Q. 24. What type of construction, color, size, material did this object appear to resemble?
- A. 24. I would say that it looked like it was about the size of a B-29. It might have been a little larger, in circumference. It was too large for a jet. It seemed to be a dark color and constructed of an unknown metallic type material.
- Q. 25. What would you say its speed was in comparison with other types of aircraft?
- A. 25. About seven hundred miles per hour.

- Q. 26. How did you arrive at that estimate?
- A. 26. I have seen P-80 type aircraft flying but this was one of the fastest objects I have ever seen. I saw German V-1's in the Summer of 1944 and they were fast, but this one was even faster. This object was much larger. A V-1 is very small and only made about three hundred miles per hour speed.
- Q. 27. How did it disappear?
- A. 27. Just like an airplane in normal flight fading away from normal vision.
- Q. 28. Was there any sound or odors at the time?
- A. 28. I heard no sound and everything was quiet. No engines were warming up at the time.
- Q. 29. How about the maneuverability and exhaust trail of this object?
- A. 29. It was flying straight and level and took a changing southwest course while in sight.* The flame seemed to be longer, maybe due to the object moving through the air.
- Q. 30. Had you consumed any alcohol in the preceding four or five hours?
- A. 30. No sir. I do not drink.
- Q. 31. Did you ever see any planes in 'Buck Rogers' comics that resembled this object?
- A. 31. Maybe the length and roundness resembled, but as far as the wings, I couldn't tell if this object had any.
- Q. 32. What did you say your educational background and Air Force experience was?
- A. 32. I am a high school graduate and I was in the Air Force for four years.
- Q. 33. How long --- (questions 33 and 34 concerned his personal work record.).
- Q. 35. Is there anything further you would like to add to aid in this evaluation?
- A. 35. Yes sir. During the Battle of the Bulge, a Sergeant and myself were on guard duty and saw something that resembled this object in question. We later found that we had witnessed the launching of a German V-2 rocket. It carried a stream of fire that more or less resembled this object. This object looked like rocket propulsion rather than jet propulsion, but the speed and size was much greater.
- Q. 36. Did the altitude, speed, and size of this object have any similarity to a meteor or shooting star?
- A. 36. No sir.
- Q. 37. What else did you associate your thoughts with when you first saw this object?
- A. 37. It looked like a rocket and was the shape of an XS-1 but it was too large for an XS-1. My final conclusion was

*Note that he claims the object changed course!

- that it was energized by rocket propulsion.
- Q. 38. Were you excited when you told the other people about this object?
- A. 38. No sir. They more or less kidded me about it and I was informed that Flight Service wanted to see me.
- Q. 39. Who did you talk to in Flight Service?
- A. 39. I talked to a man over the interphone system but did not know his name. He wanted to know whether I was a civilian or military and asked me a few questions. I think Flight Service turned it over to Air Defense Command the next morning."153

Military Intelligence observed that both the Chiles-Whitted encounter and the Robins AFB sighting were: "... officially made within a period of time that precludes any chance of impressions being gained from radio or newspaper reports."154

More specifically: "Special Agent Cassidy contacted Capt. H. R. Daniels, Public Information Officer, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, to determine whether or not any publicity releases were given to the reported sightings at Robins Air Force Base. Captain Daniels stated that no press releases were given out on this information at least until ... (August 9th).155 Since the Robins case was an hour before the Chiles-Whitted encounter, conceivably the two pilots could have been inspired by the sighting, but as we have seen there had been no chance of that.

Major General Cabell, Director of Intelligence, AF01, at Wright-Patterson, immediately dispatched a team of investigators to Atlanta; a group made up of Major R. A. Llewellyn, Project SIGN officer, Mr. A. Deyermond, Technical Assistant to Col. Clingerman, Mr. A. C. Loedding, Assistant Deputy for Technical Analysis Division, and Capt. R. J. Groseclose, Security Officer. When they arrived in Atlanta, the team questioned Chiles and Whitted at the Henry Grady Hotel where they obtained signed statements and had the two pilots produce sketches of the object on hotel stationery. Major Llewellyn sought also to have a chat with passenger Clarence McKelvie but didn't catch up with him until July 31st.156

While the military was slowly setting its investigative wheels in motion, popular author R. DeWitt Miller was way ahead of official speculations and already had the ear of a stringer for United Press. A year before during the height of the flying saucer flap (July 8, 1947) Miller had achieved recognition by the press when he proposed a long list of possible explanations for the reported sky phantoms. This time, however, he narrowed the options by, for example, dismissing the idea of an Army experimentation program, or the theory that the thing zooming over Alabama that night was the product: "... of some strange group of super scientists working in a secluded Shangri-La." Instead, Miller thought only of the possibility of something emerging from an unknown dimension, or about something arriving from Mars or somewhere else beyond the Earth.157

As previously indicated, perhaps of even greater importance is what Miller brushed aside as it seems the news media was now inclined to do at the moment. There was no entertaining the illusion, natural phenomenon, or hoax theories.

The composure of the military Intelligence team in Atlanta may have suffered a little July 26th when something swept over Georgia while the Intelligence team was still there and still trying to determine what happened the 23rd and the 24th in the skies at that locality. Official files state:

"This object was observed between 2100 and 2300 hours 26 July 1948 at Chamblee and Augusta, Georgia, by observers --- (names of six witnesses deleted). This object was not thought to be a meteor in that it maneuvered. The glow was described as varied in color but predominantly brilliant blue-white. The course was described as generally 'southern.' Although the dates seem to indicate that this sighting could not be the same as that described in incident #1 (Chiles-Whitted), yet the major portion of this testimony refers to a 'blue white light.' Observations in the first instance describe a 'blue glow' running the entire length of the fuselage. When viewed from the ground it is logical to assume that the blue glow would be mostly visible."¹⁵⁸

The evaluator was attempting here to match this sighting with that of the Chiles-Whitted "sky monster" that was supposed to have had a blue glow along its undersurface, yet another bit of data that increased the strange index of the case.

Additional descriptive information from other witnesses in the Chamblee and Augusta areas mention the phenomena as, for the most part, a football shape with a green light and silvery tail racing along to the southwest in level flight.

If the thing was a meteor it certainly had to be one of the slowest in recorded history. The night editor for the Augusta Chronicle was working on the next day edition of the Chronicle in his office when his nocturnal routine was disturbed July 26th by a series of phone calls beginning at 9:50 p.m. concerning a fiery ball in the heavens. Finally he peeked out his office window and immediately spotted an odd bluish light. Peering closer, this is what he saw:

"The light was sighted southwest and was moving in a southwest direction, bobbing and weaving in flight. It was not traveling in a level plane but seemed to go slightly up and down. The speed was approximately that of an average passenger aircraft. I judged the object's distance from us to be approximately five miles. There was a slight trail following the object which seemed to burn itself out in the course of its flight. The object itself gradually disappeared from sight as a normal aircraft might do in flight. The altitude was approximately 5,000 feet."¹⁵⁹

In a written wrap-up of the case the following paragraph was inserted:

"On 12 August 1948, S/A (Special Agent) Montgomery, 111th CIC Det., contacted personnel at the Atlanta Naval Air Base and adjoining municipality regarding a reported aerial phenomena. It was generally agreed that the phenomena resembled a shooting star, despite

the fact that course and altitude did not correspond to the characteristics of such an aerial phenomena."¹⁶⁰

The origin of the confusion was from accounts like that of the Chief of Communication at the CAA station at Daniel Field who sighted the same phenomena apparently moving to the northwest while he stood on the porch at his home. To him the thing was large, about one-fourth the size of the full moon, a brilliant multi-colored sight trailing burning fragments. He believed it to be a meteor and estimated its speed at 10 - 12,000 miles per hour during the 2 - 3 seconds it was in view.¹⁶¹

One is tempted to accept the above account and write off the report by the Chronicle editor since it seems to come down to making a choice between an expert observer and an untrained layman, but consider the next account by an expert observer named "Avery" at the Atlanta Naval Air Base, Chamblee, Ga. He had been on duty in the base observation tower on July 26th at 10:00 when he spotted a blue-white light: "... the light was very high, traveling very fast, and maintained a uniform altitude and speed. The light looked very much like a shooting star except for the fact that it maintained a uniform altitude."¹⁶²

So far there was nothing intriguing in the testimony and evidently this is all many persons in the Atlanta area observed but it just so happens that "Avery" goes on to say that suddenly: "The light appeared to gain altitude and then turned sharply to the south..."¹⁶³

The July 26th case:

"An attendant at the Atlanta Naval Air Station reported he saw the apparition twice. He said the first time he saw it about 9:00 p.m. near Stone Mountain. The operator, who was asked that his name not be used, said he thought 'it was a falling star' until it started climbing and banked sharply to turn away from the city.

"He said the 'bluish streak of light' was traveling very fast and very high. He added it did not look like any jet plane he has seen in night flight. He saw it again 45 minutes later."¹⁶⁴

Extensive checks of air traffic in the southwest area at the time of the Chiles-Whitted encounter turned up something from an airliner that was cruising an airline to the north of the EAL plane. The time in the report is a guess but if it is any where near correct then it would play havoc with the meteor hypothesis since it indicates that the object in question was traveling at subsonic velocity. Did it take the object some 15 minutes, instead of seconds, to travel from North Carolina to Alabama? The report reads:

"At about 0230 (Chiles-Whitted encountered their object at 0245) --- (deleted) and I (Louis Feldvary), as pilot and Captain on 571/23, saw what I believe was an unusual meteor. It was brighter than any I have seen before, and traveling in a horizontal direction,

slightly above the horizon. I estimate that I saw it for about three seconds before it died out. At no time did it appear to travel in a downward direction. ---- (deleted) and I talked about what we had seen and discussed the fact that a meteor, caused by gravity, could still appear to be traveling horizontally."165

The pilots had just checked with Blackstone, Va., ground station so they said the time is approximate, based as it was on the Blackstone transmission. The document continues:

"At the time of this incident we were traveling between Blackstone, Va., and Greensboro, N.C. The sky was clear and the visibility unlimited. We were on a magnetic heading of 240 degrees and I estimate that the object was on a bearing of about 210 degrees from us (Chiles and Whitted put their object on about 230 degree heading), that is, about 30 degrees to the left of our heading. It appeared to be traveling in a southerly direction, about but close to the horizon."166

The trail, which to the pilots appeared to be a jet or rocket trail, covered an 80 degree to 90 degree arc laterally."167

The initial evaluation of the Chiles-Whitted report stated that of all the strange light sightings in the area during late July, it was:

"The only incident which possessed absolute intelligence significance...(and) it is obvious that this object was not a meteor. There has been no evidence to support any findings of unreliability, nor have there been any major inaccuracies on the part of the witnesses."168

The first conclusion rendered on the case was:

"After extensive investigations and studies; and consideration of all possible approaches and data pertinent to suggest at least one valid hypothesis or explanation to the sighting were exhausted--the incident was appropriately classified as a true 'Unknown.'"169

There exists extensive official comment on the conclusion which may be instructive:

"... there is no astronomical explanation if we accept the report at face value. The sheer improbability of the facts as stated, particularly in the absence of any known aircraft in the vicinity, makes it necessary to see whether any other explanation, even though far fetched, can be considered. The two reliable pilots obviously saw something. If one extracts from their reports parts of the description--'tremendous bursts of flame,' 'cigar-shape,' 'disappeared into a cloud,' 'orange-red flare,' time in sight five to ten seconds,' the explanation could be satisfied by a brilliant, slow-moving meteor. The orange-red flame is particularly suggestive. It is

pertinent also, that the only passenger awake at the time the two pilots sighted the object gave a description that does not tally with that of a 'space ship' but does agree with that of a meteor.

"It will have to be left to the psychologists to tell us whether the immediate trail of a bright meteor could produce the subjective impression of a ship with lighted windows. Considering only the Chiles-Whitted sighting, the hypothesis seems very improbable. However, not included in the summary but mentioned in the voluminous collateral material is the report of a qualified Robins Air Base observer, who stated that he saw a cylindrical object trailing a red flash of fire, but did not discern any windows or a double deck, (admittedly, from the ground he would have had less opportunity to do so). The time of his observation is exactly one hour earlier, if both times are given in EST as is stated. It is interesting to note, however, that Macon, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama, are both on the line of flight as described by the Montgomery observers."170

The same official comment goes on to say:

"If those two sightings refer to the same object, there are two possible interpretations: one is that the object was some type of aircraft, regardless of its bizarre nature. The distance between Macon and Montgomery is approximately 200 miles. From all reports the object was traveling definitely faster than 200 MPH, so would have covered the distance between the two points in much less time than that noted. (The schedule is, if course, correct for an ordinary aircraft.)

"The other possible explanation is that the object was a fireball, in which case it would have covered the distance between the distance from Macon to Montgomery in a matter of a minute or two. If the Montgomery observers had been using daylight savings time (do regular commercial airlines connecting cities using daylight savings time operate on it?), then there would be no discrepancy in the time.

"The conclusion seems to be this: If the difference in time is real, the object was some form of aircraft traveling at 200 MPH. If there is no time difference, the object must have been extraordinary meteor. The observation from two such widely separated points is the focal point of the investigation--if one assumes that the same object was observed in the two cases. That there were two separate objects can most likely be ruled out by the sheer improbability of more than one such extraordinary object being seen on the same night, traveling over the same course, exactly one hour apart."171

The military evaluators also wrote a note on the fiery phenomenon seen near Blackstone, Virginia; although assuming it to be a meteor, these remarks were added:

"It should be noted that this object was traveling in the same direction as the one reported in ... (in the Chiles-Whitted case), although separated by some 400 miles. It is not unusual for a fireball to be seen along a path several hundred miles long. There is a time discrepancy of 15 minutes between the observations, however, any connection between ... (the Chiles-Whitted and the Blackstone, Virginia case), in considering the meteoric hypothesis, necessarily hinges on whether this time difference was real or not."¹⁷²

Thus, it is quite evident military Intelligence was cognizant of the ill-fitting nature of the various eyewitness accounts which were at variance with a meteor answer.

"Triple mystery."

By now it had become clear the military was confronted by a "triple mystery" which was well illustrated by reports made at this time. One was something that would become the "classic" UFO.

High over Pasco, Washington, on July 26th at noontime, a private plane encountered a round, saucer-shaped craft "with a dome," the surface of the object gleaming like brushed aluminum. The most striking aspect of the case was the violent maneuvers the UFO went through, zooming around the sky with wild abandon, climbing and diving at high speeds and occasionally coming to an abrupt stop. It was an airplane designer's dream.¹⁷³

Another enigma was those strange balls that had stumped the military experts since World War II.

One report of a ball-like thing came in from Texas on July 26th when it was reported that a "mystery globe" had hovered over the town of Alice for two whole days. A newspaper clipping of the event reached Fortean Society Secretary Tiffany Thayer who chuckled at the oddment and wisecracked: "Explanation: the Chamber of Commerce wanted visitors."¹⁷⁴

The levity of Thayer was not shared by a concerned part of the Air Force Intelligence team at Wright-Patterson that composed Project SIGN. The third type of UFO prompted the most startling Intelligence document ever written, an "Estimate" drawn up to explain the rocket-like flying objects.

The continuing case for the curious cylinders:

"At 9:15 July 30th, a resident of Worthington, Ohio spied something slowly coming from the direction of the southwest horizon at about 3,000 feet, a fairly low altitude. It remained visible for 15 miles in a sky strewn with scattered clouds. The object appeared to be cylindrical in shape, with no apparent wings or tail surfaces. There were no standard marker lights displayed, and no engine noises. The object did, however, emit a steady silver glow."¹⁷⁵

The military made a strong effort to understand this incident and shot off a telegram to a dirigible company at Lakehurst, New Jersey, where craft of a similar shape were operated. The military said they: "... would appreciate information on operations of your lighter-than-air craft in vicinity of Columbus, Ohio, during the period of 30 July to 3 Aug. 48. Please direct reply govn collect H Q AMC."176

The answer came back negative. The Goodyear people replied that the nearest airship had been in the Chicago area at the time.177

Mr. Loedding of Project SIGN strolled into the office of the Vice-President of Eastern Air Lines July 30th and flashed his military Intelligence credentials, asking for information on EAL's pilots, Chiles and Whitted, and any further data the company could add to the "sky monster" case of July 24th plus a company policy statement concerning UFOs. Before complying with Loedding's request, the executive contacted Eddie Rickenbacker, President of EAL, for an okay. The famous World War I air ace authorized full cooperation with the Air Force.178

No one can guess exactly what went on in the minds of those Air Force evaluators who were burdened with the difficult problem of coming up with an answer to the UFO riddle. The amount of data that had piled up, the pressure from the media, and the bad effect of imposed official silence (that threatened to generate wild theorizing by civilians), no doubt applied an enormous push to those who wished to stay uncommitted to any definite hypothesis. Furthermore, the Chiles-Whitted "sky monster" was, if one accepted the two pilots' testimony without question, a "rocket ship," a machine of some sort. Providing a significant boost to the idea was the other "rocket ship" report from Holland just before the Chiles-Whitted encounter which also mentioned a "double-deck, wingless craft." There seemed to be no way the two pilots could have known about the Dutch sighting. Moreover, there were other UFO reports in Air Force files that told of cigar-shaped objects during the same general time period. The information gathering routine at ATIC continued but some of the experts there were mulling a possible solution to the UFO riddle.

In compliance with the orders of the Director of Intelligence, AFOI, Major General Cabell, Wright Field did an analysis of time, geographical location, and descriptions of the objects sighted in the U.S. Southeast in July. This produced a collated data chart.179 A glance at this chart shows that many of the sightings indicated the same object, or objects very similar in appearance, were responsible for the flurry of strange aerial activity. Had it been just a meteor shower? Many thought not, and they had their reasons.

Moscow mystery.

As fate would have it, at the very moment Air Force Intelligence was studying stories of mystery spindles, an intriguing dispatch arrived at Air Force Intelligence headquarters datelined Moscow:

"MOSCOW, USSR: 'AT ABOUT SUNSET ON 3 AUGUST 1948, ABOUT 25 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF MOSCOW, AN EXPERIENCED AMERICAN NEWSPAPER REPORTER SAW AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT AT A VERY HIGH ALTITUDE. IT WAS LONG AND NARROW AND PROCEEDED AT A GENERALLY SOUTHWEST-NORTHEAST DIRECTION. IT SHONE VERY BRIGHTLY PROBABLY FROM REFLECTED SUNLIGHT. NO WINGS COULD BE SEEN AND NO SOUND WAS HEARD. IT LOOKED LIKE A RIGID AIRSHIP, AND WAS SO IDENTIFIED BY A RUSSIAN ACQUAINTANCE WHO SAW IT AT THE SAME TIME. THE REPORTER, HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE OBJECT, WAS OF THE OPINION THAT IT WAS NOT A RIGID AIRSHIP DUE PRINCIPALLY TO ITS HIGH SPEED. HE HAD NO THEORY TO OFFER, AND COULD ONLY SAY THAT IT WAS A MYSTERY, LIKE THE AMERICAN 'FLYING SAUCERS.'"180

Intelligence experts commented:

"This object might have been anything. Its speed seems insufficient for a guided missile, but it could have been either a jet or conventional airplane, as unusual light conditions and fore-shortening frequently give aircraft a freakish appearance. The possibility that it was a dirigible, as suggested in reference (A), should not be excluded."181

This Russian case did not enhance the idea of a Kremlin secret weapon theory to explain UFOs. Instead a mind boggling Air Force document proposing quite another origin was just then completed and turned over to the High Command.

To be continued in the next book in this series;

UFOs: A HISTORY --1948: August-December

1. New York Times, 1 January 48, Editorial page.
2. The Report On Unidentified Flying Objects, by Edward J. Ruppelt, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1956, p. 46.
3. Blue Book File #99. (Project Blue Book was the Air Force's UFO investigation effort. Officially no more investigating is being done and old UFO reports are on microfilm for public examination.)
4. "Restricted Correspondence." From: USMILATTACHE AMLEGATION, Helsinki, Finland sqd Burrill. To: Dir of Intelligence GSUSA Washington 25 DC, 13 January 48. Blue Book Files.
5. Ibid. Blue Book File #99, 100.
6. Unless otherwise stated, all references concerning the events of January 7th are to be found in Blue Book Files #30, 32, 33, 33A, 33B, 33C, 33D, 33E, 33F, 48A, 48B, 48C, and 48D. Further footnotes on this case will be given in a shorter form: Blue Book Files: "Events of January 7th," #30-48D.
7. Ibid.
8. "Fighter Pilot Is Killed After He Chases a UFO," by Eloise Feola. The Indianapolis (Indiana) News, 15 March 67, p. 1.
9. Blue Book Files: "Events of January 7th," #30 - 48D.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. "New Information on the Mantell Case," APRO Bulletin, published by the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, 3910 E. Kleindale Road, Tucson, Arizona, July 1977, p. 8.
18. "First Man Killed in a Saucer Incident," by Eloise Feola, UPI Louisville, Ky., Flying Saucers, a LOOK special by the editors of United Press International and Cowles Communications, Inc., 488 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022, p. 8.
19. Blue Book Files: "Events of January 7th," #30-48D.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Blue Book File #32.
25. Ibid.
26. "New Information on the Mantell Case," APRO Bulletin, July 1977, pp. 5-7.
27. APRO Bulletin, June 1977, p. 8.
28. Ibid.
29. Blue Book File #32.
30. Blue Book Files: "Events of January 7th," #30 - 48D.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Blue Book File #33G.
36. Blue Book Files: "Events of January 7th," #30 - 48D.
37. Ibid.

38. Fort Knox, Ky., 7 January 48 (AP).
39. "New Information on the Mantell Case," APRO Bulletin, July 1977, pp. 5 - 7.
40. Fort Knox, Ky., 8 January 48 (INS).
41. Blue Book File #121.
42. Youngstown, Ohio, 9 January 48 (UP).
43. Blue Book File #49.
44. "Extract from Weekly Intelligence Summary," ATC 23 January 48, Blue Book Files.
45. Blue Book File #149.
46. Ibid.
47. "Memorandum to the Press," National Military Establishment Office of Public Information, Washington 25, D.C. 29 April 49.
48. "Something in the Sky," The New Yorker, 6 September 52, p. 68.
49. ADC document dated 4 February 48 (Dr. Bruce Maccabee's files).
50. Ibid.
51. FBI document dated 1 March 48 (Dr. Bruce Maccabee's files).
52. Report from: OMA - Denmark 12 February 48, by Colonel Earl C. Ewert, GSC. Military Attache. Blue Book Files.
53. Rouen, France, 29 January 48 (UP). Clipping quoted in Blue Book Files.
54. "Information Regarding Rouen, France Incident," MCIAXD, MCIA, 13 February 48, A. C. Loedding, Technical Assistant Analysis Division Intelligence Department, Blue Book Files.
55. Anatomy of a Phenomenon, by Jacques Vallee. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965, p. 188.
56. "Why Don't the Damn Things Swim--So We Can Turn Them Over to the Navy?," by Edward J. Ruppelt, the TRUE Report on Flying Saucers, No. 1., A Fawcett Publication, Compiled by the editors of TRUE, 1967, p. 58.
57. Norton, Kansas, 19 February 48 (UP).
58. Notes taken at Norcatur, Kansas, the night of 18 February 48. "Exhibit A." Blue Book Files.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid. "Exhibit B." Blue Book Files.
61. Ibid.
62. Letter to: Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Washington D.C. From: --- (deleted), Pueblo, Colorado, 20 February 48. Blue Book Files.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Blue Book File #133.
67. "Summary of Aviation Reports Contained in Danish Newspapers and SAS News for the Period 20 February to 26 February inclusive," by Lt. Col. Franklin E. Tomlinson, USAF. Blue Book Files.
68. The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, p. 60.
69. The London Times. 25 February 48, p. 3.
70. Blue Book File #150.
71. Ibid.
72. "Summary of Aviation Reports Contained in Danish Newspapers and SAS News for the Period 20 February to 26 February inclusive," by Lt. Col. Franklin E. Tomlinson, USAF. Blue Book Files.

73. "Brain Trust." Journal of the British Interplanetary Society, Winter, 1948, pp. 199 - 200.
74. Blue Book File #106.
75. Interview with Mr. Oscar E. Monnig, Secretary, National Meteoritical Society, 18 March 48, by Melvin W. Faulk, Major USAF. Blue Book Files.
76. Excerpts of the letter from Dr. Lincoln La Paz to Deputy Executive Director, Committee on Geophysical Sciences Research and Development Board, 11 April 48. Blue Book Files.
77. Ibid.
78. "Hunt for the Flying Saucer," by J. Robert Moskin, Look, July 1952, p. 37.
79. "Apparitions of the Atomic Age," by Vincent H. Gaddis, Sir, March 1948, p. 30.
80. "Ray Palmer," by Daniel Cohen, UFO Encyclopedia, Edited by Ronald Story, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York, N.Y., pp. 260 - 261.
81. "I did see the Flying Disks," by Kenneth Arnold, Fate, Vol. 1, #1, pp. 4 - 10.
82. "Mystery of the Flying Disks," by the Editors, Fate, Vol. 1 #1, pp. 18 - 48.
83. Doubt. Journal of the Fortean Society, Edited by Tiffany Thayer, #23, p. 349.
84. "Followup on Meteor," Letter to the Editor by Jack Martin, Oakland (California) Tribune, 25 February 48, Editorial page.
85. Teletype message from W. R. Clingerman, Col., USAF, Chief Tech. Intelligence Department to C/O Paul F. Helmick, 30 April 48. Blue Book Files.
86. Report of Trip to Holloman AFB, 5 - 6 May 48, by Lt. Col. James C. Beam and Mr. Alfred C. Loedding, 11 May 48. Blue Book Files.
87. "Supplement to Trip Report to Watson Laboratories -- 3 and 4 June 1948," by James C. Beam, Lt. Col. McCoy thru Col. Clingerman. Blue Book File #122.
88. Ibid.
89. Holloman AFB, Alamogordo, New Mexico. Operations & Projects Electronic & Atmospheric Division, "Statement" by --- (deleted) 1st Lt. USAF Communications Officer. Blue Book Files.
90. "Supplement to Trip Report to Watson Laboratories -- 3 and 4 June 1948," by James C. Beam, Lt. Col. USAF Project Officer Tech. Intel. Division pp. 1 - 2. Report to Col. McCoy thru Col. Clingerman. Blue Book File #122.
91. Doubt, #21, p. 315.
92. "Unidentified Object in Sky," Report by Floyd S. Dunning, S/A 109 CIC Detachment. Blue Book File #112.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. "Incident #112, a-f Ashley and Delaware, Ohio -- 8 April 48 (supersedes report of 2/15/49). Blue Book Files.
98. Letter from: Col. W. R. Clingerman, USAF, Chief., Tech. Intelligence Division, Intelligence Department to Acme Newspictures, Division of NEA Service, Inc., 15 April 48. Blue Book Files.

99. Letter to: Commanding General AMC Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. ATTN: Maj. M. W. Faulk (MCIA). From: Dr. Oscar Monnig, 16 May 48. Blue Book Files.
100. "Supplement to Trip Report to Memphis -- 17 thru 19 May 48, thru Col. Clingerman to: Col. McCoy" by James C. Beam, Lt. Col. USAF Project Officer, Technical Intelligence Division. Blue Book Files.
101. Blue Book File #117.
102. "Supplement II to Trip Report to Memphis, Tenn. -- visit with Dr. Paul Herget of the Observatory of Cincinnati, Ohio," by James C. Beam, Lt. Col. USAF, Project Officer. Blue Book Files.
103. Ibid.
104. The Hynek UFO Report, by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Dell Publishing Company, Inc., New York, N.Y., 10017, 1977, p. 15. This book is recommended reading.
105. Blue Book File #170.
106. "Adapazari Incident." AFO (13 May 48) To: Chief of Staff, USAF, Washington 25, D.C. Blue Book Files.
107. NA, Moscow, USSR, Serial 38-S-48, 10 June 48, Eval. F-3. Blue Book Files.
108. Ibid.
109. "UFOs Behind the Iron Curtain," by Joe Brill, Skylook, #87, Feb. 1975, p. 14. Information from a manuscript by Soviet UFO expert Felix Y. Zigel, assistant professor at the Moscow Aviation Institute. Testimony from Arkadiy Apraksin obtained by a Ya Furmin of Voronezh University.
110. Blue Book File #127.
111. Blue Book File #129.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. My First 10,000,000 Sponsors, by Frank Edwards, Ballantine Books, New York, N.Y., 1956, p. 113.
115. Blue Book File #164.
116. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 28 August 48.
117. "Some Little-known UFO Reports from Finland," by A. Maurity Hietamski, Awareness, Autumn, 1976, pp. 5 - 6.
118. "Luminous Object," MA R-365-47-NAD No. 12199, 29 June 48. Blue Book Files.
119. Ibid.
120. Blue Book File #168.
121. Ibid.
122. Project SIGN. Technical Report No. F-Tr-2274-IA. Release date: February 1949, p. ii.
123. Statement of Captain Clarence S. Chiles, Atlanta, Ga., 3 August 48. Blue Book File #144.
124. Statement of Captain John B. Whitted, Atlanta, Ga. 3 August 48. Blue Book File #144.
125. "Atlanta Pilots Report Wingless Sky Monster," by Albert Riley, Atlanta Constitution, 25 July 48, p. 1.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.

- 130. Supplement to Trip Report to Columbia, Ohio, by Major R. A. Llewellyn, 31 July 48. Blue Book File #144.
- 131. Supplement to Trip Report to Columbia, Ohio, Re: Atlanta sighting, Thru: Col. Clingerman, To: Col. McCoy, From: R. A. Llewellyn, Major USAF, 31 July 48. Blue Book File #144.
- 132. "Atlanta Pilots Report Wingless Sky Monster," by Albert Riley, Atlanta Constitution, 25 July 48, p. 1.
- 133. Ibid.
- 134. Ibid.
- 135. "Sky Devil-Ship Scares Pilots; Air Chief Wishes He Had One," by William Key, Atlanta Journal, 25 July 48, p. 1.
- 136. Ibid.
- 137. Ibid.
- 138. "Atlanta Pilots Report Wingless Sky Monster," by Albert Riley, Atlanta Constitution, 25 July 48, p. 1.
- 139. "Statement of John B. Whitted." Exhibit "A." Blue Book File #144.
- 140. Atlanta, 24 July 48 (UP).
- 141. The UFO Controversy in America, by David Jacobs, Indiana University Press, Blooming & London, 1975, p. 309 (Letter from James E. McDonald to Richard H. Hall, 13 January 68).
- 142. Flying Saucers: Top Secret, by Donald E. Keyhoe, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, N.Y. 1960, pp. 87 - 88.
- 143. Air Force Memorandum to the Press, 27 April 49, p. 7.
- 144. Statement of Captain Clarence S. Chiles, Atlanta, Ga. 3 August 48, Exhibit "A." Blue Book Files #144.
- 145. Statement of John B. Whitted. Exhibit "A." Blue Book File #144.
- 146. The World of Flying Saucers, by Dr. Donald H. Menzel and Lyle G. Boyd, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, N.Y., 1963, pp. 112 - 113.
- 147. Statement of Captain Clarence S. Chiles, Atlanta, Ga. 3 August 48, Exhibit "A." Blue Book File #144.
- 148. Sighting of Unidentified Flying Object: Character: Special inquiry unconventional aircraft: File No. 24-185, Date 2 November 49. Blue Book File #144.
- 149. The Chiles-Whitted incident. Official account. Blue Book File #144.
- 150. Ibid.
- 151. Ibid.
- 152. The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, by Edward J. Ruppelt, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, N.Y., 1950, p. 62.
- 153. Special Investigation, Date: 9 September 48, File No. 333.5 (24-1). Blue Book File #144.
- 154. Air Intelligence Information Report, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. #102-122-79. Blue Book File #144.
- 155. Special Investigation, Date: 9 September 48, File #333.5 (24-1). Blue Book Files.
- 156. Air Intelligence Information Report, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. #102-122-79. Blue Book File #144.
- 157. "Buck Rogers Craft Seen in Alabama," by R. DeWitt Miller, 25 July 48 (UP).
- 158. Air Intelligence Report, 20 December 48, #102-122-79, p. 3.

159. Special Investigation, Date: 9 September 48, File #333.5 (24-1). Blue Book File #165.
160. United States Air Force, The Inspector General, Special Investigations Report, 9 September 48, File #333.5 (24-1). Special Investigator, Walter M. Cassidy. Blue Book File #165.
161. Special Investigation, 9 September 48, File #333.5 (24-1). Blue Book File #165.
162. Agent Report, Date submitted: 16 August 48. Blue Book File #165.
163. Ibid.
164. The Atlanta Constitution, 27 July 48.
165. Report of Meteor seen on July 24, 1948. To: Capt. J. F. Gill, From: --- (deleted), 5 August 48. Blue Book File #144A.
166. Ibid.
167. Blue Book File #144A.
168. Air Intelligence Information Report, 20 December 48, ATIC Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, p. 3.
169. The Chiles-Whitted Incident, 24 July 48. Blue Book File #144.
170. Blue Book File #144 -- near Montgomery, Alabama -- 24 July 1948, 144a, b -- near Blackstone, Virginia -- 24 July 1948, pp. 1 - 3.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid., p. 4.
173. UFO Evidence, published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, 1536 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington D.C. 1964, Richard Hall, Editor.
174. Doubt (Publication of the Fortean Society) #23, p. 349.
175. Letter: To: Major H. M. Campbell, USAF, 2 August 48, From: --- (deleted) Worthington, Ohio. Blue Book Files.
176. Telegram: To: Douglas Leigh, Sky Adv. Corp. C/O Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, From: W. R. Clingerman, Col. USAF, Chief Tech. Intel. Division Intelligence Department, 17 August 48. Blue Book Files.
177. Telegram: To: H.Q. AMC, Wright Field, 18 August 48, From: R. L. Fickes, Goodyear Aircraft. Blue Book Files.
178. Letter: 30 July 48. From: --- (deleted), Vice President of Eastern Air Lines, To: Commanding General, A.M.C. Headquarters, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, Att.: Col. McCoy, M.C.I.A. Blue Book Files.
179. Air Intelligence Report, #102-122-79, 2 August 48, p. 1. Blue Book File #144.
180. Source: N Moscow, USSR, Serial 125-48, 4 August 48, EVAL, B-2. Blue Book Files.
181. Ibid.

APPENDIX

Nine months after the Mantell case a certain UFO report was made to OSI agents of the Fourth Army Branch Intelligence Office, New Orleans, Louisiana. The reader is urged to compare the following testimony and accompanying sketch with details given in accounts of the sky object over Godman Field in January 1948.

The report in question reads:

"... (deleted) stated that on the morning of 1 October 1948 he was squirrel hunting on his property, and that he had gotten up very early in the morning and was standing on a little ridge facing south. This ridge was located in a clearing which had been cut for telephone lines. The clearing is approximately twenty feet wide and runs from the highway north to the swamps. At this particular time it was too dark to go into the woods hunting, but was light enough to see what time it was by his watch, and at 0540 hours ... (deleted) was looking to the south at the sky and saw the aerial object which he described as follows. 'It looked like an ice cream cone traveling toward the east with the larger end in front. At the front it looked as if it were white hot (like the mantels in a gasoline lantern), and toward the rear it got gradually darker red. There was no visible metal or other material and no projections of any kind, only fire. The object made absolutely no noise and left no trail of any kind. It was traveling in a straight line from west to east and did not gain or lose altitude. There was no visible means of propulsion. It appeared to be about three-quarters of a mile away and at an elevation of approximately twenty-five hundred feet. I was looking up at an angle of about thirty degrees elevation relative to the ground, and I watched this object for approximately ten seconds before it was obscured by some trees. It appeared to be about the size of the average airliner and was traveling at approximately three hundred miles per hour. The larger end of the cone appeared to be thicker than the average airliner is through the fuselage, but it was about the same length. The object displayed no lights other than it appeared to be encased in flame, and it did not light up the area. There was no visible means of support and no control surfaces. There were no clouds that day, and the wind was fairly calm.'"

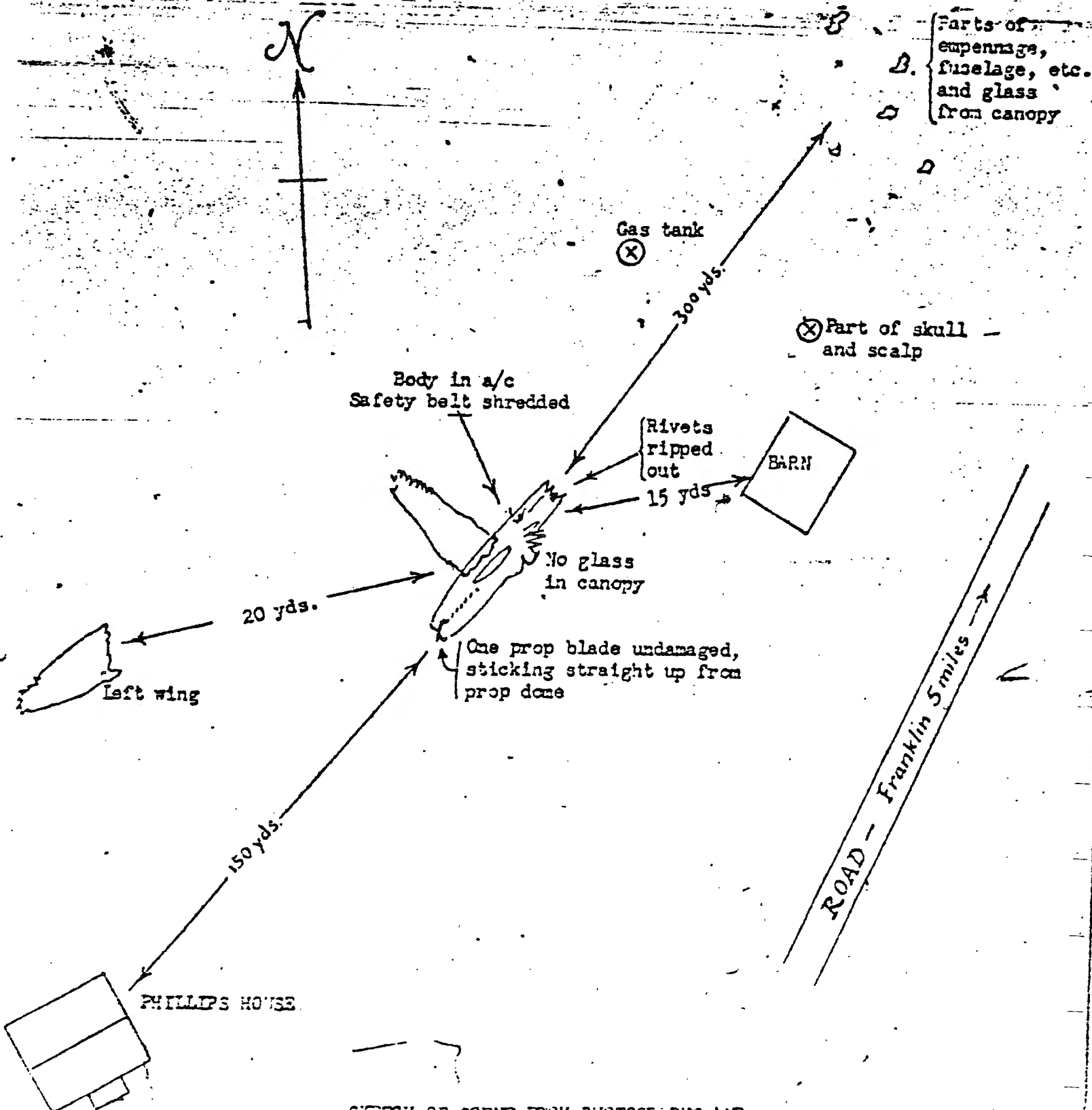
The incident took place in Ascension Parish Township, 10 South Range 4 East 50 miles from New Orleans, La. The official evaluation is: Astro (meteor). The Blue Book File number is 174.

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE:

- A. Drawing of the Mantell crash scene. Air Force Blue Book Files.
- B. A strange spindle-like aerial object. Little information is available concerning the sighting. Air Force Blue Book Files.
- C. News clipping on the Chiles-Whitted aerial encounter taken from the Atlanta, Georgia Constitution. Air Force Blue Book Files.
- D. Sketch showing the upward departure of the "sky monster" as reported by Chiles and Whitted. This is a critical bit of evidence in the case against the meteor explanation.
- E. The "sky monster" as sketched by Capt. C. S. Chiles. Air Force Blue Book Files.
- F. The "sky monster" as sketched by Co-pilot J. B. Whitted. Air Force Blue Book Files.
- G. The classic saucer-shape. This object was sighted near Indianapolis, Indiana, on July 1, 1948. It is listed in Air Force Blue Book Files as case number 152.

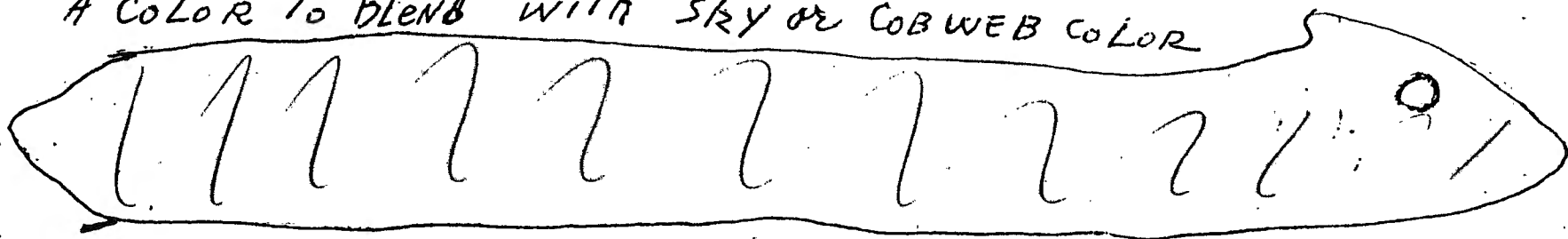
FIGURE "A"



SKETCH OF SCENE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND
DESCRIPTION OF OFFICER AT SCENE

100 or 12 ft in Dia

A COLOR TO BLEND WITH SKY OR CLOUD^x COBWEB COLOR



APPARENTLY 75 TO 100 FT IN LENGTH

NO WINGS NO SOUND NO SMOKE ABOUT 5 TO 7000 FT UP
MAKING ABOUT 1000 MILES PER HOUR

P.S. I have seen a few more of these things since I got
the first one of these things said. Flying!
But mistaking as plain as I said this was no joke

late summer 1948

going NW-SE

(name deleted)
letter to Air Force
Moberly, Mo. 5 June 53

FIGURE "B"

Atlanta Pilots Report

Wingless Sky Monster

By ALBERT RILEY

Two Atlanta pilots of the Eastern Air Lines have baffled the nation with a bizarre story of a huge, wingless, flame-shooting, double-decked aircraft they said flashed past their DC-3 airliner at 2:45 a. m., yesterday morning about 20 miles southwest of Montgomery, Ala.

The two fliers, Capt. Clarence Shippe Chiles and his co-pilot, John B. Whitted are puzzled themselves at what they saw 5,000 feet over Alabama.

"If you look at one of those fantastic Flash Gordon rocket ships in the funny papers, you've got a picture of what we saw," said Whitted.

Nearly four times larger than a B-29, it resembled a B-29 fuselage with the wings off, Chiles said, and flames were shooting out of the tail 35 to 40 feet.

Traveling at a speed they estimated at between 500 and 700 miles an hour, the mysterious aircraft was brilliantly lighted with two decks of windows. Underneath, on the belly of the ship, they said there was a sort of blue fluorescent glow.

Following a northeasterly course on scheduled flight from Houston,

Atlanta, the two pilots saw the strange object whiz past them in a southwesterly direction, toward Mobile and New Orleans.

Both pilots, who served as Army fliers during the war, said they

had never seen anything before that even faintly resembled the mystery craft, and they had no idea what it could have been.

Neither Army nor CAA officials could throw any light on the mys-

tery, and an Air Force spokesman at Washington said that "obviously" this country has no plane resembling a double-decked, jet-propelled, wingless transport shooting a 40-foot flame out of its back end.

The pilots said there were 20 passengers aboard their plane, but all were asleep except one man, C. L. McKelvie, of 85 Hanelton Pike, Columbus, Ohio. McKelvie, said Chiles, told the pilots that he also saw the mystery aircraft.

"It was a moonlit night with some clouds," Chiles said, "and we were flying along on the regular airway, when we saw ahead and slightly above and to our right what appeared to be a tremendous jet of flame.

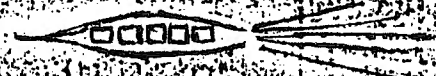
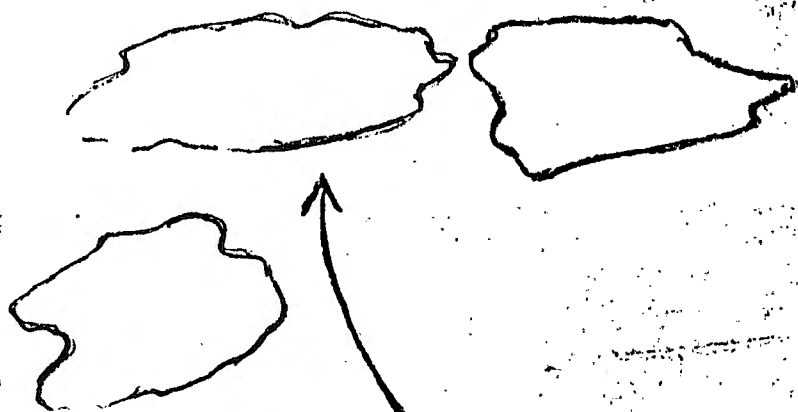
"We asked each other, 'What in the world is this?'

"It flashed down and we veered to the left and it veered to its left, and passed us about 700 feet to our right and about 700 feet above us.

"Then, as if the pilot had seen us and wanted to avoid us, it pulled up with a tremendous burst of flame out of its rear and zoomed up into the clouds. Its prop-wash or jet-wash rocked our



FIGURE "C"



(500-800 ft above plane)

5000 ft

EXHIBIT "E"

Official
Sketch

Blue Book File

FIGURE "F"

UNCL

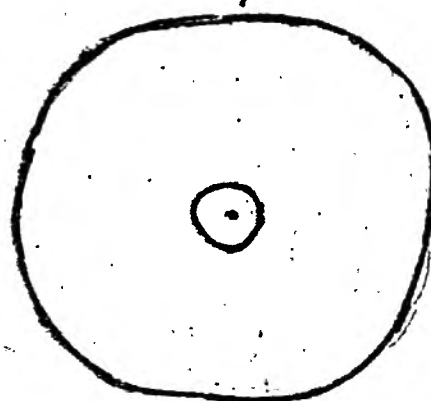
HOTTEL

THEENIRY

ORANGE & RED
FLAME 40' LONG

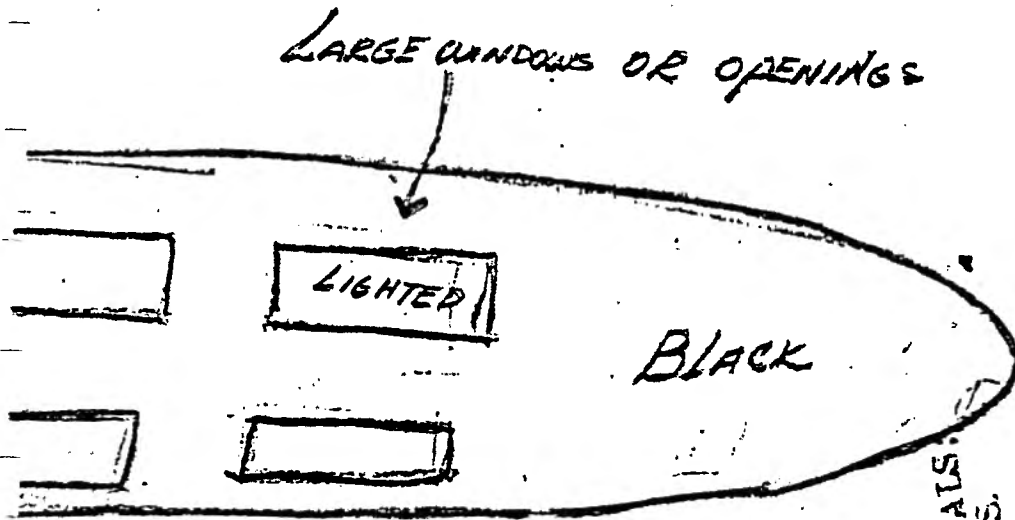
100' LENGTH

Top



ESTIMATED FRONT VIEW
ROUND

FIGURE "F"



N6TH

No FINS

DOWNGRADED AT 8 YEAR INTERVALS.
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

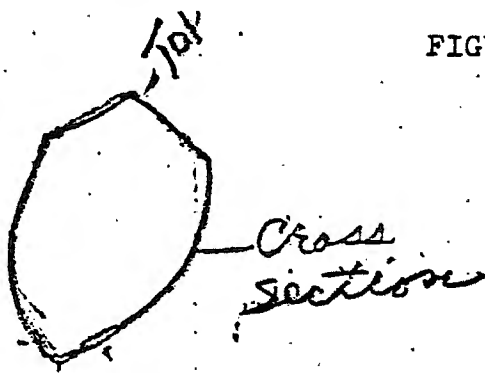
UNCLASSIFIED

EXHIBIT "A"

File of the Bureau of Defense

Page 606 pages

FIGURE "E"



UNCLAS

HENRY GRADY HOTEL

ON PEACHTREE ST.

P.O. BOX 1412

ATLANTA 1, GA

30 TO 50 FT.
Red FLAMES windows or openings

Dark

Blue Glow Light

E.S.T. 100' W



This
And there is
no fire

FIGURE "E"

50 ft.
are openings

LIGHTS

Cockpit not as
brightly lighted

Cockpit windows

solid
dark

side lights

100' in length

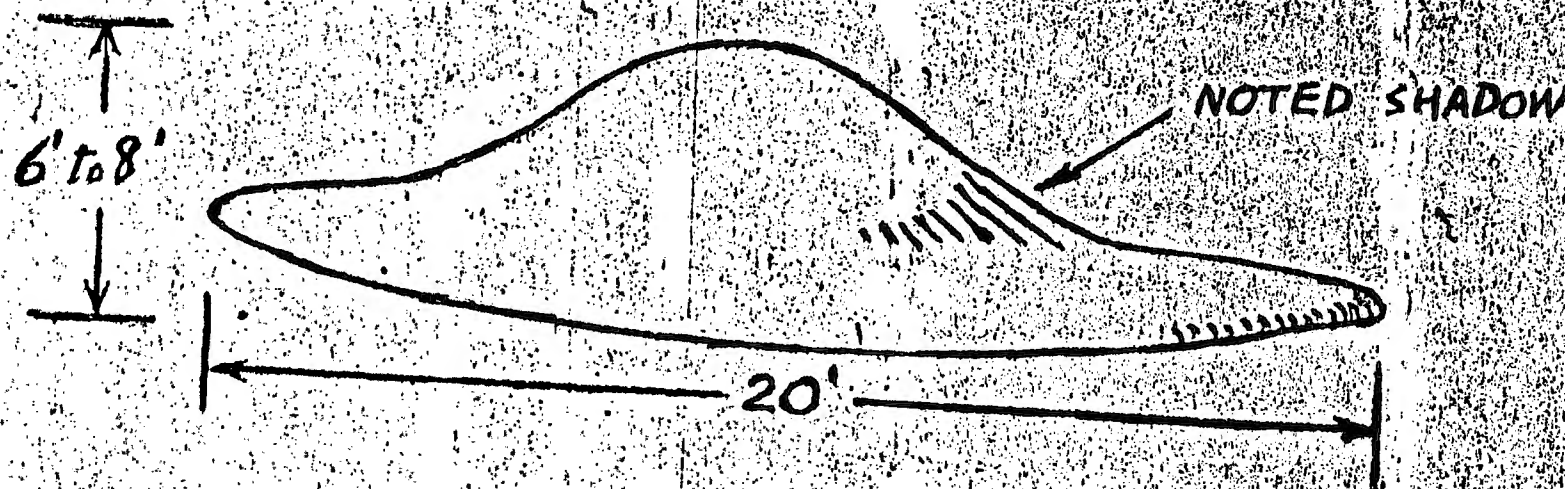
DECLASSIFIED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS:
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
1000 DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

EXHIBIT "A" UNCL.
Room of the Summary Conference Room

This is what I saw
there were no wings

UNCLASSIFIED



(Ratio approx. 3:1)

Russell J. Carey Jr.
RUSSELL J. CAREY JR.
1st Lt., US
Intelligence Officer

FIGURE "C"

UFOs: A HISTORY

1948, AUGUST - DECEMBER

A minor catalogue of UFO reports and notations on various unofficial inquiries by individuals and privately funded organizations, as well as commentary on military investigations and governmental policies. Presented in chronological order.

by

Loren E. Gross

Copyright © 1981 Fremont, California

UFOs: A HISTORY: AUGUST - DECEMBER, 1948

Early in this century a little known American writer researched a mystery which he recognized as: "... accounts of moving lights in the sky, of such duration and repetition that anything of a meteoric nature is excluded."¹ After years of labor in libraries, he arrived at an amazing postulation which was published in an obscure limited-edition book in 1919. Seven years later in 1926 the author was given a hearing by none other than the New York Times which printed the man's theory under the headline that asked the question: "HAVE MARTIANS VISITED US?" And, in a sub-heading, the Times declared that a certain literary investigator, a Mr. Charles Fort: "ARGUES IN THE AFFIRMATIVE AND SEEKS NEWS OF FUTURE MANIFESTATIONS." Fort was quoted as stating: "... explorers from other worlds whether Mars or Venus or somewhere else, have often sailed to this earth, and have traveled back and forth in the sky, hours at a time, day after day..."² The vast majority of Times readers no doubt considered Fort something of a lunatic for proposing such a notion.

Fort died in the 1930's but if he had just lived another decade he might have felt a sense of vindication.

The date: August 5, 1948. The place: U.S. Air Force Intelligence headquarters, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Events had reached a point where something had to give. A 20-year advisor to the Air Force on UFOs, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, tells us:

"... two schools of thought about UFOs quickly developed at ATIC in Dayton, and in intelligence circles elsewhere. One school felt that UFOs should be taken very seriously. Their belief was so strong that a Top-Secret 'Estimate of the Situation' was sent to Washington stating that flying saucers were probably interplanetary and that the military should be put on the 'alert' footing. Some didn't go as far as that, but were ready to accept that flying saucers were real."³

Author and UFO expert Donald Keyhoe claims to know some further details even more amazing. He asserts that he obtained his information from: Captain E. J. Ruppelt, former UFO Project Chief for the Air Force; Major Dewey Fournet, Headquarters Monitor of the Air Force's UFO Project; and Lt. Colonel George Freeman, former UFO spokesman attached to the office of the Secretary of the Air Force. Keyhoe's sources confirm that some of the military Intelligence people both in and outside of the UFO investigative project were sold on the extraterrestrial theory to explain the UFO mystery, moreover many of those same people believed that the helmsmen of the strange craft were probably engaged in an extensive survey of the earth and its inhabitants thus the government had time to make an accurate assessment of what it was up against, so it would be in the military's best interest to maintain some control on the release of information about the momentous event.

According to Keyhoe, some military officers felt that the slow release of available information about UFOs should be initiated immediately, a gradual program of public education that would forestall the great shock of an overwhelming UFO incident, mass landing, etc.⁴

The extraterrestrial advocates at ATIC drew up a document, an "estimate of the situation," that seriously proposed an alien visitation. E. J. Ruppelt described it thusly: "... a rather thick document with a black cover and it had stamped across the front the words TOP SECRET."⁵ Supporting testimony of the document's existence later came from Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who told West Coast journalists Robert B. Klinn and David Branch in 1972 that not only did he know about the document, but that he had even read it.⁶ Keyhoe, evidently using the influence he had with Dewey Fournet, got a peek at a three-page summary of the "estimate" due to a sympathetic colonel in Air Force Intelligence.⁷

Anyway, this Top Secret "estimate of the situation" was passed up the chain of command to the Directorate of Intelligence, Major General Cabell. From there it ended up on General Hoyt Vandenberg's desk. As Air Force Chief of Staff, Vandenberg vetoed any drastic official action that acceptance of such a document would entail. The evidence, however convincing, was still circumstantial. Keyhoe's sources assert: "The General said it would cause a stampede. How could we convince the public that aliens weren't hostile when we don't know it ourselves?" Moreover, again according to Keyhoe's informants: "... he (General Vandenberg) said we didn't have physical proof like a captured spaceship, and a lot of scared people would grab at this to claim the conclusion was wrong, in spite of all the expert evidence."⁸

At this point the Air Force investigation had stalled. Where could it go from here? Well, there was the analysis of the spaceship hypothesis contracted out to a group of scientists. When that study was completed perhaps some meaningful recommendations could then be made. Until then, the military investigation limped forward with uncertain objectives.

On August 5th a routine UFO report from Columbia, South Carolina, prompted an official request for an investigation containing the usual list of salient factors to be documented. What makes the request a little different is the following statement which seemed to be a bit more intense than similar ones: "... in the interest of national defense, all publicity surrounding this investigation is to be stringently avoided."⁹

Weird objects were drifting and darting high in the heavens, ever evading, ever out of reach. Each day ulcers were becoming more prevalent in the offices of ATIC as those Intelligence people responsible for the notorious "Estimate" smarted from the rebuke by the top boss, General Vandenberg, who could not be inveigled to accept a theory he construed as circumstantial fabrication, but such a rejection did not obliterate the question still lurking in the minds of many of the military experts: was there an alien invasion in the works in spite of lack of concrete clues? One has to admit that just the postulation

of such a possibility was strong stuff for Americans of 1948, a period when the Moon had not yet gone out of style as a green cheese romance.

Leave it to the saucers to pick this moment to tease the disgusted UFO hunters at ATIC. Furthermore, the FBI, after a self-imposed multi-month eclipse, emerged from the shadows to play a role in the sky drama due to the Bureau's superb crime labs; and the disc desperados, which had made trespassing an art, would again disappoint Hoover.

Ever since the Fall of 1947 when J. Edgar Hoover became upset over the Bureau's assigned role in the flying disc investigation, the famed agency had very little to do with the UFO problem. Soon after the onset of the sky mystery flap of the Summer of 1947 it seemed clear to the FBI that no subversive activity was involved making the Bureau's participation superfluous, a mere Sisyphus stone-rolling endeavor. The foreign power theory suffered a decline in interest during the Spring and Summer of 1948 among Intelligence personnel and only in the Fall would such ideas regain favor. That did not, however, mean that Hoover's people would again be tapped for investigative duty. Instead the military called on an organization of its own to conduct field investigations. This organization, the Office of Special Investigations, or as it is better known through the use of its initials, the "OSI," did more than an adequate job. For example, when an alleged flying disc witness in San Francisco made a report to the authorities in the Fall of 1948, the OSI took over and conducted a background check on that particular individual as well as doing an interrogation to obtain all the details concerning the supposed sighting. According to Air Force files the OSI in this San Francisco case, examined the records of: "G-2 6th Army, Presidio of San Francisco, California; the FBI Field Office, San Francisco, California; the Harper-Knowles (Civilian Subversive Files Source); and the Criminal and Subversive Files, Police Department, San Francisco." Furthermore, the OSI interviewed fellow employees and acquaintances for information on the informant's character, integrity and loyalty.¹⁰ Moreover, elsewhere in official records an inter-office memo of the U.S. Army explained the use of the OSI in the following fashion. Besides having access to aircraft and observation facilities, as well as being in coordination with the Geophysics Laboratory* of the Air Material Command, the OSI also had: "... a direct reporting channel to Washington..."¹¹

A Minnesota story, however, brought the FBI back into the UFO investigation for a brief moment.

The principles in the drama consisted of a farmer, his two sons, and the Postmaster of the Minnesota city of Hamel. After a chat with the farmer one afternoon, the Postmaster alerted

*The Geophysics Laboratory was very active in the Air Force's UFO investigation. The reason for this intense involvement is not clear to this author.

the FBI office in St. Paul saying: "you better hear this sod buster out," or some such comment. Anyway, the story, or yarn, take your choice, is detailed in military archives. The farmer said of his two youngsters:

"... on August 11, 1948, between 1200 and 1215 hours, CST, --- (deleted) and --- (deleted) were playing in the backyard and they noticed an object in descent approximately twelve feet from the ground, which was descending between the two of them. This object settled to the ground gently, much as a balloon. Upon hitting the ground, the object spun once, made a sort of whistle, and then shot straight up into the air approximately twenty feet, halted, and again made a whistling noise. The object then shot upward to a height of about thirty feet, and, in this ascent, maneuvered around tree branches and telephone wires. On reaching a height of approximately thirty feet, the object shot off in a northeasterly direction. The object approached from the northwest.

"The boys described the object as 'approximately one foot thick, two feet wide, and round.' The object had no windows, wires, or any visible appurtenances. The object was a dull gray in color, and when it hit the ground, it made a slight clanking noise, much as metal hitting against metal.

"Mr. --- (deleted) and Mrs. --- (deleted) stated the boys were visibly frightened when they ran into the house and were afraid to tell what they had seen. Upon close questioning, the boys related the above story to them."¹²

The story had a convincing ring to it, of sorts, so the St. Paul FBI office immediately sent Special Agent M. B. Rhodes to Hamel. Rhodes left us these words expressing his impressions of the case:

"When this Agent arrived on the scene, he was taken to a spot covered by a washtub which Mr. and Mrs. --- (deleted) advised was the spot where the alleged 'flying saucer' had landed. This spot was approximately two feet in diameter and appeared to this Agent as though some heavy object had landed there or set down there, as the ground was dented and rocks protruding from the ground had been leveled.

"This Agent advised the --- (deleted) family that the matter would be reported to higher Headquarters and requested them to keep the matter confidential."¹³

For quite a while the FBI had nothing to do with the "disc mania" and then in mid-September, 1948, the Air Force mailed a package to the FBI's famous Washington crime laboratory. Inside was a specimen that had been forwarded for an analysis by the Bureau's peerless technicians:

"... a sample of soil said to have been taken from a depression reputed to have been caused by a 'flying saucer' described as being approximately two feet in diameter and one foot thick which supposedly settled gently to the ground, rebounded to a height of twenty feet and then continued on its journey."¹⁴

As indicated, the Hamel case had not been taken lightly. The following confirms this. Colonel William M. Creasy, Army Chief, Chemical Corps Research and Engineering Division, notified the office of the Director of Intelligence, GSUSA, Washington, D.C., that the above-mentioned UFO case, the Hamel, Minnesota incident had:

"... aroused the interest of some of our scientists who would like to have more details of the reported occurrence. Photographs of the spot where the alleged 'flying saucer' landed, and samples of the surface material of the dented spot are desired if practical to obtain them at this time."¹⁵

From the poverty of further comment in official files, one assumes nothing of value was learned. Only a brief note in FBI records tells us something. On October 7th the FBI laboratory informed the Air Force the soil sample sent to the Bureau's laboratory for examination showed nothing out of the ordinary after being subjected to exhaustive tests. The UFOs had managed to elude Hoover once again. He personally signed the document citing the lab's negative results.¹⁶

At first military Intelligence tried to grapple with the possibility that something did indeed occur giving the kids the benefit of a doubt:

"No astronomical explanation is possible for this incident. A meteorite would not have descended so gently, nor would it have risen again.

"It seems incredible that this could have been an actual physical occurrence, but if it was, it is doubly unfortunate that no mature observers were at hand. If the object did land just a few feet away, one would think that even children would have given a more detailed description. Is it known whether the children had normal vision? To one with myopic vision, even a buzzard or hawk gliding to a landing might appear as a strange object."¹⁷

As we shall soon see, over the months ahead official tolerance degenerated and many cases in Air Force UFO files were retagged with hostile and abrupt conclusions. The Hamel incident was treated with this reassessment: "This apparent bit of fantasy is hardly worth further consideration."¹⁸ It took awhile before events brought about such official alienation and in August positive thoughts concerning the exotic were still in season.

When something mysterious returned to excite Godman AFB in Kentucky in mid-August, authorities were well prepared. Careful ground and air checks, which appeared to have been sufficient, determined the phenomena's cause. The incident was termed a false alarm:

"There can be no question but that the object sighted in this incident was Venus. It was just three weeks past its period of greatest brilliance, and was separating from the sun. The close agreement between the observed position of the object and the actual position of Venus, determined by others concerned with the incident and rechecked by this investigator, is convincing."¹⁹

The August 19th excitement led to a review of the Mantell tragedy that shook up everyone back in January. A rough approximation with the whereabouts of the planet Venus in the daytime sky in the January 7th case was deemed unsatisfactory, so in a document signed by A. B. Deyarmond, Assistant Deputy for Technical Analysis, for ATIC, on November 10, 1948, it was stated: "It is apparent, from the data given above (i.e., in the report), that the object sighted at Godman Air Force Base on 7 January 1948 was not the planet Venus. Therefore, this sighting must be considered as unexplained."²⁰

We should also take this chance to bring up another UFO case that may have a bearing on another UFO "classic." The weird "windows" of the Chiles-Whitted sky "monster," which astronomer/UFO critic Dr. Donald Menzel attributed to a "veined or fibrous structure of a meteor's luminous train," had an apparent counterpart in the Summer, 1948 UFO incident. The observer was none other than the famous astronomer Clyde Tombaugh, the discoverer of the planet Pluto. One summer evening Tombaugh was relaxing in the backyard of his home at Los Cruces, New Mexico. The usual sights and sounds of the desert that night did not give any indication of what was to happen. Tombaugh was outside gazing at the heavens as was his habit during his free moments. Aircraft, mirages, reflections, and various atmospheric phenomenon were well known to Tombaugh, but about midnight the renowned scientist noticed something very odd lurking in the skies of New Mexico. It approached at a low altitude in the clear night air appearing quite solid, ovoid in shape, and trailing vapor. The entire object glowed a curious blue color, but the feature that was the most striking was the six brilliant "windows" located along the leading edge. As Tombaugh himself expressed it: "The illuminated rectangles I saw did maintain an exact fixed position with respect to each other."²¹ The sight was so strange Tombaugh admits to having been "petrified with astonishment."

Odds and ends.

Hints that the UFO problem might erupt anytime outside the U.S. could be found in news stories from places like Sweden on August 24th which told of an unexplained "sky octopus" in the heavens over that country.²² Also, there was an indication that a small flap was in progress in the region of Saigon in French Indo-China (Vietnam) during this period of time.²³

In the American Northwest, two witnesses, a Mr. A. J. Kaus and his wife, were motoring along a highway outside of Boise, Idaho, when a strange sphere of white light cruised into view. Mr. Kaus was convinced that the ball-like object could not have been more than 2,000 feet high at the most for it was flying between two cloud layers. The illumination issuing from the sphere varied. Mr. Kaus termed the glow "jagged" in appearance.²⁴

Elsewhere:

"Mr. Kadel contacted a man up at Indian Lake, Ohio, 29 August 1948, who stated that on that date at 5:30 a.m. he observed a large silver colored sphere which seemed to arise from behind some woods and continued to fly across his farm. During the flight it seemed to unravel a silver substance which floated earthward. While still being viewed by this farmer, the sphere disintegrated in mid-air. This man's name is --- (deleted) of Maplewood, Ohio. Mr. Kadel further advised that the farmer concerned was a man approximately 50 some odd years of age and appeared to be very conscientious and sincere while relating this incident.

"The subject seemed to have arisen while the two men were talking and an airplane happened to fly overhead whereas the farmer then related the foregoing experience."²⁵

Official comment on the case went: "There is some chance that the object could have been a weather balloon in the process of disintegration."²⁶

The Four Corners "meteor."

On October 30, 1947, a huge smokey "something" shot through the sky over the remote Four Corners Area of the Navajo Reservation in the U.S. Southwest. (The Four Corners area is where New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado have state boundary lines that meet at perfect 90 degree angles.) A Mr. and Mrs. C. Weafer occupied a lonely farmhouse in that tractless, rocky desert and were probably the sole witnesses to the aerial phenomenon. Not owning a radio, nor having access to newspapers, they placed no great importance on the "fiery ball" that had traced a line of vapor dividing the heavens, the wind twisting the smoke trail into a big zigzag. In the course of time, the couple mentioned what they had seen to others living outside the reservation. Eventually word reached the authorities about the Weafer's front row seat to the fiery passage. In August 1948, a scientific/military team paid a visit to the Weafer home and set up measuring equipment in their front yard and questioned the pair about the path of the sky object. Mr. Weafer later related to a Texas newspaper:

"Internationally known experts who were present that day at our home, approached me and told me that it was no meteorite, but a guided object, probably from the military establishment of a foreign power.

There seemed considerable agreement among the scientists and military men on this point."²⁷

While none of the experts in the above account are identified, a quote from Dr. Lincoln La Paz, noted meteor scientist, should aid in understanding what the team was doing:

"... the search for meteorites are in many respects analogous to those encountered in air search and rescue work, and resemble even more closely those that may arise, if our nation has occasion to defend itself against attack by rocket and other guided missiles.

"Because of the notorious inability of the untrained observer to accurately estimate the elevation and bearing of a position in the sky--for example, the point of appearance of a meteor--it is axiomatic that wherever possible, transit observations should be made by a trained operator at the exact spot from whence his observation was made."²⁸

Did anything actually crash in the Four Corners region? Nothing much official in the way of information was released, but some really far-out rumors would surface for the first time October 12, 1949. However, there is much to cover UFO-wise until that date. With that we will continue.

Flying saucers saucier!

"I've never seen anything like it." "If anyone else had reported such a thing, I would have thought he was crazy." -- Lt. George Gorman.

October 1, 1948:

"Lt. George Gorman had been with his squadron on a cross-country flight. When the squadron returned at approximately 2030 hours, Lt. Gorman decided to remain in the air inasmuch as he wanted to do some night flying. He flew west as far as Valley City and returned to Fargo (North Dakota) to watch the football game from the air, his altitude being approximately 1500 feet at the time. Circling the football field, he saw about 500 feet beneath him a Piper Cub. At approximately 2100 hours he decided to return to the field. He called the tower to find out if all was clear, and was told that one other ship was in the air, the aforementioned Piper Cub, which was flown by Dr. Cannon of Fargo, North Dakota.

"As he flew into the pattern preparatory to landing, what seemed to be the tail light of another airplane passed him from the right. He called the tower immediately and complained that they had misinformed him, that there was a third ship in the air. The tower came back with the information that no other aircraft was reported out, that they had just checked with all other air fields in the area. Lt. Gorman, seeing the tail light run just outside the Piper Cub, pulled up and out towards the moving light in order to identify

what he thought to be another aircraft. He saw the Piper Cub plainly outlined beneath him against the city lights, but saw no outline of anything around the moving light. Lt. Gorman then proceeded to move toward the object (he thinks that he was about 1,000 yards from the object at this moment), which appeared then to be about 6 to 8 inches in diameter. The light was clear white, completely round without fuzz at the edges, and was, until then, blinking on and off. He then proceeded to follow the light which suddenly became steady and pulled up into a sharp left bank, making what he thought to be a pass at the tower. Lt. Gorman dived after the light, bringing his manifold pressure to 50 inches and realizing 2,000 RPM, which increased at the finish of the dive to 3,000. He was unable to catch up with the object which began to gain altitude."29

The official report goes on to say:

"Lt. Gorman continued to follow the object, in the meantime calling the tower and advising them as to what was going on. The object continued gaining altitude and again made a left bank. Lt. Gorman then put his F-51 into a sharp right turn and tried to cut the object off in the turn. By that time he was to an altitude of 7,000 feet. The object then made a sharp right turn and Lt. Gorman turned about and headed straight at the object which had completed its turn and was coming toward him. At the point where collision seemed imminent, Lt. Gorman got scared and went into a dive, the object passing over his canopy at approximately 500 feet. At this time he had 60 inches of manifold pressure and 3,000 RPM. The object again made a left circle approximately 1,000 feet above him and he again gave chase. He cut again sharply toward the object which was once more coming at him and, at the time when a collision seemed imminent again, the object went straight into the air and he started climbing after it until he gained approximately 14,000 feet at which time his plane went into a power stall. The object then turned in a northwestern heading and disappeared. It was then 2127 hours.

"Lt. Gorman proceeded to return to the field, being so excited that he had to make two passes at the field before he could properly land. During these entire maneuvers, Lt. Gorman noticed no deviation on his instruments. His magnetic compass reacted normally, there was no interference with his radio. He heard no sounds, noticed no odors, and saw no exhaust trails."30

Military investigators set to work checking Gorman's P-51 for radioactivity but Geiger counter readings were nil (There were some suspicions in Intelligence circles that UFOs were using atomic-powered engines. Evidently it was surmised that the UFO may have left an exhaust trail tainted with radiation and that Gorman's aircraft must have cut in and out of such a stream of vapor a number of times.). Gorman's background was quietly investigated, a check he passed with flying colors. Exhaustive

questioning continued for some time, after which Gorman still maintained a firm conviction about four points:

- "1) The object first detected the approach of the intercepting aircraft at about 500 yards distant.
- 2) Maneuvering of the object was indicative of intelligence control.
- 3) The object seemed bound by the laws of inertia.
- 4) The object's flying characteristics far exceeded that of the P-51 airplane."³¹

The official report on the incident then launched into a long analysis of Gorman's pursuit of the UFO. Keep in mind that a wind-tossed weather balloon was later favored by the anti-UFO people to explain this case.

Under "Comments" it states:

"1) The pilot of the P-51 craft first decided to intercept the object while at 4,000 feet (due SSW of the field), and the object was at about 1,000 feet altitude and moving at about 250 MPH (also SSW of the field). See chart of flight paths appended hereto as Exhibit "B." Paths of these initial maneuvers were horizontal in aspect and should be viewed as though one is looking down. At point "b," the subject clearly saw the object but was unable to state any exact distance as to proximity, as it began rapid acceleration, turning from a due west heading to a due south heading. Gorman pulled into a tight 360 degree turn to the left intending to cut the object off and ram it since he had clearly seen that the lighted object appeared no larger than 8 inches in diameter. He reasoned that the damage to his own plane would not be too great should he succeed. The subject's plane at the turn indicated 425 MPH, yet he saw the object on a wider turn (as indicated by the symbol 'o' on the chart) circle him twice in the time it took him to complete his 360 degree turn. Accordingly, he believed that the object was traveling at estimated speeds of 650 to 700 MPH. Consequently, in support of his previous statement, Lt. Gorman feels certain that the object became aware of his approach, despite his approach from above and behind and in spite of his prior advantage in flying speed.

"2) The maneuvers of the object, both evasive and aggressive not only matched but effectively coped with the interception tactics performed by the P-51 pilot. Thus the subject is convinced that intelligence directed the movement of his target.

"3) To explain his convictions that the object was definitely bound by the laws of inertia, Lt. Gorman explained that when he first approached the object it accelerated very rapidly, but not immediately. Although it turned 'tighter' than the P-51 and at far greater speeds, it always followed a natural curve. At no time did it turn at a right angle. Having tried with-

out success to turn with the object while trailing it dead ahead, no wash was felt; however, the subject blacked out momentarily on a few turns. Consequently, Lt. Gorman feels convinced that few living pilots (if any) could have turned as sharply and at the speeds attained by the object.

"4) As to flying characteristics, besides evidence as to degree of turn, level flying speeds, and maneuverability, subject pilot drew a vertical cross-section of his final maneuvers (submitted as Exhibit "C") to show the rate of climb of the object.

"5) Letting down from 12,000 feet, the P-51 indicated 60 inches of mercury at 3,000 RPM, estimated airspeed 400 MPH, and began a steep climb to cut off the object as it, in turn, aggressively came flying toward his aircraft as indicated by 'b'.* The P-51 fell off in a power stall at 14,500 feet altitude. When asked if he had lost sight of his target at this point, Lt. Gorman responded that he had kept his eyes fixed on his target and had watched it climbing vertically and on a slightly increasing angle of climb as indicated by 'c' until distance caused it to disappear. When asked why he had not broken the seal for military power, the subject replied that he had indicated 60 inches of mercury at 3,000 RPM for 15 minutes and he felt further abuse of the engine would possibly injure it beyond repair. The subject stated that the object's rate of climb was constant despite the steepness of its ascent."³²

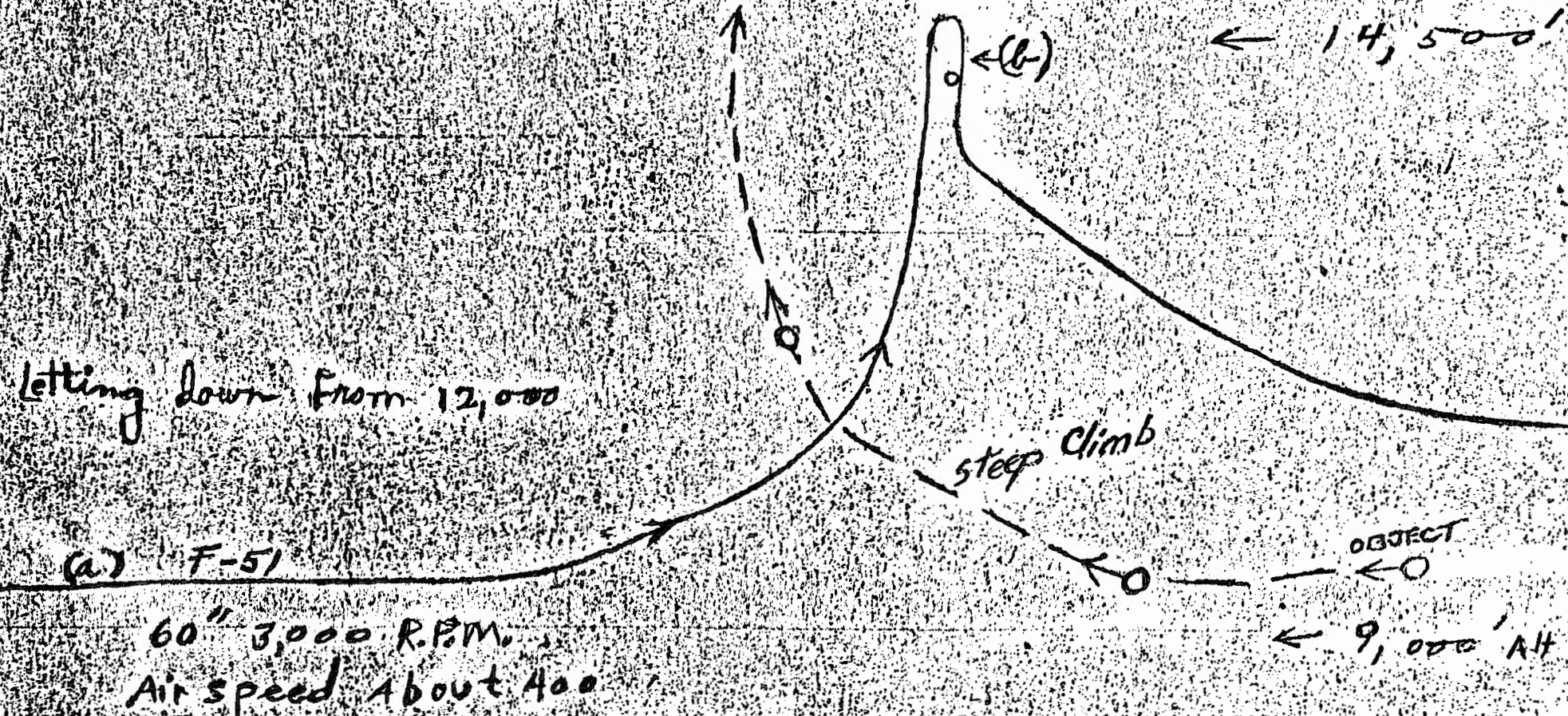
The words of Gorman about the last part of the chase bears repeating because some critics would dismiss the case on the grounds that the movements of the UFO were only an illusion caused by Gorman's disorientation as his plane maneuvered in a dark sky with no reference points, yet he needed no visual markers to tell up from down. The lieutenant flatly states that the UFO zoomed upward with him close behind, his plane hanging on its propeller. The object, he said: "... was able to attain a far steeper climb and was able to maintain a constant rate of climb far in excess of my aircraft."³³

In support of Lt. Gorman's claim that he was in pursuit of a high speed object, is the testimony of a Mr. Jensen, airport traffic controller (CAA) at Fargo Field. The summary of the interrogation cites the following:

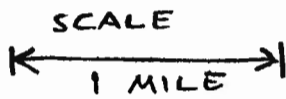
"Mr. Jensen was on duty since 1600 hours October 1, 1948, in the traffic control tower as traffic controller. There was not much traffic during the evening hours on that day, and with the exception of the P-51, there were no other airplanes from Fargo Air Field in the air. At 2050 hours, he was advised from a privately owned field south of Fargo that Piper Cub No. 707, piloted by Dr. Cannon, had taken off and had asked for permission to land

*The reader is referred to the drawing accompanying the text. The illustration has been reproduced from official Air Force Intelligence files.

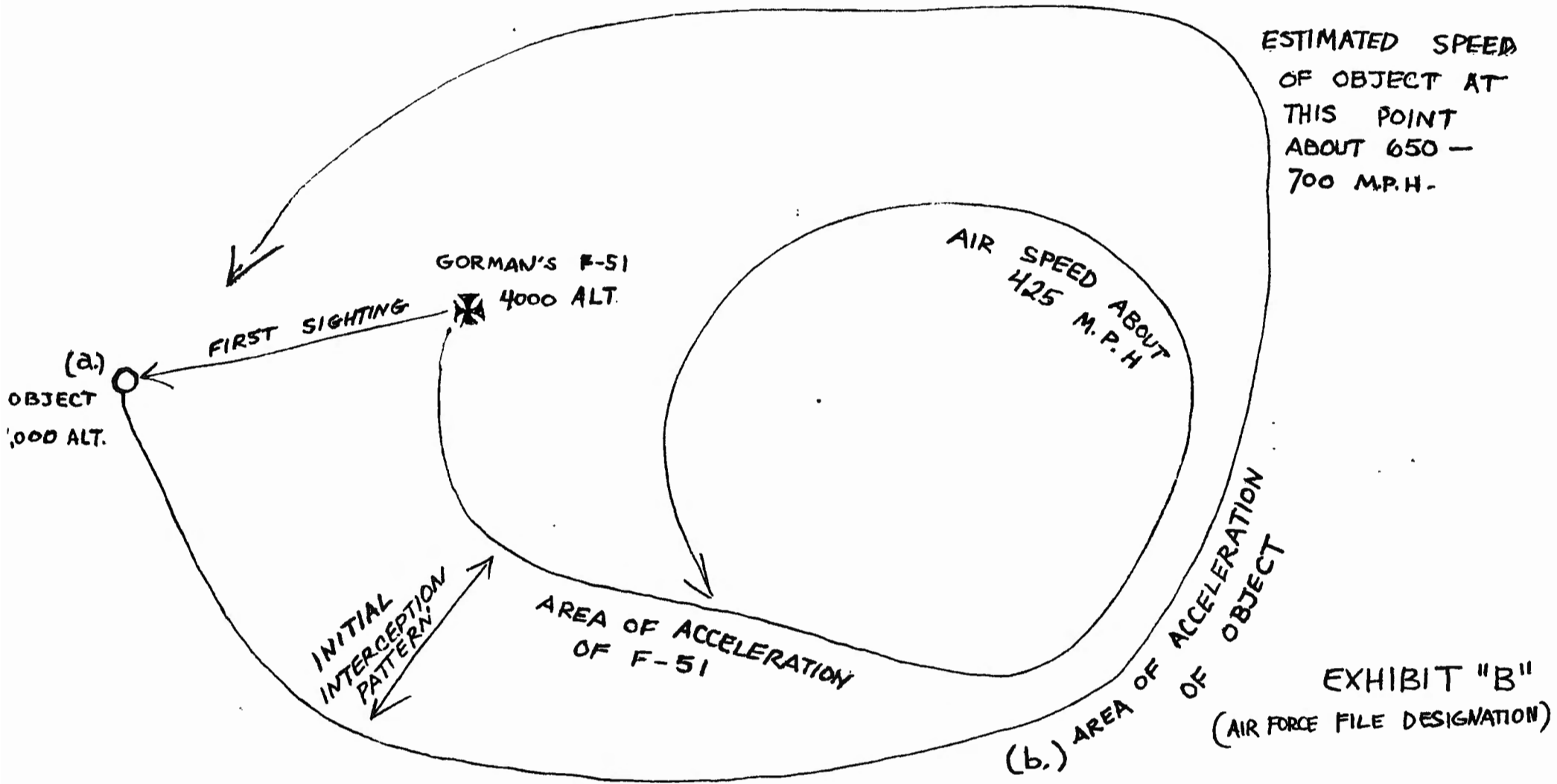
$\nearrow$ (c)
 Reproduction of
 marginal portion
 showing the right part of
 Malvern's parvate
 - tubular - 1.000.000



COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT IN AIR FORCE FILES THAT DETAILS THE FIRST PART OF GORMAN'S PURSUIT OF THE UFO.



AREA OF LEVEL FLIGHT



at Fargo Air Field to attend the ball game. At 2100 hours, Lt. Gorman called the tower, asking if any other aircraft were in the air and he was given the position of Piper Cub. Approximately 5 minutes after that, Lt. Gorman called again and stated that there was another aircraft in the air at approximately the same altitude as the Cub; however, it could not be the Cub in view of its speed. He was advised that no other aircraft was in the air from Fargo Air Field, and none other was signalled from other air fields."³⁴

Mr. Jensen is further quoted as saying:

"Lt Gorman then called in again and stated that he was going to follow the other aircraft. Mr. Jensen then stepped to the south window of the tower and at that moment saw the object, approximately 1,000 feet from the tower in a northwestern direction, passing very fast over the field. Mr. Jensen happened to have, at this particular moment, a pair of binoculars in his hand, and he watched the object as it passed over the field. He was, however, unable to distinguish any shape or form other than what appeared to be the tail light of a very fast moving craft.

Mr. Jensen did not see the maneuvers carried on by the object nor the P-51 of Lt. Gorman. He saw the object only once, and then only as it passed in a straight line over the field.

"Mr. Jensen states that approximately 10 minutes prior to Lt. Gorman's call, the Weather Station at Fargo had released a lighted weather balloon; however, the balloon was at all times in sight by Mr. Sanderson of the Weather Station, the balloon flying slowly in a westerly direction at an altitude of about 500 feet. Mr. Jensen further states that the voice of Lt. Gorman became, at times, very garbled and he had to repeatedly ask him to speak clearer. He thinks, however, that during the diving and climbing maneuvers of the P-51, Lt. Gorman's throat microphone had probably slipped."³⁵

In a letter composed by Mr. Jensen he states even more clearly the critical aspect of the case: "The P-51 was some distance behind, and the object was traveling fast enough to increase the spacing between itself and the fighter."³⁶ And further on in the letter he says: "The main identifying characteristic (of the UFO) ... was the high rate of speed at which it was apparently traveling."³⁷

For some reason there exists quite a difference between official Air Force records and an article in a National Guard magazine, the Guardian, authored by the Public Information Officer of Gorman's unit. Lt. Duane Lund, the PIO, evidently interviewed Gorman and he obtained an account of the last part of the aerial chase that departs significantly from the composite account compiled by the Air Force Intelligence agents. According to Lt. Lund, after stalling out at 14,000 feet, Lt. Gorman said he then leveled

out. The light, meanwhile, had outclimbed Gorman's P-51. If the light had been a mere balloon (make that a rather fast-climbing balloon), then it should have kept rising out of sight. The Guardsman article states that the light did not rise out of sight but instead: "... the light came back to Lieutenant Gorman's altitude. He turned, dropping to 11,000 feet, where the light made a quick turn and tried another head-on pass. Then in a final burst of speed, it went straight up and out of sight."³⁸ The "balloon" in this case dropped some 3,000 feet in a very short time!

The assistant Airport Traffic Controller, whose name has been deleted from official files, testified:

"The object in question was first noticed just east of the airport, and appeared to be on a north heading. After passing to the east of the airport it seemed to take up a northwest heading. The object seemed to be about two thousand feet and appeared to be traveling at quite an excessive speed compared to a Piper Cub that was east of the field at the time. No definite outline could be identified. Both objects were noticed at the same time."³⁹

The pilot of the Piper Cub, a doctor whose name was also deleted from official files, gave the following account:

"A gentleman and myself took off from Sky Ranch Flying Field which is five miles south of Hector Airport, at eight-forty P.M. to do a little night flying. We were in a two-way radio connection with the tower at Hector Airport. I was doing the flying and --- (deleted) was using the phones and while circling the Football Field at the A.C. at 1600 feet, the Fargo tower advised us there was a P-51 in the air and a few moments later asked who the third plane might be. We had noticed the P-51 and when we were over the north side of Hector Field going west, a light seemingly on a plane flared above and to the North moving very swiftly toward the west. At first we thought it was the P-51 higher and more over the field. We landed on runway three and taxied into the Add building and went up to the tower and listened to the calls from the P-51 which seemed to be trying to overtake the plane or lighted object which went southward and over the city. The (UFO) plane was moving very swiftly, much faster than the P-51. I tried to get a better view with a pair of binoculars but couldn't follow it well enough. The P-51 landed and we took off just ahead of a northwest plane and landed at Sky Ranch and registered on the flying sheet at 10:20 P.M. I saw the light and the P-51 at the same time. The light seemed to be outside of the circles made by the P-51."⁴⁰

Latter day examinations of the case produced controversy:

"Dr. James E. McDonald, University of Arizona, atmospheric physicist, stated in 1970: 'Although the pilot-balloon light became the official explanation there are a number of explicit statements in the

Blue Book file that thoroughly discount that hypothesis.' Menzel (UFO critic and professor of astronomy at Harvard) acknowledged the difficulty by deciding: 'that there were two objects responsible for the illusion'--a balloon and the planet Jupiter. Gorman was at times seeing a lighted balloon, and at other times 'very probably a mirage of the planet Jupiter.'"⁴¹

The fear that the military might well be dealing with a high performance atomic-powered device, an apprehension that intensified over the next few months, is illustrated by the briefing conducted concerning the Geiger radioactivity check of Gorman's P-51. Captain Robert Sneider and Mr. Loedding, Technical Assistant to MCIAXO, both of Project SIGN, were briefed by a Major Carl B. Lindstrand, Chief, Electronics Section, and Mr. Lawrence H. Truettner, Aeronautical Engineer, Chief of the Guided Missile Branch. Specifically, it was Major Lindstrand who advised that positive indications of excessive radioactivity in the subject airplane would have to be thirty to forty times normal readings. It was also suggested that Gorman be given blood tests over a four week period since exposure to radioactivity affected blood count. Results, however, were negative.⁴²

A careful interrogation revealed that the first assertion to the effect that Gorman did not perceive the UFO's configuration was not justified. Air Force evaluators wrote in a later report that:

"A check with MCIA personnel involved in this case and Project SIGN disclosed that their concept of the configuration was spherical or 'ball-like.' Furthermore, it was officially reported and recorded as such. Actually the configuration is round, but flat or 'disc-like.' Major Kubabla stated that according to the direct question and answer interrogation, by Major Jones, NDNG, Commanding Officer, that the disc-like or round-flat configuration would have to be accepted in lieu of the apparently indirect and assumed 'ball-like' shape. This error on the part of the Intelligence Department could cause some serious embarrassment and repercussions."⁴³

Contemporary evaluations were reduced to a series of questions, the last of which was sensational. Under the heading: "Recommendations," it states:

- "1) That scientific and technical analysis of known factors in this and similar cases be continued so that data may be compiled to prove or disprove the following allegations:
 - a. Is it or is it not, possible for an object without appreciable shape or known aeronautical configuration (and which appears to possess sensing capabilities) to appear to travel at variable speeds and maneuver intelligently.
 - b. From the technical standpoint, to what degree is it possible to draw upon rumored

- present-day attainments (foreign or domestic) in the fields of equipment, propulsion, fuels, electronics (radar control), atomic research, and any other applicable field, to account for the aforesaid flying characteristics attributed this small missile.
- c. To what degree does ball lightning phenomena approximate the flying characteristics attributed to this missile.
 - d. From the aero-medical viewpoint, to what degree is it possible for a human being (utilizing pressurized cabins, flying equipment, etc.,) to accomplish the reported abrupt turns and extreme degrees of ascent at terrific speeds described in the foregoing."⁴⁴

The final point "e" asked:

- "e. Is it plausible to assume possible inter-planetary visitations?"⁴⁵

Since Lt. Gorman was on active duty with the National Guard, the Fargo incident would never have made a splash in the newspapers if the Commanding Officer of the air squadron had not taken it upon himself to release the story to the press; an example of liberality unthinkable in later years. Lt. Gorman's CO, Major D. C. Jones, had a subordinate draw up and deliver a statement to the local newspaper, The Fargo Forum. The Forum headlined the UFO "Kamikaze" case and the incident was picked up by the national news services, so when Project SIGN investigators arrived on the scene, The Fargo Forum headlined the appearance of the military authorities from Air Force Intelligence. Annoyed, the Air Force agents clamped a lid on any more dissemination of information to the news media.⁴⁶

"Wild hysteria:"

When Major Jones got into hot water over his liberal handling of the UFO story, he composed a letter to Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, explaining his actions to the high brass there. He wrote that he was: "... cognizant of the fact that reports of this nature are classified material, and the fact that a number of civilians were aware of the alleged engagement which Lt. Gorman had with the object, so it was necessary that a press release be made in order to avoid an exaggerated account being printed and a consequent wild hysteria."⁴⁷

Out of Dayton, Ohio, came a more "official" comment about the Fargo incident. Needless to say, the words were more carefully chosen:

"Today Colonel C. H. Welch, public relations officer of the Air Materiel Command, said he wished the public to know the Army was investigating such reports, regardless of the place or type of occurrence.

"That way," he said, "the public can be assured there's nothing going on we don't know about."

"The Colonel said Wright Field officers were in Fargo, N.D., Sunday, investigating a report of a National Guard officer who claimed he chased and did aerial maneuvers with a lighted disc-like object which outran and outmaneuvered him.

"Asked the results of the investigation, the Colonel said: 'Nothing to report.'

"Then he explained military intelligence is charged with investigating any reports regarding such 'flying discs' and that the matter is purely routine in nature.

"If one of these things turned out to be something strange and new--the public will be informed,' he said. Otherwise, he added, reports of such investigating teams remains the property of military intelligence."⁴⁸

Ghost Rockets over Japan:

A night fighter of the 68 squadron sped through the darkness over Japan the evening of October 15, 1948. At the controls was 1st Lt. Oliver Hemphill. He later reported to his superiors:

"... my radar observer and myself were flying a routine airborne alert mission approximately 50 miles out to sea northwest of Fukuoka, Japan. At approximately 2305 we made our first contact with our Airborne Radar Set with a target we assumed to be a P-51. We attempted a practice interception, but the target put on a tremendous burst of speed and dived so fast we were unable to stay with it. At this point the intercepting aircraft was traveling at approximately 300 mph and descending at 3500 feet per minute. This was a head-on interception. When the target passed under us we executed a chandelle back to our original altitude of approximately 6,000 feet. Our second target was immediately picked up on the scope, and a stern interception was attempted, but the aircraft immediately outdistanced us. At this time we were puzzled by the tremendous bursts of speed exhibited by the supposed P-51s. The third target was spotted visually by myself. I had an excellent silhouette of the target thrown against a very reflective undercast by a full moon. I realized at this time that it did not look like any type of aircraft I was familiar with, so I immediately contacted my Ground Control Station and asked for information regarding any aircraft flying in the area. I informed them of what I had seen and was in contact with them from then on.

"The fourth target passed directly over my ship from stern to bow at a speed of roughly twice that of my aircraft, 200 mph. I caught just a fleeting glance of the aircraft; just enough to know he had passed me. The fifth and sixth targets were attempted radar interceptions, but their high rate of speed put them immediately out of range.

"The only aircraft I can compare our targets to is the German ME-262. It was not a ME-262 or similar jet."⁴⁹

UNCLASSIFIED

Vertical Tail Surfaces very small if present. Horizontal Tail Surfaces undiscernable at observers visual angle.

Wing Size & Shape undiscernable at observers visual angle.

Power Section undiscernable

Canopy or Greenhouse if present. Formed into main body and was not discernable.

Rear of Body cut off sharply

Body length approximately the same as conventional Fighter type aircraft.

Color or Markings undiscernable other than very dull or dark finish

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIB 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED



700

1 2000000000

The other member of the two-man crew was Barton Halter, 2nd Lt., the night fighter's radar operator. He declared:

"On October 15, 1948, my pilot and I started out on a routine mission off the northwest coast of Kyushu. When at 2305 we were approximately 50 miles at 330 degrees from Fukuoka, I picked up an airborne target. It showed up at a range of five miles, dead ahead and slightly below us. We increased our speed to approximately 220 mph and obtained an advantage of 20 mph. The target showed no evasive action at first, and we thought that it was probably one of the fighter aircraft from our home field. As we closed in, I noticed a slight change in azimuth and a rapid closure between us. Shortly thereafter, a matter of seconds, the target gave the indication of diving beneath us. We dived in an attempt to follow, it had passed beneath us and was gone. I was notified by my pilot that we were diving at a rate of 3500 feet a minute at 300 mph. I had intended to ask the pilot to peel off after it split 'S', but it was gone too fast.

"The next, or second, interception was from the rear of the target as was the first; however, the target added a burst of speed dead ahead and out-distanced us immediately. On the third interception, my pilot called a visual at 60 degrees port-side. By the time I made the pickup it was at 45 degrees port 3,000 feet and 5 degrees below. My pilot made a rapid starboard turn in an attempt to head off the target. By the time we got astern of it, it was off again in a burst of speed and disappeared between nine and ten miles.

"On the fourth interception, the pilot called to me that we had been passed from above from the rear by our target. I picked up the target as it went off my scope from five to ten miles dead ahead and slightly above. On the fifth and sixth interceptions, the target appeared at 9 miles doing approximately 200 mph. We had an advantage of 20 mph making our IAS approximately 200 mph, a safe high speed cruise for F-61 aircraft. We closed in to 12,000 feet; then, with a burst of speed the target pulled away to the outer limit of my set which is 10 miles for airborne targets. This took approximately 15 to 20 seconds.

"In my opinion, we were shown a new type aircraft by some agency unknown to us."⁵⁰

When all the facts were in on this case the experts were a bit baffled by the lack of ground radar coverage:

"Interceptor aircraft visible to ground radar only periodically as it flew in and out of permanent ground return area in which search was conducted. Time of pickup of interceptor by ground radar not logged since pickup was identified each time as friendly

and log on friends are not kept. Radar return in each instance was clear enough to establish if recognition, and was clear for each pickup out of the ground return area. It is firmly established that the only object detected at any time by ground radar at site one was the F-61. There were no jet aircraft of this Command airborne at the time of the sighting."⁵¹

UFO expert Edward Ruppelt stated that this case was one of the first to attain the distinction of being rated a good radar return report,⁵² but it is obvious complex radar questions arise if the incident is to be considered a true unknown. As Air Material Command later put it: "There is no apparent explanation. One discrepancy seems to be that the target was never seen by ground radar, which was operating and had the F-61 in sight throughout the period of the sighting."⁵³

Until 1980, at which time the Pentagon announced the development of a method of making aircraft invisible to radar (the STEALTH program), the ability to mask one's ship from radar seemed pure fantasy. In 1948 the possibility was unsettling to the Air Force experts. They could only ask: "... was it (the UFO) running into normal skip 'null' zones affecting appearances on the scopes of all aircraft?"⁵⁴

The reply to that read: "The pilot and the observer feel that it was the high rate of speed of the object which enabled it to disappear so rapidly."⁵⁵

As for the ground radar stations, perhaps the UFO used some sort of STEALTH type of absorbent material in its makeup. One notes the visual description of the UFO given by witnesses states that the object in question appeared dull or translucent. Granted that this was so, however, the system used was selective in its ability to fend off electromagnetic waves because: "The return on the airborne radar scope was the same as that from a conventional aircraft."⁵⁶

The experts pondered the possibility that a sophisticated flying device had been encountered: "The object seemed cognizant of the whereabouts of the F-61 at all times which might indicate that it carried radar warning equipment."⁵⁷

While we are on the subject of radar, it should be noted that a number of strange radar blips were tracked at Goose Bay, Labrador, at the end of October 1948, and author Donald Keyhoe indicates in his writings that the incidents were worth consideration yet a check of the Air Force's documents on the cases show that the supposed targets were not seen by the naked eye, were recorded very near the radar site, moved slow, and were only tracked a short distance. All told, some sort of equipment malfunction was probably responsible.⁵⁸

Strange doings in the U.S. Southwest.

A narrative summary:

"On 24th Oct. --- (deleted) noticed a very strange star or fireball in the Eastern sky. It was green and she thought at first that it was a plane. It moved very slowly south, then slightly north as if it were uncertain as to which way to go. It slowly changed its course to Northwest. It took at least 75 minutes for the object to cross over Phoenix (Arizona). It seemed to be drawn to other stars, and when it came close to them it would become very bright. Everytime the star would light up and leave the other star it would be dimmer. Finally she could hardly see it. When she thought it had completely disappeared it suddenly became very bright and fell apart."59

Official evaluators made some obvious comments but they did not dismiss the report outright because of other "green sky objects" that would visit the region:

"This incident as described is not amenable to any astronomical explanation. The object took 75 minutes to cross the sky. The witness apparently is not a very critical observer since there could be no possible physical connection between the object's brightness and its apparent distance from a star. The object could have been a lighted balloon; speed and maneuvers check."60

"A definite clue?"

A member of the Fortean Society named Molesworth; as early as 1948, divined that UFO activity occurred in yearly cycles. His musing went: "One is tempted to examine further the files around July-August being certain to find...such objects interpreted in terms of 'brilliant meteors.'"61 Molesworth had crept nearer to official conjecture than he could suspect.

According to a document in the files of the FBI certain high-ranking military authorities were warned by the Air Force on November 1, 1948, that strange aerial phenomena was occurring periodically in the Southwest and another such flurry was imminent. A search of Air Force files confirms this. A teletype report dated simply "OCT. 48" reads:

"STATISTICAL DATA FOR PROJECT SIGN IS SUBJECT PD THIS HQ REVEALS THAT GROUPS OF SIGHTINGS OCCUR AT PERIODIC INTERVALS PD BEGINNING OF INTERVAL IMMINENT PD REQUEST ALL UNITS CMA AGENCIES AND DEPT OF AF CMA NAVY AS WELL AS PERTINENT CIVIL AGENCIES BE ALERTED TO SIGHTINGS OF UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL OBJECTS PD REPLY DIRECT TO MCIAXD DASH THREE AMC PD REQUEST ALL AFFECTED AGENCIES TAKE VIGOROUS ACTION TO INITIATE SPEEDY REPORTING SYSTEM PD WHERE POSSIBLE INITIATE INVESTIGATIVE ACTION WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS PLACED ON ACCUMULATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF REPORTED SIGHTINGS PD REQUEST THAT THIS HQ INFORMED OF ACTION TAKEN AND NATURE OF RESPONSE PD."62

As early as May 1948, the magazine Popular Science had as a cover story the full details on Project SKYHOOK, the huge 206,000 cubic foot balloons sent aloft by the Aeronautical Research Laboratories of General Mills. Annexed to the essay were a few comments that suggested that hitherto secret balloons might account for some saucer sightings. The real secret behind the plastic giants exploring the roof of the airways however was not the balloon but the spy cameras attached for snooping on regions behind the Iron Curtain. The true purpose of the Skyhooks remained cloaked from unauthorized persons for some time. This is illustrated by a November 3, 1948, entry in Air Force UFO files. It seems that there had been a determined pursuit of a "giant intestine" wafting through the thin air over 40,000 feet by two Mustang fighters. The weird thing was identified as a "cosmic ray equipment carrier (a Skyhook)" by a Coast Guard officer stationed at an installation just outside Salem, Mass., who managed to trace the balloon's origin to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Strategic Air Command tried to convince the Air Defense Command the thing was just a "heavenly body" misidentified, but when the rational answer surfaced, the Skyhook theory, Air Force Intelligence sought to downgrade the report's classification, but to the Strategic Air Command experts this was unsatisfactory and they made a request that the "... original messages be destroyed."⁶³

The Gorman-UFO aerial dogfight of October had a very sobering effect on military Intelligence. If one accepted these aerial objects as real then it was painfully apparent the military's best machines were outclassed. This point was made again on November 18th:

"At approximately 2200 hours Lt. Henry G. Combs sighted an object flying on a 360 degree course from west to east over Andrews AF Base. The object had one continuous glowing white light. Combs thought it was an aircraft with the wing navigation lights turned off or burned out. He then made a pass to check. The object then took evasive action. First contact established at 1700 feet over Andrews AFB. When the object started taking evasive action, Combs switched wing and tail navigation lights off. Maneuvering his ship so that his exhaust flame would not be noticed in an effort to get the object on his left he proceeded to close in but the object quickly flew up and over his aircraft. Then Combs attempted to maneuver the object between his ship and the light of the moon. This was done by making a very tight 360 degree turn with flaps down while making a steady climb. The object was able to turn inside of Comb's aircraft even under this condition. Another amazing feature was the quick variation of airspeed from 80 MPH to 500 to 600 MPH. Combs remained in contact with the object for some 10 minutes with the object between the lights of Washington, D.C. and his aircraft. He could only see an oblong ball

with one light and no wings and no exhaust flame. Trying to close in again he remained in sight of it up to 6,000 feet, then down to 3,500 feet to 4,000 feet but it always easily evaded him. Then Combs climbed up underneath the object within 300 to 400 feet. He then turned his landing lights on it. It had a very dull gray glow to it and was oblong in shape as mentioned before. The object then performed a very tight curve and headed for the East coast at 500 to 600 MPH."⁶⁴

Two lieutenants watched the aerial encounter from a point on the ground near Andrews AFB, a K.W. Jackson and a G. L. Stalker. They corroborated what Lt. Combs said about his sky duel.⁶⁵

Here is the statement of a witness on the ground, a 2nd Lt. Kenwood W. Jackson:

"It was flying from northeast to southwest across Andrews Field at 1700 feet. Plane then descended from 4,000 feet to same altitude as object which was then coming back across Andrews Field from the southwest on a northeast heading. Object and plane then flew in circles, object an outer circle. Plane followed it to 7,000 feet. While climbing plane made 3 to 4 passes at the object to identify it. As plane descended at approximately 240 MPH object would then climb vertically, drop below plane from behind and continued circling the field. In a last effort the plane switched on a landing light and the object momentarily gave off a dull glow. It appeared oval with no wings and no tail surfaces. After the object was sighted in the landing light, it headed to the northeast climbing rapidly. Plane lost sight of object at 8,000 feet; the time was then 22:03. Weather at the time: CAVU--no clouds, haze, or smoke."⁶⁶

S/Sgt. John J. Kushner's account is on record in this matter:

"Sgt. Kushner was on ground duty when he heard a noise. Turning his head in the direction of the sound he saw a shining object coming across the sky. It made a sound similar to a P-47 only twice as loud. It seemed to him to be coming from the direction of the 2238th Engineering Hanger across the field toward Hanger #1. It wasn't very high. It couldn't have been a P-47 and witness did not see an exhaust. Shortly afterwards, he heard the same noise only higher up over the field. He stated the object did not resemble an aircraft."⁶⁷

Official comment went:

"That the object described was a synoptic balloon. Dr. Fitt's report shows that it is very

difficult for the observer to separate target motion and his own motion even in daylight, and practically impossible to do so at night. This fact has been substantiated by the writer, who in controlled experiments attacked ordinary balloons with a T-6. In daylight, and with knowledge of what the object was and what it did, all the above described maneuvers were duplicated in appearance.⁶⁸

The reader can examine the witnesses' statements and then ponder the AMC opinion before making up his own mind. The only thing that is really clear is that one should refrain from making a snap judgment either pro or con in regards to the balloon theory. Before leaving this case it is interesting to note that military evaluators mused a possible correlation with Blue Book case number 172, the Gorman incident of October 1st. The military experts wrote:

"The similarity of the incident to #172 is striking, and it suggests a common origin for the objects. The two incidents were separated by a month and a half and by half a continent. The hours of observation were about the same. It may be significant that ground observers in each incident did not report the evasive tactics described by air observers, and it is tempting to hazard the guess that such tactics were largely the result of relative motion. It should be investigated whether a lighted balloon caught in the prop wash could give the appearance of a rapidly-maneuvering aircraft. In fact, this investigator believes that it would be an interesting experiment to have a typical lighted balloon engaged by aircraft at night, with a competent observer along to record apparent relative tactics of the balloon. It is not clear whether the two observers in this incident who reported evasive tactics were in the same plane, or not, but it is presumed that they were."⁶⁹

That the Pentagon still harbored feelings Canadian reports were of potential importance was illustrated by the slapping of a SECRET label on a UFO file originating from the province of Alberta dated November 17th. The "thing" was reported by a military aircrew:

"The crew was flying at 7,000 feet MSL on top of an overcast when the object was sighted. Altitude was judged as approximately 18,000 feet and the object appeared in a shallow dive. There was no sound. The object (shaped like an egg with a flaming tail)...was on a southwest heading at an unknown speed. As it passed it momentarily illuminated the sky behind it."⁷⁰

Just when the Russian idea appeared unlikely, a report like the above created doubts that continued to linger.

The same day as the Lt. Combs--UFO incident, November 18th, Brigadier General Putt, USAF, Director of Research and Development, contacted a "Mr. Collbohm," of the RAND corporation, a civilian expert of an unnamed specialty, in the hope he could be some assistance in solving the saucer problem.⁷¹ Apparently this move was in compliance with "Air Force Letter No. 80-10," which was dated July 21, 1948 and which authorized a contractual hiring of scientists to: "... evaluate the remote possibility that some of the observed objects may be space ships or satellite vehicles."⁷²

On November 24th the same "Mr. Collbohm" replied to General Putt. We know only a portion of what the letter contained and that portion was an agreement to evaluate the possible "performance" and "design" of envisioned craft capable of travel in space.⁷³ Apparently these secret exchanges dealt with the Air Force's insistence in pursuing the extraterrestrial hypothesis in spite of General Vandenburg's put down of the idea, but it could as well have been an attempt to establish guidelines for proof that could meet with the General's objections. Needless to say, the effort to obtain physical evidence continued to be a high priority activity.

On December 3, 1948, a mysterious "wheel of fire" spun out of the sky and landed on the lawn in front of the home of a Bellefontaine, Ohio citizen by the name of W. C. Donahue. The smoldering mass burned with an intense light and gave off considerable smoke. Several people witnessed the object's earthward plunge, among them a W. H. Reynolds, who described the visitor from the sky as being the size of an automobile tire and that: "... it went past his house and then fell." Bellefontaine police investigated but could find only ashes where the fiery thing had alighted, except for what appeared to be: "... a light metal ring which disintegrated when touched."⁷⁴ Police Chief A. D. Paden phoned Air Force Intelligence headquarters at Wright-Patterson in the hope the military experts could identify the remains of the "flaming wheel." Colonel C. H. Welch answered the call and expressed considerable interest, saying that the Air Force was anxious to examine any remains. Headquarters, USAF, Office of Intelligence Requirements (AFOIF), Washington, D.C. requested an immediate analysis of the Bellefontaine material.⁷⁵ Small fragments were put into an envelope and mailed to Wright-Patterson.⁷⁶ A teletype message dated December 7th from Wright-Patterson to Washington, D.C. referred to the "flaming wheel" of Bellefontaine as "probably" a common pistol flare after preliminary inquiries, an assumption that proved true after lab tests.⁷⁷ Before leaving this topic of strange sky debris, we should take note of some testimony more interesting than the Bellefontaine case.

Death of a Disc?

Moonless and clear, only the tiny diamonds of the Milky Way provided a feeble illumination of an otherwise carbon-black

night. R. J. Strong, a professional engineer, and his missus, were returning from a writer's conference at Northwestern University, motoring home on a road several miles southwest of Evanston, Illinois. No other cars were in sight. The clock on the dashboard crept close to 12:00 p.m., the hour of goblins, ghosts, and things that go bump in the night.

A "green star" detached itself from the heavenly vault and slipped downward in a gentle descent. It eased to a halt about 80 yards from the Strong's auto. Both he and his wife were fascinated and stopped to observe. Floating 250 feet above them and off to the right was a disc-shaped thing four feet in diameter and some 20 inches thick. Mr. Strong noticed that the bottom was a parabolic bulge and seemed to be burning with a brilliant green light, not in the normal sense, but like intense radioactivity. What looked to be "corona rays" extended out from the undersurface an inch and a half. The top surface, just visible, since it was viewed at a 45 degree angle, emitted a dull reddish glow like hot iron. No corona could be detected on that portion so Strong assumed the greenish-lit area on the bottom produced a propulsion force of some sort because of the apparent greater emission of radiant energy.

After what may have been ten minutes, the emission of green rays dimmed at one place near the edge of the disc which evidently led to structural weakening at the spot because a red glowing chunk broke free and fell to the ground. The equilibrium of the hovering object disturbed, it fluttered a bit. The waning of the green spread and more jagged fragments fell away, each some three to four inches in size, creating a steady cascade of glowing embers. Soft thuds of the charcoal crimson lumps striking the earth were the only sounds to be heard during the eerie fireworks. In 40 seconds the circular shape was no more, leaving the heavens an inky emptiness aside from the familiar stars.

The sight excited wonder in the Strong's. Mr. Strong turned the headlights of the car on and pointed the vehicle at the field where the embers had come down. A high fence blocked their vision and discouraged a personal investigation of the disc remains so the couple marked the roadside and drove on to Chicago. Pressing business engagements prevented a return to the site. Aside from the writer's conference, Strong could not think of any clue to the date of the forementioned occurrence other than that it took place a few years prior to 1952.⁷⁸

More eerie fireworks.

The U.S. Southwest loomed large in the swelling UFO mystery in 1948. Intelligence agents took extra care to document suspect occurrences in the sensitive high security region of atomic laboratories and rocket testing installations. Besides the curious repeat falling objects sighted by a Colonel Hayes, an outbreak of another mysterious series of sky events took place. Late in 1948 these strange occurrences became so common they drew attention at an increasing rate. On December 5th, at 9:30 p.m. Air Force Flight 9921, a C-47 piloted by a Captain

Goade, was cruising 10 miles east of Albuquerque, New Mexico, when he saw something odd and radioed Kirtland AFB. He told Kirtland tower he had seen a strange flare-like object soaring skyward, launching itself from a site somewhere among the slopes of the Sandia Mountain range. Captain Goade also related the fact that he had witnessed something similar a half hour before in the air west of Las Vegas, New Mexico. In fact, a dozen other persons reported flare-like objects between the times of 7:30 to 11:15 p.m. The sky phenomena was spotted from vantage points in Albuquerque, Onava, Lucy, and Levy, all cities in the state of New Mexico.⁷⁹

It so happened that there were some more pilot-witnesses on December 5th which were the pilot and co-pilot of the airliner Pioneer Flight #63. Interrogated at Pioneer Airline Operations at Kirtland Field, the two pilots stated that, as they approached Las Vegas, New Mexico, at 9,000 feet, a bright white-colored flash occurred above and ahead of their C-47. Attracted to the flash the flyers quickly sighted a whitish-orange object that appeared to be on a collision course with their plane but the "light" suddenly arched downward and vanished at the last second.⁸⁰

The fact that things were astir in the heavens over New Mexico on December 5th grew more interesting when another report came in from a location to the north. The report read: "On 5 December 1948 while traveling on U.S. Highway 160, in the vicinity of Blanca, Colorado (This was a civilian observer), a fireball was observed. Moving horizontally and westerly at a very fast rate of speed, it appeared to be a bright green." This witness claimed he had seen a similar sky object earlier on September 12th which: "... did not fall but 'went out in midair.'"⁸¹ One fireball over Blanca was interesting but two seemed very odd indeed.

The next night, December 6th, a security guard at Sandia Base watched a strange sight after he had pulled up to a stop sign at an intersection. A "greenish flare" one-third the size of the full Moon streaked by in a slight arc.⁸²

Military Intelligence contacted civilian and governmental aviation and research facilities in the New Mexico region to determine an "applicable explanation" but discovered nothing to explain the reported phenomenon.⁸³

On December 8th the "flare" problem became very real for two of the OSI agents. They witnessed one first hand. Their names are deleted from the official report but it is known from other files that they were agents Neef and Stahl. The report states:

"... (Neef and Stahl) both rated pilots took off from Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, in a T-7 type aircraft. At 1833 while flying at an indicated altitude of 11,500 feet, mean sea level, approximately 5,000 feet above the terrain, a strange phenomenon was observed. The exact position of the aircraft at the time of the observation was 35 degrees 31' North--104 degrees 51' West, approximately twenty miles east of the

Las Vegas, New Mexico, radio range station. At the time of the observation the aircraft was flying on a compass course of 90 degrees, the indicated air-speed was one hundred ninety miles per hour. --- (deleted) was flying as pilot and seated on the left side of the cockpit. --- (deleted) was flying as co-pilot and was seated on the right side of the cockpit. --- (deleted) first observed the phenomenon and a split second later --- (deleted) saw it. At an estimated altitude of 2,000 feet higher than the airplane or 13,500 feet above mean sea level a brilliant green light was observed coming toward the airplane at a rapid rate of speed from approximately 30 degrees to the left of course, from 60 degrees ENE, to 240 degrees WSW. The object was similar in appearance to a burning green flare of common use in the Air Forces. However, the light was much more intense and the object appeared to be considerably larger than a normal flare. No estimate can be made of the distance or the size of the object since no other object was visible upon which to base a comparison. The object was definitely larger and more brilliant than a shooting star, meteor, or flare. The trajectory of the object when first sighted was almost flat and parallel to the earth. The phenomenon lasted approximately two seconds at the end of which the object seemed to burn out. The trajectory then dropped off rapidly and a trail of glowing fragments reddish orange in color was observed falling toward the ground. The fragments were visible for less than a second before disappearing. The phenomenon was of such intensity as to be visible from the very moment it ignited and was observed a split second later. It was not possible for the phenomenon to have been visible for longer than a split second before observation ... after the occurrence the aircraft remained in the same vicinity for approximately one and one-half hours but no further phenomena were observed."84

The following day Special Agent Stahl again took to the air, this time in the afternoon (4:35), and conducted an aerial search of the terrain where the strange sky phenomenon of the previous evening had seemingly fragmented in midair. Nothing unusual was detected in the area.

Extensive investigations were launched. State and city police were questioned but only a patrolman Noland Utz of San Miguel County had knowledge of anything and it only amounted to the overhearing of a conversation between several lawmen concerning "aerial flares" in the neighborhood of Las Vegas. Beyond that patrolman Utz could not offer additional information or identify the lawmen involved. A Las Vegas civilian flying service was checked with negative results. OSI agents then talked with CAA officials stationed at the Las Vegas Municipal Airport

about any recent, or previously reported, sky phenomenon. Again nothing of consequence was learned. Four of the CAA Aircraft Communicators were briefed as to any future reports of "flare activity." Air Force records include the following interesting sentence: "All of these four men agreed to maintain this information on a discreet basis and to handle the information as being highly classified."⁸⁵ Likewise, when the situation was discussed with two officials of Pioneer Airlines at the company's Las Vegas office, one of the officials remarked: "... he did not feel like confiding in his two assistants, since they were very youthful and would undoubtedly disclose information regarding this investigation."⁸⁶ This official added that he would brief another Pioneer executive at present out of town as to: "... the confidential classification of this investigation."⁸⁷ The head of the Santa Fe National Forest Service was contacted, a Mr. William Brainard, who said that nothing of the described nature of mysterious "flares" had come to his attention since his assignment to the Santa Fe post in February 1948.⁸⁸

Dr. Lincoln La Paz,* who had been consulted back in March, 1948, by the Air Force concerning meteor activity, naturally found himself embroiled in the New Mexico "flare problem." On the afternoon of December 9th, Special Agent Melvin E. Neef had a conference with Dr. La Paz. The professor agreed that the reported phenomenon was indeed of an unusual nature, therefore, Dr. La Paz made plans for a systematic observation of the Gemini meteor shower. His reasoning went:

"I felt certain that the observed phenomena somehow must be connected with the Gemini meteors which reach their maximum activity between December 10th and 12th, but are frequently seen in considerable numbers as early as December 3-4."⁸⁹

Dr. Lincoln La Paz later received a letter from a student enrolled at the University of New Mexico relevant to an observation on December 5th, a date of special interest in regards to the appearance of the "flares." The letter's contents are summarized below:

*Dr. Lincoln La Paz was Director of the Institute of Meteoritics and Head of the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy at the University of New Mexico. He was Research Mathematician at the New Mexico Proving Grounds under an OSRD appointment in 1943 and 1944, and Director of the Operations Analysis Section, Headquarters, Second Air Force, 1944-45. In 1948, Dr. La Paz served on a voluntary basis as consultant for the District in connection with the "green fireball" investigations.

He was also closely associated in an official capacity with Dr. H. S. Landsberg, Executive Director, Committee on Geophysics and Geography, Research and Development Board, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. In connection with this capacity he had a secret and top secret clearance by the Air Material Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

"At about 2000 hours, 5 December 1948, while walking along the west side of Varsity Village, a University housing area, --- (deleted) saw a bright green 'meteor.' The color was a brilliant green, as in a traffic signal or a neon tube. There was a definite area to the object; i.e., it was not merely a point of light. The size was very hard to determine, but was estimated at one third that of Venus when that planet is visible in the daytime. --- (deleted) discounted any claim of accuracy as to the size, however, saying that he could not definitely say. The object appeared in the western sky, vertically to about five degrees. There was a definite corona or halo effect, but no sparks or trail were produced. The sky was hazy and there was some cloud cover at the time of the sighting, but --- (deleted) did not recall the extent of the cloudiness. No stars were visible in the part of the sky where the 'meteor' was observed.⁹⁰

On December 9th Air Force Special Agents John J. Stahl, Jr., Herman N. Munroe, and Melvin E. Neef, summoned Colonel William P. Hays, Infantry, Civilian Component Affairs Officer, New Mexico Military District, for an interview at Building T-25 on Kirtland Air Force Base. Colonel Hays was quizzed about his reports of repeated sightings of strange fireballs in the vicinity of Vaughn, New Mexico, a curious case of repetition not to be ignored if true. He said he did not check the terrain after the sightings so he did not know if any fragments of the fireball were in the area:

"Colonel Hays first observed an unusual aerial phenomena during the latter part of 1947. This occurred in the vicinity of Vaughn, N.M. The phenomena appeared approximately 400 - 500 feet above the ground when first observed and was descending slowly and steadily in a vertical manner toward the earth. It appeared slightly larger than a basketball, bright white in color like a miniature sun. At a point approximately 200 feet above the surface of the earth, the object appeared to explode although no noise was apparent. By this time the Colonel had stopped his automobile and had gotten out to watch the object. The explosion or disintegration appeared to be taking place some 40 to 60 yards distant and still no noise was noticed. At this time the fragments assumed a fiery red color and descended toward the earth like numerous sparks being extinguished before touching the ground. At this time Colonel Hays was on Highway 60, near a railroad and separated from the vicinity where the fragments were landing by a fence. He did not cross the fence or investigate further."⁹¹

It should be noted, a year later this same Colonel reported another such occurrence right after the official paper about "periodicity" was filed. The file reads:

"On 3 or 4 Nov 48 at approximately 2130 hours he observed a ball of light, reddish-white in color, one foot in diameter, falling vertically. The ball burst 100 - 200 feet from the ground in a spray of reddish color which extinguished before reaching the ground--this occurred about 400 yards north of the road on which he was driving--10 minutes east of Vaughn, N.M.--Highway 60."92

Official comment on the repeated phenomenon at Vaughn, New Mexico, read:

"It is difficult to ascertain whether the objects described in this incident belong to the general group of 'New Mexico green flashes,' or not. The description here is sufficiently different from the majority to indicate that they do not: the characteristic green color is not mentioned.

"It is improbable, however, that the three separate sightings, all occurring at approximately 2200 hours and in the same locality, can be explained as astronomical phenomena. Furthermore, the stated altitude and distance are entirely out of keeping; this fact might be discounted as an illusion, common in the observation of fireballs, if the instances were isolated. The weight of the evidence, however, inclines to the conclusion that the objects were man-made devices and part of some scientific experiments, so common in that section of the country."93

Special Agent Melvin Neef had a chat with Dr. La Paz on December 9th in the professor's office at the University of New Mexico. Air Force records tell us:

"Dr. La Paz explained the behavior of meteors and stated that these phenomena being investigated could not be explained or be considered as meteors. He advised in view of the unexplained Memphis, Tennessee incident,* the occurrence at Los Alamos, New Mexico, and the proclaimed meteoric fall in Russia,** that the present phenomena should be investigated and an attempt be made to identify them."94

After conferring with Captain Neff of the O.S.I. about the strange "fireballs" on December 9th, Lincoln La Paz typed a letter to Lt. Col. Doyle Rees, Commanding Officer of the District No. 17 Office of Special Investigations, detailing a review of the reports received up to that time and making certain recommendations for more thorough investigations of the phenomena in question. Excerpts of interest from this missive include the following:

*See the author's booklet: The UFO Riddle, 1948: January - July in that section dealing with events of May, 1948.

**This is probably in reference to the 1908 Tungus explosion. The reader is urged to check the book: The Fire Came By, by John Baxter & Thomas Atkins, Warner Books, New York, N.Y. 1967.

"On the basis of all available observational evidence, it can be stated that an extraordinarily large number of fireballs has been reported recently, not only to the agencies that I direct but to other groups carrying out meteoritic studies. In spite of well organized and persistent field searches conducted, not only by the Institute of Meteoritics but also by other organizations, there has been only one case in which the actual recovery of fallen meteorites served to confirm the supposed meteoritic origin of an observed 'fireball.'

"In addition to the evidence set forth in the preceding paragraph, the undersigned has on several occasions been requested by agencies, both military and otherwise, to express an opinion upon, or to actively investigate the occurrence of luminous phenomena, supposedly of meteoritic nature, but of such remarkable character that this explanation cannot be accepted without confirmation. In this connection, I should like to call attention to Colonel W. R. Clingerman's letters to me under the date of 23 June and 20 July 1948 and Dr. H. E. Landsberg's letter to me under the date of 30 March 1948, copies of which are enclosed herewith.

"The incidents referred to in the above paragraphs, considered in connection with the special inquiry of the Office of Special Investigations under the date of 10 December 1948, are of such a puzzling nature, and may conceivably be of such serious import that I should like to make certain recommendations for a systematic study of all such incidents."⁹⁵

At this point in La Paz's letter the professor urged that all military personnel be ordered to report any luminous phenomena and to seek help from the security guards at Sandia Base, Kirtland Air Base, Los Alamos: the New Mexico Wing of the Civil Air Patrol; Forest Rangers; and night guards at the New Mexico Proving Ground. The possibility that the general public might be tapped for information touched on a sensitive issue. Dr. La Paz wrote:

"... it is recommended that the Institute of Meteoritics be given official authorization to make public in newspapers and over radio-networks requests for observations of 'fireballs.' Such authorizations would seem to be necessary since requests of the nature alluded to, transmitted through Dr. Ward Fenley, Director of the University of New Mexico News Bureau to newspapers throughout New Mexico, in connection with the Las Vegas incident of 1020PM, on the night of 5 December 1948, were not published, apparently because of pressure from other agencies also investigating this occurrence."⁹⁶

Dr. La Paz then expressed confidence that the mystery could be unraveled, although he allowed for the unexpected and underlined such sentiments in the last part of his letter:

"... it is recommended finally that where sufficient observations have been obtained to permit a determination of the probable area of fall, under the supposition that the incident under investigation is actually meteoritic in nature, a thorough-going field search be conducted in this area in the hope of recovering fallen meteorites and of thus establishing once and for all the true nature of the incident. In this connection, some provision should be made for putting into the area of fall radio-equipped vehicles, planes and ground searchers. Our experience, even in the difficult Four Corners area* is that with these groups cooperating, an exhaustive search of an area of large size can be speedily completed."⁹⁷

LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!

Dr. La Paz was in the company of his military sponsors on December 12th, motoring down a street on Kirtland AFB when he happened to witness something first hand. In the auto that afternoon besides Dr. La Paz were a Lt. A. Clark, Kirtland AFB Intelligence Officer, a Major C. L. Phillips, Liaison Officer for the Kirtland installation, and two Atomic Energy Commission security agents from Los Alamos. Dr. La Paz just happened to glance at the sky that afternoon. Something caught his eye, and four times he yelled: "LOOK!" The auto's driver, Lt. Clark, slammed on the brakes. The passengers jumped out in time to see a green ball of fire traversing the sky horizontally until it reached a point near the end of its flight where it soundlessly broke into four fragments. Other personnel in the area noticed the sky object and Dr. La Paz collected a number of observations to calculate the object's flight path as was his usual practice. His computations indicated an object 8 - 10 miles high, travelling 8 - 12 miles per second, and visible to witnesses along a course of some 25 miles. His data, furthermore, showed something else which he took care to cite as of possible significance. He noted that if the track of the object was drawn on a map it would show that the thing, flare, meteor, or whatever: "... passed almost centrally across the Los Alamos reservation."⁹⁸ One can well imagine how the eyebrows of the Atomic Energy Commission security agents lifted after hearing that!

By the evening of December 12th, Dr. La Paz had felt he had completed his analysis of his observations. He had seen a number of meteors the nights of December 9th, 10th, 11th, and the 12th, including the strange "flare" that afternoon. Gemini meteors had never been very brilliant and after checking meteor files of his personal observations that went back as far as 1915,

*This may be a clue that La Paz was a member of the team that visited the Weafer's homestead back in August.

which listed some 414 meteor sightings, none were green or even of a greenish tint.

La Paz then made the notation:

"Subject to discovery that a new (non-Gemini) meteoric radiant emitting numerous very bright fireballs of a vivid green color (deeper and richer than the green of the beacon at the New Municipal Airport south of Santa Fe, New Mexico) has suddenly become active during the first half of December, I am now convinced the various 'green flare' incidents reported to the O.S.I. are not meteoric in nature."⁹⁹

"Less conspicuous."

The remarkably green "meteors" that emitted a vivid color of the wavelength of approximately 5218 Angstroms, showed what La Paz determined to be a "curious association" which was explained thusly:

"The three groups of anomalous greenish luminous phenomena show a curious association with well known meteor showers, although none of these meteor showers normally produce extremely bright green fireballs such as those recently observed. For example, the observation mentioned by Mr. Monnig (Incident 231) appeared near the maximum of the Quadrantid shower of early January. Mr. --- (deleted) observation of August was near the time of the Persid shower (Incident 230) and the December observations (223, 223a, 224, 226, 227) all fell in the interval covered by the Gemini shower. This relationship might indicate an attempt to render the green fireballs less conspicuous by causing them to appear only when there is considerable meteoric activity."¹⁰⁰

Authorities lost no time initiating an investigation. Project SIGN personnel entered the picture and quickly circulated a request to all Commands in the Southwest on December 17th reminding them of its authorization to demand access to information pertinent to its investigative mission. On this occasion Project SIGN agents asked for data on: "... any flights which may have been by the Flight Test Section with ram jets or other experimental types of propulsion emitting long pulses of flame, during the darkness hours..."^{101. 102. 103.}

The Base Commander of Kirtland Air Force Base advised Special Agent Melvin E. Neef that no aerial maneuvers were in progress to account for the green lights in the sky, and likewise the 4th Army Liaison Intelligence Office at Sandia Base denied that any experiments involving rockets or flares were responsible since no activity of that sort was known to his office.^{104. 105}

A routine request by O.S.I. Agent Edgar J. Bethart on December 17 asking the Base Commander of Holloman Air Force Base, Colonel Paul F. Helmick, about possible research work involving special lighting devices or flares, revealed the fact that J. Edgar

Hoover's boys were once again interested in the UFO mystery. It seems that Colonel Helmick advised the O.S.I. that Holloman AFB was doing nothing that could account for the odd "flares" being reported and just happened to add: "... that he had been contacted by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in relation to the same matter in their pursuance of the same investigation."¹⁰⁶

Analyzing the data accumulated on the "green flares" reported between December 5 - 13th, La Paz pronounced them not of a meteoric nature. He put forward the following reasons to support his opinion:

- 1) The horizontal nature of the objects' paths.
- 2) The very low altitude of the objects.
- 3) The low velocity of the objects.
- 4) No sound heard.
- 5) The objects maintained a constant brightness.
- 6) An inordinate tendency to approach from the north.
- 7) A strange correlation in time with known meteor showers although there was no apparent relationship.
- 8) A remarkable vivid green color.
- 9) Duration of visibility stayed within a narrow range.
- 10) No spark trains or dust clouds accompanied the objects.¹⁰⁷

However, the thing that would mystify him most profoundly would be the inexplicable lack of recoverable debris, the utter fruitlessness of searching for particles after one of the strange sky objects exploded.¹⁰⁸

The military evaluation of a December 20th green flash episode went:

"Dr. La Paz, who has interviewed the various observers of this incident, has stated that the object seen was not a falling meteorite. He had access to more detailed information than is contained in the typed reports offered here, and he is an expert in these matters.

"It should be noted, however, that the reports available to this investigator show many contradictions concerning the color and trajectory of the object: One observer gives the angle of fall as 45 degrees, another states that the trajectory was horizontal. Most observers indicated a bluish-white light; only one mentions the color green, which is so predominant in the New Mexico 'green flashes.'

"It is not at all certain that the object observed here belongs to the 'green flash' family of incidents."¹⁰⁹

One of the Atomic Energy Security Service Inspectors that witnessed a December 20th "flare" added some recommendations to his report on his observations. In part, he wrote:

"Certainly some attempts should be used to observe and find out about this thing from the air. It appears in the air. It disappears in the air. It might damage some of our Atomic Installations eventually if it is not a natural thing and man-controlled.

Also attempts should be made by our own personnel to observe this thing. Patrol 405 of the Reconnaissance section could be at this Point Eagle about the expected time of appearance each night. It might even be important enough to place other patrols at points of observations until this thing is understood and known about. Also in future attempts to observe this thing, radio silence should be observed under all conditions by participating personnel until the thing is sighted. However, it might be better if nothing is said over the radio in the future about it. Radio conversation, if this thing is man controlled, may give a clue to those controlling it that attempts are being made to observe it and may make difficult a discovery or an understanding of its nature. The use of radar may also aid in its discovery."110

Special Agent Jack L. Boling submitted a status report concerning the recent rash of unexplained aerial phenomena on December 22nd for local consumption, i.e., Kirtland Air Force Base and the regional O.S.I. Headquarters. He stated that the status of the special inquiry was "pending," however in the synopsis he asserted:

"Additional sightings of unexplained celestial phenomena were reported in this period (13 - 20 December). Accurate transit bearings were obtained where possible. Actual flight path plotted from north to south, with minor deviation. General data for all sightings appears to coincide. No known meteoric phenomena would give data coincident with that reported from observations."111

Dr. La Paz spent December 22nd, 23rd, and the 24th, trying to plot the course of a mysterious "green flare" reported over New Mexico, by questioning persons in cities south of Las Vegas and Albuquerque. He journeyed to Belen, Scholle, Abo, Mountainair, Willard, Encino, Vaughn, Pastura, Santa Rosa, Dilia, and Palma. His inquiries drew a blank.112

Little green men (make that meteors) from Mars?

A big hubbub over "anomalous luminous phenomena" erupted as the haunting of the skies of New Mexico intensified. Observations were more than casual as indicated by official documents:

"... a description was given of the real path through the atmosphere of green fireball of 1948, December 12, 9h 2 m (plus or minus 30s). On the basis of corresponding observations made from one station near Starvation Peak, New Mexico, and a second station near Los Alamos, New Mexico, this fireball was found to have appeared near a point with coordinates: latitude 35 degrees 50' N, longitude 106 degrees, 40' W, traversing an almost horizontal path, at a velocity of approximately 10 miles

per second. (The minimum path length consistent with the observations was found to be about 11 miles; the corresponding velocity then falling between 3 and 6 per second, depending on the duration adopted.)"113

Another case, this time a vertical fall:

"At approximately 0431, this date (December 28, 1948), while looking east from Station 108 toward Station 101, I noticed high in the sky what appeared to be a falling star, white in color, descending in a vertical path. My attention remained with the object when I noticed the rate of descent seemed slower than that of a falling star. After watching it lose altitude for several seconds, I saw it suddenly disappear with a greenish-tinged flash which momentarily illuminated a small cloud between the object and myself."114

"Observers Whose Reliabilities are not Questioned."

The observers of the "green fireballs/flashes" included various scientists, Special Agents of the Office of Special Investigations (IG) USAF, airline pilots, military pilots, Los Alamos Security Inspectors, military personnel of all ranks, and many others with technical backgrounds, which the Pentagon representatives characterized as "observers whose reliabilities are not questioned," therefore the following actions were initiated:

"In a liaison meeting with other military (other than the Air Force) and government Intelligence and investigative agencies in December 1948, it was determined that the frequency of unexplained aerial phenomena in the New Mexico area was such that an organized plan of reporting these observations should be undertaken. The organization and physical location of units of this District were most suitable for collecting these data..."115

From deep space?

One of the most fascinating green "meteor" accounts is related below. The critical section is capitalized:

"It is found that the fireball doubly observed by --- (deleted) and --- (deleted) appeared at a height of at least 10 miles and descended at an angle of about 45 degrees to the vertical (according to Truett's estimate) to a point C at an elevation of only 2.3 miles about the horizontal plane through the point from which Strang and Skipper observed. As the fireball approached the point C, its PATH LEVELLED OFF AND FROM C TO ITS POINT OF DISAPPEARANCE, E, THE FIREBALL FOLLOWED A NEARLY HORIZONTAL PATH APPROXIMATELY 7.5 MILES LONG MOVING WITH A VELOCITY OF BETWEEN 3.75 AND 7.5 MILES PER SECOND,* depending on the duration estimate adopted.

*Author's emphasis.

The coordinates of the projection of E are 35 degrees 57' N, 106 degrees 23' W. The forward extension of the fireball's trace on the Earth, as determined by the above projections, passes some six miles to the north of the town of Los Alamos."¹¹⁶

Dr. La Paz received support from a fellow scientist, an approval that was made part of the official file on the "green flash" cases:

"In his letter of December 29, 1948, to Lieutenant Colonel Rees of the OSI, my colleague Dr. Lincoln La Paz has summarized thoroughly the nature of those incidents and particularly has noted the reasons why the objects concerned cannot be dismissed as ordinary meteoric phenomena. Dr. La Paz is an extremely able man in the field of meteoritics and an enthusiastic, almost to the point of extravagance, investigator and worker. On the basis of the description at hand, I concur in his conclusions. Dr. La Paz, who is 'on location' and has observed at least one of these objects at first hand, should be fully supported in a continued investigation. Apart from the unusual appearance of the objects, the pattern of incidents is particularly striking. It would be exceedingly unlikely that so many meteors would appear in that small sector of the Southwest and nowhere else; if they did, they would not have consistently horizontal paths and head in a consistent direction. These points are sufficient to dismiss the meteoric hypothesis. It is entirely possible that, among the many incidents reported, one or two of the objects may have been fireballs, thus serving to confuse the issue, but a blanket explanation of that sort is improbable.

"It would suggest that Dr. Jack Workman, Director of the New Mexico School of Mines, be contacted. He is conducting highly classified experiments in very high velocity projectiles and may be in a position to offer a worthwhile opinion. High velocity experiments, probably in connection with preliminary trials in the production of artificial meteors or artificial satellites, may prove to be the explanation of these incidents. Such experiments would not be conducted at any of the recognized air bases so far contacted.

"Note: It has come to my attention since the writing of the above that Dr. La Paz in the March issue of Popular Astronomy (LVII, 3, p. 136) refers to 'the spectacular meteoric display of 1948 December 5' in northeastern New Mexico. It would seem an unusual coincidence that the sightings reported in this incident occurred on the same evening and yet were entirely apart from it. The apparent contradiction is puzzling."¹¹⁷

Meanwhile, back at Air Force Intelligence Headquarters, Wright Field, where work on Project SIGN was being conducted, a disagreement arose.

Speculations about the spectacular:

Speculations about a spectacular answer to the UFO mystery came under fire on December 7th. C. A. Griffith, Chief of the Tech Intelligence Division, Operation Section, reviewed commentary by military evaluators of the "sky monster" case of July 24th. He submitted the following criticism:

"It does not appear logical to bring in a conclusion regarding space ships when it was not discussed in the body of the report. This is not a conclusion that is based on this report so it does not belong in 'Conclusions.'"118

Griffith's unhappiness was with a "point 4" under "Conclusions" of a Technical Intelligence "Air Intelligence Information Report" which stated in an evaluation of the Chiles-Whitted "sky monster" sighting that:

"It has been established by a Project Rand investigation that world resources, technical attainments and existing materials are adequate to permit construction of a space ship. It is now aerodynamically feasible for subject configuration to fly. An aircraft of the configuration described could support itself by aerodynamic means."119

Air Force records show the document edited by circling the offending paragraph and scribbling of the remark: "Place this in comments."120

Having satisfied oneself that such travel was not a fantasy, it is an easy step to other related musings. Air Force evaluators, with the spectacular Chiles-Whitted case in mind, added an additional note to the written assessment of the "wingless craft" spotted over The Hague, Holland, the 20th of July 1948:

"In passing, it is interesting to note that this incident occurred just four days before the famous 'Alabama space ship.' Maybe our visitors from Mars were cruising around."121

Such "wild remarks" could have caused havoc if they gained circulation outside official channels. Obviously something would have to be done. Heightening the danger of "wild thinking" was the assuming of an investigative interest in UFO activity by those not under military discipline or only subject to limited security restrictions.

Fascination with the "green fireball" activity was so great at Los Alamos various engineers and scientists banded together to discuss the phenomenon; the group calling itself "The Los Alamos Astrophysical Association." In spite of its informal nature, the members did receive some official cooperation; i.e., access to classified Project SIGN files. Only one name is known, a Dr. Leon Davidson, who was employed at the Los Alamos Laboratory.122

Not only did this group agree with Dr. La Paz's opinions as to the inexplicable quality of the strange sky fireworks, it even dared to propose a startling theory, suggesting that the

short-lived "fireballs" were some sort of mysterious test missile being catapulted into the Earth's atmosphere.¹²³

Deeply concerned.

Dr. H. E. Landsberg, executive director of the RDB committee on geophysics and geography, received a letter from Dr. Lincoln La Paz on December 28th:

"Since December 5th I have been working almost continuously day and night on certain anomalous fireball phenomena of which a detailed account is given in the accompanying confidential enclosures. No doubt you are familiar with these incidents since I brought your name into the picture in my first report to the OSI of the U. S. Air Force.

"These incidents are not in the same category as the rather fantastic ones described by Norman G. Markham and certain inhabitants of Norton County, Kansas. Authorities here are deeply concerned. Perhaps you have knowledge of defensive training maneuvers that would explain the observed concentration of incidents in certain highly important areas.

"Additional observations by 6 more AEC Security Service Guards made incidents referred to look very serious. Please give this matter careful attention. I am sure the two best observed incidents are not meteoric."¹²⁴

"Beryllium Copper and guided missiles."

The Fourth Army issued a summation of the weird happenings in the skies of New Mexico on December 29th. It read:

"1. Since the initial report of unidentified objects, described as flares or moving lights, in the vicinity of Las Vegas, New Mexico, on 5 December 1948, there have been 23 reports from observers up to and including 28 December 1948. Of these reports 21 have been in New Mexico, 1 in Arizona and 1 in Oregon.

"2. The 21 observations in New Mexico have, in general, been in the vicinity of an area bounded in the east by the city of Las Vegas and in the north by Los Alamos. Two observations were made in the vicinity of Albuquerque.

"3. The appearance of the lights are of a definite pattern. All have been of an intense white or greenish white. The trajectory or path of flight has been north to east, north to west or west to east. Altitude has been reported from 3000 to 20,000 feet above the terrain, which in this area is 5000 to 7200 feet above sea level. Speed has been undertermined except that it seems to be above the supersonic range.

"4. This office, the FBI and the intelligence agencies of Sandia Base and Kirtland Field have been unable to evaluate or determine the significance or origin of the phenomena. We therefore have agreed that the 17th District, Office of Special Investigation (OSI) of the Air Force be the gathering and reporting agency in that they have a direct reporting channel to Washington, have access to aircraft and observation facilities and are in coordination with the Geophysics Laboratory of the Air Material Command, USAF.

"5. The OSI has obtained the cooperation of Dr. Lincoln La Paz of the University of New Mexico. Dr. La Paz is one of the top ranking meteorologists in the United States. He is qualified to identify the sighted objects as natural meteoric phenomena or otherwise. Dr. La Paz has, from descriptions of observations furnished him and, BY PERSONAL OBSERVATION, (Air Force emphasis) determined that the objects sighted are NOT (again Air Force emphasis) natural meteoric phenomena. Dr. La Paz is in consultation with other scientists in an effort to solve the problem but up to this time have arrived at theories only. Theories advanced to date have fallen into CATEGORY III possibilities (what these possibilities may be are not given in Air Force Blue Book records that are available). Experimental tests have been made at the university to determine what material would give off the whitish-greenish glow under extreme heat. The only material which they have discovered giving off this color is Beryllium Copper, a metal used in the construction of guided missiles. It is the unsubstantiated opinion of Dr. La Paz that the presently unidentified objects are man made missiles constructed to be self disintegrating, hence the whitish-greenish color given off at the time of observation.

"6. It is of interest to note that at least two of the objects have been sighted directly over the Los Alamos AEC project. One person who observed one of the objects at Los Alamos has stated that it looked exactly the same as V2 rockets he had seen over England during the war.

"7. In view of the continuation of these objects being sighted over this area, it is suggested that Fourth Army coordinate with the Air Force and the Air Material Command to conduct a scientific study of ordinary intelligence agencies, who can only report occurrence and cannot evaluate the probabilities or possibilities."125

The idea of "self disintegration" proposed by La Paz brings to mind the "New Explosive Theory" suggested by the Swedish Defense Staff to explain the mysterious exploding "missiles" that lit up the skies of northern Europe in 1946 and for awhile in 1947 and 1948. No fragments of the "missiles" were discovered

so the military experts surmised that rockets, utilizing a new kind of explosive, were ranging in the nations in the Baltic region with Russia being the prime suspect. As it so happens, a military document touching on this subject appears in Air Force records at this point.

The "Special Section of the Swedish Defense Staff," or: whatever happened to the Ghost Rockets?

Mysterious objects flashing over Sweden and other countries in the region back in 1946, a wave of unexplained flying objects that was a precursor to the flying saucer wave in the U. S. in 1947, was dismissed by the Swedish military at the time as "astronomical phenomena" although there seemed to be something very odd in the Swedish atmosphere. A resurgence of sightings occurred in early 1948 and according to a dispatch from the U.S. Air Force Air Attache in Sweden, the Swedish Defense Staff again endorsed the "astronomical phenomena" solution. The date of this information report is December 29, 1948. The document lists four points plus a comment:

- "1. The Swedish Defense Staff has no proof that any unidentified flying objects, missiles or vehicles have passed over or near Sweden to date.
- "2. All reports of sightings in Sweden during the past year, irrespective of to whom they were submitted, have been funneled to a special section of the Defense Staff, where the sightings were plotted. In each case an exhaustive interrogation of the sighter followed, somewhat along the lines of the EEI for Project SIGN. All evidence obtained of sightings was explainable in terms of astronomical phenomena.
- "3. In addition, three ground radar stations and two radar equipped destroyers cooperated in maintaining watch. The radar equipment was Swedish modified British sets of fairly short range and were not operated on a 24 hour basis; however, no unexplained sightings were made with this equipment.
- "4. Conclusion: Although the possibility exists that objects have traversed Sweden and its adjacent waters, no proof has been obtained to confirm such flights in any instance.
- "5. Comment: The cooperation of the Defense Staff in securing this information was undoubtedly given in an effort to emphasize their need for additional U. S. radar equipment. The Swedish Air Board had previously negotiated with the Bendix Corporation for 20 THS--sets but had been refused an export license by our State Department. The members of the Defense Staff, to whom I talked, were eager to point out the good use

to which such equipment could be put for both ourselves and the Swedes as instanced by our mutual interest in unidentifiable flying objects. However, I am convinced that our refusal to grant an export license for such equipment will do more good in implementing our national policy, as expressed in the National Security Council document NSC 28/1, then would the information we might receive from the use of such equipment here."

/s/ Donald L. Hardy
Colonel, USAF
Air Attache¹²⁶

Were the Swedish "ghost rockets" just "astronomical phenomena?" Could it be that the "green flares" seen over New Mexico were also due to "astronomical phenomena?" How many "flying saucer" sightings were caused by "astronomical phenomena?"

"Anomalous sounds:"

Guards in New Mexico walked their posts with greatly increased vigilance. No one dared guess what to expect. The only thing that seemed certain was that something lurked in the sky as yet unexplained.

Before the year 1948 passed into history, on December 30th to be exact, mysterious roars from the night sky startled security personnel at the top secret atomic installation of Los Alamos. All guard stations were immediately notified, a blackout ordered, and a "sky bogey alert" sounded. The noises did not continue for any great length of time, 2 - 3 minutes at most, and the interpretation of them caused some debate with most of those hearing the sounds assuming that it was a small motor laboring heavily but that did not mean anyone would endorse an aircraft theory. All agreed, however, that the source of the latest mystery was the sky, a fact that prompted the filing of the anomalous sound reports with UFO records. The authorities seemed a bit spooked by the aerial business and things were not eased at all by a disturbing development during a routine security investigation of a UFO witness. One person, who had related some interesting UFO sightings to the military and had been very active in discussing the incidents with experts at various New Mexico scientific and military facilities, underwent the usual background check by G-2 Army Intelligence. Such checks had been so fruitless at the outset of the UFO mystery in 1947 the FBI begged to be released from the time consuming chore. This latest check, however, produced some alarming results. The person in question was a security risk of such a high order that the report on the individual termed him: "dangerous."¹²⁷

Meanwhile, on or about December 16th, a Mr. Collbohm hand-delivered copies of certain papers to a Colonel H. M. Mc Coy, Chief of the Intelligence Department, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The papers were for an important briefing of Project SIGN personnel scheduled within the following 72 hours. The briefing was to be given by highly important scientific and military experts.¹²⁸

THE BIG CHANGE:

By December, 1948, detailed interrogations had been completed dealing with the more important cases of the previous Fall. An analysis was done and a report drawn up. These newest results were submitted by Captain Robert R. Sneider, Project SIGN officer, Special Projects Branch, Technical Intelligence Division, Intelligence Department, USAF. Giving their approval after a perusal, was R. A. Llewellyn, Major, USAF, Acting Chief, Operations Section, Technical Intelligence Division, Intelligence Department.

In the case of the Chiles-Whitted "sky monster" incident it was stated: "The analysis was undertaken as only one of 219 reported incidents with an objective of arriving towards a definite pattern or trend in order to determine whether the objects reported were of domestic or alien origin, or a natural phenomena."¹²⁹

In mid-December the briefing previously mentioned took place. One paper presented at the gathering is known in some detail. It was an essay authored by Dr. J. E. Lipp, an expert with the RAND organization. The gist of Dr. Lipp's thoughts are contained in the following paragraphs:

- 1) He recognized the theory that the Earth may have been visited by aliens from outer space at various times in the distant past.
- 2) He posed this question: Why has there been no overt contact by the helmsmen of the UFOs if they had come from the stars? It seemed to be a great waste of time and effort otherwise.
- 3) He suggested that any space traveling aliens, if they were responsible for the flying saucers, might have been attracted to the planet Earth by mankind's experiments with atomic bombs.
- 4) He discussed what was known about the environmental conditions on Mars and Venus, and also the enormous difficulty of detecting the existence of the planet Earth among all the stars of the galaxy.
- 5) He stated that the most powerful and efficient spaceship engine conceivable to science would be a nuclear-hydrogen rocket, which still left much to be desired in terms of interstellar travel.
- 6) He doubted that any actual spaceship visiting the Earth would maneuver frivolously.
- 7) He thought it conceivable that a larger number of smaller craft specifically made for the exploration of the Earth's surface might be launched by a much larger interplanetary ship in orbit around our planet.¹³⁰

While Dr. Lipp concluded that a visit by extraterrestrial beings could not be ruled out entirely, in view of what was known about the problems of space travel, the UFOs could not be of alien origin.¹³¹

Nothing is known of the reaction of the others at the briefing to Dr. Lipp's paper; whether there was debate or submissive silence.

One aspect that troubled Dr. Lipp, if one assumed the alien visitation theory, was the "apparent lack of purpose" of UFO behavior. He postulated a benign testing of the Earth's air defenses, but if that was so, he went on, why should such maneuvers be continued so long?¹³²

At this moment the "powers-that-be" made some changes. Suppositively the code name SIGN had been compromised providing an excuse to change the UFO investigative effort designation to: "Project GRUDGE" (E. J. Ruppelt asserts that the real reason ran much deeper.).

Under project GRUDGE standard evaluation procedures suddenly became biased as all UFO reports were examined on the premise that sightings of any unusual phenomenon could not possibly be due to any mysterious cause. Official orders were cut to change investigative personnel working on the project as well. Ahead lay months of the "Dark Ages" of official UFOlogy.¹³³

The GRUDGE name-change was ordered December 16, 1948, and was to be made effective February 11, 1949. Dr. J. Allen Hynek, under Air Force contract 33 (038)-1118, was activated to do some re-evaluation of UFO cases on file which numbered some 243 reports that had found their way to Air Force Intelligence through military channels (which accounts for the low number since those from civilian sources, i.e., newspaper accounts, were not recorded officially). Even stretching things a bit, Dr. Hynek could only attribute a third of the cases on file to astronomical explanations. This did not, however, bother the professor at the time since he considered UFO sightings simply a fad, but as the years passed Dr. Hynek would grow more and more uncomfortable because of the puzzling persistence of the phenomenon.¹³⁴

Acting as a one-man crusade to solve the saucer mystery, famous saucer sighter Kenneth Arnold got in touch with Lt. George Gorman in order to pursue the riddle of the "Fargo dog-fight." Gorman put off making any comment until finally on December 18, 1948, he replied to Arnold's repeated requests writing a letter to the man that "had started it all" to apologize for his silence, explaining that he was under orders not to discuss the subject and that the Air Material Command considered such matters as under a secret classification. Lt. Gorman stated that he and his Commanding Officer were under the threat of Court Marshal for having already released what information that had appeared in the press, but General Edwards had intervened in time to halt any punitive proceedings. An outfit calling itself the "Counter Intelligence Corps" reserved all pertinent UFO data for itself, according to Gorman.¹³⁵

"Serious complications?"

As it so happened, the Fargo incident had been singled out on December 23rd. A review of Lt. Gorman's UFO chase produced this remark by A. C. Loedding, Technical Intelligence Division, of the Intelligence Department, Wright Field:

"The positive statement that the aerial object sighted by Lt. Gorman was a piloted aircraft is unjustified and may lead to serious complications. Although the object apparently performed in a superior manner and as though human thought was involved, nothing was reported to indicate or permit assumption that the object was an aircraft, as the term is accepted today."¹³⁶

Just prior to New Year's Day, the Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, announced that the initial steps had been taken in an "Earth Satellite Vehicle Program." The eventual development of space-travelling ships and space stations were now officially envisioned with this seminal allocation of funds to the military services.¹³⁷ The military application of such research was evidently directed at the Soviet Union, but were there more exotic implications? Exotic suspicions would not lack for proponents.¹³⁸

To be continued in the next booklet in this series:

UFOs: A HISTORY: 1949, January - July.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Have Martians Visited Us?," Letter to the editor by Charles Fort. The New York Times. 5 September 26, p. 14.
2. Ibid.
3. The Hynek UFO Report, by J. Allen Hynek, A Dell Book, New York, N.Y. 10017, p. 13.
4. "Operation UFO Intercept," by Donald Keyhoe, Saga, February 1974, p. 58.
5. The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, by Edward J. Ruppelt, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1956, pp. 62, 67.
6. "Despite Denials, Secret UFO Documents Do Exist," by Robert B. Kilnn and David Branch, The Santa Anna Register, 4 October 72, p. D13.
7. Personal interview with Brad Sparks, 13 July 81. Sparks discussed this incident with Keyhoe. Also: "Operation UFO Intercept," by Donald Keyhoe, Saga, February 1974, p. 58, is a source that is of some value.
8. Ibid.
9. Letter, To: Commanding Officer Shaw AFB, Summter, South Carolina, ATTN: Base Intelligence Officer, From: H. M. Mc Coy, Col. USAF, Chief of Intelligence, 5 August 48, Blue Book Files.
10. "19D OSI 24-6," Invesitgation, Conducted by the district office No. 19, Fairfield--Suisin AFB concerning UFO. Date: 29 November 48. Blue Book Files.
11. Interoffice Memo Slip, Headquarters, Fourth Army, Subject: Unidentified Flying Object: New Mexico, Date: 29 December 48, From: Major Godsoe, To: A C/S, G-2. Blue Book Files.
12. "Flying Saucer," Minnesota, Report of Special Agent M. B. Rhodes, 18 August 48. Blue Book File #162.
13. Ibid.
14. Air Material Command letter dated 9 September 48. Dr. Bruce Maccabee Files.
15. Letter, From: Colonel William M. Creasy, Chief, Army Chemical Corps, Research and Engineering Division, To: Director of Intelligence, GSUSA, Washington, D.C., ATTN: Chief, Intelligence Group, 29 October 48. Blue Book Files.
16. Report of the FBI Laboratory, 7 October 48, To: Commanding General Air Material Command Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio, From: John Edgar Hoover, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C. Dr. Bruce Maccabee Files.
17. Blue Book File #162.
18. Ibid.
19. Blue Book File #187.
20. "Godman Field Air Force Base Sighting -- 7 January and 19 August, 1948." Report date: 8 November 48. Blue Book File #187.
21. The UFO Evidence, Edited by Richard Hall, Washington D.C. National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, 1964. p. 53.
22. Doubt, publication of the Fortean Society, Edited by Tiffany Thayer, Vol. II, p. 211.
23. The Truth About Flying Saucers, by Aime' Michel, Criterion Books, New York, N.Y., 1956, p. 56. Translated from the French by Paul Selver.

24. Coming of the Saucers, by Kenneth Arnold and Ray Palmer, Amherst, by the authors, 1952, p. 140.
25. "Note," by H. C. Zimmerin, 2 September 48. Blue Book Files.
26. Ibid.
27. The Bryan (Texas) News, 20 December 49. Newspaper clipping from the files of The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena.
28. "The Achondritic Shower of February 18, 1948," by Dr. Lincoln La Paz. Journal of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, pp. 63 - 64.
29. Interrogation Report No. 2, dated 4 October 48. Blue Book Files.
30. Ibid.
31. Field Investigation Report, Subject: Fargo, North Dakota Incident, 29 October 48. Blue Book Files.
32. Ibid.
33. Certificate, 23 October 1948, Headquarters, North Dakota Air National Guard, Hector Airport, Fargo, North Dakota, signed by George F. Gorman. Witnessed by Captain Ernest Winterquist and Lt. Donald M. Sonlie. Blue Book Files.
34. Interrogation Report No. 3, 4 October 1948, ATI Field Office Intelligence Detachment, Headquarters Air Material Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. Interrogation officer Major Paul Kubala, Major USAF, Chief, ATI Field Officer. Blue Book File #172.
35. Ibid.
36. Letter, From: Mr. Jensen, To: Major D. Jones, 178 Fighter Squadron Air National Guard, Fargo, North Dakota, 1 October 48, Airport Traffic Control Tower, Hector Airport, Box 1755, Fargo, North Dakota. Blue Book File #172.
37. Ibid.
38. "Those Discs Again," by Lt. Duane Lund, PIO officer of the 178 Squadron, The National Guardsman, p. 10 (date of issue not known by this author since the article was on Blue Book microfilm). Blue Book Files.
39. Letter, To: Major D. Jones, 178 Fighter Squadron, Air National Guard, Fargo, North Dakota. 1 October 1948, From: --- (deleted) Assistant Airport Traffic Controller Civil Aeronautics Administration, Airport Traffic Control Tower, Hector Airport, Box 1756, Fargo, North Dakota. Blue Book File #172.
40. A Statement by Doctor --- (deleted) 1 October 48, at 11:20 p.m., Exhibit "E". Blue Book Files.
41. "Gorman 'dogfight'," by Richard Hall, UFO Encyclopedia, Edited by Ronald D. Story, J. Richard Greenwell, Consulting Editor, Doubleday & Company, Inc. Garden City, New York, 1980, p. 152.
42. Routing and Record Sheet, To: MCIA XO - 3, From: MCIA, date 23 December 48, comment No. 4. Blue Book File #172.
43. Field Investigation Report. Subject: Geiger radioactivity check of F-51, #511435 Air National Guard, Fargo, North Dakota, Date: 29 October 48. Blue Book File #172.
44. Evaluation by Robert Sneider, Captain, USAF, To: C. A. Griffith, Chief, Operations Section, Technical Intelligence Division, Intelligence Department. Blue Book Files.
45. Ibid.
46. Fargo (North Dakota) Forum, 4 October 48, p. 4.

47. Transmitted statement pertaining to aerial phenomenon seen on 1 October 48, by Donald C. Jones, Major, AF, NDNG, Commanding Officer. Date: 5 October 48. Blue Book File #172.
48. Dayton, Ohio, 5 October 48 (AP).
49. Statement by Oliver Hemphill, Jr., 1st Lt. USAF, AD-784156. Date: 28 January 49. Blue Book File #183.
50. Statement by Barton Halter, 2nd Lt. USAF, AO-878470. Date: 28 January 49. Blue Book Files.
51. Quotes of radio messages transmitted on various dates: 23 October 48, 16 October 48, and 18 October 48. Blue Book Files.
52. "Dr. McDonald's Files," Canadian UFO Report, #4, Vol. 2, p. 21.
53. Blue Book File #183.
54. AMC "Request for Information," 9 November 48. Blue Book File #183.
55. Letter, Air Material Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, File MCIAXO, Subject: "Request for Investigation," Date: 9 November 48, p. 1. Blue Book File #183.
56. Ibid, p. 3.
57. "Narrative Summary." Blue Book File #183.
58. Blue Book File #195.
59. Blue Book File #239.
60. Ibid.
61. Doubt, #23, p. 237.
62. Teletype Report. From: H. M. McCoy, Colonel, USAF, Chief of Intelligence, To: Chief of Staff, USAF, Washington 25, D.C., ATTN: AFOIR Collection Branch, October 1948. Blue Book Files.
63. Blue Book File #194.
64. Blue Book Files #207, 207A, 207B.
65. Ibid.
66. Blue Book File #207.
67. Blue Book File #207B.
68. "AMC opinion." Blue Book File #207.
69. "Comment," Andrews AFB, Camp Springs, Maryland, 18 November 48. Blue Book File #207.
70. Blue Book File #203.
71. Scientific Study of UFOs, Editor Daniel S. Gillmor, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. New York, 1969, p. 844.
72. The UFO Riddle, 1948: January - July, by Loren E. Gross, privately published by the author, 1981, p. 35.
73. Scientific Study of UFOs, p. 844.
74. The Bellefontaine, Ohio, Daily Examiner, 4 December 48.
75. "Request for Analysis," Project SIGN, 7 December 48. Blue Book File #211.
76. Ibid.
77. Blue Book File #211.
78. Letter to the Air Force dated: 14 May 52, by Robert Strong of Chicago, Illinois. Air Force Blue Book Files. "Letters to the Air Force about UFOs," Military microfilm records.
79. Blue Book File #223.
80. Blue Book File #226.
81. Blue Book File #223D.
82. Blue Book File #226.

83. Blue Book File #223.
84. "At Las Vegas, New Mexico," Incident #223, p. 10. Blue Book Files.
85. Ibid, p. 9.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Enclosure No. 1 to Investigative Report #24-8, 17th District OSI Office. Blue Book Files.
90. Report by Jack L. Boling, DO #17, Kirtland AFB, N.M. Subject: "Aerial Phenomena," paragraph #1. Date: 4 January 49. Blue Book File #223E.
91. Blue Book File #225.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Blue Book File #225.
95. Letter, From: Dr. Lincoln La Paz, To: Lt. Colonel Doyle Rees, Date: 13 December 48. Blue Book Files.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Blue Book File #227.
99. Enclosure No. 1 to Investigative Report #24-8, 17th District OSI. Blue Book Files.
100. Report, To: Lt. Colonel Doyle Rees, Commanding Officer. District No. 17 OSI, From: Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Director, Institute of Meteoritics. Date: 20 December 48.
101. Blue Book File #227.
102. Enclosure No. 1 to Investigative Report #24-8 17th District OSI. Blue Book Files.
103. Report, To: Lt. Colonel Doyle Rees, Commanding Officer, District No. 17, From: Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, Date: 20 December 48.
104. Blue Book File #213.
105. Letter, To: Commanding General, AMC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio, From: C/O Headquarters, Kirtland AFB, Kirtland Field, New Mexico, Subject: "Unknown Aerial Phenomenon." Enclosure: Letter, From: Dr. Lincoln La Paz, To: C/O 17th District OSI, Dated: 15 December 48. Blue Book File #225.
106. "Special Inquiry." Report by Edgar J. Belhart. Date: 17 December 48. File #24-8. Blue Book Files.
107. Blue Book File #227.
108. The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, pp. 80 - 81.
109. Sections a and b, -- Los Alamos, New Mexico, Date: 20 December 48. Blue Book File #241.
110. Enclosure #3. Report, From: Inspector --- (deleted), To: Captain J. P. Shea, p. 3. Blue Book File #241.
111. Report of investigation by Jack L. Boling, File #24-8. 22 December 48. Blue Book Files.
112. Joint investigative report filed by Special Agent Melvin E. Neef, Edgar J. Bethart, and Robert R. Johns. Enclosure #6. Blue Book Files.
113. Blue Book File #227.
114. Enclosure #7, To: Lt. E. D. Hightower, From: Inspector --- (deleted), Date: 12 December 48. Blue Book Files.

250
80