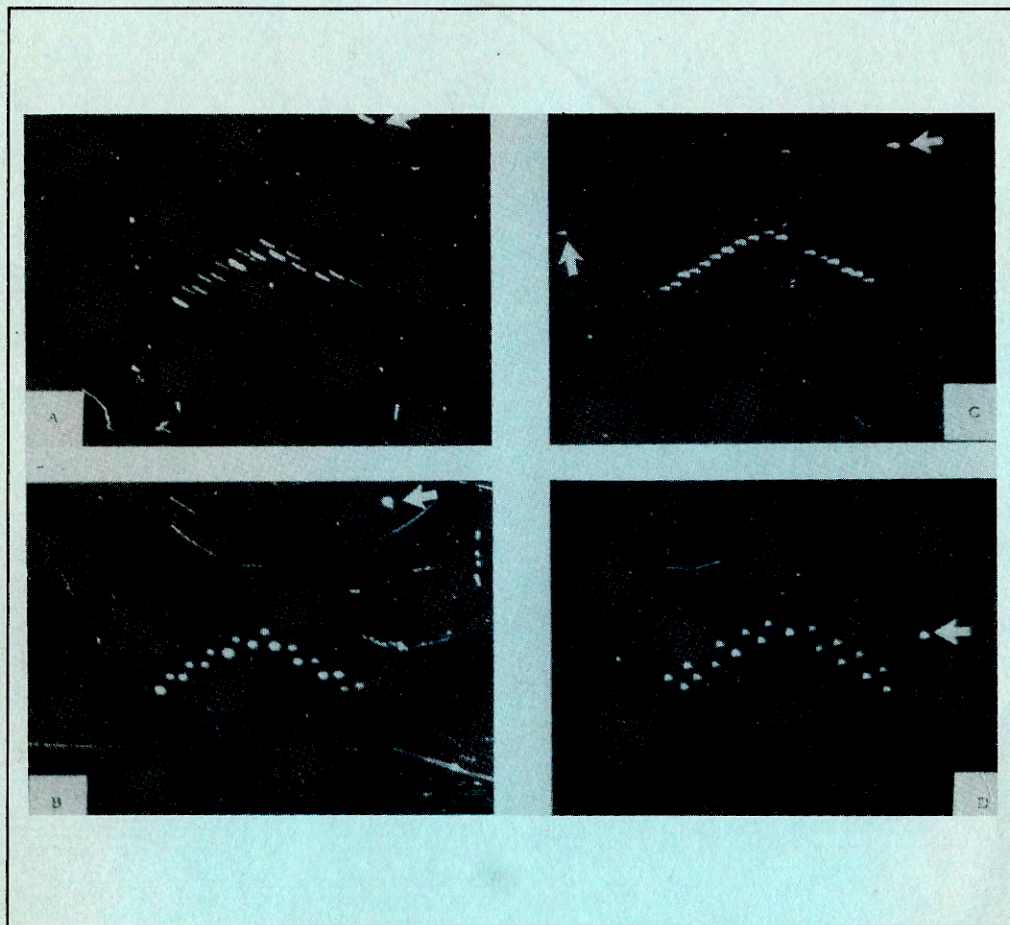


UFOs: A HISTORY

VOLUME 8: 1951



LOREN E. GROSS

UFO'S: A HISTORY

1951

by

Loren E. Gross

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Twice

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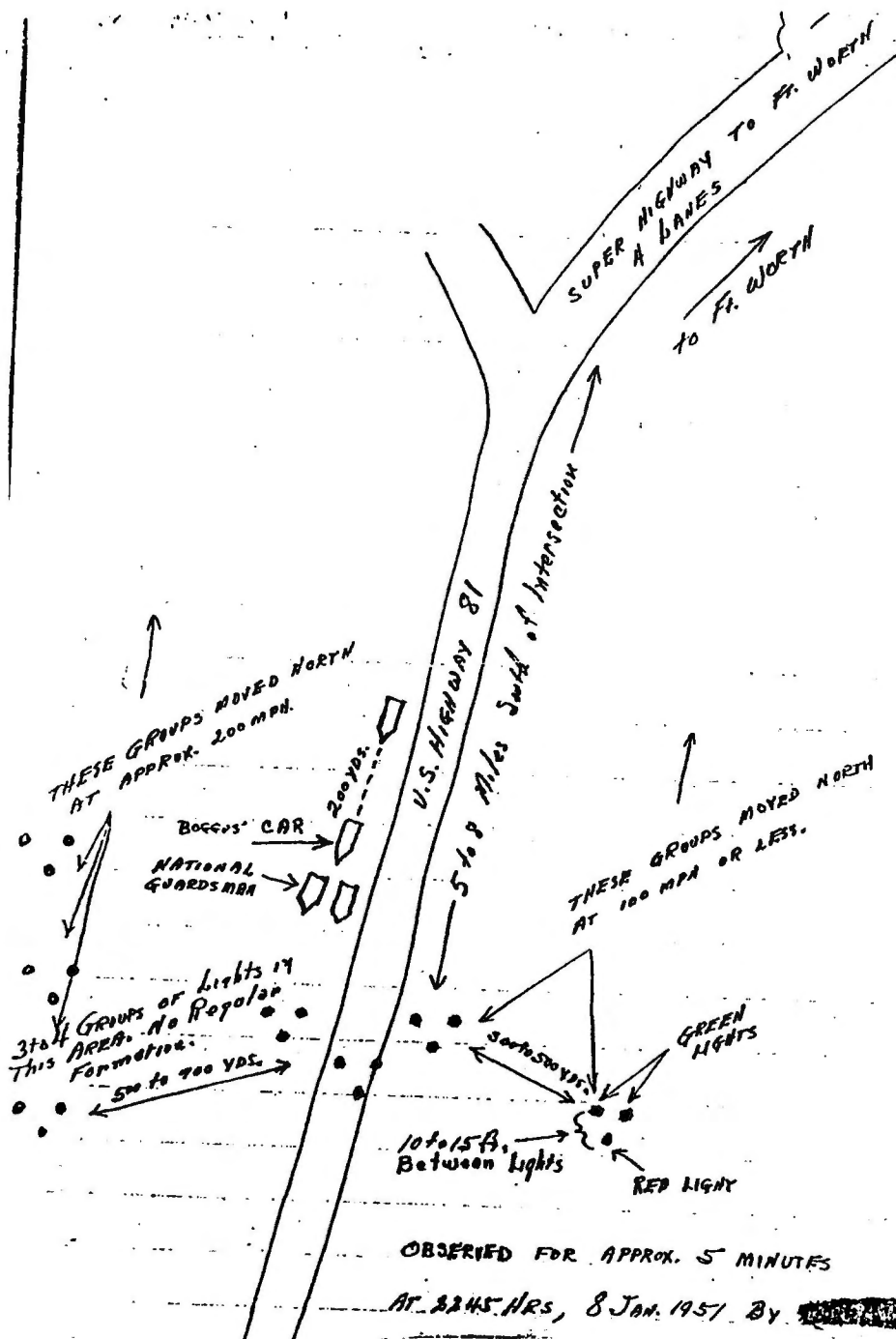
Nineteen-fifty-one was more than a multi-month time period between the big UFO flap years that preceded and followed it. Here is just a few words that can clue us to the extent of the UFO story during this "lull." There was: Colonel Watson's attack on "UFO nuts," the rise and fall of the Skyhook hypothesis, reports from Africa, reports from India, and reports from Europe. Also, there was the termination of project TWINKLE, the awakening of Life magazine, Lt. Cummings as ATIC's UFO chief, continued UFO activity over New Mexico, the UFO review of July, the Lubbock Lights, the Peruvian photo, the appearance of Rockmore's Saucer Review, the formation of France's CIESCO, the Fort Monmouth uproar, the mysterious civilian group "authorized to ask questions," E. J. Ruppelt as head of ATIC's UFO investigation, the "new project GRUDGE," the green meteors' return, the Marquand hoax, ATIC's "Status Reports," and Project STORK.

Weird lights.

One of the biggest UFO stories of 1951 concerned some mysterious lights in the night sky over Lubbock, Texas late in August, but as early as January 8th some very spooky goings-on were happening in the heavens near another Texas city. Some motorists testified:

"We were returning from Fort Worth, Texas, at approximately 10:45 p.m., 8 January 1951. After leaving the super highway coming out of Fort Worth and entering U.S. Highway 81, we drove over a slight hill approximately five to eight miles south of the intersection of the super highway and U.S. Highway 81. As we crossed the top of the hill, we saw a series of lights in the sky and at first it appeared to be a water tower or a radio tower. We then looked to the right and to the left and saw other bunches of lights identical to the ones over the highway. We pulled over to the side of the road and stopped. We noticed approximately 200 yards ahead of us two other automobiles which had pulled off to the side of the road, apparently to watch the same lights we were observing. We pulled our car up behind these other two cars, at which time one car drove off.

"The driver of the second car came back to our car and stated that he had been watching these lights and had never seen anything like it



before. These lights over the highway appeared to be 1,000 feet and on a vertical plane. Two of the lights were green and the third light was red, forming a triangle. There were three of these triangles in the group over the highway, making one large triangle. We looked to the east of Highway 81 and could see another triangle. We saw three lights approximately three to five hundred yards to the east, and to the west we noticed three to four groups of lights arranged in the same manner. These lights appeared to be five to seven hundred yards to the west of the main group over the highway. We stood outside the car and observed these lights, which were stationary at first. After a short while we noticed that the groups of lights over the highway began moving north in the direction of Fort Worth, Texas and we estimated the speed of these lights to be 100 miles or less. The two green lights appeared to be moving to the north followed by the red light. We looked at the group of lights in the east. They had also started to move north toward Fort Worth. The group of lights on the west appeared to be moving toward Fort Worth, but traveling at a speed of approximately twice that of the group over the highway. We noticed that the group of lights to the east of the highway and to the west of the highway appeared to be on a horizontal plane. These lights did not blink and resembled the lights on a water tower or radio antenna. As these lights moved away a sound resembling an outboard motor trolling in the distance could be heard. We observed these lights for approximately five minutes and from our observation, agreed that the distance between the lights in each of the smaller triangles was ten to fifteen feet."1

If these lights were on helicopters the roar of the engines would have been deafening, but the only sound noted however was like an "outboard motor trolling."

Another case took place January 12th at Stewart Air Force Base, New York. An Air Force officer noticed an odd "star" in the heavens about 10:00 p.m. which he described as:

"...unusually bright and a brilliant white: appeared to be three or four times as large as a star; as object ascended [if it was meteor it was falling upward] it appeared to change in color to a hazy yellow-green-red and left tail of light behind; no sound; appeared to have tremendous rate of speed, as well as a pattern of flight, although it would zig zag in an abrupt fashion.

Observer stated object did not appear to be conventional aircraft and in his judgment displayed convincing traits of planned maneuverability, which discounted theory of its being a balloon."²

Another "mystery star" appeared in the daytime (11:00 a.m.) over Fort Benning, Georgia the same date, January 12th:

"It remained stationary for approximately 20 minutes, then clearly moved directly south at a very high rate of speed leaving a very thin visible wake and then disappearing. Its wake was very short and fan shaped. He was not certain as to the shape of the object, but said it appeared round and could have been spherical or circular shaped. The size seemed to be that of an ordinary kitchen match when holding the match about at arm's length."³

A more conventional sighting on the 14th took place in the air in the vicinity of Big Bear Lake, California.

The weather was clear with visibility about fifty miles at 1238 hours that day. A private aircraft with four people aboard was en route from Santa Monica to Palm Springs when a UFO passed by. All four of those in the aircraft sighted the object which they described as 40 to 50 in diameter and round in shape. It was estimated that the object was at 30,000 feet as it sped in a western direction toward Los Angeles. Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control was immediately notified by radio, which in turn contacted March Flight Service Center at 1250 hours. The alert reached the 27th Air Division Headquarters at Norton AFB and the military experts there determined that the: "wind at 30,000 feet was forecast to be 360 degrees at 60 knots, which would discount an object without a source of power."⁴

"Mystery star" over Oak Ridge.

A car load of civilian employees of the NEPA Division, Fairchild Engine and Airplane Corporation, spotted a "brilliant, stationary, object" hovering above Oak Ridge in airspace restricted to aircraft, but a check by authorities responsible for area security revealed that no aircraft or balloons were airborne at the time of the sighting.⁵

The next case reminds one of the big fuss back in the summer of 1949 when it was proposed that the UFO's were curious about the goings-on in the New Mexico area. In 1949 it was reported that UFO's had flown around rockets during test launches.

On January 16, 1951, a giant Skyhook balloon launched by the General Mills people operating out of Artesia, New Mexico, triggered a rash of flying saucer reports as the balloon drifted over west Texas, but the real story of the

day occurred during the actual launch. Shortly after the launch the team of General Mills technicians watched the Skyhook as it gained altitude. Suddenly the technicians detected two objects in the sky approaching fast. A brief summary in official files stated that the objects were in view for 40 seconds:

"On 16 January 1952, two members of a balloon project from the General Mills Aeronautical Research Laboratory and four other civilians observed two unidentifiable aerial objects in the vicinity of the balloon they were observing. The balloon was at an altitude of 11,000 feet and was 110 feet in diameter at the time of the observation.

"The objects were observed twice, one from Artesia, New Mexico, and once from the Artesia Airport. In the first instance, one round object appeared to remain motionless in the vicinity, but apparently higher than the balloon. The balloon appeared to be 1½ inches in diameter and the object 2½ inches in diameter (ratio 3:5) and the color was a dull white. This observation was made by the two General Mills observers.

"A short time later the same two observers and four civilian pilots were observing the balloon from the Artesia Airport. Two objects at apparently extremely high altitude were noticed coming toward the balloon from the northwest. They circled the balloon, or apparently so, and flew off to the northeast. The time of observation was about 40 seconds. The two objects were the same color and size as the first object. They were flying side-by-side. When the objects appeared to circle the balloon, they disappeared and the observers assumed they were disc-shaped and had turned on edge to bank.

"Unfortunately this report was not made until 5 April and did not reach ATIC until 16 April. Due to this time lag, no further investigation is contemplated. The observers are known to be very reliable and experienced."

Under "conclusions" it simply said: "None."

Hawaii's strange tourist.

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin asked on January 18th: "Is someone casing the Garden Island?" The Star-Bulletin was puzzled over the fact that Kauai island had had its third flying saucer report since Christmas Eve and expressed wonderment at the qualifications of the latest witnesses. Five of Kauai's county officials viewed a silvery disc in a clear blue sky at 6:30 p.m. from the window of the

county chairman's office. One of the men dashed home to get a telescope but before he returned the object moved away and entered a cloud formation.⁷

On the other side of the world, Europe's first taste of flying saucer "hysteria" in 1950 left behind curiosity and the beginnings of much public speculation.

A pioneer of aeronautical science, M. Charles de Rouge, wrote for the French newspaper Le Parisien Libere on January 18th that in his view:

"In the condition of barbarism into which we have sunk through the lack of general scientific progress, the arrival on earth of flying saucers would perhaps be the salvation of a world condemned to destruction by its own errors."⁸

Edward Ruppelt.

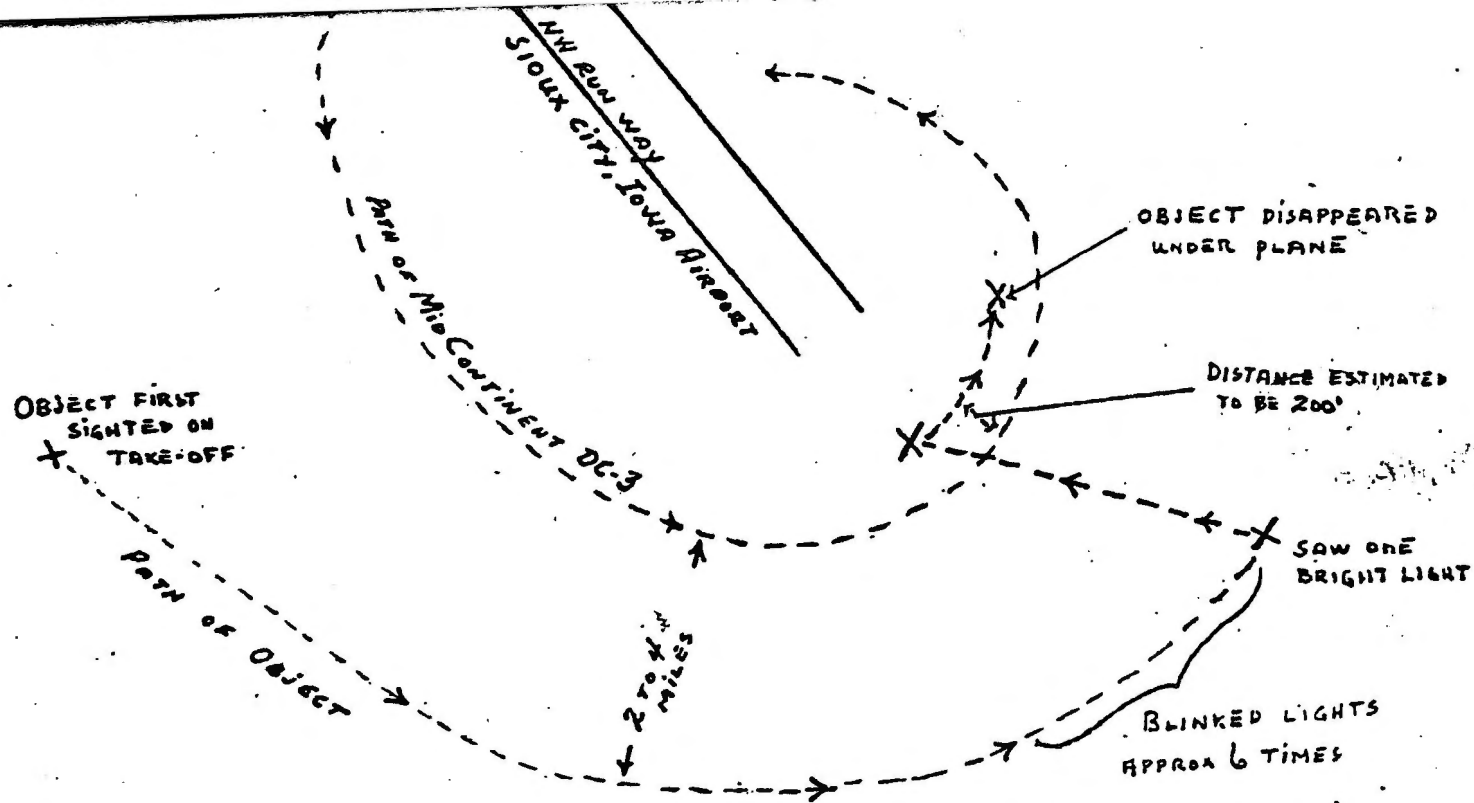
An extraordinary personality in the history of UFO's was Edward Ruppelt, a key man in the Air Force story in the early years although he never held a rank higher than Captain. Even today (1982) researchers are still unearthing new information about his role in the sky mystery.

According to his own account, his involvement in the aerial riddle was gradual. Ruppelt had been called to active duty during the Korean conflict and was assigned to ATIC, Wright-Patterson AFB, where his work consisted of evaluations of the latest Communist aircraft; however, his desk job acquired some unexpected fascination when he discovered that an officer in the same room processed UFO reports, the hottest topic of conversation in the nation.

Right after beginning work at ATIC, Ruppelt overheard a discussion taking place at the desk of the UFO officer. Office personnel had gathered around the desk to scoff at a story that had come in, something about what the newspapers were calling an "impossible plane." It seems a very strange "aircraft" had been witnessed in the air over Sioux City, Iowa, on January 20th. Offutt Field's Colonel Matthew Thompson, an officer that served as the Air Base UFO investigator, had been a passenger on Mid-Continental Flight 9 but had been sleeping at the time. His aide, S/A Sparks, noted some strange lights he believed were aircraft running lights to the left rear of Flight 9, but that's all. The chief Air Controller at Sioux City tower was amazed as he watched the UFO's passage. In spite of who the witnesses were, the "impossible plane" report met with what appeared to be a poor reception. Ruppelt marvelled.⁹

The Sioux City Airport Traffic Controllers signed the following document:

"At approximately 2020C a bright light was observed from the control tower. When first noticed the light appeared to be approximately 2,000 feet above the surface on a bearing of approximately 285 degrees from the tower and about 2½ to 3 miles away. This light appeared to be stationary and of extreme brilliance for a period of one to two minutes, then gradually began to fade. At this time Mid-Continent Airlines Flight Nine was given taxi instructions for takeoff and was then advised of the light the tower had in sight. The pilot was unable to locate the light which had faded to a dull glow and was climbing rapidly in a southerly direction. At approximately eight or nine thousand feet and a distance of about four miles the light appeared to become stationary again southwest of the airport. Mid-Continent Airlines Flight Nine took off northwest at 2027C and made a left turn. The tower then advised as to the light's position. Within a few seconds the Mid-Continent pilot sighted the object. The pilot then turned to a southerly heading and advised the tower the object appeared to be a very large military aircraft. The pilot asked if there were any jet aircraft in the vicinity of the airport. At this time N1810V, a Cessna Model 140 called the tower and advised he was low on fuel and was making an emergency landing at Sioux City. The Cessna was immediately given landing instructions and landed at 2032C. Also, at approximately the same time, N3137V, a Beechcraft Bonanza called for landing instructions, and landed at 2036C. At approximately 2030C Mid-Continent Airlines Flight Nine advised the object was flying a loose formation with him. Mid-Continent was at an approximate altitude of 2,500 feet on a north-east heading about one mile southeast of the airport. The pilot asked if the tower had the object in sight. The object could not be observed from the tower. Mid-Continent Airlines Flight Nine then took up a northwest heading circling directly over the tower, advising at the same time the object was directly on their tail. At approximately 2031C the object was observed apparently following Mid-Continent Airlines Flight Nine just before Flight Nine passed over the tower. The pilot then took up a northeast heading and asked for the position of the object. The tower advised the object was in sight about a mile and a half due east of the tower at an estimated altitude of 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the ground apparently in a stationary position. The object then began to move at a high rate of speed in a northwesterly direction. The pilot of Flight Nine again asked the position



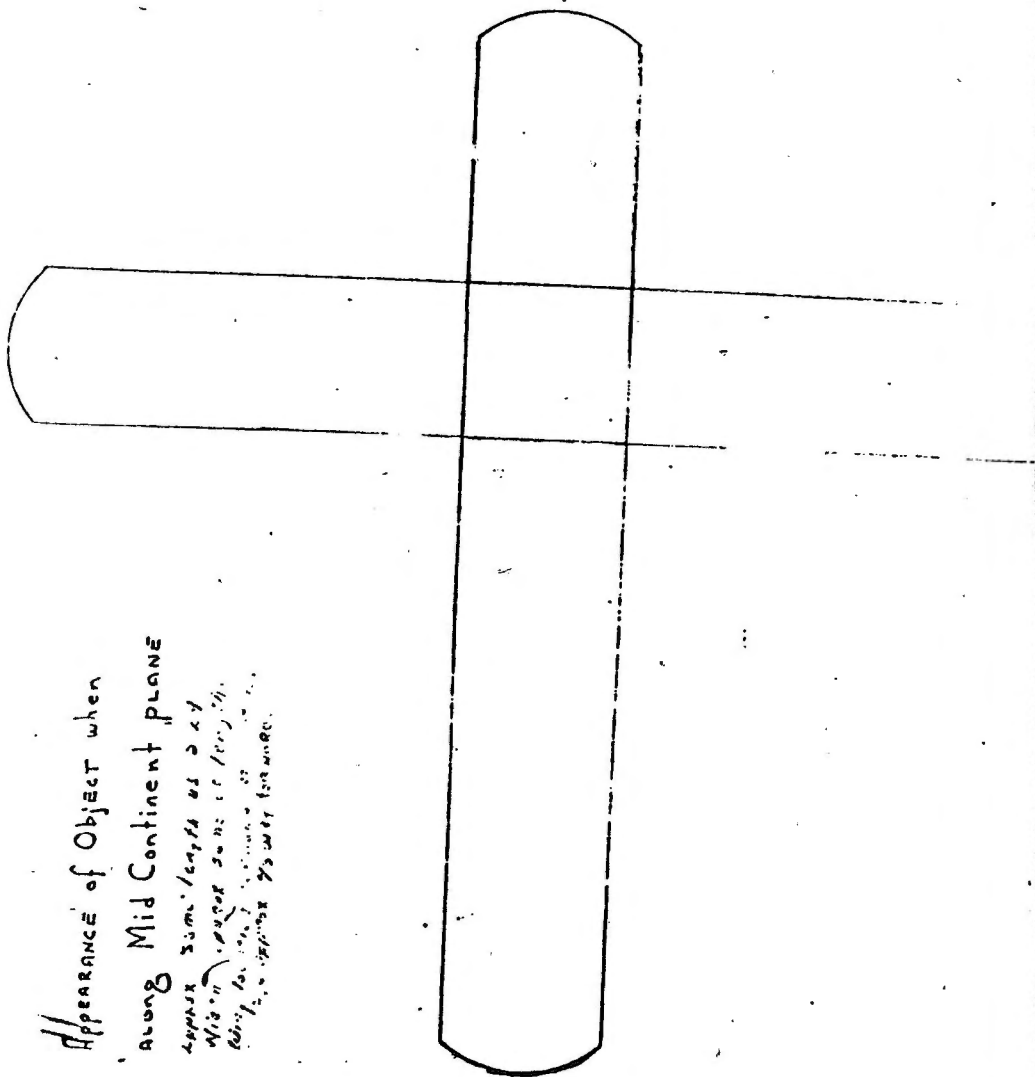
James I. [illegible]

of the object which was approximately half way between Mid-Continent Airline Flight Nine's altitude and the ground and was moving very rapidly in a northwesterly direction. Mid-Continent Flight Nine then proceeded on course to Omaha, Nebraska at approximately 2034C. The object was last sighted from the tower at 2034C headed in a northwesterly direction."¹⁰, 11

What is especially odd was the description of the UFO. The pilot of the Mid-Continent Airliner reported the thing could be clearly seen in the moonlight as it momentarily paced the airliner only an estimated 200 yards away. It appeared:

"...equal to one and one-half times the size of a B-29 airplane. Fuselage appeared cigar-shaped and wing was long and slender, well forward and straight across, looking like a flattened cigar. Wing was from middle to high fuselage. No engines nacelles visible and wing appeared as a glider wing. No lights were noted on object at this time and no rudders or stabilizers."¹²

What Ruppelt never mentions when he tells the story is that a number of wingless cigar-shaped UFOs had been reported over the years but in this case we have a freak, flying spindle with "wings." Could it be the UFO was a conventional aircraft in spite of the testimony of witnesses? Was the image and moves of the object just an illusion, some kind of mirror-like reflection of the Mid-Continent airliner? Perhaps the head shaking at ATIC was justified? One of the hard-to-convince fellows at ATIC muttered within earshot of Ruppelt: "Is everyone crazy!" Ruppelt questioned one of the old hands at ATIC and learned that officially the UFO problem was being taken lightly, yet privately there were some Intelligence officers that felt strongly the subject merited serious consideration although they were hampered in their efforts to influence policy.¹³ Ruppelt at this point became aware of a significant and disturbing fact about official attitude toward the sky mystery. A shocking split between believers and nonbelievers existed, one that would continue and become the story behind the story of the UFO riddle. When the final word on the UFO mystery is written, many of the dramatic scenes will deal with the clashes between persons in authority. Some very distinguished scientists and news commentators over the years have launched vehement attacks on the UFO mystery using as evidence "official announcements," but they would be shocked if they knew of the politics and prejudice that controlled the content in "official announcements," statements that distorted official documentation.



Appearance of Object when
 along Mid Continent plane
 appears some length as 2 x 4
 when viewed from some of the
 other directions it appears as
 a square 25 meter square.

64

24
 UNCLASSIFIED

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVAL
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
 DOD DIR 5200.10

The public may, or may not, have been of a pro-UFO persuasion at this time but one thing seemed clear as shown by a New England organization. The "Aero Club of New England" sent a letter of protest to Air Force Secretary Thomas K. Finletter denouncing the abandonment of the Pentagon's UFO investigative project and charging that explanations offered were 'inadequate, unconvincing, or totally lacking.' Furthermore, the club stated that the testimony of credible witnesses readily conveys the distinct impression there were grounds for belief a novel aircraft existed unknown to aeronautical science. Many others shared the Aero Club's view.

The complaint found an echo at ATIC coming from one of those officers Ruppelt says was not so rigid in his thinking. A Lt. Colonel Kent Parrot, USAF, Chief, Aircraft and Propulsion Section, Technical Analysis Division, was annoyed with the data given him for the interpretation of the Mid-Continent Airliner case.

He stated that more information was needed and although it might be assumed that a conventional aircraft might explain the UFO, the: "...expected final conclusions are difficult to state at this time."¹⁴ And: "The responsibilities of the Air Defense Command in connection with visitations of this kind should be more firmly established than currently appears to be the case."¹⁵

In one case, reaction to the official handling of the UFO problem reached an extreme.

The Air Force cooperated with columnist Bob Considine toward the end of 1950 allowing him access to military UFO files and afterward having Air Force Director of Intelligence at Wright Field, Colonel Harold E. Watson, grant an exclusive interview. Colonel Watson met with the columnist and told him the so-called UFO mystery was nonsense, and investigating it an enormous waste of Pentagon funds. The result of the interview, the article "The Disgraceful Flying Saucer Hoax," appeared in the January 1951 issue of Cosmopolitan magazine, an article that was a strong attack on all those persons who had reported seeing one of the sky objects. The columnist not only blamed saucer reporting on cold war jitters, but even went beyond that and characterized UFO witnesses as "screwballs." Unfortunately Considine included the name of Mr. Mariana of the Great Falls movie case in the strongly worded essay and Mariana immediately lost some sponsors of his sport program.¹⁶ Enraged about Considine's writings, Mariana contacted an attorney to see about taking legal action against the columnist.

Colonel Watson no doubt laid it too thick when he told Considine: "At the end of nearly every report tracked down, stands a crackpot, a religious crank, a publicity hound, or a malicious practical joker."¹⁷ That was an interesting statement considering the fact that many UFO witnesses were military personnel, or civilian experts under government contract. One might also give some thought to the fact

it was Colonel Watson who was running the show at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio where UFO reports were being received during 1950. Little wonder not much was done with the reports that poured in to the Air Force.

As UFO expert Donald Keyhoe remembers, the blast by Colonel Watson incurred angry reactions from pilots. One snapped to Keyhoe: "To hell with him and the Air Force too. I wouldn't report a UFO now if they paid me."18

More balloons and UFO's over New Mexico.

The UFO incident of January 16th had something of a counterpart less than a week later. Air Force Captain James E. Cocker informed his superiors:

"On 22 January 1951 while participating in Project Gopher at Holloman AFB, New Mexico, we took off at about 0900 E and proceeded to the balloon launching site at 10,000 feet MSL where we started tracking a balloon.

"The balloon was set to maintain a 10,000 ft. altitude for a period of about four hours. After tracking the balloon for about one hour on a southeast course and at a point about 50 miles southeast of Holloman AFB, a tiny star-like object appeared next to the balloon. At this time Captain Spradley of Photo Lab and Mr. McAleese of General Mills Corporation were notified.

"The object held a constant position next to the balloon and appeared to be increasing in size. At this time its round shape and clear outline became more visible. After leaving the cockpit and observing the object from the astrodome, the object started separating from the balloon in a westward direction. At this time the object was about one fourth to one-half the size of the balloon. The object now appeared to be travelling in level flight at a very high speed. After about one minute it emitted a series of brilliant flashes of light at one-second intervals and disappeared from sight."19

"Daddy, there's an airplane on fire!"

The man's young son had run home shouting. It was 6:28 EST January 25th at the Zeigler Apartments on Warner Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. The father went outside and saw an object:

"...in the south and at an altitude of 4,000 to 6,000 feet. It was oblong in shape and appeared to be of uniform thickness throughout rather 'like a flattened orange, but not

round.' Mr. --- (deleted) estimated the length of the object as approximately 150 feet. In color it was dull, perhaps black, without any gloss."²⁰

Moreover:

"The light seemed to be projected from the entire unit, not just the center. The thing which most impressed Mr. --- (deleted), was the way in which the light 'pointed' the movement of the object. The point of light would move, then the object would move, as though the object were attached to the point with strings. The point of the light would lean over, then the object would move until it was directly centered under the point, then both point and object would rise. Mr. --- (deleted) compared the action to 'climbing steps.' This happened approximately four times. Attached is a drawing made by Mr. --- (deleted) in an attempt to present in pictorial form the movement of the object."²¹

A bizarre episode to be sure, if we are properly informed, excited Galena, Illionis, 7:00 p.m., February 3rd when a fiery-red object, the shape of a baseball bat and as big as a telephone pole, passed soundlessly over the city at a mere 300 foot altitude. The sight was spectacular as bolts of lightning-like flashes shot from the rear portion. It was not a meteor report since the object was said to have made a number of turns in the air, skirting hills, and moving at a perceptible velocity."²²

Overseas, in the wake of the UFO wave of 1950 that passed over Europe late in the year, interest in the subject continued due to an occasional sighting and the sale of UFO books. London publisher Wavern Girvan's edition of Heard's writings, The Riddle of the Flying Saucers, met with modest success, as did the American UFO books, Donald Keyhoe's Flying Saucers Are Real and Frank Scully's Behind the Flying Saucers. Publishers on the continent were even sending out feelers about translations for non-English markets.

In north Scania, Sweden, a dazzling object was chased through the sky by a Swedish Air Force plane, but that report, made on January 25th, was offset somewhat by Reuters news service reporting from Copenhagen, Denmark, stating that the Chairman of British European Airways was anti-saucer."²³

Atlantic aerial anomaly.

Testimony of Lt. Fred W. Kingdon, Jr., U.S. Navy:

"At 0055Z on 10 February 1951, while serving as second Plane Commander on above flight, I was

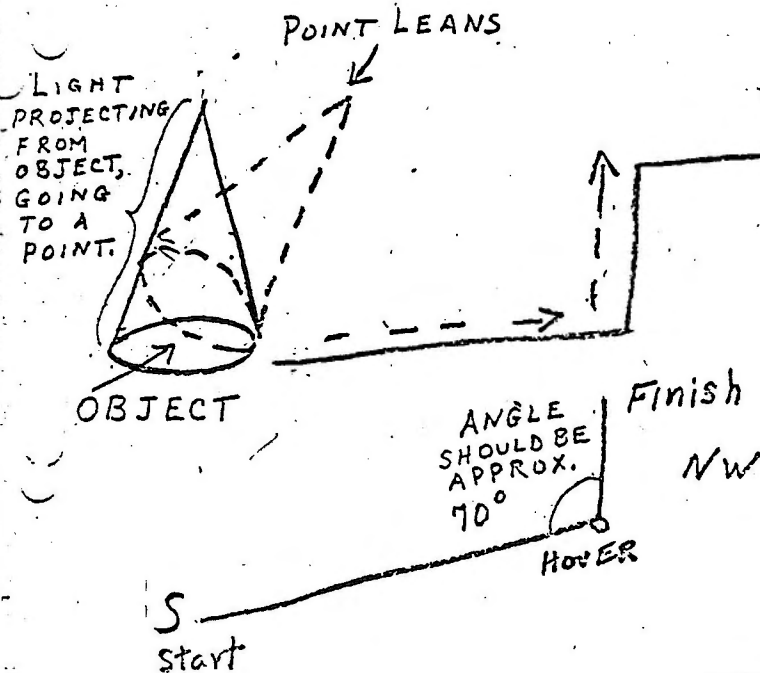
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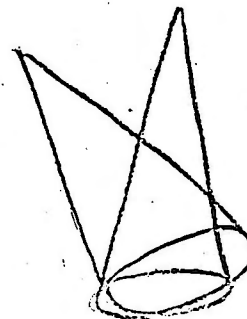
← "1" REPRESENTS
LIGHT GOING
TO A POINT
ABOVE OBJECT.

→ OBJECT

NOTE: RATIO BETWEEN
SIZE OF OBJECT AND SIZE
OF LIGHT IS NOT CORRECT,
OBJECT SHOULD APPEAR
MUCH LARGER.



UNCLASSIFIED



PRACTICE

Incl 2

an eye witness to an unusual sighting of an unidentified flying object. This occurrence took place at approximately 49-50 N and 50-03 W, which is approximately 200 miles northeast of Argentia, Newfoundland. We were at 10,000 feet altitude cruising on a true course of about 230 degrees at the time of the incident.

"At time of sighting, I was occupying the right hand (co-pilot's) seat and left hand (pilot's) seat was occupied by Lt. G. E. Bethune.

"My attention was first called to the occurrence by Mr. Bethune, who asked me to look at an unusual light which was to my right. I then saw that there was a glowing light beneath a thin layer of strato-form clouds beneath us. This was to my right and down at an angle of about 45 degrees. This object appeared to lie on the surface and was throwing a yellowish-orange glare through the cloud deck. It appeared to be very large and I at first thought that it could be a large ship completely illuminated.

"Mr. Bethune and I watched the object for several minutes in trying to determine its nature. We then called our navigator, Lt. N. J. P. Koger to the cockpit to scrutinize the object and render his opinion as to its nature.

"While further observing the object, I saw that it suddenly started ascending through the cloud layer and it then became quite bright. The object was very large and was circular with a glowing yellow-orange ring around its outer edge. This object appeared to be climbing and moving at a tremendous speed, and it appeared to be on a more or less collision course with our aircraft. When it appeared that there was a possibility of collision the object appeared to make a 180 degree turn and disappeared over the horizon at a terrific speed. During the course of events, LTJG A. L. Jones had come to the cockpit and he made a turn in the direction of the object but it went out of sight in a short period of time.

"Due to the fact that this object was seen over water at night it would be most difficult for me to estimate speed, size, or distance we were from it during the course of events. However, the speed was tremendous and the size was at least 200 to 300 feet in diameter. The object was close enough to see and observe it clearly."24

LTJG A. L. Jones, U.S. Navy, was aft when the phenomenon was first seen. Lt. Koger alerted him and others that something strange was visible to the pilots forward. Lt. Jones went to the cockpit and witnessed the object's departure:

"My first view of it resembled a huge fiery orange disc on its edge. As it went further away, the center became darker, but the edge still threw off a fiery hue. When it went over the horizon, it seemed to go from a vertical position to a horizontal position, with only the trailing edge showing in a half-moon-effect."²⁵

When their plane landed at Argentia, the Navy men were interrogated by Captain D. H. Paulsen, USAF, of Pepperell Air Force Base, and Navy Commander Wehmeyer, C.O., VP-8, Argentia. One of the Navy men later said of this questioning:

"The types of questions they asked us were like Henry Ford asking about the Model T. You got the feeling that they were putting words in your mouth. It was obvious that there had been many sightings in the same area, and most of the observers did not let the cat out of the bag openly. When we arrived in the United States, we had to make a full report to Navy Intelligence.

"I found out a few months later that Gander radar did track the object in excess of 1800 mph."²⁶

The proposed solution to this case as carried in official files went:

"...it was concluded that while there is a possibility of the object being a meteor or a fireball, the description furnished gives reason to believe that the aircrew actually saw an unusual 'northern lights' display."²⁷

This evaluation was made on February 20, 1951, in a document signed by Lt. Colonel Kent Parrot, although a message from J. J. Rodgers of MCIAXA states that the origin of the forementioned solution was someone else's and the supposed answer not as firm as the official record makes it appear.²⁸

In Australia the wave of UFO activity had eased off. On January 7th, a news story from downunder told of some residents of the city of Bowral in New South Wales sighting a silent, high-speed object crossing the sky. In appearance it was a steel-blue in color and the size of the full moon. The object suddenly slowed and then rose in a spiral until it disappeared into some clouds.²⁹

Back in the States there was a new attempt to stop the "hysteria."

The second try in a month to put an end to the UFO riddle surfaced in New York from the pen of Associated Press Science reporter Alton L. Blackeslee. On February 13th

Blackeslee gave space in his column to a theory conceived by Dr. Urner Liddel, Chief of the Nuclear Physics Branch of the Research Section, Office of U.S. Naval Research. The noted Navy expert flatly stated that all unexplained flying saucer reports were due to the sighting of the U.S. Navy's giant "skyhook" cosmic ray balloons since there appeared to be a correlation between balloon launches and reports of strange objects in the sky. Dr. Liddel went into some detail on how round balloons could resemble a disc under various lighting conditions, and since the Skyhooks were just beginning to become familiar to the general public, he predicted that UFO reports would taper off as people became better educated.³⁰

The Skyhook idea was hardly new for back in May 1948 the magazine Popular Science postulated the exact same hypothesis, but you wouldn't have known it by the big play given Dr. Liddel's assertions in an article by Richard Wilson in the February 27th issue of LOOK magazine, or for that matter the welcome extended to Liddel by TIME. The same goes for the Christian Science Monitor and England's Manchester Guardian.

Speaking of England, Liddel's theory got a good press across the Atlantic. There was a sudden drop in the number of orders for sensational UFO books which could be attributed to Liddel's "solution." An exception to the sudden loss of faith was the London Sunday Dispatch, which remained loyal to the premise that the saucers were mysterious objects from "somewhere else."

A strength of his theory, Liddle believed, was that it explained the "persistence" of UFO reports since real objects were keeping the excitement alive. The professor claimed that the Navy cosmic-ray balloon project had collected some 2,000 UFO reports for study and having looked them over he felt that: "...there is not a single reliable report of an observation which is not attributable to the cosmic balloons."³¹ While Dr. Liddle was open to the idea his devices were causing alarm, he shut the door on the possibility that any other research unit or experimental project was putting aloft anything remotely resembling a flying saucer.

When Dr. Liddel received sympathetic support from William Webster, Chairman of the Research and Development Board, the press labeled the statements by the two a "double-barreled scientific debunking."

Webster had called a briefing for the press which convened at the Pentagon on February 13th. At briefing he blasted the revolutionary new weapon theory making the rounds as well as the spooky idea that the mysterious objects seen in the heavens were a vanguard of a Martian invasion. The Chairman assured everyone that:

"Careful studies have been made. I don't believe anyone who has the opportunity to be informed and to look into this thing believes there is a flying saucer as such.

"As far as I know there is nothing to the flying saucers."³²

At this point the magazine Aviation Week jumped in and joined Webster in applauding Dr. Liddel's appraisal of the UFO problem.³³

A very interesting reaction to Liddel's solution came out of Dayton, Ohio, but not from Air Force Intelligence.

On February 15th, two Air Force officers assigned to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Captain J. E. Cocker of the All Weather Flying Division and Captain E. W. Spradley of the Aerial Photographic Laboratory, after returning from temporary duty at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, spilled the beans about their sighting a round, flat, silver-colored object near a Skyhook balloon during a launch! The question that comes to mind instantly is how UFO's could be Skyhooks if both objects were seen together in the sky and were recognized as distinctly different objects by some men that were well acquainted with what a Skyhook looked like. ATIC at Wright Field, having enough trouble as it was trying to convince the public the UFO mystery was a crock, answered an inquiry from the Dayton Daily News evasively: "Air Material Command officials said Thursday they had received no official reports from the two officers and 'do not take it too seriously'"³⁴

Donald Keyhoe, however, didn't need the help. He struck back at the "Liddel theory" by writing an essay for the International News Service. Being an old balloon pilot before earning his wings as a Marine fighter pilot, Keyhoe knew something about the subject and he certainly wasn't about to buy Dr. Liddel's ideas. After a critique of Liddel, Keyhoe went out on a limb and predicted an upswing in UFO activity during the spring of 1951 due to the scheduled atomic bomb tests near Las Vegas, Nevada.³⁵ As it turned out, Keyhoe missed by a mile. The spring of 1951 would turn out to be the quietest ever.

Things were so quiet in the States during this period a foreign report grabbed the spotlight.

On February 19th the American Consul at Dar es Salaam, Kenya, a Mr. H. Gordon Minnigerode, forwarded a Foreign Service Dispatch to the Department of State. The message was rerouted to Air Force Intelligence since it concerned a UFO sighting.³⁶

At ATIC Ruppelt noticed one of the Intelligence officers studying the Consul's report, a UFO sighting from Africa, of all places. Curious, Ruppelt asked for a peek.



SAYS FLYING SAUCERS NOT JUST BALLOONS—Dr. Anthony O. Mirarchi, former Air Force scientist, uses a blackboard drawing at his Scituate, Mass., home to explain his theory on flying saucers. He disputes the explanation of a Navy scientist that the objects people saw were plastic balloons used in radiation research.—AP Wirephoto.

Feb. 26-1951 Flying Saucers Not Just Balloons, Says Scientist

Ex-Air Force Chemist Calls Navy Report False, Asks Investigation

SCITUATE, Mass. (AP)—A former Air Force scientist yesterday brushed aside the idea that flying saucers are just balloons. He urged a full investigation of what he said may be experiments by "a potential enemy of the United States."

Dr. Anthony O. Mirarchi, who was employed by the Air Force as a chemist in its geophysical laboratory, took issue with a recent magazine article written by Dr. Uner Liddel, Navy scientist. Liddel said what people have been seeing are plastic balloons sent into the upper air for radia-

meteor or the erratic motion of drifting balloons.

He remarked that a number of "the fireball observations came from a certain region of New Mexico which is critical to the national defense." In that region is the Los

After scanning the pages, Ruppelt returned the documents and made a remark about "crazy people," a comment he thought was expected but he was surprised by the other officer's thoughtful demeanor. Pressed for his true feelings, the other officer replied that UFO's were not his responsibility but he was familiar with much of the aerial phenomenon material arriving at ATIC and he was disturbed by the poor quality of official "explanations," a discontent he knew others shared. To that, Ruppelt posed the 64-dollar question of why there was such a "big show of power" to debunk UFO's? The other officer understood that debunking was the will of the "powers-that-be" and it behooved the lower ranks to toe the line.³⁷

In England the African report made a big splash in the press, abruptly throwing cold water on Liddel's theory that was enjoying a warm reception. Needless to say, the London Sunday Dispatch was jubilant.³⁸

The story itself is worth retelling.

An East African Airways airliner, the Lodestar, flying from Nairobi to Mombassa and piloted by a Captain J. Bicknell, made its way through a clear blue sky as it approached Tanganyika's beautiful snow-capped peak of Kilimanjaro. The plane's radio operator, Dennis W. Merrifield, spotted the UFO initially. Rather casually, with the British manner of understatement, Merrifield slowly turned to Captain Bicknell and said: "Have a look at a flying saucer." About 10,000 feet in the air directly above Mt. Kilimanjaro was something gleaming brightly, a thing so strange the crew of the Lodestar knew they had to find out more about it. Nairobi Air Traffic Control, when radioed about other aircraft in the area, replied jokingly that there was none and that perhaps the Lodestar crew should add more water to whatever they were drinking. In spite of what Nairobi Control said, something was visible directly above Kilimanjaro for 17 minutes as the Lodestar sped toward the mountain. After 17 minutes, as the crew of the Lodestar and a number of the passengers watched, the UFO rose vertically in two jumps, and then zoomed away at an estimated 1,000 mph. A couple of passengers, a Britisher by the name of H.B. Fussell and an American merchant marine radio officer of the freighter Robin Mowbray by the name of Ray Overstreet, took turns scanning the UFO with a pair of binoculars. Fussell described the UFO as looking like a huge bullet, whitish-silver in color with vertical dark bands. Overstreet wasn't sure but he thought he could detect a row of "portholes" along the side. Three attempts were made to take pictures of the object. One camera missed completely, and another effort only photographed a small black body. The third try, 30 feet of colored movie film, obtained by Mr. Overstreet, was alleged to have captured an interesting image but the frames have never (to this writer's knowledge) been carefully examined and it is assumed the film is still in the possession of Overstreet.

(A mention in the British press disclosed that a screening of the Overstreet's colored movie film was held in Johannesburg later on March 10th.)

There was no vapor or smoke visible near the object, which in the clear air would have been readily detectable; and there was some agreement the UFO had a "fin-like" arrangement on the rear portion. Passenger Charles Vernon was awed and he exclaimed: "the object was 'immense!'" All of the forementioned witnesses signed affidavits.³⁹

The Nairobi Sunday Post commented: "If this report had come from a few isolated individuals it would soon be discounted. But it came from responsible airline officials and nine ordinary travellers."⁴⁰ The paper went on to dismiss talk of balloons and opined that "natural" solutions to the UFO mystery were fading fast.

The incident near Mt. Kilimanjaro mentioned in the Sunday Post jarred the memory of a Mrs. A. M. King, resident of Nairobi, who recognized that the thing witnessed by Captain Bicknell and the others must have been a close cousin to the "monster" flying tube she sighted from the deck of the Llandovery Castle as that ship navigated the Straits of Madagascar back in June 1947.

Mrs. King's story eventually made its way to ATIC files but there is no indication the Air Force has ever noticed the similarity.

More objects over Africa.

It was a beautiful night. The air was clear and a bright moon hung in the dark early morning sky. At about 4:00 in the morning sometime in March 1951 (the witnesses were not sure of the exact date) a very bright point of light was noticed in the sky by a trio of French Air Force officers stationed at Bangui Air Base in what was then French Equatorial Africa. The glowing point, which grew in size, quickly assumed twice the brilliance of Venus and zoomed straight toward Bangui Air Base at high speed, with the officers carefully peering at the object's approach. The military men at first believed the phenomenon was a meteor but soon changed their minds as the object streaked over Bangui soundlessly, coming to a halt to the west of the field, after which it made a right angle turn and sped away.

In France, French Air Force Captain Clerouin, who was keeping an unofficial log of such mysterious aerial occurrences, reported by the French military, wrote an essay on the Bangui case and submitted it to the French journal Revue de l'Armée de l'Air.⁴¹ The attitude of Captain Clerouin contrasted sharply with that of some officers of the U.S. Air Force.

Ruppelt quoted one of the officers at ATIC that seemed to be playing the scoffers role quite well:

"One of these days all of these crazy pilots will kill themselves, the crazy people on the ground will be locked up, and there won't be any more flying saucer reports."⁴²

This scoffing attitude filtered down to the ranks. On February 24th people living at Redwood Valley, California, were startled by a flash in the sky and when it faded away a bright point of light remained. The bright point of light then began to circle at high speed after which it zoomed toward the south. At nearby Hamilton Air Force Base, humorous remarks about nutty civilians became so rampant the news media got wind of it.⁴³

"Flattened football."

It's difficult to understand just what a Sergeant Sells of the 5001st Air Base Group saw in the sky over Ladd Air Force Base, Alaska, unless we assume the man was telling a lie:

"Sells stated that he was placed on guard duty at Building 135 at 1600 hours 26 February 1951. At approximately 1710Z hours he was at his post at the south side of the building and he observed a large bird, probably a raven, which flew up into the air, which at first he thought to be a weather balloon. Sells stated that this object was at an altitude of about 8,000 feet and almost directly over the Ladd Air Force Base runway. In order to observe it he had to look almost vertically at an angle of approximately 80 degrees. This object, which appeared gray, was shaped like a flattened football, having no sharp edges. Sells stated there was not sufficient light to determine if the object was metallic or not. Judging the altitude at 18,000 feet Sells believed its dimensions to be 10 to 12 feet thick and about 120 feet across. When first observed it was hovering over the runway and had an oscillating motion similar to that of a coin dropped on a table. It remained in this position for about 45 seconds. Then the object emitted a single puff of smoke which formed a ring and accelerated rapidly toward the north at a speed far in excess of that of a jet aircraft. Sells attempted to watch the flight of the object but lost it as it passed toward the general direction of Birch Hill (north). The white smoke ring lasted only a moment."⁴⁴

The official report on the incident said that Sells was considered reliable by the officers of the 5001st Air Base

Group and that he had alerted the officer of the guard immediately after sighting the phenomenon.

Things really hit the fan February 26th when Air Force scientist Dr. Anthony O. Mirarchi granted an interview to the Associated Press to rip Liddel's assertions. He warned that the Navy expert's ideas would "lull the American people into a false sense of safety and that it might be possible UFO's could, if ignored, launch an attack worse than that of Pearl Harbor." Without mentioning Project TWINKLE by name, Dr. Mirarchi revealed, that as an Assistant Chief of a branch of the Geophysical Research Organization, he had been engaged in a study of the mysterious sky phenomena and as a result he recommended that "considerable appropriations" be allocated to conduct a complete investigation.⁴⁵

"Office of Strategic Information."

According to Dr. Mirarchi, the "Office of Strategic Information" had hundreds of UFO reports on file, which he had examined, and he determined to his satisfaction that the records of those observations were consistent with: "a missile programmed in advance." The maneuvers displayed, particularly vertical and horizontal motions, ruled out meteors or drifting balloons.⁴⁶

A spokesman for the Air Force in Washington issued a standard reply with the key word being "concrete". The spokesman said:

"In over 500 investigations we have made so far, we have yet to find one concrete bit of evidence to back up these reports of flying saucers."⁴⁷

The statement was amended by the remark that the Air Force had never terminated its study of the flying saucer "rumors" and that a Colonel Harold E. Watson was in charge of the investigative effort at Air Material Command headquarters, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio.

The same press account reported further:

"Asked about an Air Force statement that more than 500 investigations were made without one bit of concrete evidence to back up reports of flying saucers, Dr. Mirarchi said: 'I thought I was the only one making such an investigation. And as far as I'm concerned, there certainly was evidence to back up my conclusion.'"⁴⁸

Dr. Mirarchi gave a second interview within a day of the first to detail three reasons he believed gave credence to the concept that UFO's might be missiles of "foreign

origin." He listed the great velocity, multi-colored jets of flame, and abrupt appearance and disappearance of UFO's which could not be attributed to tricks of light. Thought provoking was his remark: "...there were additional reasons which he could not reveal for security reasons."⁴⁹

More amazing foreign reports.

From Switzerland came this sensational story:

"A flat object of a blinding white color was seen on March 12, 1951, at 4:00 p.m. for fifteen minutes, at Corcelles-Neuchatel in Switzerland. The witnesses were Professor Alfred Lombard, his family, and several other persons. The UFO was seen above the lake. It followed a large course across the sky, leaving a white and woolly smoke trail as it progressed with sudden leaps forward. Sometimes it would remain perfectly motionless. After fifteen minutes the object travelled in a half-circle and turned upside-down, appearing as a perfect disk. It then took off vertically, at a fantastic speed, emitting no smoke or noise, and was lost in an instant."⁵⁰

Another report, this time from India, was hardly less sensational. An Air Force attache assigned to the American Embassy check the incident and obtained signed statements:

"On Thursday morning 15 March 1951, an object was sighted by Mr. George Floate, the chief aerial engineer of the Delhi Air Club, along with his assistants, Mr. --- (deleted) and Mr. --- (deleted). Also some twenty other mechanics and helpers professed to have witnessed this object. When interviewed by the reporting officer the stories were all the same. Dr. P. Nilakantan, educated at the California Institute of Technology and now Director of the Research and Development Laboratory of the Director General of Civil Aviation agency in India, accompanied the reporting officer while interviewing these people. Dr. Nilakantan recommended Mr. George Floate as one of the best aerial engineers in India.

"The object sighted was shaped like a cigar with no outer visible control surfaces. It was about one hundred feet long and as big around as a C-47 fuselage, bare metal color and only one object sighted. [sic] The exhaust was described as white except when its speed was increased; then the exhaust turned black. Mr. Floate estimated the speed to be about three

times greater than the cruising speed of a British Vampire. The object came over Sadarjang Airdrome, New Delhi, from the north at about four to five thousand feet high, made one pass over the field to the south, then came back over the field in a very large loop. At the top of the loop it was out of sight but came into sight again in its dive. Upon recovering straight and level flight it proceeded out of sight travelling in a south-westerly direction at very high speed. The exhaust stayed visible in the sky for over twenty minutes. The object was sighted at 1020 local time and was observed for approximately seven minutes. The observers were on a taxi strip working when the object was sighted. The weather at the time of the sighting was clear, sunshining with thirty mile visibility. Surface wind was from 300 degrees at fifteen to twenty knots.

"Mr. Floate, forty years old, has held an Indian pilot and Indian engineer license since 1935. His experience covers twenty years in aero engineering; (no formal engineering education). He has worked at Madras Flying Club, Himalayan Airways, as engineer in charge, Aero Training Center, Indian National Airways, as engineer in charge, aircraft inspector for Director General Civil Aviation, Hindustan Aircraft, Ltd., Bangalore, India, and chief engineer Delhi Flying Club (about 15 words censored here). However, it is felt that some object did come over New Delhi and that it was unconventional. The stories of all twenty-five witnesses are the same as Mr. Floate's."⁵¹

"Evaporated?"

Floate claimed the UFO "jumped" like a frightened cat when jet fighters of the Indian Air Force headed its way. The "leap" took the UFO 2,000 feet higher in an instant, and then an incredible thing occurred. Floate uttered in an amazed tone: "It was there. And a second later it had vanished, evaporated, dissolved into the sky."⁵²

It was said that some 400 miles from New Delhi at the city of Allahabad the same, or a very similar object, was spotted that night spouting a queer fluorescent wake. The witness to this latter manifestation was a Mr. Y. R. Bhan Darkar, a flying club instructor.⁵³ (The general appearance and movements of the object over New Delhi had an uncanny similarity to the "thing" above Mt. Kilimanjaro a month before.)

What tie-in there was to the India report is not apparent, but an Intelligence report filed March 21, 1951 mentions that: "There have been many sightings reported of unknown objects observed on the Soviet-Iranian border..."⁵⁴

Bell Aircraft Corporation witnesses.

When Lt. John G. Albert of Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, asked civilian experts working at the air base to keep a look out for UFO's and in doing so help Project TWINKLE, he probably didn't expect the following interesting report (While reading the report one is reminded of similar swarms of strange white-colored objects in New Mexico in 1950.). The Field Test Director for the Bell Aircraft Corporation (whose name was deleted from the report) filed a report with Lt. Albert about a UFO sighting made on March 14, 1951, during a Bell aircraft test. No fewer than nine members of the Bell Aircraft Corporation observed the objects in question. The Test Director wrote:

"Mr. --- (deleted) made the first sighting at approximately 1500 hours while following the flight path of the B-50, which at that time was flying on a southerly heading at an altitude of approximately 15,000 feet NSL east and slightly south of the base. At the first sighting due either to the distance involved or small individual size of the objects, Mr. --- (deleted) attached little significance to the phenomenon thinking perhaps that it was a flock of birds at a considerable distance. However in a minute or so he began to think otherwise and called the matter to the attention of Messrs. --- (deleted) and --- (deleted). At the time his sighting was verified by the latter two men, the elevation angle of the bodies appeared to be greater than that of the B-50 which had progressed a few miles further south and east of the Field.

"The motion of the bodies (estimated at between 14 and 20 in number) appeared to be of a swirling nature, not unlike a flock of towering geese or a handful of leaflets in an up-draft. Either due to distance or size, it was impossible to resolve individual shape, however, the general impression was gained that the bodies were white.

"Several minutes after the first sighting the writer and others were apprised of the phenomenon. At this time, the B-50 had turned to the left on a reciprocal heading and was approximately east of the Field at the same altitude. The bodies continued to swirl in somewhat random fashion and increase apparent elevation angle. During this time they appeared to move slowly to the north regrouping on at least two occasions into what appeared to be a V-Formation. At this time the writer apprised General Control of the phenomenon and thereafter attempted to give them bearings as seen from the Bell Hardstand.

"Shortly before Queen-1 was notified, the bodies had grouped into a V-Formation and commenced heading generally northward. The bearing heading from the Hardstand changed from nearly due east to a position lined up with Sierra Blanca in what seemed to be a few minutes time. This gave the impression of relatively high velocity. When last seen the bearing heading from the Bell Hardstand was slightly west of Sierra Blanca."55

At the end of his report the Test Director put these comments:

"The writer is morally certain that the phenomenon he witnessed could not have been balloons of Project SKYHOOK.

"In conclusion, the writer wishes to emphasize that the aerial phenomenon was different from anything he has ever seen up to and including flights of birds."56

What of the photographic stations that were in the area to capture UFO's on film? Nothing is known about any Project TWINKLE activity that day, in fact two weeks later, on the 31st, Land-Air terminated its vigilance since its contract with the Air Force had expired the last day of March. According to the final report of Project TWINKLE, the contract was not considered for extension since the Askania camera results "had not been encouraging."57

"Stopped dead."

One night in March 1951, a U.S. Navy radar picket destroyer was on station 125 miles southeast of Cape May, New Jersey, sweeping the sky for miles around with its radar. The ship, the USS Dyess, was providing advance warning of any sneak attack on Washington, D.C., a fear heightened by the fact that America had chose to resist the Communist invasion of South Korea. Aboard the USS Dyess was Navy Lieutenant Commander Robert Wood, a gentleman who later became professor of astronomy and director of the Observatory at Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Florida. Commander Wood remembers that about 11:30 p.m. a strange target was picked up by the ship's radar approaching from the east. Since the object was coming from the direction of the mid-Atlantic, it prompted some concern by the Navy radar personnel.

According to Commander Wood, this is what happened after the target was first noticed:

"...this object came in from the east and got within about 30 miles of us when it just stopped dead.

"It had been moving rather slowly, about 85 to 90 knots. We didn't have the altitude-determining radar on at that time and we had to get one of the operators to come up. When he did, we found the object was somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 to 4,000 feet altitude.

"This object gave us a blip on the radar screen about the size of a large aircraft, like a DC8 or a DC9. I phoned the bridge and they informed the captain, who ordered the ship to head out in the direction of the object.

"We'd been loafing along, steaming in circles, and didn't have all our boiler power on. We did about as much as we could, about 22 knots, out in that direction.

"We got to within about 15 miles of that object when it suddenly took off at a very high rate of speed. It was going so rapidly that as the radar turned we could see the blip just jumping across the screen.

"We estimated it was going 5,000 kilometers an hour or roughly 3,000 miles per hour.

"Then, when it got up within 35 or 40 miles south of Nantuxett, it suddenly just took off and went straight up!

"I called the bridge and said, 'We're losing contact, the object is fading.' And the operator on the altitude-determining radar in the other end of the room said, 'NO! I've still got it! It's 100 miles high and it's still going straight up!'

"The object then faded from the second radar."⁵⁸

The target had been on the scopes for over a half an hour. Officer Wood remained convinced the ship's radar had detected some sort of "unidentified flying object." He also remembers that a report on the incident was sent to the Pentagon but the High Command never acknowledged receiving the document.⁵⁹

Far to the east of the destroyer, across the Atlantic, in fact almost due east, a UFO event took place in the sky over El Moudyine, Morocco, on March 21st.

Three government employees were taking a break at 6:46 p.m. and were standing outside in the open air when a fast moving glowing dot in the evening sky caught their attention. Leaving a luminous wake, the dot turned into a white object that had a hint of a metallic shine. The thing made a wide sweeping curve course through the heavens, disappearing below the horizon after about 20 seconds. Astonished, one witness, a Mr. M. Spirtal, exclaimed: "I have seen meteorites falling before now, but what we saw did not resemble them at all."⁶⁰

Returning to India, we find that Wellington Airfield, New Delhi, experienced another visit by a UFO on March 29th.

Mr. Floate also saw this object and assumed that it was the same thing that had made an appearance 14 days earlier. This time the UFO sailed by at the same altitude (but at about one quarter the speed), and then came to a stop, parking in the air for 20 minutes. After hanging in the sky, the UFO "jumped" at a steep 80 degree angle and then "vanished" as it had done on the previous visit. Considerable vapor was detected where the UFO was last seen. 61

The monarch of the magazines, Life, finally targeted the UFO mystery for a major feature almost four years after the expression "flying saucer" had become part of the English language. Life sent its man Bob Ginna to Washington to get the facts, where at the Pentagon he received the usual briefing, but true to his credentials as one of the best men in the business, Ginna asked to see for himself the operations at ATIC, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, where the UFO reports were being "solved." The Pentagon had long been assured by Colonel Watson that the UFO operation at ATIC was a smooth working one, but just the opposite was closer to the truth. Under the guidance of Watson, whose virulent anti-UFO attitude had helped to trigger a law suit early in the year, the analyzing and cataloguing efforts left much to be desired. When word was received that Ginna was on his way to Wright Field, panic reigned at the Intelligence center, but there was little that could be done before the writer got there. The representative of the world's foremost pictorial weekly arrived prepared, even if Watson's team was not. Ginna had a list of questions to be asked for he was not to be put off by flat statements or the "results of previous Air Force studies." Ginna wouldn't be sold a bill of goods. As Ruppelt relates it, Ginna's questions had Colonel Watson and his men dashing about, rummaging through stacks of paper and that more than once the magic words "that's classified" saved the day. 62 One hardly needs to say that Ginna's visit was a calamity. Colonel Watson's days as an Air Force UFO officer were numbered.

When a round thing, "as round as any dishpan you ever saw," rocketted over the Terra Haute, Indiana airport, people poured out of the airport restaurant to watch the silver object flash overhead at "fantastic" speed. The manager of the airport checked with the pilot that landed shortly thereafter to determine the wind direction and velocity at 10,000 feet, the estimated altitude of the UFO. According to the pilot, the winds aloft did not match the direction of the strange sky object. The airport manager, Mr. John Marcotte, felt safe to declare that the UFO, that had been in sight for 25 seconds, could not have been a balloon. 63

An interregnum ensued...

It wasn't until the middle of April that UFO reports began to pick up again, but in the meantime the publishing of the American edition of Gerald Heard's book, The Riddle of the Flying Saucers, with a new, more sensational title: Is Another World Watching?, occurred in April and it received a welcome by none other than the world renowned rocket expert Willy Ley who penned a favorable review.

Ley had considered Keyhoe's work as a "reporter's honest effort" that was premature. Scully's writings Ley blasted as filled with "coarse assertions, errors, and lapses of logic." As for Heard, Ley recognized the Englishman as very skilled in the art of writing and saluted him for his talent, however, the famed rocket authority was aware that the UFO problem was a very "queer and complex" subject and not even Heard's pen had verified the "scouts from another planet theory" that had inspired all of the saucer books.⁶⁴

(Perhaps the memorable original contribution of Heard's was something that undercuts Dr. Mirarchi's Pearl Harbor fear. The Englishman noted that if the UFO's were a threat, they had discarded a fabulous advantage: "the element of surprise.")

"Unconventional aircraft," (UFO's) was the subject of an Air Defense Command Letter 200-1 dated 11 April 51. It had to do with reporting of information and apparently was a reaffirmation of official concern with UFO's in spite of the "Liddel explanation."

April 12th.

Nine military men and a civilian flying instructor at McChord Air Force Base, Washington, contacted McChord Flight Service Center about an aerial object in the vicinity of Point Defiance. The configuration of the object was not discerned but the speed was tremendous. Aside from the speed, it was the maneuverability that caught everyone's attention. The object:

"Flew from southwest to northeast, descending then turned left to northwest and flew straight and level for approximately thirty seconds with lights slowly dimming, following which it shot straight upwards and disappeared. The object gave forth periodic bursts of light."⁶⁵

Overseas again it is to be noted that the Paris newspaper France Illustration published the article "Une Engine Sous Nas Yeux" in its issue of May 5th which helped fan the embers of smouldering UFO enthusiasm.

A week later 300 people witnessed a stratling sky show but the persons involved were not French. On May 12, at 4:00 p.m., some 300 inhabitants of Neuchatel, Switzerland, gazed in surprise at a UFO spewing a milky colored wake. The thing travelled across the sky in spurts of speed,

made a sweeping curve, flipped over, and then finally shot straight up in a high speed vertical ascent. A professor, Alfred Lombard was one of the 300 observers.⁶⁶

When things flared up again for UFO watchers on May 22nd, the United Press news service led off its story on the latest incident with: "Flying saucers, be they real or imaginary, were back with us today." The story follows.

Hard by International Falls, Minnesota, is a body of water called Rainy Lake. Some 50 people in that area saw a "crystal ball-like object" speed into view going faster than 700 mph, a guesstimate by a witness. The "ball" braked to a stop at a point over the lake, waited motionless for a time, and then rose with tremendous velocity. "A split second" was the comment of a few persons. Shining brightly from light reflected from the sun, the "crystal ball" moved toward a nearby cloud. At the cloud's edge the sphere waited until another identical object flew into view and joined the first. Both hovered without movement for a quarter of an hour before flying away. The "crystal balls" were also seen from the other side of the lake by witnesses at Fort Francis, Ontario.⁶⁷

Another sky dance.

The next morning a 100 miles to the south a Captain W. R. Hunt was piloting an American Airlines passenger plane on an uneventful flight. It was 3:20 a.m. and all of his passengers were dozing. Ahead in the darkness Captain Hunt suddenly noticed a bright, white, "star" that was moving. The point of light was going fast, perhaps in the neighborhood of 500 - 1,000 mph. Captain Hunt testified: "The star moved backward and forward, then up and down, and seemed to stop. Then it would complete the pattern over again but would never approach closer than five miles to my plane."⁶⁸

For 20 minutes the sky dance continued. Finally the "star" dived below his airliner and out of sight. All this time Captain Hunt was radioing a description of the object's antics to ground stations at Garden City and other places.

Questioned by the press, Northwest Airlines officials denied that any of their planes had spotted "crystal balls" scouting the Minnesota countryside and suggested that perhaps wayward "cosmic ray balloons" had excited the inhabitants of the Gopher state.⁶⁹

The second UFO report from the state of Washington in two weeks occurred May 29th. This time two pilots and two airmen observed the object from a site at Geiger Field, Spokane. The Air Force men, members of the 116th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, first sighted the object at 9:18 a.m. and observed it over a period of some four minutes. They said:

"The object was elliptical and flat in appearance, similar to a large sheet of paper or a thin aircraft wing. It was light sun-tan color. No noise nor visible exhaust was present. The object moved over the field from the WNW slowly, at approximately 2500-3000 feet above the surface (estimated), in a wallowing manner. It hovered over the field and then ascended rapidly out of sight at approximately a 60 degree angle."⁷⁰

The station weather officer was no help in explaining the object and there was another report that seemed to confirm the first one:

"Shortly thereafter, at approximately 0943 hours, a passenger in a T-6 aircraft approximately 40 miles SW of Geiger Field en route to Larson AFB at approximately 3500 feet above the surface, sighted an object high in the sky to the SE of the aircraft. The object was reported to be circular and had a glistening appearance. Duration of sighting--approximately 20 seconds."⁷¹

Memorial Day a pair of inexplicables whirled into view near Cresson Mountain, Pennsylvania. A Mrs. E. M. MacAlarney and her daughter looked skyward and saw two round objects coming out of the northwest. The objects were a clear white color and very distinct in their outline. Whirling around each other, the two objects drifted overhead in eerie silence. The UFO's picked up speed and moved off. Balloons?⁷²

About May 1951, Ruppelt noticed a new face at ATIC, a Lt. Cummings, who was recently recalled to active duty and had been assigned to ATIC's UFO desk. The new officer evidently had no preconceptions about UFO's and with some scientific training in his background, he made a good impression on Ruppelt. Lt. Cummings was to be a definite improvement, yet as Ruppelt put it, the project: "was still operating under political, economic, and manpower difficulties."⁷³ Edward J. Ruppelt, whose active role in the UFO story will be touched on later, happened to have a desk near Lt. Cummings and during the summer of 1951 received something of an education on UFO's. Ruppelt often read the better UFO reports and shared his impressions with Cummings. Ruppelt tells us:

"One day Lieutenant Cummings came over to my desk and dropped a stack of reports in front of me. 'All radar reports,' he said, 'and I'm getting more and more of them every day.'"⁷⁴

Did 30 UFO's zip over Los Angeles on May 29th? Perhaps not, but a subsequent development was supposed to have had its beginnings on May 29, 1951, when some brilliantly lit

objects throwing off a vivid bluish glow were said to have wheeled about the sky in a narrow, angular horse shoe formation. The formation was said to have made its sweep over a Los Angeles aircraft plant, but of the millions of persons living in the Los Angeles basin, only three men claimed to have witnessed the overflight: Edward Sullivan, Werner Eichler, and a Victor Black (Ginna of Life is the source of the names). The sighting was credited with being the stimulus to the establishment of the "Civilian Saucer Investigations," a short lived organization that managed to enlist some impressive individuals in its ranks.⁷⁵ But this question of civilian UFO investigative groups will not be addressed at this point since Edward Sullivan would not put together his band of disc detectives for some months and honors for the first such effort went to someone else.

Another germinal event took place in May 1951, when Edgar Jarrold of Australia witnessed what he believed were mysterious yellow lights in the sky over Sydney. Fascinated by the sight Jarrold called the press and was told many others were reporting the strange radiant dots. After the sighting his curiosity grew and grew until he felt compelled to establish the "Australian Flying Saucer Bureau" which would have as its journal The Australian Flying Saucer Magazine.⁷⁶

June.

The first of the month an "official at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base" detected a most peculiar phenomenon. Requesting anonymity he leaves us this:

"While driving west near Dayton, Ohio, I suddenly became aware of a large blue-white light moving parallel to me. It was parallel and to the left at 30 to 45 degrees elevation. I can best describe it as being similar to the flame trail from a rocket power plant. It was a clearly defined outline similar to a stubby cigar. It was much brighter at the leading end, and gradually dimmer toward the trailing end. After 10 to 15 seconds it made approximately a right angle turn, became circular and even-colored, and rapidly disappeared. I detected no trace of yellow, orange, red, or purple in color. The speed was faster than an airplane, slower than a meteor."⁷⁷

More overseas news.

Three weeks after an American airline pilot watched a sky waltz by a UFO over the midwest, something similar was observed in the skies of France. On June 15th at 11:30 p.m., something was seen which officials chose to suggest was a "possible case of ball lightning" in spite of its 20 minute duration (The same duration as the Hunt sighting.). In the

heavens over the village La-Rock-Sur-Yon, in the department of Vendee, with the air clear with both the moon and the stars plainly visible, a light appeared which French peasants said looked like a glowing orange basketball hanging in the atmosphere. It then went:

"...toward the northeast, then toward the southwest, and at the same time it came closer to the ground. Later it began to ascend again only to assume a swaying motion, after which it went out of sight."⁷⁸

Earlier that day, at 10:37 a.m., French Air Force jets had encountered something over Orange, France. Flying a Vampire jet on a training flight were Lieutenants Prio Jrence and Raymond Gallibert who were in constant radio communication with the tower at Orange Field. In an interview, Lt. Prio declared:

"We were flying in an absolutely cloudless sky when right above Orange we perceived an object of bright metallic appearance at an altitude of between 1,600 and 1,700 feet. The object was circular and appeared to be of aluminum and was perfectly motionless.

"Naturally interested, we made toward it, the disc 'see-sawed' for a moment and then took off at a rapidly increasing speed. We chased it as far above Aspes-sur-Buech without being able to catch up, the climbing speed of our Vampire being inadequate. After we had followed it for six minutes, the object disappeared, still climbing at a speed of about 600 miles per hours."⁷⁹

The chase came to the attention of General de Buretel de Chasse, Commander of the First Air Force of Dijon. French journalist Charles Garreau, writing for the La Bouragne Republicanine, quoted the General as saying: "These two pilots were sober types and I doubt that they would venture a hoax."⁸⁰

England.

An American living near Kingston, England, in June 1951, wrote a letter to Air Force Intelligence about something that happened while he was out for a walk:

"...I happened to glance up and was startled to see a very, very bright circular object. It stayed in one position above the river (The Thames) for what seemed a long time, to me, though it may have been only for a minute. I longed for binoculars, a camera, or even a

witness, but I was too far to be seen or heard. I had heard of flying saucers with portholes around the side, but this was just a silvery bright object, the size of an average parachute, circumference, diameter, etc..."⁸¹

Before signing off, the witness remarked: "No, it was not a weather balloon!"⁸²

Finland.

An interesting person approached Lt. Colonel Howard T. Van De Car, USAF, Air Attache of the American Embassy at Helsinki, Finland. The man was a Mr. Saastamoinen, a graduate engineer and an ex-Minister of the Finnish government. Lt. Colonel Van De Car sized up the gentleman and was impressed, the fellow giving the impression he was anything but a crackpot. Over lunch this man told the Air Attache he had seen a "flying saucer."

"He stated that he had observed a flying saucer near Mikkeli, Finland, at 2005 hours on 9 June 1951. (At this season daylight lasts until about 2300, at which time only a twilight type darkness occurs.) Mr. Saastamoinen stated that the craft was flying at an estimated altitude of 3,000 meters, or about 10,000 feet, from the northwest toward the southeast, or in the direction of Lenin-grad. The craft was described as being a perfect disk approximately 25 meters in diameter, of aluminum color, with no visible windows. Source estimated that it was flying at a speed of 800 miles per hour in straight and level flight. He was unable to see any cockpit canopy but assumed that this was because he could see only the underneath side.

"Mr. --- (deleted) said that this observation was made while he was driving on the road north of Mikkeli with his wife and that she first pointed out the craft. He then stopped the automobile, got out, and watched the craft disappear into the clouds. At that time there were broken clouds and the craft was flying through a large opening in the overcast. Source stated that he could hear absolutely no noise from the aircraft and that in his estimation the engine was neither a conventional reciprocating engine nor a jet engine."⁸³

A disc in the hand is worth two in the sky.

Incredible if true, an incident alleged to have been part of the June 1951 story was discovered by UFO researcher, C. W. Fitch. He relates:

"In June 1951, while living in Cambridge, Ohio, Mr. Thomas P. Weyer was walking along a street one day when his attention was attracted to a shiny object lying in the grass a short distance away. The first thought to cross his mind was that it was a hub cap and he walked over to it to take a closer look. He picked up the object and turned it over expecting to find that it was a hub cap and was quite surprised to discover that both sides were convex and that it was actually a small disc approximately 15" in diameter and 6" thick at the center, perfectly symmetrical with tapered edges, in appearance similar to one saucer inverted on another with one edge smoothly overlapping the other.

"Weyer described it as having a metallic appearance with a bright, shiny surface like polished chrome. He said it was warm to the touch but felt that this was probably due to the fact that it had been laying in the sunlight for some time.

"As he examined it he noted that there were no openings or markings on its surface. Weyer stated that the object was not heavy, perhaps a bit more so than if made from aluminum.

"Still pondering as to what it was, Weyer laid it back on the ground and momentarily looked away. Almost instantly he heard a "whoosh" and turning his head saw the object rising rapidly at an angle without any apparent exhaust or vapor trail. In a matter of seconds, it was lost to sight in the sky."⁸⁴

Yet another sky dance.

A letter to the editor of the Lynchburg, Virginia Lynchburg News told of a sighting of a disc-like object seen motionless in a clear sky when it abruptly began to zigzag and then to "roll on edge" as it travelled westward in a straight line. There was no sound or visible exhaust. The date of the sighting was given as July 6th.⁸⁵

Just two days later something equally amazing appeared over Alabama 400 miles to the southwest.

A serviceman named Robinson (Rank and first name deleted from Air Force records) assigned to the 3814th Installations Squadron, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, had the night off so he drove out to the Fairview Drive-in Theatre to see a movie. It was Sunday evening, July 8, 1951. At about 8:35 p.m., Robinson noticed the sudden appearance of a disc-shaped light in the dark sky in the southeast. Air Force interrogators obtained an official statement, subscribed and sworn to, about what happened next. It stated

that the light was actually a glowing "thing." The statement read:

"The object observed by Robinson appeared to be saucer-shaped, very thin at the outer edges and comparatively thick toward the center section. Robinson said that the object glowed with a light that was comparable to the bluish light which is given off by fluorescent desk lights. Robinson further stated that the object appeared to be about two and one-half miles southeast of the Fairview Drive-in Theatre, which is located in Montgomery, Alabama on Highway #80, and that the object appeared to be at an elevation of approximately 1000 feet. Robinson also stated that from that distance of two and one-half miles the object appeared to be about fourteen inches in diameter, and that in his opinion a close-up view of the object would have revealed it to have been between fifty and seventy-five feet in diameter. Robinson added that he had observed the object for about six seconds and that at the end of this six seconds, the object accelerated from a wobbly floating speed to an extremely fast speed gaining altitude and headed in a southerly direction. Then the light disappeared and due to the darkness, he, Robinson, saw no more of the object."86

In the report on the case, signed by Lt. Colonel Hays of the Air Force OSI, it says:

"Observer Robinson has spent ten and one-half years in the Navy and two years in the Air Force. All of his service time has been in conjunction with various types of aircraft. During the interview, Robinson gave the impression that he is a mature, level-headed and intelligent type of person."87

From this case we move to the next day, and some 150 miles east to a place in Georgia.

The previous report and the following one are so incredible there is a strong temptation to accuse the teller of the tale of being guilty of prevarication. In cases such as these, when the witness is an ordinary John Smith, authorities automatically assume a hoax, but if a military officer is involved what is one to think? For what possible reason would an officer file a report that related something fantastic? The following official Air Force classified message is submitted as a case in point:

"Object sighted by 1/Lt. George H. Kinmon, Jr., 160 Tac Recon Sq. Lawson AFB, Ga., at 1340, 9 July 51 until about 1350, same date. Object described as falt on the bottom and appearing from a front view to have rounded edges and slightly beveled. From front view as object dived from top of plane was completely round and spinning in a clockwise direction. From front view as object dived observer noted small spots on the object which he described as being similar to craters observed on the moon through a high powered telescope. Object did not appear to be aluminum. Only one object observed. Color white. No vapor trails or exhaust or visible system of propulsion. Described as traveling at tremendous speed. Object appeared near Dearing, Ga., 25 miles West of Augusta, Ga., while pilot was on a routine flight from Lawson AFB, Ga. Pilot had leveled off at 8,500 feet altitude on a course of 247 degrees. As he leveled off, object dived from the sun in front and under the plane and continued to barrel-roll around the plane for a period of ten minutes, when it disappeared under the plane. Pilot states object was 300 to 400 feet from plane and appeared to be 10 to 15 feet in diameter. He compares its speed to that of a jet plane. Pilot states he felt disturbance in the air described as 'bump' when object passed under plane. Object left the plane a few miles South of Milledgeville, Ga., and 15 to 20 miles from Macon, Ga. Pilot was flying a F-51 at 270 miles per hour when object was sighted. Weather conditions .6 to .8 broken clouds. Wind 2 to 7 miles per hour."88

Just who was it that told this wild story:

"Pilot states he was in good physical condition, has 1,500 hours flying time and has been flying since 1942. Pilot flew in combat in Europe for 12 months, 1944-45. Pilot considered by associates to be highly reliable, of mature judgement and a creditable observer. Pilot notified tower, Robins AFB by radio and contacted flt svc at Maxwell AFB."89

Detroit's "visitor."

On July 7th a green "meteor" swooped over the city of Detroit in such an odd fashion it excited meteor expert, Dr. Lincoln La Paz. His reaction was put down on paper and submitted to authorities August 28th. More will be said of this when we reach August.

Approximately 18 miles southwest of the city of Corona, New Mexico, was an experimental radar facility. Nearby on July 9th a red ball of light slowly descended out of the sky taking about 30 seconds to reach ground level where in a grove of trees it continued to cast off a crimson glow for another 10 seconds or so.⁹⁰

"Some type of object did exist."

Air Force files state without much explanation:

"[ATIC]...has recently received a copy of a report written by personnel of Holloman AFB, New Mexico. This report, dated 25 July 1951, compiles the results of an investigation of unidentified aerial phenomena carried out at Holloman AFB.

"The project consisted of an organized watch for the objects, the watchers being equipped with cameras. Several photos were obtained with hand held cameras. The photos show only a round image with no details for identification.

"The report makes no conclusions as to the identity of the objects. However, it does establish the fact that some type of object did exist."⁹¹

The above may have been a reference to the next story although nothing can be found in official files to provide positive proof:

"...on July 14, 1951, two strange objects were sighted above White Sands as Air Force and other observers watched a guided missile test. An optical tracker, using a 20-power monocular telescope, spotted one of the large objects near a B-29. Its presence was confirmed by two radar operators who tracked it at jet plane speed. Pictures taken on 35-mm film are said to show an oval-shaped object, too indistinct because of the altitude to reveal details. At first, a balloon was suggested as an answer, but the 'jet speed' approach shown on radar proves this was impossible. No definite conclusion has been made by Air Technical Intelligence analysts."⁹²

The Peruvian photo.

The following was submitted by Colonel McHenry Hamilton, Jr., USAF, American Air Attache, Lima, Peru. Aside from some comments by the preparing officer, the report consisted of a translation of a newspaper article in a Lima daily.

A "luminous disc" was supposed to have sped over the Puerto Maldonado area of Peru near the Bolivian border at 4:50 p.m. on July 19th, and among those who claimed to have witnessed the passage was a Peruvian school teacher who took a picture of the UFO, an object that was spewing an impressive wake of smoke. A newspaper account read in part:

"The color of the head or nucleus of this disc was an intense orange. The direction was south to north; was visible from 1 to 2 minutes, leaving a thick vaporous trail which floated for more than 15 minutes. The altitude was more or less 2500 to 3000 feet. It was seen in broad daylight. During its passage, the Peruvian Corporation of the Amazon radio went dead and wasn't able to transmit or receive any signals."⁹³

The object was also said to have been seen at 4:55 p.m. over the city of Maldonado, the capital of the department of Madre de Dios.

The Peruvian Minister of Education later held discussions with American Embassy officials about the UFO report. The school teacher's photograph and an article about the discussions with the Americans was published in the August 15th issue of the Lima newspaper El Comercio.⁹⁴

The American Intelligence report on the case seems to be incomplete because there is an unexplained reference to more than one photograph. Colonel Hamilton was informed by Peruvian authorities that some falsification had occurred involving "three different photographs taken by three different persons."⁹⁵ Did that mean the one photo reproduced by the Lima El Comercio was one of the forementioned hoaxes? The Intelligence Report is not clear on this. Another bothersome aspect is how the photographer of the picture published in the El Comercio could have possibly faked the smoke trail shown in the print? If a fake was to be made why not just throw a pie pan in the air? One could guess that the smoke stream shown in the picture was real and from some sort of natural cause and the "object" spewing the vapor just "painted in" on the negative. Without the negative the experts tell us such evidence is worthless.

The UFO review of "July 1951."

Air Force records mention something curious. It has been generally believed that Project GRUDGE was "reorganized" late in 1951 but in the document Project Blue Book Staff Report, on page one, it plainly says:

"In July 1951, this project was reorganized.
A review of the data available at that time

showed that the first three assumptions made in the 1949 report [mass hysteria, hoaxes, psychopathological persons] probably were not valid. The basis for this was the fact that although publicity had been at a low ebb, or nearly non-existent, between 1949 and 1951, reports from good sources continued to come in to ATIC."⁹⁶

Just what did the Air Force mean by a "good source?" An Air Force briefing document on UFO's compiled for use in 1953 states the same as the above quote except for an interesting addition:

"The reason for renewed interest in the project was that between 1949 and 1951 very little publicity had been given this subject, however, reports continued to come in. These reports were mainly from military personnel, and could be classed as good reports."⁹⁷

The same document goes on to define a "good report." It stated:

"To us, a good report is one in which several people were involved and the motives of these people in making the report cannot be questioned. They have made comparatively careful observations and have reported everything that they observed."⁹⁸

Moreover, this review was requested by: "Headquarters, USAF."⁹⁹

This "reorganization" looked to more definite action down the line:

"When the project was reorganized in July 1951, the basic premise of the reorganization was that if a large volume of complete reports could be obtained it might be possible to correlate these and possibly plot the track of an object and from triangulation obtain altitudes and size. Thus AFL 200-5 was designed to obtain all possible reports of unidentified aerial objects."¹⁰⁰

While the Air Force was debunking the subject publicly, privately there was strong desire to obtain hard evidence about the "mythical" objects. In fact, official thinking went beyond just the gathering of data. Ruppelt tells us:

"The idea for gathering together a group of scientists, to whom we referred to as our

'panel of experts,' had been conceived early in 1952--in fact, when Project Grudge was re-organized in the summer of 1951 the idea had been mentioned, and this was the main reason that our charter had said we were to be only a fact-finding group."¹⁰¹

The only counter argument officially offered, and a weak one at that, to explain the lack of Air Force interest during what Ruppelt called the "Dark Ages" of UFO investigation, 1949 to mid-1951, was something said by Major General W. P. Fisher, Liaison, U.S.A.F. He remarked: "From February 1949 to mid-1951, the project was carried on a low priority basis due to the economy policy of that time."¹⁰²

The UFO historian is fascinated by the fact that the military was forced to take UFO's seriously again because of its own people! It wasn't because of stories in the press about sensational UFO reports by civilians, nor because of pleas by scientists, or even by the writings of persons like Donald Keyhoe. In fact, the first UFO project, Project SIGN,* was also established because of sightings by military witnesses. Project TWINKLE was likewise set up because of military witnesses (and civilian experts under government contract who sighted some strange things while engaged in their official duties).

August 1951.

"What were the flying saucers?"

An article in Popular Science magazine with the above title reported results of an informal poll that indicated that some 70 percent of those questioned were inclined to agree with the idea that UFO's were actual craft but opinion was split on the origin of the objects, be they from a country on earth, or a "country on Mars."¹⁰³

Besides the August issue of Popular Science, some more UFO news that month appeared on the 8th; information about an "unusual object" in the sky over Ohio. The military teletype tapped out:

"PILOT JMT EN ROUTE TO JAMESTOWN NY REPORTED
AT 1410E APPROXIMATELY 2 MILES 330 DEGREES OFF
LAKE SHORE FM PORT CLINTON AT 5500 FEET. RE-
PORTED NOTICING CIGAR SHAPED OBJECT APPROXIMATELY
18 TO 20 FEET LONG COLOR DARK RESEMBLING A BUZZ

*Project GRUDGE was a rather bizarre effort, being a sort of "anti-project," a "demphasizing" of the UFO problem. The UFO investigation was downgraded to a "conventional military watch."

BOMB AT APPROXIMATE ALTITUDE 6000 HEADING 290 DEGREES PAST HIM AT A VERY HIGH RATE OF SPEED. REPORTED TO CLEVELAND RADIO 144E. POSITION OF AIRCRAFT THEN 15 MILES EAST OF CLEVELAND CONTINUING TO JMT."104

The Air Force's Geophysics Research Division, the boss of Project TWINKLE, apparently was not entirely satisfied with the decision to terminate the sky camera effort. Representatives of the GRD mulled a post contractual inquiry and talked about such a possibility on August 9th with Lt. Colonel Cox, CO of the OSI's 17th District Office at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. During the discussions with Colonel Cox the GRD people also asked why the last UFO report forwarded from the 17th DO was dated March 15, 1950. Surely there had been UFO reports in the Kirtland area after that date? The Colonel's answer does not seem adequate. Colonel Cox admitted that his office had always received reports, perhaps one or two a month, but that: "...little attention was being given to this matter."105

Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that the flow of UFO reports from the 17th DO was cut off, with anything dated after March 15th not forwarded, since on March 17, 1950, New Mexico exploded with UFO sightings with the mass demonstration over Farmington being the best known incident. Colonel Cox did, however, permit the GRD a peek at the 17th District's UFO file, a concession that did not help that much since the file hardly reflected the actual number of UFO reports being made in the New Mexico area. (The file had only one report for March 17, 1950, a sighting at Kirtland by some military personnel.)

If one had a suspicious nature, perhaps one could make something of the fact that Colonel Cox, during this meeting with GRD, happened to admit that both Life and Argosy magazines had reporters snooping around. A sparse UFO file and an official attitude that "little attention was being given the matter" didn't seem to hold much promise for good magazine articles, much less a favorable reaction to GRD's ambitions as to an extended photographic UFO surveillance.

That good UFO sightings were still being made in the region could be proved by the following from a civilian:

"Mid-August 1951; Central, N.M. At his ranch 10 miles east of Silver City, N.M., about 10:30 a.m., Alford Roos, mining engineer, heard a "swishing" noise, looked up and observed the performance of two lens-shaped UFO's in particularly interesting detail. Mr. Roos at the time had a Civil Service rating of senior mining engineer, was a project engineer for the U.S. Bureau of Mines and other government agencies, and

a member of the American Institute of Mining & Metal Engineers. Extracts from his report:

"I saw an object swooping down at an angle of about 45 degrees, from southerly direction, travelling at immense speed, coming quite close to the earth over Ft. Bayard, 2 miles to the NW. Reaching the bottom of the swoop it hovered for moments, then darted up at an angle of about 70 degrees from vertical, in a northwesterly direction, directly over Ft. Bayard....I neglected to state that there were two objects that [converged at the point of hovering] at which time they were in close proximity....Over Ft. Bayard there was an isolated cloud island covering perhaps 3 degrees of arc and perhaps a mile across. The two objects shot up at this steep angle at incredible speed, both entering the cloud, and neither appeared beyond, and no trace after entering the cloud.

"Their track was as straight as a ruled line, no zig-zagging. The astonishing thing was that the cloud immediately split into 3 segments, ever widening, where the objects entered...Each object left a pencil-thin vapor trail.'

"At first, Mr. Roos continued, the UFO's appeared spherical, 'but after the hovering and the turn up, they must have tipped, canted so I then saw the edge-on of the lens-like object. Going toward the cloud they were disc-shaped. There was no gathering of momentum from the low hover, to the lightning-like shoot...From almost stationary to instant about 500 mph., the shock of inertia would have made human (terrestrial) survival impossible.

"After the objects turned on their sides at the hover, there appeared to be a button, or some small protrusion on the upper side as viewed edge-on...the objects were quite close and we [Ed. Note: other witnesses named in report] could all detect some form of outer ornamentation or process or possibly orifices or port holes, on the lower side just below the rim of the lens, and these seemed to undergo change of iridescent color, almost like a blinking.'"106

"Meteorological phenomenon?"

Two U.S. Air Force officers had landed at Rhein Main Air Base, Frankfurt, Germany, at 10:20 p.m., August 14th, and were walking toward the Operations Building of the 10th Squadron when they happened to notice a round, brilliant white light above the southern horizon:

"The light seemed to fall slowly as though suspended from a parachute, then leveled off on a southerly course, made a turn to the west, then a turn to the east. The southerly heading was maintained during these maneuvers.

"The object, or light, appeared to travel extremely fast after leveling off."¹⁰⁷

"They are out there. I know that, the military knows that, and our government knows it."

-- Major H. Covington
U.S. Marine Corps

Major Covington's conversion to that of a believer was due to an August 1951 encounter:

"Over Norfolk, Virginia, at the helm of a gull-winged Corsair fighter plane, Major Covington detected a pair of orange lights cruising about 3,000 feet below him about two thirds his speed of 380 mph. Not concerned at first, believing they were exhaust glows, his mind changed when one light turned and dashed away at more than six times the speed of his Navy warplane. Startled, Major Covington went into a diving turn and plummeted directly at the remaining orange 'something.' As if spotting the diving Corsair, the light executed a sharp 90 degree turn, changed its coloration, and vanished.

"Puzzled, the Major veered toward his base. As was his combat habit, he glanced in the mirror that warned of any enemy, and stalking below and to the rear was a 'thing' near enough now to be discerned as a disc 50 feet in neon display flashing pink, orange, red, and bright white. Violent twists failed to shake his unplanned follow-the-leader game. When his fuel gauge indicator sunk toward empty, the Marine pilot set a direct course for home with the UFO 'in tow.' The Control Tower technicians heard his call over the speaker announcing his approach asking for landing instructions and mentioning the presence of an uninvited guest. The shocked

tower personnel were speechless because they could see the Major wasn't kidding. The UFO didn't press its advantage as in many similar pursuits the UFO slammed on its brakes when it hovered a while before departing."108

The summer of 1951 there was another aircraft-UFO encounter that rivaled Covington's. Here is the story as told to Charles Tracy, the Cleveland Press Aviation Editor by Lt. George Kinman. Lt. Kinman was piloting a jet on a clear day over the city of Augusta, Georgia. He related to Tracy:

"I was cruising at about 250 mph. All of a sudden I noticed something ahead, closing in on me, head on. Before I could take evasive action--before I even thought of it, in fact--this thing dipped abruptly and passed underneath just missing my propeller. The thing was definitely of disc shape, white, pretty thick, [and] ... it looked like an oval...it was about twice as big as my plane. It had no visible protrusions like motors, guns, windows, smoke or fire."109

Some might suggest Lt. Kinman had had an encounter with a balloon but moments later events made the incident quite mysterious:

"Lt. Kinman swung his F-51 around, but the disc was out of sight. Within about 15 seconds, he said, the disc came at him again, dipping at the last minute. This performance was repeated several times for a period of 5 to 10 minutes. Finally, on its last pass, the UFO zoomed upward instead of down, just missing his canopy."110

Meanwhile, some physicists employed by the Atomic Energy Commission at Los Alamos, New Mexico, had been spending their off hours pretending to be rock hounds. Puttering around in an abandoned building atop a small mountain since the summer of 1950, these scientists had kept watch on an array of Geiger tubes that monitored background radiation because it was thought that some correlation existed between unexplained bursts of radiation and overflights of UFO's. In early December 1950 an apparent correlation occurred that showed an increase of radiation by a factor of 100, and twice in the first two months of 1951 there were other suspected UFO/radiation correlations.

*The reader is urged to examine reported UFO behavior in such cases as the 1948 Gorman aerial dogfight, and the UFO "fleet" playing in the air over Farmington, New Mexico, in 1950.

Between March and June 1951, as we have noted, UFO's were for the most part on a vacation, had flown back to Mars, or whatever. Compared to the hectic year of 1950 there was a definite UFO lull. The general lack of UFO activity was matched by a lack of abnormal radiation readings, thus the "mineral club" members felt it was time to halt operations and spend all their time analyzing what data the group had obtained. An exhaustive year long study of possible sources of radiation was begun.¹¹¹

News of the "Mineral Club" reached a certain Air Force Colonel at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where the UFO's were persistent pests. Aware that Oak Ridge had an extensive radiation detection network already in place, backed up by radar, the Colonel made the decision to utilize the system to maintain a "saucer watch." In no time he struck saucer-gold. In July 1951 his "saucer watch" team got a good visual report of a UFO that was confirmed by a radar return. Hardly less important was the fact the radiation stations recorded a marked increase of unexplained radiation during the UFO's presence in the area.

His appetite wetted, the Colonel made plans to build an aerial radiation detector that could be flown to an area of UFO activity, and once there, "sniff out" the trail of radiation left in the atmosphere, tracking the aerial intruder to its lair. One has to admit the scheme was inspired.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the airborne radiation tracking idea dragged out so long it was never brought to fruition.¹¹²

More to the west, at Houston, a round, yellow-white light was viewed over Ellington Air Force Base. A radar operator assigned to the 149th AC&W Squadron spied the light visually in the dark morning (0113 hours) sky of August 25th. The airman reported:

"[It]...climbed into the sky until it was so far and so high that it looked just like another star, then it faded from sight. The course was zig-zag. It would fly at tremendous speeds in one direction and then seem to coast. Then it would take an obtuse angle in another direction and repeat its change in speeds. The one thing that was very noticeable was the fact that these angles were so definite. After it had started to climb into the sky and it was very far away the light started blinking on and off at two second intervals."¹¹³

"It was all very spooky."

Monday, August 27th, pilot Ray Williams was at the helm of his private plane getting ready to take off from Vandalia, Illinois airport. It was about 8:15 p.m. when Williams taxied his plane to the end of the runway. Glancing

around he noticed a large orange light in the southwest sky. Concerned, he radioed the CAA officials on duty in the Vandalia tower, Albert Draoklec and Paul Reese. The CAA men couldn't supply Williams with any information on the light but, since the strange brilliant point soon faded away, it was not taken seriously. Williams later told the newspaper the Vandalia Leader that:

"Shortly after I had taken off I noticed the light again, approaching my plane. It came directly at me and then circled my plane twice before heading toward Greenville. I followed it and it made a circle round that town and came back toward Vandalia. I last saw it near the country club. The CAA radioed a transport pilot who was passing over Vandalia at the time at about 20,000 feet and he too saw the object."¹¹⁴

Williams remarked that the incident was "all very spooky" because:

"It wasn't an airplane but whatever it was the light was on the tail of it, and there was a small red light on top."¹¹⁵

The GRD tries again.

The Geophysics Research Division again approached the military at Holloman Air Force Base, this time on August 27, 1951, months after Project TWINKLE had been officially shut down. Since Lt. John Albert had been reassigned to another station, talks were conducted with a Major Edward A. Doty who had some knowledge of the TWINKLE effort. As before the GRD did not receive any strong encouragement when it suggested a return to a round-the-clock scan of the heavens to detect UFO's. Major Doty informed the GRD people that UFO reports in the region had fallen off because people had "lost their sensitivity as observers."¹¹⁶ Moreover, it was revealed that scientists like Clyde Tombaugh and Fred Whipple were engaged in continuous and extensive study of the sky in the Holloman area and had detected nothing out of the ordinary. This is not to say that the UFO problem was to be ignored completely.

"It was learned from Major Doty, that Col. Baynes, C.O. at HAFB, no longer felt there was any justification for the allocation of funds for maintaining systematic investigation. Rather, he provided that the project be maintained on a standby basis and without official Air Force status. This entails assignment of officer (Major Doty) to collect incoming reports, make periodic review of the files 'for patterns or persistent characteristics in the reports,' maintain liaison

with OSI, Provost Marshall's Office and any other agencies whose activities may serve to provide information concerning future aerial phenomena developments. Land-Air has agreed to report and if possible photograph any abnormal sightings made during their scheduled periods of operation (about eight hours each day). The weather station will function similarly. Also, all pilots have been briefed to report any unusual observations. If necessary, the project can be available, for the purchase of equipment."117

The representatives of the Geophysics Research Division were taken to see Mr. Knott, the man in charge of the Land-Air equipment and personnel. From him it was learned that Land-Air had not prepared any formal report on its Project TWINKLE work since it was not under a contractual obligation to do so, but Mr. Knott suggested a study, to be made of film and verbal recordings of both Askania stations, on the chance a correlation may reveal something significant; a tedious job but one that could be done if the funds were authorized. Major Doty assured Mr. Knott and the Geophysics people he would do his best to see that the money was forthcoming.118

On August 28th the Geophysics Research Division people sought some input from Dr. Lincoln La Paz in its attempt to draw some conclusions from its involvement in Project TWINKLE. La Paz:

"...expressed disbelief in all aerial phenomena except for the green fire-balls. The red fireball occasionally reported he believed was the visual after-effect of the green. Their recent origin (1947) and peculiar trajectories did not permit, according to Dr. La Paz, them to be classed as natural phenomena. The most recent that has come to his attention occurred over Detroit on 7 July 1951. It crossed the city from Northwest to Southeast with a sharply descending trajectory which leveled out [!?] and was observed by many residents of the city. Dr. La Paz expressed the opinion that the fireballs may be of our own military origin, but if not, they are a matter of serious concern."119

People were puzzled in Amarillo, Texas, on August 25, 1951. At 9:15 p.m., something odd was noticed in the dark heavens: "Two self-luminous pinkish objects, one apparently on the top of the other, crossed the sky at a speed greater than any jet plane, travelling southwesterly."120

Five minutes later (9:20 p.m.) more aerial phenomenon was observed: "Five self-luminous pink objects in uneven

formation, crossed the sky at a speed greater than a jet plane, travelling southwesterly."¹²¹

Yet the really big story that evening took place 100 miles due south, at the same moment, at the Texas city of Lubbock.

The "Lubbock Lights."

At 9:10 the evening of August 25th, three professors, teachers from Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas, were having an informal Saturday night gathering in the backyard of a professor Robinson's Lubbock home on 24th Street. It was warm and clear so the group had decided to hold their talks outside. The three professors present were: Dr. A. G. Oberg, professor of chemical engineering; Dr. W. I. Robinson, professor of geology; and W. L. Ducker, professor and head of the Petroleum Engineering Department at Tech. They were relaxing in chairs in the yard, exchanging comments about a proposed micro-meteorite project to be sponsored by Texas Tech. Dr. Oberg was staring at a particular constellation waiting for a meteor flash when he suddenly spotted some 50 lights approaching in a semi-circular formation.¹²² To Dr. Ducker this is how the lights appeared:

"...as a 'string of beads' racing in the crescent formation from the northeast to the southeast at an 'incredible speed.'"

"The individual objects which made up the formation were indistinct, but gave off a glow, apparently reflected light, possibly from the city below."¹²³

The professors were surprised as they watched the "string of beads" zoom overhead, crossing the arc of the heavens in three seconds which left no time to estimate the shape or size of the luminous dots. Understandably intrigued by phenomenon, the professors agreed to wait and watch for any more overflights.

Approximately three minutes later a second group of 50 lights in a semi-circular formation flashed overhead. Dr. Ducker would later say:

"Frankly, we were astonished. And if I had not had confirming witnesses at the time I feel sure I should have said nothing about what I saw, for it is incredible to believe they are of terrestrial origin and even more incredible to believe they are from beyond the earth."¹²⁴

Jay Harris, Managing Editor of the Lubbock Morning Avalanche-Journal, will always remember the night of August 25, 1951. He was busy working late on the Sunday edition when the phone rang. The call was from Dr. Robinson who told Mr. Harris about the strange "strings of beads" speeding over Lubbock.

At first Mr. Harris doubted the value of printing such an odd story but came around when he decided that publication might result in testimony from other townspeople.

By next morning the whole town was a buzz with talk about the "whatsits" flying over town.

Coming to the defense of his colleagues immediately was the head of Texas Tech's Journalism Department, J. Russell Heitman, who remarked that he had sighted a similar flight of lights several nights earlier that matched the description of the phenomenon given by Dr. Ducker and the other two professors.¹²⁵

Monday four other witnesses came forward to offer supporting testimony to the claims of the Texas Tech professors. Three were housewives who had also been outside that evening talking in a backyard of a resident on Medlock Avenue. They said they had sighted similar lights flashing through the sky the same time as that mentioned in the newspaper. Likewise, a professor Carl Hemminger, associate professor of German at Texas Tech who lived on Eighth Street, said he too had noticed the mystery lights.¹²⁶

There was no gawking at the sky the next two nights as a storm front moved in, bringing with it rain showers and brilliant electrical displays.

Were the professors viewing UFOs? In UFO records there were similar cases. For example, an Air Force Major witnessed some strange lights pass over Fort Worth, Texas, two years before on July 24, 1949. The Major testified:

"...at approximately 2030 hours, I saw what appeared to be seven duly lighted objects in a type 'V' formation slightly to the West moving very rapidly from South to North. The distance between the lights apparently did not change during the time they were visible, which indicated that they might have all been on a single object. This formation of lights was visible for only four or five seconds and finally faded away into the Northern sky."¹²⁷

Perhaps the military was secretly testing a new "flying wing" type of aircraft in the Texas region? Consider the following 1951 report of something spotted the same evening as the professor's first sighting only about a half hour later, and some 300 miles to the west of Lubbock, at Albuquerque, New Mexico. An Intelligence synopsis states:

"Sandia Base Security Guard, --- (deleted) reported sighting large object similar to a Flying Wing, but one and a half times larger than a B-36, observed by himself and wife, pass over East Albuquerque area at 2158 hours,

25 August 1951, in south-southeastern direction, altitude 800 to 1,000 feet at approximately 300 miles per hour. Object had glowing white lights on trailing edge of wing and black stripes under wing. The object made no sound whatever and flew straight and level. Lights from Central Avenue and autos reflecting off object gave it silver color. No means of propulsion noted. Sighting and observations of --- (deleted) confirmed by his wife."128

Air Force Intelligence was definitely interested in the report of a "flying wing" invading Los Alamos airspace. Lt. Jerry Cummings of Project GRUDGE shot off a message, classified SECRET, to the military commander of Kirtland Air Force Base on August 31st which urged:

"Request you forward all available information directly to AFOIN-ATIAA-2a by teletype immediately. Also request you attempt to verify further this sighting, investigating along the route indicated by extrapolating the indicated course. Additionally, check any ground or air-borne radar operative in the vicinity of Albuquerque and the extrapolated flight path."129

But let us return to the professors in Lubbock during the last week of August 1951:

"Through the week, the men had discussed their experiences. Several characteristics seemed to them outstanding. Perhaps the most amazing was the apparent schedule upon which the objects were operating. The first appearance each night was so close to 9:20 p.m., that observers spoke of it, in railroad parlance, as 'old 9:20'. They were suddenly there---then, just as suddenly, gone.

"The group was confident that the angular velocity of the object was 30 degrees a second--this they determined from measurements of several flights. Stop watches and protractors were used to measure time and angles."130

Meanwhile, every evening in the local Tower theater downtown, the citizens of Lubbock were getting goosebumps thrilling to the eerie and chilling opening scenes of RKO's newest release The Thing From Another World, but it was those persons at the city drive-ins that got the "real" show. Note that street lamps do not figure in the following accounts:

"Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hotnig were at the Corral Drive-in theater (9 - 10 p.m.) when they saw mysterious objects flash overhead,

'spots of light' seemingly traveling 'very fast' and at 'high altitude.'

"Another person who did not give his name made a similar report.

"Tuesday night at about the same hour, a man and his wife, declining to be named, said they were at the Western Drive-in theater and saw two flights of such objects.

"The first flight, they said was 'almost exactly like what the Tech men saw, but the second flight had fewer and followed after a brief lapse of time.

"All agreed that speed matched that of terrestrial bodies. The man and the woman reporting the Wednesday night observation said they appeared 'slightly oblong' in shape. They moved with a speed 'out of this world.'"131

The case of the "Lubbock Lights" became even more complex on August 31st when 18-year-old Carl R. Hart of Lubbock produced some pictures showing strange glowing points.

The man who did Hart's developing was puzzled by the images on the negatives and contacted editor Harris of the Avalanche-Journal, telling the newspaperman that the pictures may be proof of the strange lights reported in the heavens.

Harris then phoned Hart and asked how the pictures were obtained. Hart's explanation was simple and direct. He told Harris that he had been laying on his bed in his room about midnight the night before and was looking out the window at the night sky. While gazing at the stars he suddenly noticed some strange lights flashing through the heavens. Reacting quickly, Hart grabbed his 35mm Kodak and dashed outside. Standing in his backyard with camera in hand, Hart was ready when more flights flashed overhead.¹³²

Although Hart had not sought out Harris and made no sensational claims concerning the pictures, the editor of the Evening-Avalanche hesitated in his decision to publish the story. Harris threatened to "run the boy out of town" if the Evening-Avalanche became the victim of a hoax. Unfazed by the threat, Hart said only that he had photographed some strange lights in the sky and what caused them he couldn't say. If Harris had doubts, Hart said, then he should not publish the pictures. That last remark broke Harris' resistance. The editor made up his mind to go ahead and said he would pay the youth a small sum for publishing rights (Hart received about \$18).

Besides publishing the pictures in the Evening-Avalanche, Harris boldly submitted the pictures to the Associated Press wire service, but just before he did, he phoned Hart again to let the youth know the story would soon be a national one and if the pictures were fakes the consequences would be even more dire. Hart still remained unruffled.¹³³

The newspaper next morning was full of stories concerning the Lubbock "Whatsits." Scores of the city's residents phoned editor Harris to relate a sighting of V or U-shaped formations of luminous dots racing across the night heavens the previous evening. The September 1st edition of the Avalanche carried some statements that mentioned nothing but ducks yet: "Everyone else seeing the objects agreed they were flying too fast a speed to have been birds..."¹³⁴

"Fowl or Flying Saucers."

Shortly after sundown the phones in the offices of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal began ringing off their cradles. Residents of the town were calling to inform the paper they too had spotted the mysterious lights with their own eyes. Some persons said the things were birds, while others believed they had witnessed an odd light reflection.

The Avalanche received word that the strange objects had been observed at three different distinct times from 8:40 to 10:37 p.m. that Friday evening. All the witnesses said the objects were flying in a V-shaped or U-shaped formation and had zoomed overhead at tremendous velocity being in view only 3 - 7 seconds. Estimates of the number of objects ranged from "8 - 9" to "20 - 30."

"Heineman's Horror."

That night the professors got together again:

"On 1 September 1951, the original group of three met again in Dr. Robinson's garden and were joined by E. R. Heineman, professor of mathematics and Dr. E. F. George, professor of Chemical Engineering.

"Once again, at about 9:20 p.m., a flight came over. It was similar to previous flights, but rather more irregularly grouped. On through the evening, at fairly regular intervals, four more flights moved across the sky from North to South. And then at 12:17 a.m., the most unusual sighting was observed. This flight passed directly overhead, flying very low, in the general direction of North to South, and was seen by every member of the group. Dr. Robinson observed that in the case of this flight, an irregularly shaped yellow light appeared in the rear. The formation included dark diffuse areas, and the arc itself quivered or pulsed in the direction of its travel.

"Each object had an angular magnitude that would be the equivalent of 12 inches across at a distance of 30 or 40 feet, and in violent agitation.

"This was the first sighting that Mr. Heinemen, who had been skeptical about the whole thing, made. The sighting was so low and so spectacular that he was really jolted, and apparently showed it, for the group jokingly dubbed it 'Heinemen's Horror.' The flight had the appearance of a group of 12 to 15 pale objects in the shape of a quadrant of a circle, producing a pale-yellow blinking light and moving noiselessly."¹³⁵

The Sunday and Monday editions of the Avalanche-Journal were filled with eyewitness accounts and comments concerning Saturday night's manifestations. Judging by the news stories, opinions were divided:

"Take Mack Forrester. He saw two flights of the objects about 11:45 p.m. Saturday and said: 'They weren't birds. They were too fast for aircraft. It looked like a light reflection, only there were distinctive little dots, not one single flash.'"¹³⁶

No one seems to have mentioned the fact that migrating fowl always fly north to south in the Fall and that all of the Lubbock observations mention a north to south course. If the lights were something else wouldn't the overflights occasionally be east to west, or south to north?

In the pro-bird ranks was an employee of the local radio station:

"...W.S. Bledsoe, KFYO chief engineer, said he saw 'a group of things going over at 9:30 p.m. They were south-bound birds of some sort. I could see the wings flapping.'"¹³⁷

On the other hand some were not so sure:

"Mrs. Stephen Matyl of the Plainview highway said she and several others saw 'some kind of strange objects' about 10:35 p.m. Saturday-- and even those in that group couldn't agree. One said it was birds, another said it wasn't and another frankly admitted she didn't have the slightest idea what it was."¹³⁸

In the face of this mixed bag of opinion, there was a strong remark by Dr. W. L. Ducker, the "original" witness, who was quoted as saying that what he observed was: "definitely not birds."¹³⁹

"Anyone trained in scientific observation won't go off half cocked on anything like that. We discussed whether what we saw might be birds,

but we ruled that out because it is improbable so much as to be outside the realm of consideration that two flights of birds would be in precisely the same formation--a formation peculiar to birds in the first place."¹⁴⁰

Dr. Ducker added:

"I don't doubt that some folks have seen some sort of bird formation and thought it to be the same thing we saw."¹⁴¹

The trophy for the most unusual suggestion could have been given to James Son who was credited with the following idea which he phoned in to the newspaper:

"...he's convinced the 'things' are flying completely around the world about every hour and 20 minutes.* He said he watched them Friday night [August 31st] and that's how often he saw them."¹⁴²

"The Panhandle."

The Avalanche-Journal mused:

"Reports of the phenomenon have caused interest over the nation, but no reports of similar objects have been received from other parts of the country other than in the Panhandle, near Amarillo."¹⁴³

The Associated Press carried the story of the Lubbock phenomenon which met with a varied reception by newspapers across the country. Some papers printed the story and Hart's pictures, and some didn't. Life magazine, always scouting for interesting photographs, turned up its nose at Hart's, claiming to already having enough "flying saucer" pictures.¹⁴⁴

After the Hart pictures were published, which resulted in a swirl of arguments over the migratory bird question, the chief photographer for the Avalanche-Journal made up his mind to do some experimenting:

*Dr. Eugene Sanger was in London, England at the time giving interviews to the press to tout his brainchild, a proposed winged rocket that could circle the world in two hours at a speed of 12,500 mph.

**There were many sightings directly south at the cities of Lamesa, Brownfield, and Big Spring.

"...he stationed himself on top of the Lubbock 'Avalanche Building with a 4 x 5 Speed Graphic loaded with a tungsten ASA 80 film and a GE #22 flashbulb in a concentrating reflector. He normally uses this same equipment to photograph night football games. He can get a normal negative by shooting f 16, at 1/100 of a second and developing twice the normal time in DK-60 a developer. This night he sat on the roof and had his camera set at f 4.7 at 1/10 of a second. He waited some time and a flock of some type of birds flew over. They were visible in the light of the sodium vapor street lights used in Lubbock. He shot as the flock was overhead. He also stated that he knew they were birds before he took the picture because he could see them dimly outlined. They were in a ragged V-formation and silent, which is unusual for ducks or geese, if they were ducks or geese. He developed his negatives and found the image so weak he could not print them. On the next night he attempted the same thing using a Kodak Reflex at f 3.5 at 1/10 with Super XX film, a #22 bulb and the concentrating reflector; the results were the same. Mr. Hams assumed that with his experience he should know that he was in a position in the city to get a maximum of light on any birds flying over him. From this, he is convinced that whatever Hart took a picture of was many times as bright as the birds he unsuccessfully attempted to photograph."145

Among the numerous reports published Sunday, September 2, was one from UFO photographer Carl Hart:

"Hart stated that on 1 September 1951, he saw two more formations pass over Lubbock, approximately 2320 hours, with about a two minute interval between the formations. Hart did not get any photographs of these formations, but said the passage was identical, except that the objects seemed to be at much greater altitude and although the formations passed over Lubbock in about the same position as before, the course seemed to be from the northwest to the southeast. Each group looked to be a single line formation."146

Another anti-bird comment came from the head of Texas Tech's biology department, Dr. J. C. Cross, who examined the photos taken by Hart and proclaimed that the dots: "...definitely were not caused by birds."147

The Avalanche-Journal contributed the following:

"One point in favor of those who say the objects are some sort of secret guided missile tests is the Big Spring report [The city of Big Spring is about 90 miles due south of Lubbock] in which Airport officials who sighted the 'whatsits' there point out that there are no lights around the field that could reflect off objects flying overhead. Also, others have reported the objects were over clouds that were 4,000 feet high at the time."¹⁴⁸

The Air Force, when it finally began to check on the Lubbock case, quickly fell in with those who favored the bird theory. If they had only checked their own UFO files carefully, they would have had even more reason to do so. It seems that two years before there had been a similar incident.

Lubbock lights circa 1949.

Air Force UFO file number 471 tells of an incident that took place at Lubbock, Texas on September 14, 1949, between the hours of 9:30 and 10:00 p.m. The report was from two citizens of Lubbock who viewed the phenomenon from the front porch of a residence at 2310 - 21st Street. One witness declared:

"Looking up and seeing the objects--nine groups with 40 to 50 in each group except the second group and there were only three in this group. Each group was in formation similar to ducks flying in formation--approximately the size of a saucer--bright silver, a rough round in shape. Were first observed at an angle of 30 degrees and passing overhead; disappearing at an angle of approximately 120 degrees. Were flying at an altitude of 5,000 feet--coming from the north and going straight south. First appeared approximately one mile away which is the north edge of Lubbock from due north to straight south.

"Each flight was visible for approximately 10 seconds but it took half an hour for all the objects to come over.

"It took approximately 10 seconds for each group to fly from 30 degrees to approximately 120 degrees. No sound was noticed but being only two blocks from a highway would prevent any sound from being heard.

"No trail--the color was bright silver and appeared as a very bright star.

"No projections, fins, wings, rods, or canopies. One object of the second group went straight up out of sight, but rest remained on straight course of going south--just disappeared

from sight--no clouds that night. The objects were in the formation of ducks flying south for the winter, and a cold wave was on the way at that time, but were flying faster than any ducks or geese that she had ever seen."¹⁴⁹

The witness, a housewife, has one believing squadrons of spacecraft were zooming over Lubbock; yet consider the testimony of the second observer, a Lubbock barber. He said the objects appeared to be the:

"...size of ducks golden in color. The first two or three groups were a rough round shape but the last group were noticed more closely and appeared as ducks flying at an altitude of several hundred feet. The color was gold such as light reflections. Were first observed at an angle of 30 degrees and passing overhead; disappearing at an angle of approximately 120 degrees. Just disappeared from sight due to flying away from the city lights."¹⁵⁰

In the 1951 Lubbock case the Air Force was quite ready to attribute the mystery to the illuminated oily breasts of migrating flights of plovers, shinning in the glare of Lubbock's mercury vapor street lights. In fact, one source claims: "One professor spotted a string of 'lights' again with binoculars. This time he said he was certain they were birds because he could see their feet."¹⁵¹

The exact source of the above-mentioned quote is not given, but we do have one bit of evidence that was not subjective: Carl Hart's photos. Regarding the photos, the professors had made something of a judgment about them:

"They do not completely accept the photographs taken by Carl Hart, and state that, had they felt it possible, they would have made every effort to take photographs themselves, but that the objects moved too fast."¹⁵²

Another important point was that careful analysis of the Hart pictures showed that the images were:far brighter than could possibly have been the reflection of plovers."¹⁵³ Were the Hart photos a hoax?

On one September night three flights of strange lights were observed at 7:30, 9:07, and 9:20 p.m. by Texas Tech professor, R. S. Underwood, and his father-in-law. Since both men observed the flights from widely separated locations, they compared notes and decided that a measurement of angles produced calculations that placed the lights at 2,000 feet and moving at a speed of about 700 mph.¹⁵⁴

On September 5th the members of the Texas Tech faculty that had first sighted the "lights" offered further substantiation that what was being seen was something other than birds:

"There have been three flights tonight, and at last we observed one group passing above a cloud which gave us a more concrete idea of the altitude. Assuming that such a cloud crossed Lubbock at 2,000 feet, the objects would have been maintaining a speed in excess of 600 miles per hour if they were barely above the cloud they passed over."¹⁵⁵

Questioned 16 years later and still insisting that his photos were not a hoax, Hart said of the sky lights: "I never really did have much of an opinion. I was just a lucky kid, in the right place at the right time with my camera."¹⁵⁶ Pressed, Hart remarked that he liked one theory that suggested the lights had been reflections off a cold layer of air, an idea that was proposed by a certain scientist (He was probably thinking of Dr. Donald Menzel's ideas). If the pictures had been a hoax, Hart could have saved himself a lot of trouble by admitting it because: "I had so much trouble from the Air Force and press for so many years, that I wished for a while I had never heard of it."¹⁵⁷

UPI news service, which obtained the forementioned quotes from Hart, noted:

"Whatever the explanation, Lubbock has become a favorite spot for UFO sightings ever since. A total of 40 more UFO's have been reported in the intervening years (1951 - 1967)."¹⁵⁸

The professors that witnessed the 1951 "Lubbock lights" also considered some connection between the flashing dots in the night sky and the UFO mystery:

"They have also taken into consideration the aerial activity that was taking place over the SW United States at that time--the much publicized 'Green Fireballs.' They attempted to tie up the two, but could find no association between the fireballs and the flying objects that they had seen."¹⁵⁹

On September 6th the Pentagon issued a new directive that signaled a return to respectability for the UFO problem. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff issued JANAP 146 (B) titled: "Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings from Aircraft," a document which included UFO reports. The directive imposed security classifications on such reports.

SPECIAL INSERT FOR THIS EDITION

Last minute additions to this edition:

June 1951. "Where are the flying saucers?"

In June 1951 Aviation Week asked: "where are the flying saucers?" The magazine noted that it was still getting a dribble of mail on the UFO subject, mostly comment on the inadequacy of Dr. Liddle's February Skyhook-Flying Saucer explanation that was the result of a ten-page report issued by the nuclear physics branch of the Office of Naval Research, but at mid year there seemed to be puzzling lack of sightings that didn't seem due to the Navy "solution." The magazine confessed that although a sizable number of UFO reports are no doubt due to mundane causes, there: "...still remain some reports from apparently trained or competent observer that cannot be explained or discredited easily." Robert H. Wood, who wrote this essay for Aviation Week, insisted that the publication's policy would be to: "...maintain an attitude of interest, though strictly neutral and impartial."

In that spirit, the magazine checked around, more for the need to satisfy its curiosity than to push a view of the mystery. The U.S. Air Force told Aviation Week that even though the military had cancelled its "project flying saucer," it was still in the national defense business and was quite ready to investigate anything worthy of attention but had received nothing of consequence since the Liddle announcement. Finding that hard to believe, Aviation Week approached the major non-military source of aerial phenomena sightings. Mr. wrote: "Have the news services been getting such reports but refusing to put them on the wires? No, says our service we questioned in Washington. They haven't been hearing of any sightings either. Nor have their various local newspapers members or clients."

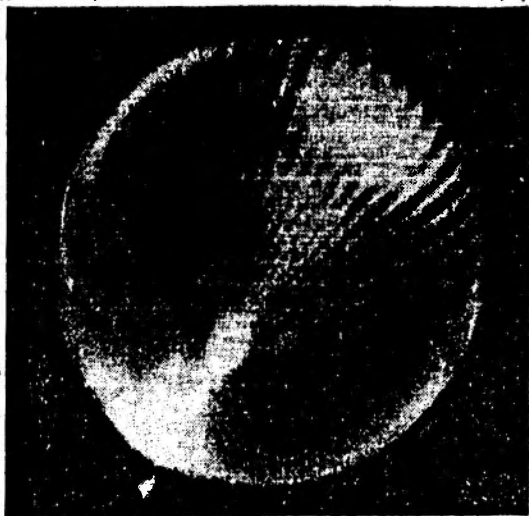
Wood, Robert H. "Where Are the Flying Saucers." Aviation Week. June 25, 1951.

The Chief of Look magazine's Washington Bureau, Richard Wilson, wrote back in February he tended to agree with Liddel and had the following to say about UFO reports and the travels of Skyhooks:

"One of the most convincing factors supporting Dr. Liddel's findings is that flying saucers or flying disks were unheard of until the ONR's experiments in the stratosphere began. There were some flights in 1947, the first year that strange objects were seen in the skies. These reports multiplied in 1948, when Skyhooks were put in the air in large numbers, and continued through 1949. Reports diminished in 1950 when the number of Skyhook balloon flights were reduced."

Wilson, Richard. "A Nuclear Physicist Exposes Flying Saucers." Look February 27, 1951.

Flying Saucers Really Balloons For Navy Cosmic Ray Studies



This picture of a "skyhook" balloon, 77,000 feet above Minneapolis, was taken through a refracting telescope during cosmic ray studies. This is a Look Magazine photograph from the University of Minnesota. —AP Wirephoto.

Feb 13 By the Associated Press 1951
A Navy official confirmed today that "flying saucers" really existed but actually were huge balloons used in high-altitude cosmic ray studies.

Dr. Urner Liddel, chief of the nuclear physics branch of the Office of Naval Research, made this disclosure in an article in the current Look magazine.

Dr. Liddel, in Washington, discussed the Look story further when newsmen queried him.

The Navy balloons, Dr. Liddel declared, were 100 feet in diameter and sometimes rose to a height of 10 miles. He added that winds might sweep them along at 200 miles an hour.

At dusk, the slanting rays of the sun lighted up the balloons' bottoms, giving them the saucer-like appearances, Dr. Liddel said.

He added that many of the disks were sighted as the sun set.

Dr. Liddel said the existence of the big balloons was kept secret

because the project was connected with atomic developments.

Dr. Liddel, who was in charge of the balloon tests, said they carried instruments to record the results of collisions between cosmic rays and atoms in the earth's atmosphere.

He added that secrecy was "no longer" necessary.

The physicist said 2,000 reports of "flying saucers" were checked, and those considered "whimsical" were eliminated. Of the "reliable" reports, he said "there is not a single . . . observation which is not attributable to the cosmic balloons."

These balloons, called "skyhooks" by the Navy, were first used in 1947, about the time the disks were first sighted. Dr. Liddel said reports of "flying saucers" increased in proportion to the number of balloons sent aloft.

Dr. Liddel said he was convinced that a "saucer" photographed at 77,000 feet altitude over Minnesota was a "skyhook."

RICHMOND INDEPENDENT
16—Monday, Feb. 26, 1951

'Flying Saucer' Radar, Spotter Posts Are Urged

BETUATE, Mass., Feb. 26, AP
—Dr. Anthony G. Mirarchi, former Air Force scientist, urged today that radar and spotter observation posts be set up to track down flying saucers "that may lead to another Pearl Harbor."

Dr. Mirarchi, who investigated more than 300 reports of flying saucers as chief of the Air Force's atmospheric composition bureau of the geographical research division in Watertown last year, brushed aside recent statements by Dr. Urner Liddel, a Navy scientist.

He said Liddel's conclusion that flying saucers really were plastic balloons sent into the upper atmosphere by the Navy for radiation research "does not tell the whole story."

"The results of my own investigation," he said, "indicate that we cannot exclude the possibility that the so-called first saucer is the result of experiments by a potential enemy of the United States."

"If they were launched by a foreign power, then they could lead to a worse Pearl Harbor than we have ever experienced," he said.

Dr. Mirarchi urged that a "considerable appropriation be granted the Air Force to set up photographic, radar and spotter tracking points to study the mysterious phenomena."

He said he had issued a report to the Air Force on his findings last year, but did not know whether the inquiry had been continued.

He said he was surprised to learn the Navy's opinion of flying saucers and said it was "inaccurate."

"Some of the reports gathered might well have been of radiation balloons, but that would not account for other observations which seem to exclude them," he said.

"The Navy's report is erroneous. It lulls people into a false sense of security," he added.

Asked about an Air Force statement that more than 500 investigations were made without one bit of concrete evidence to back up reports of flying saucers, Dr. Mirarchi said, "I thought I was the only one making such an investigation. And as far as I'm concerned, there certainly was evidence to back up my conclusion."

Brilliant White Disk Is Spotted Over Rockford

Mr. and Mrs. John Erlindson, 1728 Rural st., rushed to a nearby fire station to report the wierd object, after they spotted it "quite high in the sky" while they were driving near the intersection of 20th ave. and 11th st.

Erlandson said it was almost impossible to estimate the size of the object, but that, from the ground, it appeared even larger than an airplane would while flying at a low altitude.

It seemed to be moving through the sky slightly faster than an airplane would.

9 M ★ Sunday, Feb. 4, 1951

Rockford, Illinois

By the Associated Press

The F-88 Sabrejet is the Nation's fastest jet fighter.

"When you hear a reliable pilot tell an honest story like that, it makes you wonder."

Strange Craft Sighted in Air

Richmond Independent
Sept. 11, 1951

A number of Richmond police officers reported seeing a strange person on Saturday night, about 11:30 p.m., in the vicinity of the city hall. The person was described as being about 5 feet 10 inches tall, weighing about 150 pounds, and wearing a dark suit and a light-colored shirt. The person was seen walking away from the city hall and towards the north end of the city. The person was seen by several officers, but no one was able to identify him. The person was seen on Saturday night, about 11:30 p.m., in the vicinity of the city hall. The person was described as being about 5 feet 10 inches tall, weighing about 150 pounds, and wearing a dark suit and a light-colored shirt. The person was seen walking away from the city hall and towards the north end of the city. The person was seen by several officers, but no one was able to identify him.

PLC: 4-1951



FLYING SAUCER OR FLYING CUP-IDITY—Object above the skyline, and shown in insert (lower right corner), is purported to be a "Flying Saucer" sighted and photographed near Riverside, Calif., by Guy B. Marquand, Jr. Two friends who were with Marquand when he saw the object said he photographed the "thing" as it flew by them for the second time on a mountain road.

"STRANGE OBJECT" IN SKY

Fliers Watch Dime-Like Thing Hover Near Balloon

DAYTON, Ohio, Feb. 15 (AP)—Two Wright-Patterson Air Force base officers last night reported they recently "saw a strange object" in the sky over Alamogordo, N. M.

Capt. J. E. Cocker of the all-weather flying division and Capt. E. W. Spradley of the aerial photographic laboratory said they spotted the object as they tracked a large weather balloon. The balloon was similar to the type used in Navy weather observations and which the Navy said explained "flying saucer" reports.

"We were following the balloon when I noticed a strange object in the sky," said Captain Spradley. "It was flat and looked like a dime. It was a milky color. It wasn't doing anything, just hovering near the balloon."

The fliers estimated the object and balloon were "somewhere around 50,000 or 60,000 feet." They said that just before it disappeared there were "three brilliant flashes, like photo flashes."

Air Force Rules Out Talk About Flying Object Over N. J.

An official cloak of secrecy was pulled tight today over the sighting of a mysterious round object which flew away from a Dover Air Force jet plane over the New Jersey coast Monday.

This latest eye-witness account is regarded as important because of the two Air Force pilots who reported it.

Lt. Wilbur R. Rogers, 28, pilot of the T33 jet trainer which was flying Capt. Edward Ballard, Jr., from Dover Air Force Base to Mitchell Field, gave the most detailed report of the incident since he had unobstructed vision from the front seat of the plane.

Captain Ballard, however, also reported seeing the strange silver or white object, as the two tracked the flight of the craft for 30 miles until it left them far behind.

Both Lieutenant Rogers and Captain Ballard, skilled and veteran pilots of interceptor fighter planes, are perhaps more highly trained in the sighting, identification, and description of other craft in the air with them than any other type of observer.

The Air Force today declined to elaborate further on the report given out Monday at Mitchell Field. Public information officers at Dover said only that Rogers and Ballard were quoted correctly.

Air Force headquarters in Washington refused permission to a national radio program for an interview with the two pilots, and requests to interview them locally met with refusal.

It could not be learned, either, if a top-level investigation had been touched off by the reports filed by the pilots on Monday.

The estimated speed of the object, described as being at least as large as a fighter plane, was 900 miles an hour, when it finally pulled away from the pursuing jet trainer over Asbury Park.

The two pilots reported that the circular object was first sighted over Sandy Hook, N. J., at an altitude of about 15,000 feet moving inland.

As they follow it, coming down from their higher position of 20,000 feet, the object moved in an arc from Sandy Hook to Red Bank, then out to Asbury Park and to sea in a southeasterly direction.

The area in which the mysterious object was operating is presumed to be a section closely guarded by radar screen.

In the past, unidentified aircraft spotted by the screen have sent fighter planes up from New Castle County Airport and other defense interceptor bases to investigate.

There was no such alert and scramble order issued Monday, it was definitely determined.

With the curtain of secrecy drawn by the Air Force over the incident, there is still unanswered the questions of what the craft is; is it an American experimental craft; and if not, where could it be from.

'Flying Saucer' Excitement Grips Falls-Fort District

Flying saucers—real or imagined—have border area citizens in a whirl today.

Scores of people claim to have seen silvery discs streaking through the stratosphere yesterday afternoon. Bill McClellan of (KFI) was one of many persons at Pither's Point park yesterday who has joined the "I-saw-a-saucer" fraternity.

McClellan said that the object he saw resembled a jet plane flying at tremendous height and great speed. Every once in a while the object would stop and remain stationary. The sun's rays glinted off the "thing" and it looked like silver. McClellan is reported as saying:

It would travel fast, then stop, drop and rise again. The object was joined by another and the two disappeared behind a cloud.

Reports of similar objects came from Duluth radio stations and one from Kansas, but the one that added to the interest—and confusion—was one from New York early this morning.

Don Hollenbeck, ace CBS newscaster and narrator of the News of America program at 8 a.m. daily, reported that flying saucers were observed "over International Falls, Minn., yesterday." Hollenbeck stated they were traveling about 700 miles an hour.

Silver Ball in Sky Over Maryland Startles Autoists

A strange "silver ball in the sky" that sailed eastward over Ohio and Pennsylvania early in the day attracted wide attention at sundown last night as it passed over areas of Maryland.

But Air Force jet pilots at Pittsburgh identified the phenomenon as nothing more spectacular than a large plastic balloon of the type used in weather observation. Several airline and Air Force pilots reported it was soaring about 50 miles an hour at about 46,000 feet.

Traffic in Maryland, particularly on Route 11, between Hagerstown, Md., and Carlisle, Pa., was backed up for miles as motorists paused to watch it.

THE DAILY JOURNAL International Falls, Minn.
Wednesday, May 23, 1951

White 'Star' Chases Airliner Over City

Chicago, May 22 (AP)—An American Airlines pilot said today he saw what appeared to be a bluish white star moving back and forth at high speed in the southwest early today.

Capt. W. R. Hunt, the pilot, said he saw the object about 100 miles southwest of Dodge City, Kan., while piloting a regular airliner flight from Phoenix, Ariz., to Chicago.

Hunt said he sighted the object at 3:20 a.m. (CST) while flying about 270 to 280 miles an hour at 21,000 feet.

"It looked like a bluish white star but it definitely was something that was propelled," Hunt said. "It traveled at about 500 to 1,000 miles an hour."

"The star moved backward and forward, then up and down, and then seemed to come to a stop. Then it would complete the pattern over again."

He said the object did not approach closer than five miles away but that it seemed to "play tag with the plane."

Hunt said he was talking to a radio operator at Garden City, Kan., at the time and that he gave the operator a "play by play" account of the mysterious object. He said the radio operator lied in several other operators who also listened to the description.

Hunt said he watched the object for about 20 minutes, and that it then descended to about 3,000 to 5,000 feet below the plane. Then it drifted away to the southwest, he said.

The Garden City Daily Telegram

FINNEY COUNTY, KANSAS, TUESDAY, MAY 22, 1951

"I hated to see it leave," he added. "It was a very interesting sight."

The CAA said here that ground observers would have been unable to see the star because of a solid overcast. The plane was flying above the overcast.

Wasn't Balloon

The pilot told the CAA here the star definitely "was not a balloon."

He told the CAA that it was a "bright white-bluish light" flying a parallel course, coming close and then climbing away at great speed but never getting closer than three to five miles of the aircraft.

Hunt said by radio that he lost sight of the star near Salina after picking it up near here.

Saucers Discounted

The stories of mysterious flying saucers have died down in recent months, but several commercial aircraft pilots have reported sighting similar strange lights in the sky at night which followed them.

Some news and radio men have declared that the government has a secret flying saucer program. This the government has repeatedly denied.

Anyway whether you think it was real or not — the three-man crew of the airliner are convinced that a "white blue light" chased them away from Garden City last night.

Street Light In Sky New Version Flying Saucer, Maybe

Another variation on the old flying saucer yarn came to light today.

Mrs. Chester Hill, 616 Myron street, Ukliah, reports that she saw a "street light" in the sky last night about 7:30.

Mrs. Hill was on her way to attend a first aid class at the high school when she looked up into the western sky and saw a round, glowing object that looked, as she says, "exactly like a street light."

At first guess Mrs. Hill discounted the vision as an optical illusion. But as she started up Grove street toward the school the floating light had disappeared behind the U in the mountains directly west of Ukliah. The glow behind the mountain outlined the immediate area, causing Mrs. Hill to begin wondering.

She says the lighted object was very high and moving too slow for an ordinary aircraft.

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 1951
REDWOOD JOURNAL-PRESS
DISPATCH, UTAH, CALIF.

Paper Unknown

Weird Flashes of Light
Frighten Detroiters 1951

Detroit, Jan. 29 (AP)—Alarm residents reported a 15-minute display of weird, unexplained flashes of light over the suburban east side last night.

The bluish-green lights flashed over a three-mile area, closer to the ground than lightning. Radios in the area were blacked out momentarily and house lights dimmed.

Flashes Alarm Detroit

By the United Press.

DETROIT, Jan. 29.—Alarmed residents reported a 15-minute display of unexplained blue-green flashes of light over a three-mile area last night. Radios were blacked out momentarily and house lights dimmed.

While Ruppelt informs us Lt. Cummings was running the Air Force UFO show at Wright Field, one scrap of paper indicates that responsibility was shared. A disposition form, detailing a UFO report, dated September 7, 1951, mentioned that: "The evaluation was made in Air Technical Intelligence Center teleconference 220, item 7, by Lt. Colonel M. D. Willis, Project Officer for Unidentified Flying Objects."160

It wasn't until September 7th that Wright Field heard about the excitement at Lubbock, and then it took a message from the OSI office at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, to alert Air Force Intelligence in Ohio. At Carswell the OSI forwarded a Spot Intelligence Report to GRUDGE, which processed the information and then issued an order to Reese Air Force Base just outside Lubbock to get some men in town to begin an investigation. Air Force Intelligence clamped a SECRET classification on the investigation.

OSI officer Howard Bossert accompanied by 1st Lt. John A. Farley, Assistant Wing Intelligence Officer, Reese Air Force Base, went directly to the editor of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, Charles Guy.

A list of questions that the Air Force wanted answered is preserved in the military file:

- "1. Report states 'objects were seen in Amarillo, Big Spring, Lamesa, Brown Field, and other Panhandle--South Plains cities. Check these to see if description, course, and speed are about the same. Newspapers are probably a good source. Try to plot a track. Check Big Spring people.
- "2. Report states that six PhD's observed the flights. What was their opinion and did they make any measurements?
- "3. Article stated that the object transversed a 120 degree arc in two seconds. Confirm this. How was arc measured? What chance of error?
- "4. Was ground around spot where Mrs. Tilsom and Mrs. Bethard saw object examined?
- "5. Get weather for all nights?
- "6. Were ducks seen in daytime?
- "7. Did Mrs. Tilsom and Mrs. Bethard hear about Lubbock incident before their [Matador] sighting?

- "8. Do whirl winds go with the wind, into it, or any special direction in relation to wind? 'Was drifting slowly cast' [sic]. Began rapid ascent to cast? (Wind was NE 3 - 5 knots.)
- "9. What is possibility of hoax started by college professors? Assume they wanted to start a Mass Hysteria experiment. Since they are supposedly qualified, their statements would go over big. Maybe they planted the photos with Hart?
- "10. Attempt to get angle at which Hart shot the picture. How about clouds, above or below?"¹⁶¹

California's "Lubbock Lights?"

U.S. Highway 66 passes near Claremont, California, a city about 20 miles due west of San Bernadino. At 7:20 p.m., the evening of September 6, 1951, there was the usual vehicle traffic on the highway and in one car were two sergeants assigned to the Headquarters of the 1st Fighter-Interceptor Wing, George Air Force Base, California. While driving Highway 66 the airmen noticed some objects in the sky as their car approached the outskirts of Claremont. Immediately aware they were observing something extraordinary, the sergeants pulled over and scrambled out of their vehicle to get a better look. In the sky about 12 miles away and at about 10,000 feet, were six bright orange objects flying in an incomplete circle formation. The objects were moving straight and level on a western course. Trailing the group was a lone similar object moving at the same course and altitude.

The objects were in view for approximately three and a half minutes until they were obscured by a fogbank creeping in from the coast.

The adjutant of the sergeant's unit, Major John A. Sands, filed a report on the incident with Project GRUDGE and added the comment: "Both men are very reliable and sufficiently experienced to recognize the differentiation from conventional type aircraft."¹⁶²

Also:

"Weather in immediate vicinity clear, except for distant coastal fog bank in West. Height of fog bank unknown. Objects appeared much higher than fog bank. No wind at time of sighting. Sky was darkening at the time."¹⁶³

More "conventional" flying saucer sightings continued to occur. The next report could have been about the same object

photographed by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Trent. It's too bad, no follow-up was made.

A brief note from Spokane, Washington, on September 3 (or the 8th, the file mentions both dates) 1951 at 2:00 p.m., states some military personnel watched three objects for five minutes. The things were at a high altitude moving south-east. The sketchy information on the Project GRUDGE file card, which is the only source of data on the case, reads:

"Color bronze, shape like a disk. Size 20 to 30 feet. Speed was high to hovering. Observed through binoculars. No sound. Maneuvers--highly erratic."164

From Phoenix, Arizona on September 9th came news of:

"A bright light under telescopic observation was found to be a large brilliant light with two smaller equally brilliant lights on either side. It flashed from green to blue to amber at regular intervals, as it hovered, slanted right and left, circled, and made long swooping passes over Camelback Mountain."165

Public curiosity about the UFO mystery kept increasing for there was a great desire for information and the military was not doing nearly enough to satisfy it. Explanations, no matter how logical were too brief, the Air Force avoiding any debate like the plague.

And then there was another factor that spurred public fascination in the sky mystery. The historian recognizes that the early 1950's were special, a time without drugs, social revolutions, rock and roll, Vietnam, or high unemployment. That is not to say the period was a time of bliss, there was the war in Korea, although that conflict was not as unpopular as Vietnam, but compared to the 60's and 70's, America was relatively untroubled. The mass psyche needed something and one way was to reach out to the black depths of space where, according to science fiction writers, anything was possible. Outer space was escape, and the possibility that UFO's might be aliens arriving to assuage mankind's cosmic loneliness had thrilling appeal. If the military was going to be inept or unwilling in its attempts to understand the UFO phenomenon, then there were civilians quite ready to take up the challenge.

"Saucer Review."

In September 1951, there appeared the world's first 100 percent UFO civilian newsletter. Edited by E. Rockmore, the newsletter Saucer Review was intended as a clearinghouse for all obtainable UFO reports, the data published bi-monthly

in a single multi-page bulletin. The publication was written in terse, clean English and followed an organized format. Rockmore listed each UFO sighting by longitude and latitude to, as he put it, help in the "comprehension of the motives of the extraterrestrials."

If nothing else, Rockmore did manage to gather and publish much raw data of a useful nature.

The birth of APRO.

While Rockmore's Saucer Review was to be short lived (Not to be confused with the more famous Flying Saucer Review, a later British journal published on glossy paper), another civilian organization came into being at this time that ranks as one of the best known and most enduring of any such group, the Aerial Phenomenon Research Organization. In 1951, a Coral E. Lorenzen was living in Burbank, California and was just one of the many people fascinated with the UFO mystery. A friend suggested that some civilians should band together to learn what they could about strange reports of unidentified objects in the skies over the nation, an idea Mrs. Lorenzen was pondering when she accepted a job with a newspaper in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, moving there in August 1951.¹⁶⁶ The Sturgeon Bay position was as a feature writer for the Green Bay Press-Gazette. This gave her a chance to put into writing a lot of thoughts about the UFO riddle which evoked many responses from the Press-Gazette readership. A considerable number of Green Bay citizens penned letters to Mrs. Lorenzen to tell her of their own UFO sightings. A growth of correspondence about the UFO subject led Mrs. Lorenzen to seriously consider the establishment of a UFO research group. In 1952 Lorenzen's envisioned organization was to become a reality.¹⁶⁷

"C.I.E.S.O."

Overseas the French nation had its own share of serious amateurs and in 1951 some Frenchmen founded the Commission International d' Enquetes Scientifiques (CIESO), which published the professionally produced magazine Ouranos. The French effort was led by Charles Garreau, Jimmy Guieu, and M. Marc Thirouin.¹⁶⁸

Officially, French military interest in UFO's, as far as it was known, was of an elementary nature. We do know that Colonel Clerouin of the French Air Force, with the encouragement of his superior, General Lionel M. Chassin, kept tabs on UFO reports being made by French military personnel and in 1951 authored a number of articles on the UFO subject which were published in a French regional newspaper. Other than that, one of the few clues to possible serious official French military interest is the rumor that the

French Defense Ministry did set up a "special research unit" to study UFO's in 1951, but not much more is known.¹⁶⁹

Speaking of civilian UFO investigative organizations, a spokesman for one of the most influential wrote:

"...in 1951, an incident occurred in New Jersey that prompted the Air Force Director of Intelligence, General C. P. Cabell, to reinstate the [UFO] project to a higher level. We tried to contact Cabell in 1960 but he would not grant us an interview. Shortly after we received his letter, he died."¹⁷⁰

The incident referred to was the Fort Monmouth, New Jersey case which we shall consider next.

"Operation Immediate."

A yard long strip of teletype paper spilled out of the teletype machine at Air Force Intelligence Headquarters, Wright Field, on September 12, 1951, at precisely 3:04 p.m. Edward J. Ruppelt, working nearby, noted the time because the message dealt with a memorable UFO incident, the Fort Monmouth, New Jersey case. As Ruppelt watched, the teletype message was stamped "Operation Immediate" and given to Lt. Cummings.¹⁷¹

Shortly thereafter, Lt. Colonel Rosengarten, accompanied by Lt. Cummings, left in a hurry for Fort Monmouth. Not only was the Fort Monmouth case interesting, but what gave real urgency to the officers' departure was a direct order from the "Chief." The head of Air Force Intelligence, Major General Charles P. Cabell, had melted the telephone lines between the Pentagon and Wright Field because, according to Ruppelt: "...a copy of the message had also gone to Washington."¹⁷² Interestingly enough, it was not the UFO sighting itself that had General Cabell in an uproar, but the way the information reached the public. Uncontrolled dissemination of UFO information and unauthorized statements that might appear to reflect official policy was an abhorrence to the High Command. General Cabell heard of the Fort Monmouth story through a Colonel Carter of the Field Liaison Section, Directorate of Public Information at the Pentagon, who received his data direct from the PIO of the Air Materiel Command Headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. It seems that the Wright Field PIO was: "...officially monitoring information on news stories about flying saucers."¹⁷³

Ruppelt tells us that Lt. Cummings' boss at Wright Field, Colonel Frank Dunn (who had just been assigned to ATIC) got a phone call from General Cabell even before Lt. Cummings had time to examine the teletype sheet.

The impression that Ruppelt gives is that the High Command, in this instance the Chief of Air Force Intelligence General Cabell, had more or less gone to sleep on the UFO problem, leaving everything to the lower eschelons at Wright Field, when suddenly one of the better UFO reports was noticed.¹⁷⁴ But as we shall see, it was more than the UFO report that excited the Chief of Air Force Intelligence.

The Fort Monmouth story.

What made the Fort Monmouth case important was that it involved both a remarkable visual sighting and a remarkable radar contact. There was no direct connection but circumstances were such that it was strongly suspected that the visual and radar reports were evidence of something extraordinary.

The radar contact occurred first:

"On 10 September 1951 an AN/MPG-1 radar set picked up a first moving low flying target (exact altitude underdetermined) at approximately 1110 hours southwest of Fort Monmouth at a range of about 12,000 yards. The target appeared to approximately follow the coast line changing its range only slightly but changing its azimuth rapidly. The radar set was switched to full sided azimuth tracking which normally is fast enough to track jet aircraft, but in this case was too slow to be resorted to. The target was lost in the northeast at a range of about 14,000 yards. The target also presented an unusually strong return for an aircraft being comparable in strength to that usually received from a coastal ship. The operator initially identified the target as a ship and then realized that it could not be a ship after he observed its extreme speed."¹⁷⁵

Some 30 minutes later an Air Force officer piloting a T-33 jet trainer made visual contact with a large object he estimated was some 40 feet across which was moving through the sky near Point Pleasant. The actual words of the pilot witness were: "It appeared to be circular in shape, however, at one time I saw it edgewise where it gave a flat appearance. The design of the object could be said to be identical to a discus as is used in track events."¹⁷⁶

Said Lt. Rogers, the pilot of the T-33:

"When first sighted, I would judge that it was between 5 and 8,000 feet over Sandy Hook, as is noted on the attached map.. It appeared to be descending when I first saw it at Sandy Hook

and appeared to level out in flight just north of Red Bank, New Jersey and continued on at the same altitude until it disappeared. At the point of our first sighting of the object, I started a descending 360 degree turn to the left from 20,000 feet to 17,000 feet, gaining airspeed from 450 mph to 550 mph on a course paralleling that of the object until it was lost from sight.

"In our training and daily practice as intercept pilots, we must note accurately the times at which the object of the interception is first sighted. I did this automatically when I first sighted the object over Sandy Hook and noted the time to be approximately 1135 EDT, 10 September 1951. Although we were on a direct course for the destination of Mitchel AFB at 20,000 feet at the time of the sighting, I was so amazed at the speed of the object that I immediately started the turn to the left and waited for Major Ballard to get through with the radio conversation he was having with Sam Worth so I could point the object to his attention and we both watched it make a 90 degree turn to the left and kept it under observation together while it covered approximately 20 miles and disappeared out to sea. The object appeared to be banking as its course described a gradual 90 degree turn to the left."¹⁷⁷

Word of the UFO activity leaked out and as a result the media was beating the door down. All of the New York biggies were doing most of the beating: The New York Journal-American, The New York Times, The New York Herald-Tribune, and The New York Daily News. There were many other inquiries too but the military PIO's were too dizzy to remember.

Things came to a head when national media giant NBC News got through to Maj. Ballard at Dover Air Force Base and tried to pump him for information, but the network had its call switched over to Dover's PIO, Lt. Payne, since officer Ballard had misgivings about speaking freely, passing the hot potato to the Air Base's assigned public relations expert. However, even Lt. Payne had qualms about talking when he noticed strange sounds on the phone line indicating NBC was having the conversation recorded. Lt. Payne put off NBC with the promise that he would consult with his superiors at EADF, and in the meantime he said there could be no clearance of information. The Eastern Air Defense headquarters refused to commit itself and turned to the Pentagon in Washington for a judgment, however the High Command knocked the problem back to Lt. Payne with the simple instructions that nothing should be said and to just forget the whole matter. In the wake of NBC's inquiry, was an approach by the Associated Press, and another refusal by Major Ballard to comment on the case. Lt. Payne, of course, backed up the Major's actions.

FIRST SIGHT
EST 10-12,000 FT



UNCLASSIFIED

BRIGHT ORANGE LIGHT
FAR BRIGHTER THAN THAT OF
SUN'S REFLECTION AT THAT HOUR



SECOND SIGHTING
SAME ALTITUDE AS 1ST SIGHTING

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

CLAREMONT, CALIF. APPROX $\frac{1}{2}$ MI WEST

UNCLASSIFIED



LOCATION OF OBSERVE S. AUTOMOBILE
ON US HIGHWAY 66 PROCEEDING TOWARD LOS ANGELES, CALIF

TIME: 1920 HOURS
DATE: 6 Sept 51

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ R7C

The Air Force's Air Defense Command could care less about the press it seems. The ADC wanted Project GRUDGE to investigate both the visual and radar observations of the UFO since it was interested in what the object could have been. Public relations problems were a Pentagon worry. ADC insisted that Air Force Intelligence grant approval for an in depth investigation.

Air Force Intelligence in Washington, in the person of General Cabell, was only too glad to move on the matter, sending orders to Wright Field over the teletype which had both Lt. Colonel Rosengarten and Lt. Cummings dashing about. The TWX, however, ignored the question of the existence of any UFO! It read:

"IT IS REQUESTED THAT OSI CONDUCT A DETAILED CHECK IMMEDIATELY AS TO HOW MAJOR BARRON RECEIVED INFORMATION CMA UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES 2 MEMBERS OF THE PRESS WERE GIVEN THIS INFORMATION OF THE INCIDENT PRIOR TO CONTACTING BARRON. DESIRE NAMES AND TIME OF OTHER MEMBERS OF PRESS INFORMED OF INCIDENT. IT IS DESIRABLE THAT EXACT TIME OF EACH CONVERSATION BE VERIFIED, WHERE APPROXIMATE, INDICATE. THIS INFORMATION IS URGENT AS PER COMMAND OF GENERAL CABELL AIR TECH INT WASHINGTON DC AND IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO 0800 1ST OF OCT AT FT MONMOUTH ATTN LT. COL N R ROSENGARTEN CMA AIR TECH INTELLIGENCE HQ USAF OR BY 1200 1ST OCT AT AFOIN TC TO BE HELD FOR LT COL ROSENGARTEN."178

Right after landing at Ft. Monmouth, Lt. Colonel Rosengarten phoned the office of the OSI's DO #2 in New York City. The agent on duty, Lt. Michael O. Pettee, took the call. The Colonel told agent Pettee to stand by because he had a job for the DO #2 and that details would follow shortly in a TWX message. The Colonel said over the phone: "...the matter was urgent and classified secret."179

Curious, agent Pettee telephoned Colonel Rosengarten at 3:30 p.m. October 1st seeking additional particulars about the excitement caused by a Major Barron's release of "certain information." The Colonel told agent Pettee he: "...believed that the release of information was not done with the 'intent to aid anyone,' but rather was done as a 'friendly gesture.'"180 Yet granted that, the Colonel nonetheless stressed the point that: "The information released was harmful and was given out in violation of regulations." When he was questioned about such regulations, the Colonel: "...stated that 205-1 would apply, however, he implied that other directives were involved."181

Believe it or not agent Pettee was completely unaware of the furor being caused by the Ft. Monmouth UFO incident. In fact he seems not to have even known of the case's existence.

All he knew was something concerning "certain information."
Agent Pettee has left us this statement:

"When questioned more specifically as to the type of information, Col. Rosengarten stated that reports have been received concerning this same information from other sources and from other locations. Since it was being circulated by other agencies, he would like to know whether or not it started with Maj. B. and then picked up by others who may have read it (e.g., the Associated Press, etc.). The information is being spread and is harmful. They would like to discover if it came from one source, or are there other leaks. He was reluctant to give the undersigned [Pettée] any more particulars about the type of information."182

On October 2nd, Major Thomas W. Ellington, PIO, Hq, First Air Force, was on the hot seat for the supposed violation of security. According to Ellington, he had no knowledge of any unauthorized release of confidential information. The Major felt that the Fort Monmouth case had been handled well within the guidelines set down by Air Force regulation 190-6, dated 27 April 1951, titled: AIR FORCE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM. Contained in this regulation were two paragraphs that were pertinent (he thought!).

The paragraphs were 2b and 2c:

"Par 2b: 'Air Information: Consisting of the collection, correlation, analysis and dissemination to the public of unclassified information pertaining to the Air Force. This aspect of the program is based on the policy that the full record of the Air Force is available to the American people, subject only to security restrictions and the dictates of good taste.'

"Par 2c: 'Civil Liaison: Consisting of full cooperation with civilian individuals and organizations in matters of mutual interest and responsibility. This aspect of the program is based on the policy that harmonious relations with the civilian population will be maintained.'"183

Any student of the UFO mystery can judge for himself if the above two paragraphs have ever really applied to UFO information! Military records for this period have the following statement added to UFO reports: "Attention is invited to paragraph 7, AFR 205-1, dated 14 March 1949, which prohibits the disclosure of classified information to unauthorized personnel."184

The activities of Lt. Colonel Rosengarten were so unusual it attracted the attention of the OSI's Sabotage and Espionage Branch. An internal OSI memorandum dated October 2, 1951 discusses both the Colonel and his concern about certain Secret information:

"Lt. Colonel Rosengarten, AFOIN-ATIAA-2, is assigned to the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters USAF, with duty at Wright-Patterson AFB, in Technical Intelligence. He dispatched the wire referred to in the R & R from Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey, indicating that the information released carried the classification of Secret. He also stated in the wire that the inquiry had been personally and urgently requested by Major General Cabell, Director of Intelligence, Headquarters USAF, and that it was mandatory, if at all possible, to have the results of the interview available at AFOIN-TC, 1 October 1951, during which Rosengarten would be in conference with General Cabell and other personnel of the Technical Capabilities Branch, of OIN.

"The significance, if any, of this activity is unknown to OSI. Full information has been requested and has been promised by Major Parker, OIN, for 2 October 1951. I also pointed out verbally to OIN the irregular manner in which the request was made to OSI.

"Signed: Lucius L. Free, Lt. Col., USAF
Sabotage and Espionage Branch."185

Having become the focus of so much attention, Major Barron chose his words with care when he explained his actions to the High Command:

"At no time did I, or any of my staff, make a release on this story. Our procedure was to answer telephone inquiries in the normal fashion. Since this was not a classified matter, the news was treated in the normal fashion. Facts at our disposal were placed at the disposal of any media representative who called. I also requested the Base Operations Officer to investigate any possible regulation which necessitated a report by this office. The entire story was treated as an unclassified matter. The Public Information Officer felt that since the press had expressed a desire to get the story, and since there was nothing classified about the information, it then became his obligation to present the facts as to what had been reported to him."186

What the official investigation determined is given in the following paragraphs:

About 11:35 p.m., September 10, 1951, radar operators at the Samworth GCI Installation happened to overhear some clatter between a Lt. Rogers and a Major Ballard during a routine radio transmission. Officers Rogers and Ballard were exclaiming about the performance of a strange object that had just zoomed past their plane. They marveled at the object's speed which seemed to exceed 700 mph.

Shortly thereafter, at 11:45 p.m., Lt. Rogers, with his passenger Major Ballard, piloted his T-33 jet to a landing at Mitchell Air Force Base. After landing, the two officers were then driven from their aircraft directly to Operations during which time they made comments about the UFO. They were not sure the driver could hear over the noise of the vehicle.

It was noon when Lt. Rogers and Major Ballard approached someone officially about the UFO encounter. They broached the subject with Colonel Sprowls and Colonel Spain of General Minnie's staff, but the Colonels only laughed. At that, the report seemed a dead issue.

That afternoon at about 2:30 p.m., Dick Aurelio, a reporter for the Long Island newspaper, Newsday, was having a snack at a diner at Hempstead, New York, and within ear-shot were a couple of airmen talking loudly about a UFO encounter with a jet aircraft that very morning. That was enough for any newsman. In a flash Aurelio was on the phone to the PIO at Mitchell Air Force Base, a Major John B. Barron. At first Major Barron told Aurelio nothing had occurred, which was true enough for Barron to say since he knew nothing, at the time, of the incident that morning. Trying another tack, Aurelio rang up a Lt. Pearson of Base Operations whose blunt refusal to talk at all only enhanced the reporter's suspicions. At 4:00 p.m., Major Barron was again contacted by the persistent Aurelio. Major Barron promised to check much further into the supposed sighting. The PIO made up his mind to help Aurelio since he did not think UFO sightings were classified!

It wasn't long before Major Barron tracked down Lt. Rogers who was still at Mitchell Air Force Base. Major Barron explained over the phone that he was Mitchell's PIO and that he needed the low down on the UFO story. Lt. Rogers briefed Major Barron, which elicited from the PIO the remark that the sighting would make a humdinger of a news story and that a reporter would soon be over to take notes after clearance was obtained. Lt. Rogers tried to verify the security clearance, but Aurelio arrived before the officer had a chance. Yet, even then, Lt. Rogers requested that Aurelio phone Major Barron for approval. The newsman made a phone call and then announced that clearance had been granted. Satisfied, the Air Force pilot went about telling his story in detail using both large and small scale maps and when Lt. Rogers finished, Aurelio asked the airman

what he thought the object could have been, a question that prompted the pilot to merely shrug. Urged to admit he had seen a "flying saucer," Lt. Rogers only said the object was something he never had seen before in his life, and it certainly wasn't a balloon since it zoomed away at a tremendous velocity.

The next day things were really jumping at Major Barron's PIO office. At 8:00 a.m., Major Barron made a series of phone calls to HQ the First Air Force, HQ the Continental Air Command, the Pentagon, and the Air Material Command at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (Project GRUDGE), to inform them that a news story on a flying saucer sighting would appear in the Long Island newspaper Newsday.¹⁸⁷

The story appeared all right, and it seemed to have an air of official sanction, an awkward state of affairs since it contained the following:

"The World War II veteran from Columbia, Pa., was reminded that various units of the armed forces have knocked down reports of 'flying saucers' and that most have been explained as weather balloons.

"This couldn't have been a balloon, because it was descending," he said. "And besides, no balloon goes that fast."¹⁸⁸

Major Barron later explained to his superiors how he had handled the media:

"The following representation was given to all press inquiries, to the best of my recollection: 'Two pilots from Dover Air Force Base have reported that they saw a strange moving object in the sky over Sandy Hook, New Jersey. It was moving at an extremely rapid rate which was estimated in excess of 900 miles an hour. They had the object in their field of vision for approximately two minutes. They reported that it moved with an arc-like motion. They are not able to say exactly what they saw, at the same time they are quite sure that they saw something.' At no time did I suggest that the pilots saw a flying saucer. I am fully aware of the Air Force attitude toward flying saucers and would under no circumstances suggest to any member of the press that an Air Force pilot saw an object fully identified as a flying saucer."¹⁸⁹

"Robert Johnson and Mr. Brewster of Republic."

Air Force files reveal a very intriguing fact. There was a mention of two civilians that were "authorized to ask questions,"

and that at least one of the men believed UFO's were "real nuts and bolts aircraft!" Air Force records state:

"About 20 September 1951, Robert Johnson of Republic Aviation called Major Ballard and asked for permission to visit him to discuss the incident they had reported. Major Ballard said that he was happy to have them come over but that he couldn't discuss the matter with them unless they received authority for him to talk it over. Johnson called EADF, and EADF advised the Dover base CO, O'Gan that Robert Johnson and Mr. Brewster of Republic were authorized to discuss the incident with Lt. Rogers and Major Ballard. This discussion proceeded with ground track, shape, time of sighting, duration of sighting, color, altitude, and heading. They asked specifically concerning exhaust, and offered several sketches for identification--none were identifiable. The subjects interrogated the interrogators, learning that Brewster was studying the matter, that USAF and WPAFB personnel would soon arrive to interrogate, and that Brewster thought the objects were electrically propelled. Brewster cited names of people that had reported similar objects previously."¹⁹⁰

Was there another UFO investigation besides Project GRUDGE that had some sort of official approval? Ruppelt casts some light on the possibility and raises the question of "factionalism" within the Air Force. This brings us back to General Cabell's urgent request for an immediate assessment of the Fort Monmouth case.

Colonel Rosengarten and Lt. Cummings of Project GRUDGE spent the entire day of September 13th investigating the Fort Monmouth case, and then they enplaned for Washington D.C. since they were under orders to make a report to General Cabell personally. When the two officers arrived in Washington, they were called into a room where a meeting was in progress. Here is Ruppelt's version of what happened next:

"General Cabell presided over the meeting, and it was attended by his entire staff plus Lieutenant Cummings, Lieutenant Colonel Rosengarten, and a special representative from Republic Aircraft Corporation. The man from Republic supposedly represented a group of top U.S. industrialists and scientists who thought that there should be a lot more sensible answers coming from the Air Force regarding the UFO's. The man was at the meeting at the personal request of a general officer."¹⁹¹

The meeting lasted two hours, and according to Ruppelt who heard a wire recording of it, the gathering was a hot

exchange that did not conform to the official Air Force tone when UFO's were discussed. Press releases by the Air Force concerning UFO's and the 1949 GRUDGE report, came under fire at the meeting and Ruppelt does not indicate it was just the civilians that were making complaints. That UFO reports could be simply dismissed as hoaxes, hallucinations, or mis-identifications (the official position) didn't get much respect behind closed doors.

During the course of the meeting, Ruppelt informs us, Lt. Cummings was called on to give an account of the activities of Project GRUDGE and the young officer did not hedge. In spite of confident pronouncements, GRUDGE was "dead" said Lt. Cummings as he listed his efforts to improve report processing in the face of a negative atmosphere at ATIC. Later Lt. Cummings himself told Ruppelt that the description of the GRUDGE project evoked purple faces and sickly grins among the Colonels and Generals present.¹⁹²

At this point one might ask if the emotions depicted by Ruppelt were genuine, had General Cabell and the rest of the High Command been satisfied with sitting back and letting lieutenants run the UFO project, being deaf to the shouts of critics and blind to sensational stories in the newspapers and official reports? Or, was their reaction just an act for the benefit of the gentlemen from Republic Aircraft who were standing in for a "group of top U.S. Industrialists and scientists?"

If it was an act, it seems to have been carried off with some conviction. The Generals lit into the poor lieutenant with such fierce rage it would have jolted all those news commentators and scientists that were shallowing the "official Air Force line" that the UFO problem was really a farce. Ruppelt gives us only a few direct quotes but they are enough. One General exclaimed: "Who in the hell has been giving me these reports that every decent flying saucer sighting is being investigated?"¹⁹³ That was followed by: "What happened to those two reports that General --- (deleted) sent in from Saudia Arabia?"¹⁹⁴ And: "...who released this big report anyway?"¹⁹⁵ (The report was a bound volume of the results of GRUDGE released in 1949. For effect the General slammed the volume on the table.)

Although the wire recording of the meeting was eventually destroyed, Ruppelt kept a written transcript that was part of his estate when he died years later. Reporters for the Santa Ana, California Register, Robert B. Klien and David Branch, bought the material from Ruppelt's widow and a proposed book containing all the details, tentatively titled The Ruppelt Papers, will hopefully appear in published form some day. Until then, we must be satisfied with what little Branch and Klien have so far released, which is, unfortunately, just a few lines. According to the transcript, the meeting

was indeed explosive. At one point General Cabell screamed: "I've been lied to! I've been lied to!"¹⁹⁶

The remedy to all this exasperation would turn out to be the usual Air Force reaction: some cosmetic changes but not the badly needed massive allocation of funds and assignment of top scientists. Ruppelt tells us:

"Lieutenant Cummings and Lieutenant Colonel Rosengarten came back to ATIC with orders to set up a new project and report back to General Cabell when it was ready to go."¹⁹⁷

It is now that Edward Ruppelt stops being an off stage narrator and enters the limelight as one of the principal actors in the UFO drama. We now understand fully his apparent qualifications as an authority on the UFO mystery. This is how:

"Cummings didn't get a chance to do much work on the new revitalized Project Grudge--it was to keep the old name--because in a few days he was a civilian. He'd been released from active duty because he was needed back at Cal Tech, where he'd been working on an important government project before his recall to active duty.

"The day after Cummings got his separation orders, Lieutenant Colonel Rosengarten called me into his office. The Colonel was chief of the Aircraft and Missiles Branch and one of his many responsibilities was Project Grudge. He said that he knew that I was busy as group leader of my regular group but, if he gave me enough people, could I take Project Grudge? All he wanted me to do was to get it straightened out and operating; then I could go back to trying to outguess the Russians. He threw in a few comments about the good job I'd done straightening out other fouled-up projects. Good old 'Rosy.' With my ego sufficiently inflated, I said yes."¹⁹⁸

Ruppelt remembers being teased by a fellow officer about being the head of the "Department of Mass Hysteria" and that he would accumulate cobwebs until the kooks took a fancy to causing an uproar again. That officer was ignorant with a capital "I," a fact Ruppelt knew from watching Lt. Cummings constantly scramble to keep abreast of puzzling UFO reports that had never stopped flowing into ATIC headquarters. Ruppelt was hardly in the harness before the Air Defense Command had him working on a case for it seems a whole squadron of F-86 fighters had tried to catch something in the air over Long Beach, California; but before he enplaned for the West Coast, a thick stack of papers was dropped on his desk, some material that dealt with an apparent UFO flap at a Texas city with the name of Lubbock.

Word of the strange "Lubbock Lights" reached Wright Field around September 23rd, not many days after Ruppelt had assumed leadership of the Air Force's UFO project. Because of the thick file, Ruppelt immediately began to familiarize himself with the case, concentrating on the latest details to be obtained which concerned an incident that took place on August 31st, the same date Carl Hart took his famous pictures. It seems that two women, a Mrs. Stella Tilsom and her friend, a Mrs. Eugenia T. Bethard, sighted a very strange object in the sky while driving along a road near Matador, Texas, a town some 70 miles north of Lubbock. The time of the sighting was 12:45 p.m.

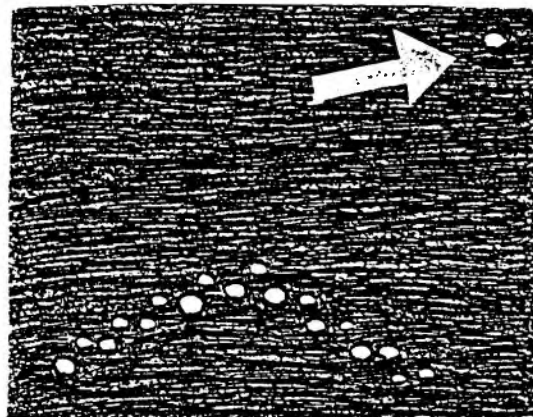
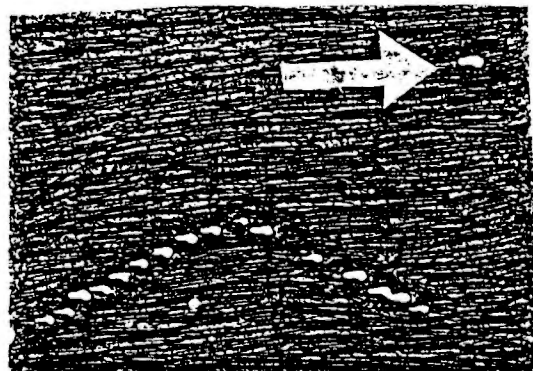
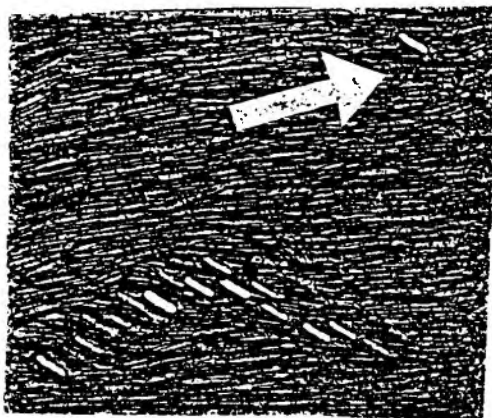
On September 18th Air Force Intelligence Officer Lt. Fabley, and OSI Agent Howard Bosseat, interrogated the two women. The military record had more detail than the press accounts and is quoted below:

"...their attention was attracted by a strange aerial object drifting across U.S. Highway 70. Mrs. Tom Tilsom, who was driving, first noticed the object and it was apparently a few seconds before she drew Mrs. Bethard's attention to it. Mrs. Tilsom stated that when she saw the object it was drifting slowly in an easterly direction about 150 feet above the terrain and approximately 200 feet in front of their car. About the time Mrs. Bethard saw the object, it began a rapid ascent and moved away in a few seconds to the east in a circular ascent.

"The object was described by Mrs. Tilsom as being pear shaped in appearance, (to quote 'like a yellow pear shaped tomato') aluminum or silver in color, and that the object readily reflected the sunlight. The object had a port, window, door or a similar aperture, located at a point where the object began to taper toward the smaller end. One object only was seen, and it moved through the air with the small end forward. She stated the sun was shining brightly with little or no wind.

"Mrs. Tilsom stopped the car and got out and both then realized there was no noise, no sign of exhaust, no smoke, no wings were visible, nor was any visible means of propulsion observed. Mrs. Tilsom stated she could not estimate the speed of the object except that it went up rapidly in a curving angle east and in a few seconds was out of her sight. Mrs. Bethard did not get out of the car and lost sight of the object as it ascended due to her limited vision inside the car. Mrs. Tilsom was certain the object was not a balloon. She compared the size of the object,

Copied from official Air Force prints.



The four Carl Hart photos. Each picture represents a different flight of objects. Object to the upper right in each picture proves Hart did not photograph birds or moths. Also, it seems unlikely the lights were attached to an aircraft with one light so far to the right.

to the best of her knowledge, as comparable to the Matador railway freight shed or perhaps larger. The Matador freight shed was examined and measured approximately 48 feet by 18 feet."¹⁹⁹

Air Force investigators made discreet inquiries and established to their satisfaction that both women were reputable citizens with excellent character and credit reputations. Officers Fabley and Bosseat then went to the scene of the sighting and recorded their impressions:

"An examination of the location described by Mrs. Tilsom was made, and it was observed that the terrain to the west of U.S. Highway 70 is rolling land for about 10 to 12 miles (est) to a line of foothills. The land is sparsely to moderately heavily wooded by mesquite with the first 300 yards open flat terrain. The land to the east is fairly flat for approximately 20 to 30 miles, sparsely wooded and the first 1000 to 1200 yards is open terrain."²⁰⁰

A follow-up investigation by Special Agent Delzon L. Durham from Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, revealed:

"It has been reported that a road repair crew saw the same object later on the same day following the course of a small creek in the area, because of a conversation members of the highway crew held with her (Mrs. Bethard's) father. Attempts will be made by Project GRUDGE personnel to contact members of this road crew and obtain their statements."²⁰¹

Like so many leads uncovered by Air Force investigators, apparently no one tracked down and questioned the highway workers. Either that, or such information is not part of open military files.

Some years later Mrs. Tilsom was to reveal: "I was interviewed by three men from Reese Air Force Base. I was asked not to discuss this matter with anyone, not even my husband; and not to call my daughter."²⁰²

Questioned again in 1972 by a civilian investigator, Mrs. Bethard had this clarification:

"I watched it from this position for a few moments when suddenly, as if it had seen me watching and while directly over the highway, the rear section took on a brilliance comparable to the sun and within seconds it rose vertically..."²⁰³

Ruppelt was impressed by the "plover" solution to the

Lubbock Lights mystery but he did notice some apparent holes in the theory. For example, if the sky lights were reflections of birds due to the brightness of Lubbock's newly installed mercury vapor street lamps, why were the bright dots in the sky also seen at locations that did not have mercury vapor lamps in the vicinity? Ruppelt commented:

"We talked to observers in nearby towns. Their stories were the same. Two of them, tower operators at an airport, reported that they had seen the lights on several occasions."²⁰⁴

The forementioned deserves a more detailed telling. According to a story in a September 4th issue of the Avalanche:

"Big Spring's Jack Cook, manager of the municipal airport there, said he saw 35 to 40 objects traveling across the sky at 'incredible speed' estimated by at least five other observers at an excess of 1,500 mph. Altitude of the objects was judged to be at least 10,000 feet."²⁰⁵

Ruppelt was also bothered by the discovery that a witness in Lubbock had seen a "flying wing" swoop low over her house the same evening the Texas Tech professors saw a flight of "Lubbock Lights." But what was amazing was that the same night another report of a mysterious "flying wing" was made at Albuquerque, New Mexico, a fact that seemed to be more than a coincidence. The Albuquerque and Lubbock "flying wing" sightings were remarkably similar. The Lubbock witness mentioned that the "flying wing" she saw had "pairs of glowing bluish lights on the back edge of the wing."²⁰⁶ The Albuquerque report mentioned the same kind of lights in the same type of arrangement.²⁰⁷ Could it be that there was an experimental aircraft buzzing cities in Texas and New Mexico? If so, it might explain why the lights seen by the Texas Tech professors appeared at "regular intervals;" also, why the lights Carl Hart photographed were intense enough to show up on film. A person could even inject here something Ruppelt apparently overlooked. According to Air Force UFO records, more than a year before, on March 22, 1950, eleven Air Force Sergeants observed a very odd object about 25,000 feet in the air:

"...northwest of Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. Shape similar to flying wing aircraft and tan in color, turning to brown around the edges. When first observed, object was traveling in a northwesterly direction then turned north and disappeared with a tremendous burst of speed. Object left no vapor trail,

although aircraft in the vicinity were leaving vapor trails. Reliability of informants: Reliable."208

All things considered, the "flying wing" sightings were interesting but one cannot really say such sightings are part of the "real" UFO mystery. Flying wing reports were about as rare as albino crows. We should give our attention instead to the "common" flying disc type of object.

In summation, not much of the Lubbock case can be entered on the UFO ledger as very mysterious. The Matador object was mysterious and was viewed in broad daylight, but the women witnesses, although deemed reliable, had no technical training. And while the Texas Tech professors were good observers, the lights they saw streaked past too fast to be viewed carefully. Even Carl Hart's photographs leave much to be desired since they are void of detailed images and show no reference points, not even stars or clouds.

Carl Hart handed over four 35 mm negatives (plus prints) of the "Lubbock Lights" to Air Force Intelligence for examination. Lt. Ruppelt discussed the pictures with a military photographic expert we only know as "Smith" but it is asserted in official records that actual laboratory tests were conducted. On the afternoon of October 25th, the Technical Analysis Division of Air Force Intelligence set to work checking each negative with the utmost care. The results are interesting considering the different suggested explanations to the Lubbock mystery.

Were the lights attached to a "flying wing?" The examination showed that:

"There is relative movement within the formation of spots, so that they are not lights on a fixed object. The relative motion is such that it appears unlikely that they are co-planar and photographed from different angles. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the moving spots are in any kind of straight line."209

Were the lights birds or moths? The study of the frames indicated that:

"Although the image size in Frame 8 is about 2 percent less than in Frame 7, suggesting that the objects are receding from the camera, the aspect of the 'V' formation does not correspond to a horizontal 'V,' travelling parallel to the earth's surface unless at an enormous altitude. Such motion at conventional altitudes would require the 'V' to flatten, eventually becoming a straight

line, but the 'V' in Frame 8 is a slightly smaller angle than in Frame 7."210

Furthermore, if Hart's pictures were of the famous flying dots over Lubbock and were pictures of birds or moths, why was there a lone bird/moth flying to the right side and some distance behind the rest:

"There is the appearance of two extra spots, outside the regular rows. One spot is to the lower right in all three charts, while the spot shows only faintly in the No. 7 negative and was missed in plotting Chart II; it appears in position at the left end of the moving row in Chart III."211

Whatever the answer to the riddle, it will also have to account for the variation of brightness of the spots:

"According to the microscopic examination, spot brightness range could be expressed as weak, average, and bright, corresponding to faint, average, or heavy spot densities. The faint spots in the moving row are underscored, while the bright spots are circled. Only those spots in the fixed row that are alike in all three negatives are indicated in the same way."212

Also, if one would look closely, he would see that the spots showing relative motion do so in a pattern. If birds/moths were the source of the light, one assumes that any relative motion would be random.

"The secret group."

In telling about the Lubbock case, Ruppelt makes another one of those quick references to the story behind the story, a clue to the existence of an important UFO investigation effort separate from Project GRUDGE and having a 'semi-official' status. The UFO historian is driven crazy by Ruppelt's teasing. Ponder the following paragraphs:

"The only other people outside Project Blue Book [the successor to Grudge] who have studied the complete case of the Lubbock Lights were a group who, due to their associations with the government, had complete access to our files. And these people were not pulp writers or wide-eyed fanatics, they were scientists--rocket experts, nuclear physicists, and intelligence experts. They had banded together to study our UFO reports because they were convinced that some of the UFO's that were being reported were interplanetary spaceships and the Lubbock

series was one of these reports. The fact that the formations of lights were in different shapes didn't bother them; in fact, it convinced them all the more that their ideas of how a spaceship might operate was correct.

"This group of scientists believed that the spaceships, or at least the part of the spaceship that came relatively close to the earth, would have a highly swept-back wing configuration. And they believed that for propulsion and control the craft had a series of small jets orifices all around its edge. Various combinations of these small jets would be turned on to get various flight attitudes. The lights that the various observers saw differed in arrangement because the craft was flying in different flight attitudes."²¹³

UFO's, the mystery continues.

A scan of just one medium size newspaper turned up the next case so it is assumed that a massive survey of the nation's press would probably result in the discovery of many more.

Richmond "rocket."

On September 19th, something slowly came in over the waters of the bay west of Richmond, California, leaving a misty wake that occasionally became fiery. The slow moving thing was variously described as "globular," "cigar or pencil-shaped," by Richmond residents'. Dozens of calls were made to the police department.²¹⁴

"Must-A-Been"

A heavenly wingding caused a hoopla at Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 19th. A reporter for the Santa Fe New Mexican declared that if flying saucers did not exist then its cousin, a "Must-A-Been," visited New Mexico's capital city's airport the previous evening. Barreling in at 30 degrees above the horizon, a point of light streaked to a point southwest of the field, and then it vaulted straight up to an enormous height where it hovered for a time. The meteoric plunge was heralded by a loud noise, so the manager of the airport flipped on the runway lights under the mistaken impression a jet aircraft wanted to land.

Dr. Lincoln La Paz, the famous meteor authority, told the press that the flight path of the object did not correspond to the usual meteor behavior (an understatement to be sure). As the New Mexican dared to say: "It 'must have-a-been' something."²¹⁵

One might tend to dismiss the next account since the witnesses were three teenagers: Robert Daniel, 15; Frank Walker, 15; and Peter Simmons, 17; but anyone familiar with reported UFO sightings would recognize that the boys' account compares well with many other such stories. The youths viewed the object from a position atop a 50 foot silo located on the grounds of the Woodberry Forest School, an institution near Orange, Virginia. The date and time was: September 30, 1951, at about 3:00 p.m.

The object the boys claimed to have seen moved around above a small mountain some nine miles away never straying more than a mile from the peak. An Air Intelligence Information Report on the case states:

"When seen clearly, the object was circular, whether like a plate or like a ball couldn't be told. We think it was probably flat because at times only a thin line, sometimes horizontal, sometimes vertical, could be seen. It was at all times surrounded by a haze of brownish-black smoke. When it moved the haze trailed behind.

"When it moved, its movements were violent and it traveled at a high speed, stopped suddenly when it did stop, at times became very hard to see. Although no sound was heard, a person would have heard even a piston-engined plane at the distance it seemed to be from us. No plane could have done the maneuvers it did at the speed at which it seemed to be traveling." 216

A French outpost deep in the Sahara in a region that was once known as French West Africa, Tessalit oasis to be exact, was host to a "UFO manifestation" early October 4th. A group of French Air Force personnel were sleeping in the open:

"I woke at 2 a.m.," says one of the officers, "and could not get to sleep again. It was a dark night, the stars were very bright and the air was quite still. Suddenly I saw a light coming from the east and travelling fast due west, or approximately due west. It was descending. I thought it might be the landing light of some aircraft coming in. I roused the men. But not a sound could be heard. It was not a plane. A few seconds later the shape of the object could be made out quite clearly. It was almost circular, with an apparent diameter of about 10 centimeters. In color it was dark yellow, almost orange. It continued to draw nearer, coming down slowly, at about the night landing speed of a DC-3. When it was immediately over the

village of Tessalit, about 6 kilometers south-east of where we were, it made a more than 90 degree turn to the left, which meant nearly 170-180 degrees at the nose. Then it accelerated in breathtaking fashion, climbed at an amazing speed, and its apparent diameter diminished in size until it disappeared."217

"Unbelievable but true."

A pilot named Charles Warren was flying his private plane over Paris, Illinois, on October 9, 1951, when he spotted a strange "flattened object," a thing resembling a huge squashed orange. Warren's wristwatch showed 1:45 p.m. So far his flight had been uneventful so he changed heading to investigate the strange stationary object. As soon as Mr. Warren made an attempt to get nearer, the object zoomed out of sight.218

On the ground at Hulman Municipal Airport, Terra Haute, Indiana, a CAA employee was astonished by the passage of a UFO at about the same time as Mr. Warren's encounter. The CAA employee said that a "flattened tennis ball-like" object had zoomed overhead, a bright silver in color.219

The CAA men told a story that went like this:

"About 1:43 p.m., CAA Airways Operations Specialist R. L. Meffmor noticed an unusual object approaching from the SE, and quickly called another witness, C. W. Sonner, Chief of Interstate Airways Communication Station, ran outside to watch. 'I have been working at airports for 16 years,' Sonner said, 'and never before have I seen an aircraft like it.' The flattened round object sped overhead, disappearing to the NW after 15 seconds. Using the angle of sighting, Meffmor and Sonner calculated that the UFO was travelling at 2,880 mph, assuming it was at treetop level; 18,000 mph if at 3,000 feet; etc."220

Meffmore snapped to the press: "I've always been skeptical about all stories concerning flying saucers and other such objects, but today's sight changed my mind."221

CAA officer Sonner added: "It's unbelievable, but true."222

This UFO activity came to the attention of Ruppelt, and as the new head of project GRUDGE, he had to do his homework. He read up on daylight meteors, a weak possibility to explain the object sighted over Illinois and Indiana; and then had to endure the drudgery of running a check on all balloon

launches in the region. Bent over his desk for hours, Ruppelt plotted and calculated using a series of aeronautical charts. The balloon answer seemed the best bet but he drew a blank. Balloons, as a miracle cure for the UFO headache, were proving a poor pallative.²²³

The deflation of the balloon theory progressed much further with the publication of a certain story in the New York Times.²²⁴ The Aeronautical Research Laboratory of General Mills, Inc., based in Minnesota, sent up giant balloons on a regular schedule and on October 10th a big experimental balloon rose to an altitude high over St. Croix, Wisconsin. Flying a small chase plane was the aeronautical research laboratory's supervisor of balloon manufacturing, J. J. Kaliszewski, and with him was another balloon expert, a Mr. J. Donahue.

As the plane reached 6,000 feet in its climb toward the balloon, Kaliszewski and Reilly spotted a strange object coming out of the heavens from the east in a slight dive. Since the UFO was near the balloon, a comparison was made and the two experts guessed that the mysterious intruder was about one quarter the size of the plastic giant.

Crossing behind the balloon, the object pulled out of its shallow descent, levelled off, and then executed an abrupt left turn, after which it zoomed toward the zenith with terrific speed at a 50 degree angle.

The object, which had an odd glow about it, was observed for two minutes as it passed across 40 degrees of the sky. Kaliszewski testified: "We saw no vapor trail and from past experience I know that this object was not a balloon, jet, conventional aircraft or celestial star."²²⁵

The following afternoon during another balloon launch, Kaliszewski was again in a chase plane, this time he had a Mr. Richard Reilly as a fellow observer:

"Richard Reilly and I were flying at 10,000 feet observing the grab bag balloon when I saw a brightly glowing object to the S.E. of U. of M. airport. At that time we were a few miles north of Minneapolis and heading east. I pointed it out to Dick and we both made the following observation:

"The object was moving from east to west at a high rate and very high. We tried keeping the ship on a constant course and using reinforcing member of the windshield as a point. The object moved past this member at about 50 degrees per second.

"This object was peculiar in that it had what can be described as a halo around it with a dark undersurface. It crossed rapidly and then slowed down and started to climb in lazy circles slowly. The pattern it made was like a falling oak leaf inverted. It went through these gyrations for a couple minutes and then with a very rapid acceleration disappeared to the east. This object, Dick and I watched for approximately five minutes.

"I don't know how to describe its size, because at the time I didn't have the balloon in sight for a comparison.

"Shortly after this we saw another one, but this one didn't hang around. It approached from the west and disappeared to the east, neither one leaving any trace of a vapor trail.

"When I saw the second one I called our tracking station at the U. of M. Airport and the observers there on the theodolite managed to get glimpses of a number of them, but couldn't keep the theodolite going fast enough to keep them in the field of their instruments, both Doug Smith and Dick Dorian caught glimpses of these objects in the theodolite after I notified them of their presence by radio."226

The balloon experts again ruled out an aircraft, a star, and especially a balloon, as the explanation for the sighting. Ground tracking personnel, D. Smith and R. Doria, collaborated the account:

"The object was visible in the theodolite for little under two seconds and appeared to be smoky gray (no halo or glow was noticed), cigar shaped, left no vapor trail and gave off no reflection such as sun reflected by metal...[and] that during their period of visual observation they saw two more like objects which finally formed in straight pattern after the first and all departed at same time."227

"Out like a light."

A strange object was seen hanging in air at 8:45 in the morning over Neubiburg Air Base, Neubiburg, Germany, October 11, 1951, by two enlisted men, Sergeant Robert L. Vice and T/Sgt. Carl E. Lucas. The thing was "strange-looking," appearing like a blimp or dirigible with a dark triangular spot at one end. It was guessed that the object was at about 20,000 feet. After staring at the object for about 30 seconds, Sergeant Lucas turned to Sergeant Vice and said: "Damned if I know what it is, you keep your eye on it and I'll get

Sgt. Warnke." Some 10 seconds later the UFO disappeared abruptly. Sgt. Vice said the vanishment was just like a light going out.

The report from Hq, USAFE, ATI Branch, West Zone of Germany, to Washington mentioned:

"From time to time this office receives information similar to that presented in this report. It is requested that the Analysis Division of the Air Technical Intelligence Center, Dayton, Ohio, advise this office whether to continue to send back reports of this nature."²²⁸

The Day the Earth Stood Still.

In Hollywood the film classic The Day the Earth Stood Still was being produced by Robert Wise with the brilliant actor Michael Rennie heading the cast, a movie that would receive rave reviews for its superlative direction, special effects, and intelligence script in spite of its fantastic plot of a flying saucer landing in Washington D.C.

Julian Blaustein at Twentieth Century-Fox had persuaded studio chief Darryl Zanuck to buy the rights to Harry Bate's novel, 'Farewell to the Master' and have it adapted to the screen because of building interest in flying saucers by the public.²²⁹

The filming moved ahead to completion utilizing actual troops from the regular Army and a local National Guard unit, evidently due to Zanuck's excellent connections with the military, unlike all the trouble the producer of the Thing had with the Pentagon. But then the Zanuck film had more class and a peaceful theme, although decades later in 1976 when Steven Spielberg filmed Close Encounters of the Third Kind (which also had class and a peaceful theme), the Pentagon refused Spielberg cooperation because, in its words, participation of the military was "silly" and even "counter-productive."²³⁰

"I Flew in a Flying Saucer."

At this period of time a story appeared in the science fiction pulp Other Worlds Science Stories titled "I Flew in a Flying Saucer." The yarn was written by fantasy publisher Ray Palmer as told to him by a mysterious "Captain A.V.G." and was supposed to have been based on "part fiction and part fact."²³¹ The "George Adamski" threat to UFO research was ripening. A big push for the "George Adamski" phenomenon would be another huge UFO flap but such excitement was some months off; meanwhile, in keeping with the "pattern," the UFO's had moved their activities too far north to bother Americans much. There were a few reports being made in the

northern half of the U.S. and some in Canada, but other than that things were quiet.

Of the Canadian activity, we know that on October 18th something was seen in the sky that looked like: "...three stars together."²³² And some time during the Fall, the exact date is not available, three Canadians spotted a UFO in broad daylight. The UFO appeared over Lake Nipissing in Ontario and according to the North Bay Daily Nugget each one of the three witnesses sighted the UFO independently from a different shore. The Nugget printed: "...their report of the time of the sighting, the appearance of the 'silver, round-shaped star' and the strange maneuvers it made, checked and double-checked."²³³

For the main story of this span of time, however, we must return to what was taking place back at ATIC, Wright Field, Ohio.

At Wright Field, Ruppelt and an aide, Lt. Metscher, sorted through four filing cabinet drawers filled with UFO report forms, letters, and memos, which they had scooped out of storage bins where the material had been dumped back in February 1949. Ruppelt had a big job ahead of him just trying to get his records in order.²³⁴

The "New Project GRUDGE."

A milestone of a kind could have been the date of October 27th. On that day old Project GRUDGE, an effort that left most of the work to local military commanders, was eliminated and officially* replaced by a revitalized program. By the 27th all the paperwork had been signed, sealed, and delivered with spanking new pledges of objectivity and diligence. Ruppelt, now the sultan of the saucers, gave the boot to three of his underlings for having adopted a mental bias about the existence of UFO's. (Recalling to mind the purge that originally brought Project GRUDGE into existence. Slipping into a definite posture on the UFO subject had been a bad habit that dated back to Project SIGN.)²³⁵

A cardinal rule of the new UFO investigation made the "sorting of data" paramount. The "good unknowns" were to be filed separately as they came in and only later given intense scrutiny. Ruppelt was happy with this arrangement although from a critics' point of view it had a glaring weakness. A UFO case being selected for review could be plucked out of the pack by mere whim or spite, thus the UFO mystery could be reduced to just a few reports of debatable quality.²³⁶

*This revitalization was much more official than some preliminary changes made in July.

Responsibility for evaluation and investigating UFO reports took on a more narrowed form with no more local military Commanders making unauthorized statements or otherwise popping off. This tightening of the ship would prove its worth when Ruppelt had to ride out the storms that were gathering their furies beyond the horizon.

October 21st.

"I'm through laughing since this experience."

He had been flying aircraft for 14 years. Two or three times a week he piloted a small plane, often encountering jet aircraft and weather balloons, but something happened to him while he was flying near Battle Creek, Michigan, and now, four hours later, he was a shaken man. After landing at Austin Lake Field, Michigan, where he was well known to the Airport Manager, he tried to calm his nerves. In the four hours it took for Air Force Intelligence agents to arrive the pilot remained very upset, something the military investigators noted. The Air Force agents asked the Airport Manager if the pilot was easily disturbed, but the Manager replied that usually the fellow was solid as a rock. After questioning the pilot the military investigators agreed that the pilot was a stable type of person and not a kook. The interviewing officers took down the following remarks:

"He stated that in the past, he has often laughed at reports of strange flying objects, but is 'through laughing since this experience.' Mr. Manteris was reluctant to tell his story 'for fear people will think I have lost my marbles,' however, he did tell his story in an oriented manner with frequent qualifications as to the accuracy of his facts. He was particularly impressed with the extremely high polish of the silver colored object and stated that in his estimation, no aluminum surface could ever be polished to such a high brilliance."²³⁷

The incident itself was as follows:

"Mr. Manteris, proprietor of the restaurant at Detroit City Airport, was piloting a Navion aircraft, number N-91424, on a heading of approximately 265 degrees, approximately seventeen miles due east of Battle Creek, Michigan at 4,000 feet indicated altitude, and 135 mph indicated air speed. At 21/1625 Z October 1951, Mr. Manteris observed an object straight ahead of him apparently flying directly at him at 'tremendous' speed. The object first attracted his attention because of the sun's reflection on an extremely highly

polished surface. The sun at that time was coming from behind the observer. Weather in the vicinity was unlimited overhead but a haze below 4,000 feet restricted visibility to eight miles. Mr. Manteris' first thought, as the object approached, was that a collision was inevitable, but before he could take any action to avoid the object, he realized that the object would pass below him, as it did at an estimated distance of 1,000 feet. While the object was far enough in front of him to get a nearly head on view, it appeared to have a dome shaped center on top with sloping sides, and oval-shaped underside. As it passed out of sight under the Navion's nose, it appeared to be perfectly round when seen from above. Mr. Manteris sketched the object as it appeared from slightly above head on, and also as it appeared from nearly plan [sic] view below him.

"Mr. Manteris noted no exhaust, vapor trails or sound during the sighting which lasted possibly three to five seconds. The object was unpainted metal of some sort, Mr. Manteris believes, and no holes, vents, or means of propulsion were observed. As the object passed out of sight beneath him, Mr. Manteris immediately orbited once on course, but was unable to see the object again. A passenger, Mr. --- (deleted) was studying a map at the time of the sighting and observed nothing of the object. Mr. Manteris then unsuccessfully attempted contact with Battle Creek radio after which he proceeded to Austin Lake Airport where he landed at approximately 21/1700Z October 1951 and made report of the sighting to the State Police at Paw Paw, Michigan, reported the incident to CAA. CAA reported the incident to the 30th Air Division ADCC at 1750Z."²³⁸

Even as late as October 26th an occasional UFO incident was listed in Australia. On the 26th:

"...in Australia, at 4:00 a.m., the engineer of a transcontinental train on the east-west line was surprised to see the track brilliantly illuminated by an object that came close to the train, seemed to examine it closely and even gave the impression it was going to land in the desert, but took off and disappeared."²³⁹

GRUDGE revitalizations.

With new life pumped into GRUDGE, UFO reports on file dated as far back as Project SIGN were re-examined. A cross-indexing and tabulation effort was begun; listing size, color, location, etc., to create a useful data bank. It

was hoped some general characteristics would become apparent. Also, contact with other agencies was planned so as to alert them to the renewed emphasis placed on gaining an understanding of the UFO mystery, since the last directive from Project GRUDGE dealing with the reporting of such incidents was dated September 1950.

It was noted that sometimes as long as two months elapsed before a report reached ATIC at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and due to budgetary restraints, military investigators' activities were strictly limited even if they did get an early start.

Without alluding to the possibility they had only themselves to blame, ATIC admitted:

"It is believed that the general feeling in some instances is that the Air Force is not too interested in this project and reporting such incidents is unimportant. It is the opinion of ATIC that regardless of personal beliefs as to the origin of the objects, the task of determining, if possible, what these objects are has been assigned, and should be carried out."²⁴⁰

The circulation of a directive requesting that all military Commands comply with the requirements of Project GRUDGE and the direct forwarding of UFO reports to Wright Field, was issued on October 25th.²⁴¹

ATIC even anticipated some resistance:

"If, after the above mentioned letter is circulated, the situation does not improve, it may be advisable to circulate another memorandum explaining why the Air Force is interested in this problem and how reports are to be made."²⁴²

ATIC asked itself a big, big question; one that could explain the use of the Air Force as a "front" for a more secretive effort by another agency as charged by the military's critics:

"Another problem that has not been fully investigated is whether or not wide spread publicity to the project should be given in an attempt to obtain a more complete coverage of incidents. It is believed that more reports would increase the workload a considerable amount."²⁴³

The role of the Air Force OSI in the UFO investigation was explained in a teletype report from Lt. Ruppelt to Colonel Willis dated October 31, 1951:

"In regard to policy, ATIC understood the policy was for ATIC to contact OSI districts direct and request further information on sightings. ATIC does not contact OSI on all sightings, only those that appear to be important. We realize OSI has other duties. They have been very cooperative and helpful in the past."²⁴⁴

The OSI records have been very valuable to the UFO historian since UFO information kept in Air Force Intelligence files at Wright Field in the care of the different UFO projects: SIGN, GRUDGE, and BLUE BOOK, suffered from neglect and are not totally complete. OSI records contain considerable UFO information not found in any other files.

The CIA.

While we are on the subject of organizations other than ATIC, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, a report from the Sixth Naval District, Charleston, South Carolina, to the Air Defense Command, Colorado Springs, Colorado, is interesting. The text consists of only two lines: "CIRVIS AMPLFVING REPORT QUOTE 1838M AT 1842 REPORT FIVE OBJECT MOVING SOUTH 23 MILES EAST BIMINI STILL TRAILING SMOKE." This November 1951 message has a dark, thick scribble in the upper right hand corner that states: This msg passed by electrical means to CIA."²⁴⁵ This is one of the few, very few, indications in Air Force files that American's super-secret spy group was taking an interest in "unidentified flying objects." With the CIA involved it was a whole new ball game in regards to secrecy and intrigue.

The Air Defense Command figures in the next item of interest. One might suggest that it stands to reason that if a strong suspicion arose in 1951 that "foreign aircraft" were intruding into American airspace, the Air Defense Command would play a role.

The official record states:

"Lt. Ruppelt of ATIAA-2 visited the Office of the Deputy for Intelligence at Air Defense Command Headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on 5 November 1951. The object of the visit was to coordinate work on the investigations of sightings of unconventional aircraft. ADC has no program for investigating such sightings, however, they are very much interested in the investigations conducted by ATIC and wish to cooperate to the fullest extent. They suggested that ATIC prepare a letter outlining what steps should be taken in reporting sightings and this has been done."²⁴⁶

Leaving Colorado Springs, Ruppelt flew to Texas, arriving on November 6th at Reese Air Force Base, just outside the city of Lubbock where OSI agent Howard N. Bossert met the new chief of Project GRUDGE as he deplaned. Lt. Ruppelt was to stay in the area for three days discussing the "Lubbock Lights" with the principle witnesses. Agent Bossert tells us:

"[The Texas Tech professors] ... dropped their investigation by the time Lt. Ruppelt arrived because they had come to the conclusion that the object was some kind of a new weapon belonging to the U.S. and that they would only be prying into something that was none of their business. They also reasoned that if such an aircraft was far enough along to be flight tested they would probably hear something about it soon anyway. It is very apparent that their interest is again aroused and that they will attempt more research on the incident.

"They are rather firmly convinced that the object is not a flock of birds. This is due to the great speed at which they travel. If the birds did have an apparently great speed, they would have to be very low. The lights these people saw gave the appearance of being very high, except for "Heineman's Horror." Another doubtful point is the nearly perfect geometric pattern of the first two formations. Birds could not do that. The men did state that now that they know that the Air Force is interested, they will thoroughly discuss the possibility of birds in hopes that it is birds or some other such thing that can be explained. It is apparent that they were concerned when they found out it wasn't an Air Force project, which they had assumed when no Air Force personnel came to investigate the incident.

"The professors were asked why they and their friends were the only ones who had seen so many while most people only saw them on one or two nights just after the newspaper articles came out. They said that they had thought of that and their explanation was that the other people had lost interest. They and their friends were interested in the object and continued to look for them. They stressed the fact that they were not readily apparent unless you were looking for them."²⁴⁷

Another person interrogated was Mr. Harris, editor of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal:

"He stated he purposely played down the articles because he felt that the object was possibly some Air Force project, he was more sure when the AF did not investigate.

"He believes the people who saw this object were not seeing birds. Some people did see birds because there was some bird flight activity in the area. His observation on a great many reports was that the people who saw ducks knew they were ducks because they could see them. The people who saw V lights knew they couldn't be ducks. At least one experienced duck hunter who saw them threw out the duck idea. Therefore, his idea was that a lot of people were conscious of the lights, were looking, and saw ducks and knew they were ducks. Others saw the real thing and knew they weren't ducks.

"Harris' statement on Hart was that he has seen a lot of fakes in his time and if Hart is a fake he is the best in the business and wasting his time in college.

"In answer to a query about sightings in areas without a large concentration of lights such as larger cities, Mr. Harris stated that they had received calls from many people in small towns and in the country. All reports were about the same as those reported in the newspapers."248

Officer Bossart's report reads:

"Several characteristics of the object [The Air Force file very often referred to the Lubbock Lights as the 'object.'] have been noticed by the observers. The lights always appear at about 50 degrees in the S or SW. They never gradually come into view or gradually disappear. Its 'Span angle' from the ground was about 7 degrees -8 degrees. They follow a rough schedule beginning about 2120 and appearing every hour and 10 minutes until three flights pass overhead. The men [the professors] have attempted to determine whether or not there is any form between the lights by trying to observe stars between the lights. They have been unsuccessful however due to the great speed of the object. Once they thought they observed stars between the objects, but could not be sure.

"The group is confident of the angular velocity of the object of 30 degrees/second from measurements of several flights. Stop watches and protractors were used to measure time and angles. Several attempts have been made to measure the altitude. On only one occasion has there been any clouds and these were widely

scattered. The objects appeared but did not pass close enough to a cloud to obtain a relative altitude."²⁴⁹

The Project GRUDGE delegation consisted of Lt. Ruppelt of ATIC, as well as Captain Parker and Lt. Farely of Wing Intelligence at Reese Air Force Base. For some of the interviews, Lt. Ruppelt was accompanied by only Lt. H. N. Bossart of the Reese Air Force Base OSI detachment.

When Lt. Ruppelt questioned Carl Hart, he asked the youth to go into great detail about the taking of the "Lubbock Lights" pictures. This Hart did with confidence, describing his movements, lens settings, etc. Lt. Ruppelt, a photographer himself for 14 years, found the account logical, a story that could not be picked apart. When asked about the brilliance of the "lights," Hart said they appeared equal: "...to Venus in the early evening."²⁵⁰ If Hart was right, then the "lights" were indeed bright enough to show up in a photograph.

One of the last stops was to see the local Federal Wildlife Game Warden for a briefing on "Plovers," the suggested answer to the Lubbock riddle:

"It was determined that there are several kinds of Plover. Several types have white breasts and are found in West Texas. The bird is about 8 inches long and has a wing span of about one foot. It will fly at night and in groups but the groups are usually not larger than 5 or 6 birds. They are known to migrate south from late August til the middle of November. Also they have been seen in the Lubbock locality recently although not in great numbers. They fly at about 1000 feet or lower at a maximum of 50 mph.

"The game warden had not read the articles about the 'objects' in the paper so was unfamiliar with the description of the objects, but tended to doubt if they were Plover. He added that they might be ducks but not geese because geese continually 'honk' as they fly over populated areas."²⁵¹

The "green meteors" return:

"On November 2, 1951, an American Airlines DC-4 had been flying from Los Angeles to Tulsa by way of Dallas. At 7:15 a.m. the airliner was cruising east of Abilene on Airway G-5. The altimeter read 4,500 feet.

"Suddenly a bright green object streaked past the airliner at the same altitude and holding the same course. As nearly as the crew could judge, the projectile-shaped device was about the

size of their plane. As it raced ahead, the pilots saw a white trail, which they took to be exhaust vapor. The DC was cruising at 220 miles an hour, and it was only a matter of seconds before the strange green fireball had pulled ahead. Then, to the crew's amazement, the strange missile exploded, shooting red balls of fire in all directions."²⁵²

As a rule such reports are explained as an illusion, the meteor actually far away and very high, but with the "green" meteors one can never be sure.

A paroxysm of light.

A week later, on November 7th, a kelly-green luminosity hurdled eastward over Arizona zooming parallel to the ground and strangely mute in spite of its violent appearance and shattering disintegration at the terminus of its flight.²⁵³

On November 8th two objects in silent parallel flight hit the earth near Cloverdale, New Mexico. Two mushroom shaped clouds were sighted. Shrugging his shoulders, meteor authority Lincoln La Paz was ready to make inquiries at White Sands about missile tests, but a spokesman there headed off such questions by denying any rocket launches on the date the objects were reported.²⁵⁴

Alarmed by seven major calibre meteors in a mere eleven days, Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Director of the Institute of Meteorities at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, announced that the swarm was: "...the most remarkable concentration of meteorite objects reported in historic times."²⁵⁵

Another one of those routine news stories. Place: Dowagiac, Michigan. Date: 17 November 1951:

"Two residents here reported seeing a flying saucer this week. They are Mrs. Guy Piper and neighbor Lee Jones, whom she called after seeing the disk-shaped object in the sky. It was a bright, silver colored disk, moving at a high rate of speed into a gale which apparently had no effect on the object, the two reported."²⁵⁶

Every UFO report on file underwent a review by ATIC by late November so Ruppelt felt confident enough to approach nine scientific consultants to ask about UFO's and the potential value of a new investigative project. Ruppelt was taken aback when the six became very excited about the "new project GRUDGE," saying they felt that in the past the Air Force had been content to "goof off." A change was considered a good move.²⁵⁷

During the Winter of 1951, there was a continuous stream of scientific visitors to ATIC. Ruppelt noted that nearly every expert that stopped in to check on GRUDGE applauded the re-establishment of the project.²⁵⁸

"Is this a flying saucer?"

One of the clearest UFO photos ever taken turned up in the press on November 23, 1951, a picture distributed to the news services by Acme Telephoto. A certain Guy B. Marquand, Jr. told the Los Angeles press he had taken the picture when he spotted a strange flying object near Riverside, California. According to the news story, the object flew by at high speed; and Marquand, surprised at first, quickly readied his camera and got a picture when the object came back into view. Occasionally the Marquand photo appears in UFO books but usually without comment. When the picture first appeared, the press asked: "Is this a flying saucer?" Many may have thought so, but on March 24, 1952 Air Force investigators finally got around to having a talk with Marquand and learned that the picture was a "phony," that it: "...originally started as a gag and mushroomed beyond his control. He told investigators the object in the photograph was a tire cover from a 1937 Ford automobile* and was buried at the site where the photograph was taken."²⁵⁹

The "flying wing" again!

Reports of a flying wing-type UFO are rare and on that basis alone perhaps they can be ignored, but when one remembers the two reports of "flying wings" during the Lubbock Lights excitement, and when in November another such sighting was made, the subject of "flying wings" takes on more interest.

Some 40 miles southwest of Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S. Air Force aircraft encountered a "strange object." Here is the original report as expressed in military jargon:

"While flying CAP south of MPLS under GCI Control, Flight of 2 F-51's, Subusy Red 'A', at FJM 1720 at 215 degrees 24 November 1951 saw a small white object, shape same as Northrop Flying Wing, color milky white, approximately 8 foot wing span. Heading of object East--level flight--appeared to be hanging in the air. Altitude 25,000 ft. 51 Flight was heading West. Weather CAVS, vis. approximately 50 miles at 25,000 ft. Wingman

*The tire cover looks a lot like Adamski's "scout ship." Could it be Adamski was inspired by the picture?

did not see object. GCI controller had nothing other than the 51's on the scope. Object passed approximately 100 ft. over and 10 ft. to left of flight leader. Wingman on left wing."260

TWINKLE's end.

Project TWINKLE's final report, authored by L. Elterman, was approved by P. H. Wyckoff, Chief, Atmospheric Physics Laboratory, on November 27th.

The following are the conclusions of the Geophysics Research Division and Project TWINKLE:

"...the over-all picture obtained from the year of vigilance and inquiry does not permit a conclusive opinion concerning the aerial phenomena of interest. The comparatively high incidence of the phenomena since 1948 does not necessarily indicate that the objects are man-made. It is conceivable that the earth may be passing through a region in space of high meteoric population. Also, the sun-spot maxima in 1948 perhaps in some way may be a contributing factor."261

Under "recommendations" it was stated:

"Since the findings to date cannot be considered conclusive, it appears that the following recommendations would be pertinent:

"(1) No further fiscal expenditure be made in pursuing the problem. This opinion is prompted partly by the fruitless expenditure during the past year, the uncertainty of existence of unexplainable aerial objects, and by the inactive position currently taken by Holloman Air Force Base as indicated by the 'stand-by status' of the project. The arrangements by HAFB for continued vigilance by Land-Air, the weather station as well as the briefing of pilots on the problem in part relieves the need for a systematic instrumentation program.

"(2) Within the next few months, Dr. Whipple will have completed the installation of two 18-inch Schmidt cameras for meteor studies. The cameras will be stationed about 20 miles apart in the vicinity of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Since these studies will be sponsored by the GRD, arrangements can be made for examining the film for evidence of aerial object phenomena."

/s/ Louis Elterman
 Project Scientist
 Atmospheric Physics Laboratory
 Geophysics Research Division"262

This loss of the TWINKLE effort should have been offset by the new life injected into Project GRUDGE, and a promising start was the first of a series of special UFO investigation status reports compiled by Lt. Ruppelt and his staff.

The Status Reports consisted of a monthly summary of incidents, and in the case of the first report it included UFO data from the period between October 22nd to November 30, 1951. Furthermore, investigations in progress or pending during the same time period were discussed in the report.

Not every UFO sighting would be accorded attention. The guideline given went:

"Due to the huge task of investigating all reported incidents, it will be the policy of Project Grudge to concentrate on those incidents that appear to have originated from high grade sources, such as pilots, technically trained people, etc. The only exception to this will be where a number of sightings occur in a certain area at about the same time. All reports, however, will be incorporated in the file for statistical purposes."263

Aside from the Status Reports there would be "Special Reports." This is how they were defined:

"In certain instances special detailed reports will be written on the conclusions of the investigations of sightings. These will be in compliance with requests from higher headquarters for such reports. The conclusions of all other incidents will be concluded in the status reports."264

Project "BEAR."

Since the planned reports were to be little more than straight investigative accounts from agents in the field, ATIC approached a renowned midwest laboratory, the Battelle Memorial Institute, to supply various experts on a sub-contract basis. The work was to be confidential with the identity of Battelle hidden by a codename. Ruppelt used the word "BEAR" but official records disclose the actual code-word "STORK."

Battelle accepted the challenge and was given two assignments at the outset: 1) Develop a new interrogation form to use when questioning UFO witnesses, 2) Conduct a statistical examination of UFO reports on file with Air Force Intelligence. In reference to the last point, Ruppelt reveals that Air Force Intelligence had 650 reports for Battelle to encode on IBM cards. Ruppelt and Colonel S. H. Kirtland, who had assisted the new chief of GRUDGE in negotiations with Battelle, felt that a data bank of UFO information might speed the explanation processing of unknowns. It would seem that Ruppelt was only trying to debunk the UFO "hysteria" in a more convincing fashion instead of showing an interest in determining the possible statistical profile of flying objects of high strangeness. Did Ruppelt feel a real mystery existed?²⁶⁵

Still another "thing" over Oak Ridge.

A security guard, with seven years experience on the job, was 45 minutes into his shift on watch a top Tower #14 west of Gaseous Diffusion Plant K-25. It was 8:15 in the morning of December 7, 1951. North/Northwest of the Tower about a mile was a low ridge. At 8:15 a.m., the guard sighted a weird object in the air above the ridge. According to official records:

"Object sighted was square and approximately twenty feet wide. Color, between a white and gray. No markings, protrusions, ridges, etc. Object looked smooth, but wasn't shiny. Resembled a square piece of canvas."²⁶⁶

When first seen the object was about 300 feet in the air over the ridge:

"Object was rising straight up into the air and went to the base of the cloud layer. It then started back down (straight) until it was approximately 300 feet from the ridge again. The object then started back up at about a 45 degree angle to the left and went into the clouds. Object came out of the clouds and straight down to approximately 300 feet of the ridge again. It then started to make a circle rising slowly during this maneuver and then went up into the clouds at about a 20 degree angle disappearing completely into the clouds. No further sighting of the object was made. Total time of observation was two minutes."²⁶⁷

The witness reported that the object moved both with the wind and against the wind. Speed was said to have been constant at all times.

The Oak Ridge Security Section sent out search teams but they returned with nothing to report. Two F-47's that were on Combat Air Patrol over Oak Ridge were called in too late to help in the investigation.²⁶⁸ What the "thing" could have been, if it was accurately observed, was anyone's guess. It was enough to stump the most knowledgeable UFO expert and certainly on par with the oddest UFO stories ever told.

Sometimes it seemed as if Air Force Intelligence at Wright Field was last to know when something happened in the sky. Consider the following exchanges.

Project GRUDGE contacted the Commanding Officer, 30th Air Division, Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, on December 4, 1951, and stated:

"Newspapers have requested information on an incident that supposedly took place in Michigan within the last six weeks. Details furnished by newspapers were, quote, an F-86 attempted unsuccessfully to intercept a saucer-shaped object and/or object shaped like B-36 fuselage, but object, which was below the altitude of the F-86, was too fast, unquote. Do you have any information on such an incident? This center has none. Immediate reply requested. 'In reply cite Project Grudge.'"²⁶⁹

The reply from Selfridge cannot be found in Project GRUDGE files but another document dated December 21st indicates that Lt. Ruppelt's team was still desperate for information. Lt. Colonel Parrot of the Aircraft and Propulsion Section, Technical Analysis Division, suggested an unusual course of action and contacted Colonel Dunn, Chief of ATIC, about the scheme:

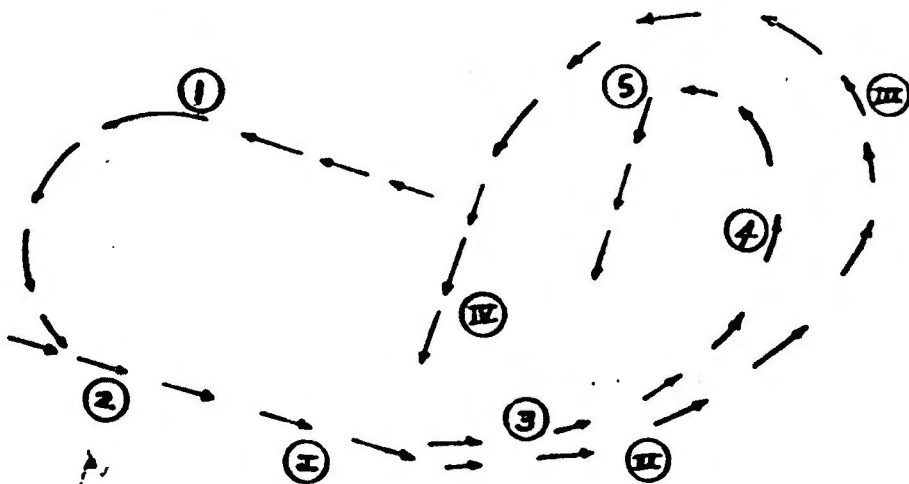
"Reference is made to a Project Grudge incident in southern Michigan on 24 November 1951 at which time an airline pilot, tower operators, and several airmen sighted an unidentified object in widely separated locations.

"In an attempt to obtain a more complete coverage of other possible sightings, it is proposed that the enclosed letter be sent to approximately twelve newspapers in southern Michigan.

"Since this entails corresponding with newspapers about a subject that could possibly cause some inquiry from the newspapers, it is requested that sending of the letters and the content of the letters be concurred upon.

"The PIO of AMC will also be requested to concur on this proposal."²⁷⁰

December 12, 1951



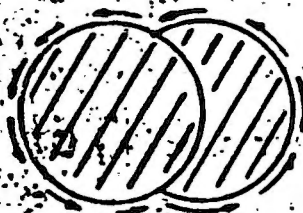
Numbers - A/C
Roman Numerals - Object

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(5) The object or objects gained speed from points (3) - (II) at a very rapid rate, and took on the appearance of a single object, and then gained speed very rapidly leaving point (II) and approaching point (III). Rotational effect appeared to be in a counter-clockwise direction at all times.

(6) Pilot when approaching point (4) started to turn with object at about a 270° left turn, the object picking up speed at all times. At point (4) - (III) the pilot had an estimated speed of about 280 mph. The pilot assumes the speed of the object at this point was about 380 or 400 mph.

(7) The pilot started to straighten out then snap back into position at point (5) when pilot went back into turn he lost sight of object at point (IV).

APPROVED:

[Signature]

[Signature]
GERHARD P. KASER
Major, USAF
Intelligence Officer

Colonel Dunn killed the idea:

"Because of other plans for obtaining better information concerning Project Grudge incidents, it is considered inadvisable to attempt the suggestion..."²⁷¹

"Spinning discs."

When Captain Donald K. Slayton turned toward a strange white object, he thought at first he was closing with some sort of kite. Piloting a speedy prop-driven F-51, Captain Slayton of the 133 Fighter-Interceptor Wing, was on a short test flight in the skies over Hastings, Minnesota, on December 12, 1951, at 1:50 p.m. CST. Visibility that day was exceptional, but even then Captain Slayton wasn't sure what it was off to his left, and below, his F-51 as he dived on it. As the object grew larger in his windshield, Captain Slayton realized that both his plane and the UFO were above 10,000 feet altitude, an unlikely place for a kite. It then entered his mind that the white round blur, which appeared to be something spinning, might be a weather balloon, but as he got closer he detected an ability to maneuver and accelerate on the UFO's part. When the distance grew even less, Capt. Slayton noticed that: "...the object appeared to be two discs 18" to 2' in diameter and approximately 1' apart, spinning at a rapid rate." Gaining in speed to an estimated 400 mph, the two spinning discs turned away and evaded further observation.²⁷²

Enter General Samford.

December was still young when Ruppelt, accompanied by Colonel Dunn, went to the Pentagon to brief Major General Samford, General Cabell's replacement as Director of Air Force Intelligence. (General Cabell had moved on to take the number two job in the CIA.)

At the Washington meeting, Colonel Dunn outlined Project GRUDGE's new objectives and procedures, especially the isolation of the better unknowns for close scrutiny.

After that, the intensity and scope of UFO activity was discussed, with Colonel Dunn admitting that UFO sightings had been continuous since the year 1947 and that he wasn't so sure that there had been a significant correlation between UFO activity and publicity the subject received. It was noted by Colonel Dunn that UFO reports had come in from all over the globe with a peak in mid-year and another peak around December. Furthermore, the Colonel conceded the obvious by admitting that the Air Force's 1949 GRUDGE report had not provided an end to the riddle.

Finally, Colonel Dunn confessed something amazing. He told General Samford that UFO sightings "followed a pattern" by occurring most frequently at "areas vital to the defense of the United States." The areas the Colonel had in mind were: Los Alamos-Albuquerque, N.M.; Oak Ridge, Tenn.; White Sands, N.M.; Port Areas; Strategic Air Command bomber bases; and industrial complexes. If anyone else were to impune such sinister motives to UFO's they would have evoked smirks by people who felt that nonbelief in such objects was a measure of normality. Here we have none other than the Air Force's Project GRUDGE suggesting something that one would expect to find on the front page of a cheap tabloid. But then, perhaps Colonel Dunn's concern was well founded.²⁷³

John Q. Public was not informed of the "UFO's might be spies" talk. Instead the only public move contemplated was a communique to the press announcing the revitalized UFO investigation, stressing that UFO's were once again considered serious business, this being done to enhance the chance for receiving measurable data.

Later Ruppelt wrote that the renewal of Project GRUDGE did not mean an admission that UFO's were definite aerial machines, but just that the continued sighting of strange phenomena by highly trained personnel prompted a stronger effort to explain the mystery. He also defended a long-standing Air Force policy: reports themselves (anodotal evidence) would never be accepted as conclusive (Donald Keyhoe could write until his arm gave out).²⁷⁴

December 11th someone else tried to get into the new spirit of things. Ephraim Radner, Chief, Operations Section, Plans and Operations Branch Geophysics Research Division, recommended that the final report of Project TWINKLE be declassified because: "...there is interest in this matter outside of the Department of Defense...[and] in view of the fact that nothing of a security nature has been discovered."²⁷⁵ He would have no luck.

Death in the Southwest.

Maybe no one knew what to make of the strange fireballs flashing through the Southwest skies, whether they were natural or not, or whether they rated closer scrutiny or not, but sixty-year-old L. Gutierrez of Tucumcari, New Mexico, had made up his mind. He claimed he observed a fireball zoom out of the sky on December 13th, and then to his astonishment, "land" near a three million-gallon water tank on the edge of town. According to his testimony, the fireball then propelled itself toward the water tank, striking the side with enough force to neatly slice a long gash in the 3/8 inch metal skin. That's hard to accept but there was no question about what happened next. The tank collapsed gushing forth a huge

wall of water that swept through the streets.²⁷⁶ Was Mr. Gutierrez's testimony true? The tank did collapse, that we can be sure of, but what about the strange "fire-ball?" There was only one shred of evidence that supported Mr. Gutierrez's story.

To the south J. O. Crosby of Portales, New Mexico, alerted the press about his sighting of "something like a ball of fire as large as the moon" zipping west to east under the clouds and blowing up, an incident that took place about the same time as the Tucumcari disaster.²⁷⁷

Dr. Lincoln La Paz was called in to study the Tucumcari case, but he could do nothing in the way of offering an answer. Meteors don't land, they impact and leave a crater.

Perhaps some people tried to laugh off Tucumcari's unexpected bath, but there was nothing amusing about one thing. Four persons drowned.²⁷⁸

Life magazine was to learn from Dr. Lincoln La Paz that according to his calculations:

"Almost all of the green fireballs observed in the Southwest between December 1948 and December 1951 radiated from the circumpolar region of the sky. They came from points 35 to as much as 105 degrees distant from the Taurid fireball radiant, and therefore obviously were not related to this radiant."²⁷⁹

"Very reasonable to believe."

While Ruppelt steers us away from the idea that the Air Force suspected that UFO's were real objects, a classified Air Force paper assumed:

"It is very reasonable to believe that some type of unusual object or phenomena is being observed as many of the sightings have been made by highly qualified sources (SECRET).²⁸⁰

UFO reports had come in at a steady rate during 1951 and showed no unusual geographical shift, a characteristic that did mark the UFO wave of 1950. The unexplained northern sweep of UFO activity in 1950 had lost itself in the wilds of the Arctic wastes of Canada and the expanses of the cold seas beyond Scotland. The steady and scattered pattern of 1951 UFO activity continued into the first four months of 1952, but something dramatic occurred in April. That month the forward edge of a new wave of UFO activity appeared, rolling out of Canada, heading south, massive, irresistible, ominous.

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The "UFOs: A HISTORY" series represents the most ambitious and comprehensive attempt yet made to apply the historian's skills and methods to a subject so "un-historical" by nature, so unscientifically documented and so little esteemed in general by conventional scientists and academics: that of Unidentified Flying Objects.

And yet, the UFO presence in contemporary society has been a pervasive and persistent one; one sees the UFO motif everywhere, indicating that its impact on our culture has been profound and permanent. It cries out to have its modern rise carefully charted and delineated. No-one is better-qualified to take up this fascinating challenge than Loren Gross, who has devoted decades of painstaking—and always scrupulously objective—historical research into this project. Modern-day researchers into The Unexplained, as well as future students of 20th Century history, will be the grateful beneficiaries of his labor.