

IUR

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The U. S. Atomic Energy Commission has undertaken a long-range program for the development of atomic energy for military and peacetime applications. This view shows a portion of the wartime ATOMIC BOMB PLANT in southern Washington. The Columbia River can be seen in the background.
(Photo by Bob Johnson)

608-H

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OR-5—View of one of Process Buildings, Oak Ridge, Tenn., "City of the Atomic Bomb"

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Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory



DO NUCLEAR FACILITIES ATTRACT UFO'S?

INTERNATIONAL

UFO

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On the cover: (lower left) missile silos of Grand Forks, a map of 150 launch sites of Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota; (upper left) the Hanford Works AEC Reservation, Washington, with the Columbia River in the background; (upper right) mushroom cloud from atomic bomb test rises seven miles from observers, 1953, Yucca Flats, Nevada; (center) view of one of the process buildings, K-25 plant, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Tennessee; (lower right) Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, New Mexico. From postcards in the collection of George M. Eberhart.

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WHAT'S CONVINCING ABOUT UFOS?

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

Recently I was discussing our favorite hobby with a veteran UFO case researcher formerly associated with the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), and I asked him what he really believed about UFOs after some 40 years of active interest. This fellow (I'll call him Fred Voad; he's always wanted to remain anonymous) is a very tough sell, so his views and conclusions about evidence, validity, and the solution to the mystery are, I believe, worth retelling. This is particularly true today, when so many persons interested in UFOs are making extremist statements, both pro and con, about UFO reality—statements that indicate a remarkable absence of either critical judgment or historical perspective. And on both sides there seems an astonishing lack of humility. But this conversation didn't go in that direction, and so it became a pleasant paradox—an old look at the field that blows some fresh air.

Voad said that three or four years ago he sat back and assessed what he felt he could *wholly* subscribe to about UFOs. He asked, "Are there cases that I have looked at very closely, about which I can say, 'That report happened, in all important particulars, exactly as the witnesses claimed, and it points to something unexplainable'?" As I've noted, he's a tough sell. Cases were left by the wayside either because he hadn't examined them closely enough, or they might have a mundane explanation, or (the worst excuse) they just didn't seem to resonate properly with him. This was his skeptical "intuitive discomfort" problem.

He came up with five cases in his "unequivocally real" group. Voad admitted that many others were close, but he'd rest on these. Readers can create similar lists, definitely a worthwhile exercise. These are Voad's five cases, with the locations, dates, and primary witnesses:

White Sands Missile Test Center, New Mexico, June 10, 1949; U.S. Naval Cdr. Robert B. McLaughlin. *See* "How Scientists Tracked Flying Saucers," *True*, March 1950, pp. 25–28, 96–99.

Las Cruces, New Mexico, August 20, 1949; astronomer

Clyde W. Tombaugh. *See* H. B. Darrach Jr. and Robert E. Ginna Jr., "Have We Visitors from Outer Space?" *Life*, April 7, 1952, pp. 80–96.

Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, July 14, 1952; Capt. William B. Nash and First Officer William H. Fortenberry. *See* Thomas Tulien, "The 1952 Nash/Fortenberry Sighting Revisited," *IUR*, Spring 2002, pp. 20–23, 27–28.

Topcliffe Naval Base, North Yorkshire, England, September 19, 1952; Royal Air Force, Operation Mainbrace. *See* Edward J. Ruppelt, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 195–196.

Boianai Mission, Papua New Guinea, June 26–28, 1959; Father William B. Gill. *See* Jerome Clark, *The UFO Encyclopedia* (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 449–452.

If I had made a list, it would have several more cases included (for example, the Capt. Lawrence Coyne helicopter sighting, October 18, 1973; the Levelland, Texas, sightings, November 1957; Kenneth Arnold's original flying disk, June 24, 1947; my own sighting of a domed disk; and a few more). I'd have left off Operation Mainbrace because I don't know much about it. But let's deal with Voad's list. Why these?

White Sands. Multiple, expert witnesses; instrumented observation; anomalous behavior; a solidly understandable context for the observation; and enough time to settle down and observe it well.

Las Cruces. Multiple witnesses; one of the most expert observers in U.S. history; anomalous qualities; an understandable context for the observation; and, given Tombaugh's expertise, enough time for the sighting.

Chesapeake Bay. Multiple witnesses; reasonably expert witnesses; anomalous behavior in spades; a solidly understandable context within which the observation took place; and enough time to settle down and observe it well.

Topcliffe. Multiple witnesses; reasonably expert witnesses; instrumented observations; anomalous behavior; an understandable context for the observations; and enough time to observe it well.

Boianai. Multiple witnesses—not expert, but given the detail and anomalousness of the sightings, they don't have to be (plus the type of witnesses speak to their honest

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character and UFO naïveté); extremely anomalous UFO behavior; and large amounts of time to observe the phenomenon.

It's not hard to extract from these five descriptions what it is that impresses Voad, and, in the absence of physical evidence, puts him in a comfort zone about the reality of the UFO phenomenon. This is the same constellation of qualities that give me my sense of UFO reality. I believe this was also true of J. Allen Hynek, NICAP, and most conservative yet convinced researchers. This set of qualities, which can be found in several dozen cases, is what Hynek viewed as the cumulative weight of the evidence that demanded that the UFO phenomenon be studied seriously. But, from such a distilled set of foundation cases, what can we tell about the phenomenon? Voad sorts it out this way:

"The cases very strongly point towards physical objects, artificially constructed, which operate in our skies in ways which deny any normal natural or modern technological explanation."

Well, what do you know? UFOs.

To Voad's succinct conclusion, I would add (with all due respect to the triangles, boomerangs, and oddball UFO shapes littering the case files), that the most valid cases indicate a technology based on a discoid or spheroid configuration, with no real evidence of normal aerodynamic encumbrances. In short, "flying disks."

I was a little shocked to see where this largely skeptical discussion had led us. We could have put on our USAF uniforms and been imitating Col. George Garrett (1947), Col. Howard McCoy and Capt. Robert R. Sneider (1948), Capt. Edward Ruppelt (1952). We had become the authors of the various "Estimates of the Situation."

Is it a sad statement that Voad and I aren't fully convinced that we've progressed much further in 50 years from those halcyon days, or is it a happy statement that we believe that the views of those early researchers have held up? The answer in both cases is yes.

The happy side is that any veteran UFO researcher with good historical methodology at the ready knows that the UFO phenomenon is real. That scholar also knows the phenomenon is related, somehow or other, to extramundane technology and intelligence.

The sad side is watching the diversion in belief systems that all too often takes place. A large number of people plow heroically into the darkness, seeking and finding answers that range from *exactly* who the aliens (or demons or paraphysicals) are and what they're doing, to *exactly* how we humans have somehow made the whole thing up. Two cheers for intelligence, creativity, and, often, hard work; one grimace for lack of humility and willingness to admit the very large spectrum of complications and hidden variables that muddy both the debunking and the claims for an ultimate solution.

The saddest thing is the recurring march of missed research opportunities that might have inched our reliable

and firm understanding forward.

Are Fred Voad's criteria and conclusions debatable? Of course they are. We won't allow ourselves to fall into the same sins that we worry are infecting the field. Tell Fred why his favorite case (Nash-Fortenberry) is no good; he'll listen objectively, believe me. Tell me why my favorite case (Boianai), or my own sighting, or the Coyne case investigation, is no good; I'll do the same. We've been listening for decades, but "we ain't heard nothin' yet." In fact, the quality and validity of the objections are often so ludicrous that they tend to further validate our views: "Is that the best you can do?"

If anyone protests that we only have a handful of good cases, I retort, "Wow, I've got a handful of good cases." Let's be intellectually honest—a handful of very solid cases is the beachhead that brings in a few hundred nearly-as-good cases with an anomalous origin as the primary working hypothesis.

This also is part of what Hynek (and NICAP) meant by the accumulation of the evidence. All of a sudden, the phenomenon seems robust—unless you have an emotional need to discard it for some reason. Voad and I recognize that need in some people. Some have fear, some just have to have a final answer. They can't live with the ambiguity. Okay. Let's all go and be well, try to understand one another, and not get in the way.

P.S. The reader will notice that no case was mentioned by us that occurred any later than 1973, nor any abduction, which could be a topic for another day. ♦

UFOs SEEN IN ARGENTINA

Police officers in villages south of Río Cuarto, in Argentina's Córdoba province, have observed a number of circular, luminous objects performing wobbly maneuvers or forming a horizontal line in the night sky for several minutes. The objects have usually been seen above high hills in the region.

Police on patrol saw the phenomenon on September 6, around 10 p.m. Two of the officers were in the town of Sampacho when they received an alert on their car radio. Arriving at the scene, they spotted the red glow of a strange, circular object. There were seven or eight UFOs over the Cerro Sampacho, and they appeared to be hovering at an altitude of 5,000 feet. There was no sound coming from any of the objects.

At 10:30 p.m. on September 9, a family traveling in a pickup truck between Achiras and Sampacho noticed "a very intense red light in the sky" that originated from the southwest. The father told reporters that the object was like an intense red beam with flashes of great brightness behind it. In the front was something like arc of light or a circle of energy. The object seemed as if it was about to fall on top of them, but it changed course and headed toward the hills of Sampacho and Suco.—*Servicio Informativo Ovnilogico de Argentina*.

MEDIA BIAS AND UFOS

BY HAIKO LIETZ

In late April 2001, headlines blared around the world about how the closing of what is now a small British UFO organization was a sign of how far ufology had fallen from its heyday. Although ufology does indeed have many problems, and membership in all major UFO organizations has declined, the press was quite eager to declare the death of ufology based on little, if any, evidence. Many in ufology see this type of reportage as the sign of continuing bias, if not a disinformation campaign, against serious ufology. What makes this even more disturbing is that the press had its facts wrong from the beginning. (Those who have followed political reporting in the United States will hardly be shocked at this news.) As longtime radio commentator Paul Harvey says on his daily radio broadcasts, "And now for the rest of the story."

Some folks stay with UFO research for decades, even if they have lost a family member in an alleged UFO encounter, and even if they believe that the men in black are monitoring them. Denis Plunkett, 70-year-old gentleman of British ufology, is one of those folks. In 1953 he and his father founded the British Flying Saucer Bureau (BFSB) as a branch of the International Flying Saucer Bureau. The IFSB, with roughly 1,500 members, was among the first and largest UFO organizations worldwide.

FROM SUSPENSION TO CLOSING

Today there are numerous UFO organizations worldwide, and most of them will probably disappear as quietly as they have appeared. But the BFSB became world famous in April 2001 when international news media reported its closing due to a lack of sightings. However, the story was untrue and Plunkett's bureau is anything but closed. He sees himself as the main character in a disinformation plot intended to divert public attention from the "existence of extraterrestrial life" on earth.

On April 3, 2001, The *Western Daily Press*, a local newspaper in Bristol, England, published an article titled

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"Is the truth still out there?"¹ Denis Plunkett was quoted making the point that, especially during the Cold War, UFO sightings "were often over missile bases, nuclear plants, government buildings." But today it had gone very quiet. "Perhaps with the ending of the Cold War their mission was over," he speculated about alien motivation. Plunkett noted that the decrease of reports had led to an enormous decrease of interest in his organization. Further, the Internet was taking its own toll on his group. As he lamented, "Who wants to turn up for a meeting on a dark, rainy night and listen to people with slides, when they can sit at home and surf the Web?" This original story was accurate and mentioned nothing about closing the BFSB.

Simon de Bruxelles, staff writer for the London *Times*, had also understood it this way and later, after calling Denis Plunkett, wrote a similar article that appeared on April 23. As with most large newspapers, story headlines are written by editors, not reporters or writers. And so the *Times* article was published with the misleading headline, "UFO Bureau Shuts As Aliens Shun Earth."²

Something similar had happened with another Bristol newspaper, the *Evening Post*, which carried an article on April 4 headlined "Closed Encounters," punning with Steven Spielberg's film, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.³ Nevertheless, in the *Times* and the *Evening Post* stories, both writers made it clear that the bureau was not closed and that meetings had only been suspended.

The story would have gone nowhere if the wire services hadn't picked it up and then messed it up. Articles from both Reuters⁴ and Agence France Presse (AFP)⁵ continued the error of the headline writers, but made it worse because they mentioned the closing of the UFO bureau in the body of the text. An AFP staffer said that articles are "usually not copied" from another service or paper, but when reading the articles it becomes rather clear that the *Times* article had been borrowed without further investigation.

As one can imagine, the canard now had its short but effective 15 minutes of fame.

European news media like *Le Figaro* in France,⁶ the German *Süddeutsche Zeitung*,⁷ the *International Herald Tribune*,⁸ and the BBC, to name just a few, welcomed this piece of soft news. What others didn't quite manage, a science writer from *Scientific American* did: He treated the

story with humor.⁹ The erroneously reported closing of a minor British UFO group now became evidence for the perilous state of ufology in general. And all of these follow-on stories were based on the original articles (actually headlines), and did no original reporting. (Thus no one contacted other mainstream UFO organizations to get their take on the story.)

As one can imagine, British UFO researchers weren't pleased at all. Some started mocking Denis Plunkett, who was blamed for negative UFO attitudes he had never expressed. Others specifically noted Simon de Bruxelles, "whose name from memory has appeared in debunking articles in the past."¹⁰ When questioned, de Bruxelles thought he had not written about the UFO matter before, but answered humorously (ufology is always good for a laugh) that he "may have had memories of this erased by the MIB Memory Eraser."

Denis Plunkett wondered, "If this was not another example of disinformation, why has the *Times* persistently resisted to publish a denial, rebuttal, or news item to correct this negative view?" He wrote many times to the *Times* and the Press Complaints Commission, without success. He was told that there was no need for a rebuttal, since the body of the article was factually correct. "But it's the headline that caused the trouble," he insists.

The canard would continue its world tour uninterruptedly. Finally, fed up with misplaced assumptions and hostility from his research colleagues, Plunkett wrote in the July edition of the British *UFO Magazine* that "at no time, either to local or national newspapers, or during radio and television interviews did I say anything which could be misconstrued as closure of the oldest established UFO organization in the world."¹¹

If there really is a disinformation campaign to lead elites from the UFO trail, it is working effectively. The *New York Times* coverage of UFOs has become progressively more negative,¹² even though public opinion about UFOs has been moving in the opposite direction. And the canard about the closing of the BFSB had a long life.¹³

Denis Plunkett hopes to be back with regular meetings in the near future. He will then have a lot to tell to his old fellows and maybe a few new ones. About the storm that his "innocent remarks" to a local reporter have triggered, some 100 people have called him to discover what has happened to his organization, or about the lack of curiosity by one or the other colleague or journalist.

FOOTNOTES

1. Roger Tavener, "Is the Truth Still Out There?" *Bristol Western Daily Press*, April 3, 2001, online at www.100megsfree4.com/farshores/ufowhere.htm.

2. Simon de Bruxelles, "UFO Bureau Shuts As Aliens Shun Earth," *London Times*, April 23, 2001, online at www.fsf.nl/en/show_nieuws.php?NieuwsId=236.

3. Michael Shaw, "Closed Encounters," *Bristol*

Evening Post, April 4, 2001, online at www.network54.com/Hide/Forum/thread?forumid=105048&messageid=986535024&lp=986535024.

4. Reuters release, "Where Have All the UFOs Gone? Long Time Passing!" April 23, 2001, online at www.albany.net/~rwcecot/iraap/news/Apr01.htm#ufo1b.

5. AFP release, "British UFO Bureau Shuts Down Due to Lack of Flying Saucers," April 23, 2001, online at www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates/2001/apr/m24-014.shtml.

6. Guy Baret, "London ferme le Bureau des soucoupes volantes," *Le Figaro*, April 24, 2001.

7. "Wo sind die Fliegenden Untertassen?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, April 24, 2001.

8. "People," *International Herald Tribune*, April 24, 2001.

9. Steve Mirsky, "Out of This World," *Scientific American*, July 2001, online at www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=0000D38E-B1D6-1C6F-84A9809EC588EF21&pageNumber=1&catID=2.

10. Graham W. Birdsall, "Letter From the Editor of *UFO Magazine UK*," *UFO UpDates Mailing List*, April 26, 2001, online at www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates/2001/apr/m26-026.shtml.

11. Denis F. Plunkett, "An 'Innocent Remark,'" *UFO Magazine (UK)*, July 2001.

12. John C. Hickman, E. Dale McConkey II, and Matthew A. Barrett, "Fewer Sightings in the National Press: A Content Analysis of UFO Coverage in *The New York Times*, 1947–1995," *Journal of UFO Studies*, n.s. 6 (1995/1996): 213–225.

13. See, for example, Cosima Lutz, "Ein Wahn im Wandel der Zeiten," *Die Welt*, June 20, 2001, online at www.welt.de/daten/2001/06/20/0620ku261875.htm. ♦

ABDUCTIONS ARE SPIRITUAL

When extraterrestrials abduct earthlings, they often share with them a message of hope, according to Krista Henriksen, who recently earned her master's degree in anthropology from Simon Fraser University in British Columbia with the study, *Alien Encounters: A Close Analysis of Personal Accounts of Extraterrestrial Experiences*. "They tell people they're not alone, that they're special, they're chosen for a purpose," said Henriksen, who studied the personal accounts of 60 men and women who claimed to have had close encounters. Most of them recounted being told there are profound, terrible problems with the world but that they had been chosen to do something about it. "Sometimes they have malevolent messages, manipulative, nasty messages. But that was, by far, the minority," Henriksen said. "Most often extraterrestrials were bringing messages of goodwill. . . . People are having profound experiences, whatever the experiences are," she added.—Canadian Press, September 29.

DO NUCLEAR FACILITIES ATTRACT UFOS?

BY DONALD A. JOHNSON

On numerous occasions, UFOs have been reported over nuclear power plants as well as nuclear research facilities and nuclear weapons storage bunkers at military bases.¹ A good percentage of these reports occurred at highly restricted government research and production facilities, such as Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, the Hanford Site in Washington, and the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. Highly trained government scientists and military personnel, who had been granted top-secret military clearances, made many of these reports.

In a well-documented series of incidents in early November 1975, nocturnal lights and unidentified "mystery helicopters" visited a wide spectrum of American military bases and missile sites across the northern border of the United States. Between October 27 and November 10, reports of UFOs over nuclear weapons storage sites were repeatedly made at Loring AFB in northern Maine, Wurtsmith AFB in Michigan, Grand Forks AFB and Minot AFB in North Dakota, and Malmstrom AFB in Montana. F-106 interceptors were scrambled out of Malmstrom, located near Great Falls, in response to multiple reports of UFO visits to missile sites near Moore, Harlowton, Lewistown, and several missile sites around Malmstrom AFB.²

A similar rash of incursions occurred in December 1948 (Los Alamos), December 1950 (Oak Ridge), July 1952 (Hanford, Savannah River, and Los Alamos), August 1965 (F. E. Warren AFB in Wyoming), March 1967 (Minot AFB, Malmstrom AFB, and Los Alamos), August 1968 (Ellsworth AFB in South Dakota), August 1980 (Warren AFB, and Sandia National Laboratories and Kirtland AFB in New Mexico), December 1980 (RAF Bentwaters in Suffolk, England), and October 1991 (the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine and a missile

base near Arkhangel'sk in Russia).

These reports led some to speculate that the intelligences behind UFOs have an interest in nuclear weapons and nuclear power. One feature of these reports that suggests a direct link involves light rays or energy beams focused on nuclear materials.³ Multiple, independent accounts state that beams of light were directed downward from the UFOs onto the nuclear storage bunkers and underground missile silos, perhaps penetrating them beneath the surface.⁴⁻⁵ In addition, there have been unsubstantiated rumors from enlisted men that the telemetry of the weapons at some sites had been changed or that other weapons had been rendered inoperative.⁶⁻⁷

Some researchers have suggested that the occupants of UFOs have a deep concern about the safety of nuclear power, and our proliferation of nuclear weapons, and are therefore keeping a close scrutiny of these sites. On April 26, 1986, during the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster, technicians reported that they observed a fiery sphere, similar in color to brass, within 1,000 feet of the damaged Unit 4 reactor at the height of the fire, about three hours after the initial explosion. Two bright red rays shot out from the UFO and were directed at the reactor. It hovered in the area for about three minutes, then the rays vanished and the UFO moved slowly away to the northwest. Radiation levels taken just before the UFO appeared read 3,000 milliroentgens/hour, and after the rays the readings showed 800 milliroentgens/hour. Apparently the UFO had brought down the radiation level.⁸

Is there any statistical evidence that indicates a heightened attention to nuclear sites? In an effort to determine this, I applied the techniques of epidemiology to the UFO evidence accumulated since World War II. The table on the next page was developed from the UFOCAT 2002 database. Using U.S. sightings, it compares 164 counties with nuclear facilities to a control group of 164 U.S. counties lacking nuclear facilities. Nuclear facilities include those plants involved in the storage or manufacture of nuclear materials, including military bases where nuclear weapons are deployed, and commercial or research nuclear

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TABLE
Do UFO reports occur more often near nuclear facilities?

A comparison of United States counties with nuclear facilities
to an equal number of counties without such facilities, matched on population and region of country.

	N	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs /100,000	Rate CEs /100,000
Cases	164	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	61,368,144	8,495	1,584	13.84
Controls	164	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	56,771,476	5,444	1,016	9.59
				Odds Ratio	1.44	1.44
	(a.) N	Counties w/ Populations > 500,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs /100,000
Cases	33	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	43,341,055	4,939	832	11.40
Controls	33	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	38,383,010	3,245	560	8.45
				Odds Ratio	1.35	1.32
	(b.) N	Counties w/ Population 250,001–500,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs /100,000
Cases	31	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	10,918,990	1,700	343	15.57
Controls	31	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	11,144,549	1,280	241	11.49
				Odds Ratio	1.36	1.45
	(c.) N	Counties w/ Population 101,001–250,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs /100,000
Cases	25	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	3,519,679	638	136	18.13
Controls	25	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	3,649,492	421	95	11.54
				Odds Ratio	1.57	1.48
	(d.) N	Counties w/ Population 50,001–101,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs /100,000
Cases	34	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	2,494,943	924	209	37.03
Controls	34	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	2,499,389	355	82	14.20
				Odds Ratio	2.61	2.55
	(e.) N	Counties w/ Population < 50,000	Total Population	UFO Reports	CE Reports	Rate UFOs /100,000
Cases	42	US Counties w Nuclear Facilities	1,093,477	294	64	26.89
Controls	42	US Counties no Nuclear Facilities	1,095,036	143	38	13.06
				Odds Ratio	2.06	1.69

power plants. A nuclear facility might be a small commercial nuclear power plant such as the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, Vermont; or it might be a nuclear production plant such as the Rocky Flats plant in Jefferson County, Colorado; or it might be a nuclear base such as the Bangor Naval Submarine Base in Silverdale, Washington.

The control group counties were selected on the basis of the closest match in population, with an attempt to match the same region of the country (Northeast, Midwest, South, Mountain, West Coast) as the county with a nuclear facility, and with an attempt to exclude control group counties with military bases that might have held nuclear weapons at one time. The results suggest that there is an important association between the presence of a nuclear

facility and the rates of both UFO sightings and close encounters (CE). This association tends to increase with those counties with smaller populations, so the results are further stratified by five population categories:

- (a) counties with populations over 500,000;
- (b) counties with populations between 225,000 and 500,000;
- (c) counties with populations between 101,000 and 225,000;
- (d) counties with populations between 50,000 and 101,000; and
- (e) counties with populations under 50,000.

For U.S. counties with populations between 50,000 and 101,000 the rate of UFO reports peaks at 37.03 per 100,000 people for those counties with nuclear facilities,

and this rate is 2.61 times higher than for similar counties without nuclear facilities. Overall, the rate of UFO sighting reports is 13.84 for nuclear-site counties and 9.59 for non-nuclear counties, for a relative risk of 1.44. In other words, reports are 1.44 times more likely to occur in these counties. For close-encounter reports, the rate is 2.58 per 100,000 compared to 1.79 per 100,000 in non-nuclear counties, again for a relative risk of 1.44. Ninety-two of the nuclear site counties are considered UFO "hotspots," having had four or more UFO close encounters, while only 70 of the non-nuclear counties are rated as UFO hotspots.

The answer about whether nuclear facilities attract UFOs appears to be "yes." There is an excess of 3,051 UFO reports for nuclear-site counties above what would have been predicted based on the non-nuclear counties. For close encounters, there is an excess of 568 close-encounter reports over what should have been expected based on other UFO reporting dynamics.

In a previous study using county data, education was found to be positively correlated with UFO reporting. Those counties with a higher percentage of residents possessing a high school degree were found to produce larger numbers of UFO reports.⁹ So it is important to check if there is a large imbalance in educational level between the nuclear-site and non-nuclear counties selected for this study.

From 1960 U.S. Census data (chosen because most reports occurred many years ago), the average percentage of those adults (over age 25) possessing a high school degree across the 164 nuclear-site counties was 43.7%. This compares to a rate of 38.9% for the 164 non-nuclear counties.

In general, it can be stated that nuclear facilities tend to require a more highly educated work force, and this fact may account for the small difference in education noted between the two groups. Whether this small difference in educational level could explain all of the excess in UFO reports and close encounters seems doubtful.

So we are left with a somewhat troubling finding. Apparently UFO reports do occur more frequently in the vicinity of nuclear sites, after controlling for population and the region of the country. Assuming that UFOs are intelligently controlled, we should be concerned, since the motives of the intelligences are unknown.

Given the long history of UFO incursions at sensitive, highly-restricted nuclear facilities; and given that the events of September 11, 2001, have drawn attention to the vulnerability of nuclear power plants to terrorist acts, it would seem appropriate for national security agencies to redirect some attention to the issue of UFOs entering restricted air space over nuclear facilities.

No matter how possibly benign the motives of the UFO occupants may be, if I were Director of Homeland Security I would certainly be paying attention to this matter.

FOOTNOTES

1. The UFOCAT 2002 database lists 289 reports at sites coded as "missile" or "nuclear" facilities. These reports range from March 1944 (an aerial encounter near Yakima, Washington, not far from the huge World War II plutonium production plant at Hanford) to another aerial encounter in October 2001 over a nuclear power plant in Kent, England. At least 52 of these cases are close-encounter reports.

2. Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, *Documents Describing UFO/Helicopter Overflights of U.S.A.F. Bases in 1975*. Evanston, Ill.: Center for UFO Studies, 1976.

3. Loqueffret, Brittany, France, February 1961. Pierre Gustin, in *Phénomènes Spatiaux*, July 1973, p. 26.

4. Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah, April 25, 1950. Loren Gross, *UFOs, a History 1950: April-July*. Fremont, Calif.: The Author, 1982, p. 34.

5. RAF Bentwaters, December 27, 1980. Richard H. Hall, *The UFO Evidence Volume II: A Thirty-year Report*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2001, pp. 99–108.

6. Minot AFB, March 5, 1967. Donald E. Keyhoe, *Aliens from Space: The Real Story of Unidentified Flying Objects*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973, pp. 10–11.

7. Malmstrom AFB, March 16, 1967. Hall, p. 333.

8. Paul Stonewell, *The Soviet UFO Files*. New York: Quadrillion Publishing, 1998, pp. 68–69.

9. David R. Saunders, "Some New Lines for UFO Research," in *MUFON '72 Conference Proceedings*. Quincy, Ill.: Midwest UFO Network, 1972, pp. 130–145.

MARTIAN MICROBE?

A hardy microbe that can withstand huge doses of radiation could have evolved this ability on Mars. That is the conclusion of Russian scientists who say it would take far longer than life has existed here for the bug to evolve that ability in Earth's favorable conditions. They suggest the harsher environment of Mars makes it a more likely birthplace and speculate that the microbes could have travelled to Earth on pieces of rock that were blasted into space by an impacting asteroid and fell to Earth as meteorites.

Deinococcus radiodurans is renowned for its resistance to radiation—it can survive several thousand times the lethal dose for humans. Anatoli Pavlov and his colleagues from the Ioffe Physico-Technical Institute in St Petersburg calculate that it would take between a million and a hundred million years for this resistance to evolve.

David Morrison of NASA's Astrobiology Institute is sceptical that *Deinococcus* came from Mars, pointing out that its genome looks similar to those of other Earthly bacteria. But he admits that there's still no obvious explanation.—*New Scientist*, September 25.

INTERPRETING THE RAMEY MEMO

BY JAMES HOURAN AND KEVIN D. RANDLE

It has been well documented that the Roswell UFO crash involved extensive military activity. Nevertheless, there are very few documents available that record these military activities, and few that have any reliable provenance. Most documents can be traced to the individuals who released them and no further. That does not bode well for their authenticity. One of the major exceptions is the so-called Ramey memo.

The Ramey memo is found in a photograph of Brigadier General (later Lieutenant General) Roger M. Ramey taken on July 8, 1947, by *Fort Worth (Tex.) Star-Telegram* reporter/photographer J. Bond Johnson (see next page). Copies of the photograph were published in newspapers around the country beginning on July 9. Further documentation came from the Bettmann Photo Archives, which had a copy of the photograph and a cutline that said, "Brig. Gen. Roger M. Ramey, Commanding General of 8th Airforce [sic], and Col. Thomas J. DuBose, 8th Airforce chief of staff, identify metallic fragments found near Roswell, N. Mex. as a raywin [sic] high altitude sounding device used by Airforce and weather bureau to determine wind velocity and direction, and not a flying disc. Photo by J. Bond Johnson. 11:59 PM CST."

The memo then, is a piece of paper held by Ramey in the photograph that, while not facing the camera straight on, is sufficiently visible so that words on the paper might be read. In 1991, Don Schmitt sent a copy of the photograph to Richard Haines, a former NASA research scientist, asking if he could read anything on the paper. Haines, using a microscope, scanned the message and reported that he could see vague words but could not make out the individual letters of those words. In a few cases, he could identify a random letter, but that was no help in understanding what might be printed on the paper. He thought that a better quality, or enlargement, of the letter area of the photograph might reveal more of the message, but didn't

seem to think it would be of much real use.

That was where the matter rested until 1998 when Johnson, the photographer, decided to investigate further. He put together a team to inspect the photographs that included Ron Regehr, a space and satellite engineer. Using a huge blow-up of the photograph, a computer, and a variety of software and camera equipment, Johnson's team believed they could read more of the message. Their interpretation was:

AS THE . . . 4 HRS THE VICTIMS OF THE . . . AT FORT WORTH, TEX . . . THE "CRASH" STORY . . . FOR 0984 ACKNOWLEDGES . . . EMERGENCY POWERS ARE NEEDED SITE TWO SW OF MAGDALENA, NMEX . . . SAFE TALK . . . FOR MEANING OF STORY AND MISSION. . . WEATHER BALLOONS SENT ON THE . . . AND LAND . . . ROVER CREWS . . .
[SIGNED] TEMPLE

There were some major gaps in what they could read, and some of the phrases they spotted made little sense in the context of what else could be seen. However, the references to victims, to weather balloons, and to Magdalena, New Mexico, were important clues. These words seemed to tie the message to the Roswell events, and suggested that some kind of a quick response was required by the military, either at 8th Air Force headquarters in Fort Worth, or by the 509th Bomb Group in Roswell.

Others began to request copies of the pictures from the Special Collections at the University of Texas at Arlington, the current owner of the negative. They brought their expertise to bear on the message in Ramey's hand. To the delight of many, these researchers could also see letters, words and images, as had Johnson and his team. The problem was that many of those doing the work were not seeing the same words as Johnson had claimed.

Neil Morris, a technician who works for the University of Manchester in England and was part of the Johnson Roswell Photo Interpretation Team (RPIT), began to work on the message independently. He did do one thing that was beneficial to all researchers, breaking down the message line by line so that it would be easy to follow his

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The Ramey memo. A crop from the original Bond Johnson photo (left).

interpretation. He used capital letters to represent the parts of the message of which he was sure, lower-case letters to represent his best guess at some letters, an asterisk to denote a letter he couldn't decipher, and a dash where there was little more than a smudge on the message.

Morris's interpretation was not an exact match for what Johnson had released and, in fact, went in a couple of new directions. In his version, while the word "victims" remained, as did "Fort Worth, Texas," nearly everything else was different. One of the major points in the Johnson version was the wording that suggested, "Emergency Powers are needed Site Two SW of Magdalena, Nmex." The best guess by Morris was instead, "SOught CRASHE s pOw*** *** N***** SITEOne IS reMotely *****." This great difference suggested that those interpreting the message were seeing, to some extent, what they wanted to see.

That wasn't, of course, the end of it. Schmitt, now working with Tom Carey from Pennsylvania and Don Burleson of Roswell, came up with their own interpretation of the message, at least, according to Burleson. Burleson, writing in the January 7, 2000, issue of *Vision*, a monthly magazine published by the *Roswell Daily Record*, noted, "A number of attempts have been made to read the Ramey letter. Quite frankly, most of these attempts are amateurish, and even some ufologists have concluded that there is nothing in the Ramey image that advances the case for the Roswell incident. They are *mistaken*." (Burleson also reported his findings in "Deciphering the Ramey Memo," *IUR*, Summer 2000, pp. 3-6, 32.)

Burleson wrote that he had spent a year working on deciphering the letter. He said that he had the advantage of being the director of a computer lab and that he had a background in cryptanalysis. According to him, "I'm quite used to reading things that I wasn't meant to read."

Of course, the problem for Burleson, as well as the others, is that this is not an encrypted message, but a plain text message. Cryptanalysis has little relevance when trying to read what is printed on the paper. Burleson wrote that he had been using several excellent computer image enhancement software packages, "including Lucis, the

most advanced software used today in such fields as microscopy."

Interestingly, the interpretation of the message, as given by Burleson, and credited to Schmitt and Carey, doesn't even agree with what Carey has reported. In a publicly posted e-mail dated March 29, 2000, Carey suggested first that the "take" on the Ramey memo is that of Carey and Schmitt and not "Burlson [sic] or anyone else. . . All of us continue to work on the memo as best we can, so there will no doubt be more to say in the future."

Given Carey's objection to what Burleson had written in the *Roswell Daily Record*, and given that Burleson seemed to believe that his interpretation was the only one to make sense while the others were "amateurish," what does this say about the credibility of the attempts to read the document held by Ramey? As I suggested above, those who have a specific agenda are seeing in the memo exactly what they wish to see.

That opinion has been expressed by some of the others who are attempting to understand the Roswell case. UFO researcher Stan Friedman contacted Rob Belyea, the owner of ProLab in Fredericton, New Brunswick, and asked him to examine high-resolution scans made from the negative. Friedman had actually paid someone in Fort Worth to hand-carry the original negatives from the Special Collections department to a computer lab to have the scans made. The results were then sent on to Friedman who supplied them to Belyea. Belyea said that he couldn't spend hours examining the message but that he could rule out or confirm the interpretations of others by using his software to decide on character count and combinations of letters.

While Friedman stood on the sidelines watching and not commenting on the research, Belyea did say specifically that he could not see "Magdalena" in the text as the Johnson team had suggested. He did say, "They're pulling off all sorts of [readings], but they're making some of it up."

There is an additional problem, only partially addressed in the research on the message. If this was a military message sent from one military installation to another, there should have been some military jargon in it. The attempts at reading it have failed to account for any

TABLE. A Comparison of Various Interpretations of the Ramey Memo

- M = Neil Morris
 MII = Neil Morris (in a later review)
 R = David Rudiak
 RII = David Rudiak (in a later review)
 B = Don Burleson
 C = Tom Carey
 K = John Kirby
 (A) = Agreement (A majority of those contributing to the research saw the same basic structure).

Capital letters and words in all capital letters are those that the interpreter believes to be accurate.
 Lower-case letters suggest a best guess.

No explanation of some phrases has been offered. "Safe talk" is not a known military phrase.

Burleson and Carey have worked together on this project, though their interpretations differ.

Information was assembled by Don Burleson, Tom Carey, George Filer, John Kirby, Kevin Randle, and David Rudiak. A significant portion of this data was reported by George Filer in his Filer Files for October 31, 2000.

- (M) (1) —————***ARY WERE —————AS
 (MII) (1) —————reco VERY Was ROSWELI Head olc giveN AS THE
 (R) (1) ————— officer
 (RII) (1) NEAR OPERATION AT THE
 (B) (1) RECO - OPERATION WITH ROSWELL DISK 074 MJ-
 (C) (1) RECO... OPERATION... AT THE
 (A) (1) OPERATION
- (M) (2) —————fxs 4 rsev1 VICTIMS OF THE WR eck and CONVAY ON TO
 (MII) (2) [n]ext 4hs Exp VictIMs of THE WReck and CONVAy ON TO THEY
 (R) (2) —(jul)y 4th the VictIMs of tHE weECK you fOrWArdEd TO The
 (RII) (2) RANCH AND THE VICTIMS OF THE WRECK YOU FORWARDED TO THE
 (B) (2) —AT THE ()() THE VICTIMS OF THE WRECK YOU FORWARDED TO THE
 (C) (2) JULY 4TH. THE VICTIMS OF THE WRECK YOU FORWARDED TO THE
 (K) (2) ARE THE REMAINS OF THE MATERIAL YOU COMMANDED WE FLY
 (A) (2) VICTIMS OF THE WRECK
- (M) (3) —————*** AT FORT WORTH, Tex.
 (R) (3) ——EaM At FORT WORTH, TEX.
 (B) (3) TEAM AT FORT WORTH, TEX.
 (C) (3) ... AT FORT WORTH, TEX.
 (K) (3) AT FORT WORTH, TEX.
 (A) (3) AT FORT WORTH
- (M) (4) —————***S** smi Ths *ELSE* ***** unus-d***e T&E A3ea96 L*****
 (MII) (4) W-S- SorTei -e——thAT — ONUS raaf T&E A# -9——Landparty
 (R) (4) ——5 pM THE "DISC" they will ship [swap?] FOR A3 8th Arrived.
 (RII) (4) THE "DISC" THEY will ship FOR A3-AS2 Arrived
 (B) (4) () ON THE "DISK" MUST HAVE SENT LOS ALAMOS ADVANCED ()
 (C) (4) SSOR ON THE "DISK" MUST THUS SAVE FOR THE ATOMIC LABORATORY
 (A) (4) DISK or DISC
- (M) (5) —————SO ught CRASHE s pOw*** *** N***** SITEOne IS reMotely *****
 (R) (5) —or 58t(h) bom(be)r sq(?) Assit [Assess] offices? AT ROSWe(ll) AS for
 (RII) (5) BY B-29 ST OR C47. WRIGHT AF ASSIST FLIGHTS AT ROSWELL. ASSURE
 (B) (5) URGENT. POWERS ARE NEEDED SITE TWO AT CARLSBAD, NMEX.
 (C) (5) URGENT POWERS ARE NEEDED SITE TWO NW ROSWELL, NMEX.

TABLE (continued)

- (M) (6) ***D* bAsE ToLd ***a* for we**ous BY STORY are 8*****
(MII) (6) MIDDAY 509# TOLD newsPaPer segment of STORY Adv—
(R) (6) —54th SAID MIStaken——[meaning? weather? balloon?] of [is] story And said
(RII) (6) THAT CIC-TEAM SAID THIS MISTAKEN MEANING OF STORY AND THINK
(B) (6) () SAFE TALK NEWSPAPER MEANING OF STORY AND
(C) (6) SAFE TALK WANTED FOR MEANING OF STORY AND
- (M) (7) ———lly thy even PUT FOR BY WEATHER BALLOONS n*d** were
(MII) (7) LLY ThrY EVEN PUT for AF WEA TA TN BALLOONS raDar W ERE
(R) (7) news [clip, chat, dirt] out is OF WEATHER BALLOONS which were
(RII) (7) LATE TODAY NEXT SENT OUT PR OF WEATHER BALLOONS WOULD WORK
(B) (7) ONLY SHOW () BY WEATHER BALLOONS () WAVE ()
(C) (7) MISSION [OR OBJECTIVE] NEXT CREW OUT TODAY WEATHER BALLOONS
(A) (7) WEATHER BALLOONS
- (M) (8) ***** ***la** l***denver****
(MII) (8) And Land L —denver ofww3
(R) (8) — Add [And, Ask] land d——[dirt cover?] crews.
(RII) (8) BETTER IF THEY ADD LAND DEMO RAWIN CREWS
(B) (8) L — DENVER CREWS
(C) (8) 509 HAS LAND SURVEYOR CREWS
(A) (8) LAND

Line (9) is blank.

- (M) (10) Temple
(R) (10) rAMEy
(RII) (10) RAMEY
(B) (10) TEMPLE
(C) (10) R RAMEY

military jargon. The closest is David Rudiak's attempt to place military unit designations into the message. He noted one spot where he thought the terms "58" or "58th bomber squadron" might have been indicated. He also located a second place where the phrase "54th SAID" could indicate some kind of a military unit, although no one has yet located a unit with that designation.

There is now a final complication for all this. Johnson, according to some, has suggested that he handed the message to Ramey that he (Ramey) is holding in the photograph. That scenario changes the source of the document. Did Johnson bring it into the office with him? Johnson said that he had received, from his boss at the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, an Associated Press wire story about the debris coming from Roswell. This would mean that the memo could relate to Roswell but would be a document from a civilian source. Thus, it would contain nothing to establish the reality of the Roswell UFO crash.

Of course, it must be noted that Johnson has altered this new statement slightly. It must also be noted that Johnson's retelling of the events in General Ramey's

office has undergone considerable evolution from the first interviews conducted in 1989.

There is currently no consensus on what the message says or of the source of it. One researcher, a champion of the Roswell case, said that it had to be assumed that the message had something to do with the Roswell case because Ramey is holding it while Johnson is taking his picture. There really is no reason to make that assumption. The message could be about almost anything, could be from almost anywhere, and the words and images being seen might be a reflection of what the researcher wanted to see rather than what is actually there.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

One of us (Jim Houran) wondered if those interpretations of the memo might not fall into the category of seeing the "faces in the clouds." No one denies that biases and errors have crept into previous studies of the memo; otherwise, analysis and interpretation of the document would be a straightforward task with a clear consensus of its contents.

(although the memo is near the resolution limit of the camera, which complicates interpretation).

Accordingly, we designed a psychological study to estimate the degree of bias that suggestion and expectation may have caused in previous interpretations. Such findings would be helpful for determining whether more refined analyses of the memo are needed, as well as what type of research design for deciphering the memo would promote maximum reliability, objectivity, and meaningfulness.

Towards this end we conducted three related studies in which we asked self-selected participants to attempt to decipher the Ramey memo under one of three possible suggestion conditions. We expected that each suggestion condition would elicit significant differences in the interpretations provided by the subjects. However, we were also interested to learn whether there was any agreement on the identity of words in the same location in the document, irrespective of suggestion condition. We had no expectations about this aspect of the study.

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

Houran enlisted the help of two research assistants to compile a test pool of ideally 300 people for a study that generally aimed, as the subjects were told, to "determine how much information people could read on a photograph of a document." Only 176 people (93 men, 83 women) were recruited (mean age = 37.4, std. dev. = 9.8, range = 18-68), and we randomly assigned these subjects into one of the three suggestion conditions. There were no statistically significant differences in age among the three groups. The protocol for the three experimental conditions is outlined below.

Study I: A convenience sample of 59 subjects who were asked to "carefully study and try to read the contents of a photograph of a military memo that could contain information about the crash, retrieval, and subsequent cover-up of an extraterrestrial craft near Roswell, New Mexico, in July of 1947."

Study II: A convenience sample of 58 subjects who were asked to "carefully study and try to read the contents of a photograph of a military memo that could contain information about atomic testing."

Study III: A convenience sample of 59 who were asked to "carefully study and try to read the contents of a photograph of a document," but were given no clues about the origin of the document or what it might contain.

After the deciphering task, each subject completed a questionnaire containing demographic questions; Lange and Houran's (1999) Rasch version of the AT-20 (MacDonald, 1970) measure of tolerance of ambiguity; and a constructed index of a subject's knowledge of Roswell and the Ramey memo.

The findings revealed some surprises. We found that a person's age and knowledge (belief, alleged experience, and exposure to UFO information) significantly influ-

enced the number of words deciphered, irrespective of the suggestion condition. The suggestion condition also affected the number of words deciphered. Analysis revealed that subjects in the Roswell and Atomic Bomb suggestion conditions deciphered a similar number of words in the document, and both of these conditions elicited significantly more words than in the control condition.

Subjects in the Roswell condition spent an average of 20 minutes trying to decipher the contents of the document. The subjects primed to notice Roswell-related terms tended to interpret some words in accordance with earlier interpretations of the same words in the same positions by ufologists (e.g., "remains," "weather balloons," "land").

Likewise, subjects in the Atomic Bomb condition spent an average of 16 minutes trying to decipher the contents of the document. This change in context was accompanied by new interpretations of certain words. Subjects perceived content that was congruent with the atomic bomb scenario (e.g., "flash," "glasses," "atomic").

Subjects in the blind or control condition spent an average of 14 minutes trying to decipher the contents of the document. Only a few interpretations were noted, and the content of these efforts did not strongly reflect any particular scenario such as we found in the other conditions.

Even without sophisticated analytic software, the subjects across all three conditions found parts of the document legible. Moreover, despite the statistically significant effects of cognitive style and suggestion, subjects across the three groups did show consensus on several words that previous investigators also agreed upon: "Fort Worth TX" ($n = 52$), "story" ($n = 61$), and "weather balloons" ($n = 27$). Another word of relative agreement "land" ($n = 47$) was noticed by subjects in the two primary suggestion conditions, in which people were perhaps more motivated or discriminating in their interpretations than in the blind condition. Finally, subjects across all suggestion conditions perceived punctuation marks within the document.

While it must be noted that the examination of the memo by those in the study was of a relatively short duration, the purpose was not to decipher the memo, but to determine if "priming" or bias had any effect on the perceptions of the text in the memo. The interpretations offered by the subjects, based on their assignment to one of the three groups, did offer insight into the effect of their preconceived notions of the memo. Where the words were truly ambiguous, the spin put on the memo influenced the way in which they read the text.

The surprisingly high agreement between our subjects and previous investigators on some words in certain locations in the Ramey document suggests that some of it is indeed legible, even without computer enhancement. However, the meaning or context of those specified words remains ambiguous because the degree of interpretation of the document is strongly influenced by suggestion effects

(continued on page 26)

COLD CASE UFOLOGY

BY JENNY RANDLES

Out of the Shadows, by David Clarke and Andy Roberts. London: Piatkus Books, 2002. 282p.

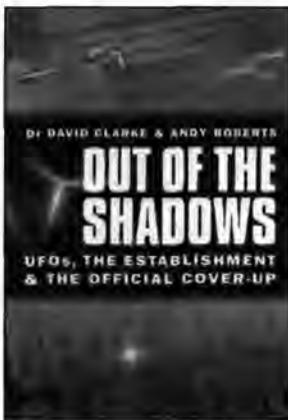
Clarke and Roberts are two British ufologists whose reputation is probably greater at home than beyond those shores—although this is, in fact, by no means their first book—either as individuals or as a writing team.

Yet *Out of the Shadows* is in my view their most important contribution to the UFO record, eclipsing Clarke's myths and legends guidebooks about various parts of northern England and Roberts's famed, but very acerbic, magazine *Armchair Ufologist*—which prided itself on being “tough on Ufology and tough on the causes of Ufology!” Many witty editions of that short-lived zine read a bit like *Saucer Smear* on acid. It was funny, cruel, and at times said things others dared not say (but probably would have done if they had had the guts).

In short these two are hard-headed ufologists who, like many Yorkshiremen, speak their minds and do not like to take any waffle. If they think someone has made a mistake, they will tell him (along with the rest of the world).

The duo has gathered a reputation, particularly through their presence on the Internet, as almost evangelical disbelievers. Certainly they are both intensely skeptical of anything alien behind UFO reality. But the name “debunker” would be unfair. I have known Dave since he was a teenage UFO enthusiast and Andy for 20 years and (in order that the reader should appreciate any bias) admit that we three coauthored the 2000 book on solved UFO cases *The UFOs That Never Were* (London House).

Andy, who works in care for the disaffected, and Dave, who has a Ph.D. in folklore (making him a little like the British equivalent of Eddie Bullard) but has mostly worked as a journalist, are utterly tenacious investigators. Armchair ufologists they are not, and I doubt there are



more willing and active field investigators anywhere in the U.K. When they get their teeth into a case, they pursue it like a dog that has a rag doll in its mouth and will not rest until it is lying in its component pieces on the ground.

It is easy to interpret this zeal as a desire to rid the world of pesky UFOs—or even to dream up crackpot ideas that they are in league with the government to further the

cause of the great cover-up. But this is nonsense and much too simplistic. Yes, they are driven by demons: notably a passionate attempt to get to the truth. Without a doubt, they think that the truth is more mundane than most *IUR* readers do, and that there are no spaceships or aliens to be covered up. But nobody is paying them to say that and I truthfully think that if they ever stumbled across a big case that suggested some great event then they would be bold enough to say so. Indeed, knowing their skills at public relations, my bet is that they would rapidly become the biggest thorn in the side of the powers that be and make darn sure nobody covered this one up.

DEFENSIVE TACTICS

In the U.K., the Ministry of Defense is charged with the responsibility to investigate UFOs. The authors have, I suspect, always believed that the MoD operate no cover-up of any guilty secrets. They tend to think (much as I have argued in *IUR* over the years) that the MoD is hiding its ignorance rather than any knowledge of some dark truth. Unlike me, however, Clarke and Roberts seem to have concluded that every case can probably be explained in mundane terms given sufficient effort at its investigation. They are more or less persuaded that there is no new science lurking behind any of the apparently baffling cases (although they do say they are still willing to be convinced).

About two years ago, Clarke and Roberts began a quiet campaign to persuade the MoD to release their UFO data for public scrutiny. Dave, given his doctorate and links to a modern folklore study project that has the backing of senior academics, was an ideal person to try to coerce the

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MoD into changing its long-standing policy of withholding UFO data. The agency does release data but only 30 years after the fact—batches being annually opened up to study at the Public Record Office at Kew. Dave, working on a project to record the social history of British UFO study as a sort of space-age folklore archive, wanted to see documents much sooner than this policy would allow. So he asked for precisely that.

There has been some softening of this archaic approach in the British government over recent years, and a few cases that were less than 30 years old had lately surfaced. Moreover, there was the prospect of a sort of Freedom of Information Act on the Blair government's horizon that would see the MoD persuaded by law to be rather more liberal than now. Given these developments and the proven track record of hard-headiness (or skepticism, depending on your take) it was easy to see why the MoD might well find it palatable to cooperate with Clarke and his colleague. They are certainly preferable to some pro-ET ufologists whom the MoD would likely expect to turn the files over to a tabloid and then spin its content into evidence of alien invasion. There was never any danger of that happening if they cooperated with Andy and Dave!

Whatever the case, the two ufologists succeeded in their quest and during 2001 a stream of documents was made available to them. The two most extraordinary of these were the complete MoD file on the infamous Rendlesham Forest case (*IUR*, Fall 2001, pp. 21–25, 30–32), and the data from what was an Air Ministry working party which 50 years ago met to first set the agenda for the MoD UFO investigation program that followed.

This Working Party report had supposedly long since been lost—although its existence was known. For instance, we have had for about 12 years a 1952 memo sent by Prime Minister Winston Churchill who had demanded an inquiry into UFOs from his Air Minister. He was evidently satisfied by this then-secret report and supposedly stopped asking for further action. So we were told. But the report that he was shown had allegedly been destroyed years ago.

Missing or not, thanks to some detective work and persistence by the authors, a copy was suddenly traced by the MoD in time to allow them to use it to full advantage in this book.

With these major planks and the promise of a thousand little splinters in the form of hundreds of internal memos and other reports from the MoD, Clarke and Roberts decided to write this book. You might expect it to be a presentation of the MoD records that have thus surfaced, and on one level that is precisely what it is. But it is actually far more as well. What they have done is introduce a new kind of UFO research—what the British police call “waking the dead”—taking cold, unsolved cases from years ago and subjecting them to a vigorous reinvestigation using modern insights and ufological skepticism, hoping to at last find a way to resolve them.

Make no mistake, the authors tackle these cold cases expecting to turn them into IFOs and frequently believe that they can do just that. However, it is important to add, there are cases in this book that they admit leave them puzzled. And several new reports surface that will satisfy any believer as to their high strangeness.

In pursuing this new investigation of these often 50-year-old tales, the authors have not sat back and let the data come to them. They have used the resources available to their study to go out, find crucial witnesses and persuade them to talk. Nearly every big case that they write about is fleshed out not merely by newly released MoD documentation but interviews they have conducted over the past 18 months with retired MoD personnel, military commanders, and direct eyewitnesses—often people well into their dotage, of course. The result is probably the best-documented series of UFO case investigations I have yet seen in a book. It is first-hand ufology in the best possible sense.

No doubt, many people will have to suffer the negative tone that seeps from beneath the surface of the text at times, as many ufologists will interpret this quest to solve cases in that light, but I doubt that any reader will not respect the methods used to accumulate the evidence. For these are not debunkers making up explanations; they are investigators looking hard for them. You may believe, or disbelieve, what they say they have discovered. But you cannot fault their determination.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

The resulting book is almost entirely concerned with the U.K., for obvious reasons, although there are occasional references to events elsewhere. Moreover, it is quite firmly set within the Cold War era, with virtually all of the case data predating the 1990s; indeed, quite a lot of it dates back to the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. However, much of the time this is superbly illuminated by new information.

Chapters 1–2 address the pre-UFO era, concentrating on what the MoD did or did not do regarding the wave of foo-fighter sightings during World War II (lights that pursued allied aircraft) as well as the various ghost-rocket sightings in northern Europe in 1946. As part of the discussion, they demystify a few old chestnuts, such as supposed projects that never happened despite having been written about by other books. But this is really just the appetizer, as the chapters concern cases that are just too cold to be fully decloaked.

Similar things can be said about Chapter 3, which looks at early British sightings (1947–1950) in an era when there were no UFO groups or UFO books and very little coordinated investigation, even at the MoD. The chapter recounts some of the cases (a few of which seem interesting), but there is no real evidence of a Project Sign or Grudge type of study underway in the U.K. Indeed, the authors characterize the government response as a lack of interest, and I have heard it said to me by one man who was

in the Air Ministry in the early 1950s that a belief was current that UFOs were just an "American craziness"—a belief that ongoing events were rather swiftly to destroy.

In Chapter 4 we see this shift in gear. Now the authors have begun to conduct real investigations into events and this chapter reveals some fascinating insights, gleaned from memoirs, private records, and interviews regarding how the Air Ministry might have taken it upon itself to delve more carefully into UFO cases. They dig out the true background to such legends as Lord Louis Mountbatten's UFO associations and even the Queen's husband (Prince Phillip's) long-suspected UFO enthusiasm. There is little doubt from the evidence they present that as UFO reports grew stronger (and stranger) and were self-evidently not confined to the United States, influential people in British government circles started to think again.

We now move into the newly discovered and long-lost Working Party study on UFOs that dates from June 1951. This is the report used to try to persuade Churchill a year later that UFOs were no big deal after his concern was understandably piqued in the wake of the Washington, D.C., sightings. Sadly, the report itself is no great shakes. It is a mish-mash of Project Grudge findings and comments from Hynek (who would have been amazed to know how much he influenced British UFO policy 51 years ago).

This data, perhaps crucially, was made available to the MoD thanks to the CIA. This fact is probably more interesting than the authors realize. In my book *The Truth behind the Men in Black* I show how around this same time, as the CIA-inspired Robertson Panel was being planned, both British and Australian cases with physical evidence were ending up with the CIA. So there was evidently an international dimension behind the CIA/Robertson Panel policy and its now fairly apparent debunking strategies.

Indeed, this important chapter goes even further in exposing the origin of and motives behind the cover-up by official sources that must have been in evidence on a global level at this time. For, as I have noted before, the British UFO record actually allows us to see the reality of a cover-up in full flow in a way that I do not think the U.S. Freedom of Information Act documentation necessarily does.

I noted in my MIB book how by 1953—the same week in fact that the Robertson Panel met in Washington—a memo went out from the Ministry to all senior military bases in the U.K. basically telling them to prevent their air crew from reporting UFO sightings in public. These would be too influential on public thinking, because the public trusted the caliber of such witnesses. Thus the reports were to be considered secret and only investigated "in house." This was clearly the basis of the first real cover-up, and Clarke and Roberts add some vital new pieces to the puzzle in this chapter.

We find that the CIA sat in on MoD meetings when the conclusions of the Working Party were debated and how its findings were covered up, as the memo puts it, "following the lead given by the Americans on this subject."

So, yes, there was a cover-up in the U.K. circa 1952–1953 and it was led by the United States and dictated by the CIA. It was not, they feel and I concur, a cover-up of any major secrets (like physical proof of alien UFOs), at least not insofar as the British data reveals. But it was born out of a desire to kill off serious discussion of UFOs by preventing public revelation of cases that might impact favorably on public opinion. That is almost as disconcerting, in my opinion.

Moreover, this chapter proves something else that is terribly important. After discovering documentation about two military encounters in the U.K. during this same period, the authors went out and found the now very elderly gentlemen involved in the sightings. What emerged was pretty good evidence that their stories were officially distorted and their significance modified by the authorities so as to underplay the possible impact of the events on opinion in the military. Even in interviews in 2001, these witnesses were unhappy with what the powers-that-be did with their stories half a century before.

Another important clue to emerge from this pivotal chapter is the way in which much of the work was being done by the Directorate of Scientific (and Technical) Intelligence (DSI, or DSTI, as it was later known). This agency has long been known by ufologists to be the linchpin in British UFO case study, but its evidence remains elusive, even today. The agency had roles in most of the key cases and we know of these activities only through the memos it sent to the Air Staff (the public relations operation for which Nick Pope recently worked). This Air Staff is, of course, the source of the files that everyone—even Clarke and Roberts—are debating. We see little of the record that might have been kept at other levels of government.

While some DSTI memos are released alongside Air Staff case files, the internal data from the DSI/DSTI on how it evaluated cases is often left to the imagination. You have to work out what DSTI really does or thinks about a case, as you only get to see what it chooses to tell the Air Staff well after it has done or thought it! This to me is one of the most important points about this story of the MoD and UFOs, but it is often underemphasized.

The Air Staff, quite naturally, never suspects it is being misled. But we should not be so kindly disposed towards intelligence staff at the MoD. In reality, the story that we see is always at best only a partial insight: a view through a crack in the window, not a full guided tour of the house.

We see here, I suspect, the way in which UFO investigation is officially conducted, not just in the U.K. but likely elsewhere. A "shop window" organization interfaces with the public and reports what information it is given by the deeper-level scientific and intelligence staff. The shop-window organization can always be honest and claim it knows no more than it is telling in its statements to the public or media. As indeed it does not. It is vital it should not lie if at all possible. But the people who may

know more never interact with the public or have to release their data, so do not have to lie. Anything they may know or suspect is conveniently stored well out of sight.

If this has been a long-term strategy of the MoD, it's a clever one because it has caused us to be blindsided into paying attention to the Air Staff (or to Project Blue Book in the U.S.), when the real people we needed to be engaging were hiding at the back of the store.

Of course, what kind of story would be revealed by the machinations of these hidden bodies cannot be presumed. I am sure those who feel that there has been a cover up of major UFO evidence would be heartened to know that it remains a possibility. But it is by no means a certainty. It may well be that these people genuinely had little more data than those who were interacting with the public, or that they truthfully did not believe that there was an alien presence in our skies, or that they simply carried out a cover-up to protect their own butts.

After all, what government wants to admit that it has no clue what UFOs are and that they are cavorting about our skies at will but we cannot do very much about it? A government that does not want to get reelected seems to be the most likely answer. So there is a strong built-in reason why a cover-up should practically generate itself regardless of the nature of the UFO evidence. It may be quite enough that the public, in large numbers, feels that the UFO mystery is real and extraordinary.

THE BRITISH PROJECT BLUE BOOK

In Chapter 6, the authors reveal how the MoD set up a monitor on UFOs in the wake of a wave of sightings that occurred during the NATO exercise Operation Mainbrace in September 1952. Ironically, this was only days after Churchill had been assured there was nothing going on! This story is already well-known to ufologists, but the authors, as usual, add new dimensions. They reveal additional cases from the period that illuminate the way the study was carried out and how its existence was suppressed. Even a member of parliament (MP) was lied to deliberately in the House of Commons over the existence of the CIA-inspired study.

This MP (Major Sir Patrick Wall) remained an outspoken UFO supporter until his death many years later. He also became a president of BUFORA (the major British UFO group). Today, a government lying to an MP would probably cause it to fall. The fact that the MoD were willing to mislead politicians in this dangerous gambit as part of their obsession with playing down the UFO mystery is another serious issue we now have to confront.

The well-known RAF Lakenheath/RAF Bentwaters radar-visual encounter of August 1956 gets Chapter 7 almost to itself. As before, there is a splendid investigation, featuring interviews with all the major British air crews involved. Alongside the presentation of the evidence is a scarcely disguised view that one of ufology's

great cases is probably going to be resolved, although, to be fair, the book does suggest that there are unresolved issues and signs of another cover up at work.

This chapter is intriguing in the way in which you can see an account of a solid case (told through the modern-day testimony of half a dozen participants) set alongside the political machinations exposed in previous chapters.

For instance, I immediately recalled how on my trips to the Public Record Office while filming my 1996 BBC documentary (*Britain's Secret UFO Files*) I found one MoD memo referring to this case. That memo was very significant because it was a briefing for an answer to be given in parliament about radar-tracked UFO sightings. It referred to Lakenheath-Bentwaters in passing but noted that just one case had escaped into public notice (an event over Scotland that triggered a civil-defense alert and so simply could not be covered up). The others, it almost triumphantly noted, had successfully been hidden from public knowledge, including Lakenheath-Bentwaters.

One is left wondering just how successful the policy was never to reveal a case that might be strong enough to convince the public. Has it concealed dozens of key encounters from our knowledge since the 1950s? Recall that the MoD did exactly the same thing following the December 1980 sightings in Rendlesham Forest. Left up to their devices, those events would not have been made public either, or at least until the file might have found its way onto the public record office another decade from now. So one has to suspect that other amazing cases may exist in the DSTI records that have never been revealed publicly because they have been successfully kept under wraps. How many of these do we still not know about?

With this memo, we already had proof by 1996 of a British government cover-up. Now, thanks to this new book, we have plenty more evidence—and evidence provided by two men who are largely skeptics, do not forget. Taken all together, this is tantamount to cast-iron proof that the British MoD deliberately prevented the best evidence from ever reaching the eyes of the public. That is a virtual definition of a UFO cover-up.

But this chapter reveals another aspect to the book that I found a little more irksome. The authors seem to want to be perceived by the public as anything but ufologists. The publicity blurb on the cover makes scant reference to their long past as active UFO enthusiasts. And they have been presenting themselves in public as social historians and referring to UFO enthusiasts (when they occasionally do in the text) almost as if they are another species.

For instance, there is no mention in the chapter on Lakenheath-Bentwaters of the UFO Investigator's Network study into this case that we started about three years ago and in which Andy and Dave have been active participants. It began because I was able to meet and interview two of the four RAF air crew for the first time and then establish a rapport with the squadron leader who scrambled them (Freddie Wimbledon). He provided us with a lot of

useful documentation and assistance.

Without question, Andy and Dave have added massively to this research by doing their own extensive interviews and finding the other two crew members to flesh out our knowledge. But any association with ufology is seemingly covered up in a manner with which the MoD would be proud.

I assume it was part of Clarke and Roberts's tactics to appear divorced from ufology as much as possible, and thus hope to gain support from high-brow media sources. The establishment will take seriously a book by social historians—especially skeptical ones—but would probably ignore one written by two ufologists.

However, to read of my filmed interviews with two of the air crew in 1996 that the pilots spoke to "a researcher" for the BBC, rather than a ufologist reads rather oddly if you know the full story, which most readers likely will not. I found myself wondering whether it was thought more important to avoid any impression that the case was contaminated by prior association with ufology. Perhaps I am overreacting here. And I do appreciate that public relations is a fact of life for authors. In any case, it is a minor quibble only.

The authors could have aided serious UFO research by showing more often throughout the book that it has a sober side. Instead, the ufologically uneducated reader will more likely conclude that only social historians marching in from the outside could possibly sort out the mess. I doubt that was the author's intention, and I applaud their superb efforts at trying to unravel this case, efforts that surpass those of any ufologist (myself included). Still, as a long-time UFO researcher, it is hard not to feel a sense of betrayal at seeing such spin.

INTO MODERN TIMES

The remaining chapters of the book take us into more modern times (if we can define 1967 in that way). To some extent these are less successful than the earlier ones, as cases seem to be rather more casually dealt with at times. We read, for instance, in Chapter 8 about the 1962 Alex Birch photographic hoax, or non-hoax (depending on which witness statement you choose to believe), covered briefly.

Chapter 9 investigates the famed 1967 wave over Britain where police officers saw flying crosses, which most sensible ufologists have long accepted to be misperceptions of Venus. While the coverage of the cases is limited, there is an interesting look at the MoD memos of the time which provides some insight into how such widely reported UFO activity was dealt with. But most significant here are the sections revealing how the Defense Intelligence investigative agency DI 55 got involved in UFO cases around this time. Its role ever since, rather like DSTI, has no doubt been more important than any released documents have ever made apparent.

The thorny issue of men in black surfaces in Chapter 10. While there is interesting material here about dubious agency practices, the overall sense the authors leave is that no government agents have attempted to silence witnesses and that most or all claims that this has occurred must be mistaken. I also felt that their attempt to show this through the famous Jim Templeton (Solway Spaceman) photograph is rather slight. They conclude (on the basis of a 1997 evaluation not really discussed) that the photo is a hoax, although they tactfully suggest it was carried out by persons unknown and not by the witness himself (which is certainly possible but a million miles from being proven).

As to Templeton's very strongly recalled MIB visitation (which again I documented on film in 1996 while making the BBC film), they produce a contradictory statement carried in a press article at the time of the 1964 event and rather oddly claim that the witness has changed his mind because of what "UFO writers . . . wish to be the truth" (which I trust does not mean to imply I talked him into it). In fact, I was stunned to hear his story, which was fully formed when I met him six years ago.

Well, perhaps they are right to interpret this weird case in this way, but I know what both Jim and his wife adamantly told me on camera and have repeated in my various conversations since and I don't share this rather easy way out as being anything but a possibility.

Of course, it is possible that the photo was faked to fool the witness by someone who decided never to admit it. It is equally possible that someone went to elaborate lengths to pretend to be government agents interested in the case. It is possible that they knew about the contemporary incident at Woomera that the visiting agents used as a reason for MoD interest. But to suggest all this can only be supposition. It is no less possible that the story as Templeton tells it is basically the truth. And that someone, somewhere deliberately tried to discredit him.

Moreover, surely that falls exactly into the arena of what you might expect of the MoD, given the obvious public impact of this extraordinary photo. They could not deny its existence, since it was public knowledge, but they could covertly visit the witness and let him shoot himself in the foot merely by telling the truth about their odd behavior. The fact that no such admission by DI 55—or whatever agency might have been involved—exists in the files released to Clarke and Roberts is hardly any surprise, nor is it much in the way of evidence that such a thing did not occur. You choose what you prefer to believe, I guess.

In Chapter 11 there are a series of further less detailed looks at data from the MoD archives about events from the late 60s and early 70s. These range from a TV debate about sightings in Oxfordshire (although oddly the authors do not mention the explanation for this case that BUFORA investigators found, a fuel burnoff by a USAF F-111) to the Berwyn Mountains "UFO crash" in 1974, which Andy Roberts expertly reinvestigated and believes he has resolved in mundane terms. While again there are interesting

filler items along the way, the in-depth coverage and interviews from earlier chapters are not so evident here.

That changes a bit with Chapter 12, which contains 22 pages on the infamous Rendlesham Forest episodes from December 1980. This is the last major case to be featured in the book, but most ufologists will find little comfort in how it is treated. The authors chose not to attempt to resolve what was seen but to show why the MoD investigation went nowhere (because at times it was more concerned with public perception than with discovering the truth).

To be fair, the MoD had little chance, given that they were provided with the wrong dates for the incidents, had not been given the photographs or soil samples taken by the USAF at the time, did not even get to hear the famous Halt tape, and faced radar units with malfunctioning equipment.

Add to that the awful bureaucratic mess that saw letters crawl back and forth between departments taking weeks to do so, and stagnation was inevitable. Not to mention the confusion over the witness statements and the presence around the same time of the events of a major satellite reentry *and* a bright bolide, both of which had some role in the case. It is easy to see why the MoD got nowhere.

Twenty-two years later, the UFO community is still arguing about what happened in Rendlesham Forest, and opinion is probably more polarized now than it ever was. Moreover, the MoD was hugely concerned because I chanced to mention (to *Omni* magazine) that I suspected a nuclear accident might have occurred. There was mild panic because they knew (although the public didn't) that there were indeed nuclear weapons on base and concern among the public was mounting over the placement of U.S. cruise missiles on British soil.

In fact, it is fair to say the MoD was mighty relieved that the UFO community laughed off my suggestion and chased spaceships instead, because even if this was what happened—as I now do not believe it was—they could see a huge political headache coming to bite them if serious media sources started to talk about nuclear missiles rather than aliens. It is with relief their internal memos note that ufologists will, of course, not be interested in this nuclear explanation. As they rightly guessed, many UFO investigators did not want the case to be resolved in terms other than UFOs.

This aside is possibly more telling about government association with UFOs than any aspect of the still confused Rendlesham Forest affair. As the records show, the MoD never explained the case (not even as a lighthouse), and their investigation was at best perfunctory. All these years we waited to see their in-depth case file and, if this now released file is all there is (still a necessary caveat), it was not worth the worry. The file exposes a level of competence in searching for answers that is hardly worthy of the Little Piddletown UFO Spotters Club.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Rendlesham case is a good place to end because that episode reveals in all its gory mess the contradictions, arguments, and insoluble myriad options that all UFO investigators face. The MoD were not omnipotent and all-knowing. They, like the rest of us, were faced with baffling evidence and were trying to unravel it by using nothing more than human ingenuity. But, unlike a UFO investigator, their responsibility was hardly ever directed toward finding out what had really happened. It was inwardly focused toward protecting the country against possible invasion and, once satisfied that no UFOs were doing that, to public relations and spin to ensure the public got to see and hear what it was deemed most expedient to tell them. For the MoD UFOs have long been not a problem to be solved but just a PR nightmare.

The authors conclude with a chapter examining what they think the evidence reveals. Basically, it is that official secrecy is endemic in the U.K. and sometimes its own worst enemy. The MoD clearly have covered up UFO cases since 1952 and engaged in dubious practices to persuade the public that nothing much is going on. You may feel, as I do, that these practices may have gone further than the authors themselves suspect (perhaps with regards to MIB activity). But you may find it hard to argue with their assessment that the cover-up came because the UFO mystery was such an elusive thing that its scope went beyond the capacity of MoD filing clerks to investigate, let alone solve, in their spare time.

I doubt that Dave Clarke and Andy Roberts expect many ufologists to accept all of what they conclude. They know that for many the belief that UFOs are a major phenomenon and thus simply must have exercised the minds of the powers-that-be more than this book reveals is hardly going to be driven out of existence by their words. But they have done as good a job as was possible to do in presenting the data released from these records. Indeed, the very fact that you can read their evidence and disagree with it if you choose is testament to that.

This is not an easy book to like if you are a die-hard ufologist. But it is an important book to try to understand, for its pages contain many important revelations and insights. It deserves to be the subject of debate in years to come. I do worry as to whether the UFO community is ready to embrace its less than exciting conclusions about why the cover-up—exposed as a reality as it may now be—first came to be created. And I do fear that so far as the public is concerned it will only reinforce the views of the skeptics that nothing much has ever been going on in the UFO mystery.

While I do not think for one minute that there is anything sinister in this, I suspect the MoD will also be quietly delighted with the PR job this book does for them. That the authors happen to support the MoD stance is not

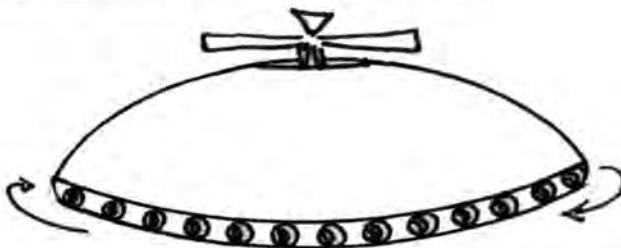
(continued on page 31)

UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES FROM THE TIMMERMAN FILES

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

As readers may recall from "The Timmerman Files" (*IUR*, Winter 2001–2002, pp. 13–14, 30), CUFOS board member John Timmerman collected hundreds of new UFO case reports while shepherding the CUFOS Photo Exhibit around the country in the 1980s. These cases are in the process of being extracted and collated for a Fund for UFO Research monograph. The cases I describe below represent some of the more thought-provoking material in the collection.

Case One: Benton, Louisiana, January 19, 1988. A father and daughter were driving to pick up the mother from work at about 5 p.m. They pulled into the parking lot and stopped. The lot, the street, and the nearby Interstate highway were all in their normal hubbub of activity. The daughter brought the father's attention to a streak of light in the sky. Almost as soon as he focused on it, the light appeared immediately in front of them (about 150 feet away and about 50 feet above the ground).



It was a disk, dull silver or steel gray in color. All around the edge were openings like wind scoops (what the witness called "turbines"). They spun about fairly rapidly like a slow-moving fan on which you can follow the blades if you concentrate. The witness speculated that these held the object up. From the top of the disk emerged a sheath from which extended rotary blades as seen in helicopters. The device performed this extension for them as they watched, though the blades did not turn.

The disk was about the size of an automobile and

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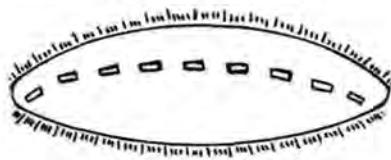
CUFOS Treasurer John Timmerman and the CUFOS photo exhibit.

around five feet tall. There was never any noise. In fact, for the approximate minute and a half of the performance, nothing seemed to be happening at all. As the witness said, "It seemed at this time that there were no cars moving, didn't hear a thing in the world. Nothing. Just like the world stood still."

Then the device began to move, again with no noise, and "zip" it was gone. "As soon as the machine left, traffic on I-20 came alive and the parking lot became active."

Was it an out-of-this-world technology that can pinch off a little bubble of time and play around in it?

Case Two: Near Pittsburg, Kansas, late July or early August 1975. A married couple and their small son were driving in the country about 9 p.m. The wife said, "Look! A falling star!" At that instant, an object began to move quickly toward them. It came across the highway at about telephone pole height. It was round and glowing intensely, with even more intense, small panels inset all around it. And it was very large; it covered the whole highway.



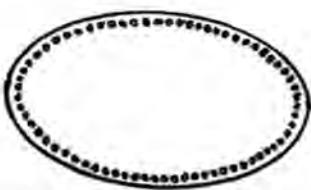
It was hovering above, and the wife said, "Stop! Pull over." At that moment, the object began to pull away. The couple followed it as they drove on, and each time the wife would say something, the device would slightly change its motion. As the wife said, "We wanted to look at it and it

seemed more like it reacted to my voice. Anytime I said something it changed direction."

The object finally picked up a little speed and then was just not there anymore: "Like someone turned off a switch." While the sighting was happening, they were amazingly calm, and only began to feel scared afterwards. There was no noise throughout, no wind, just completely dead silence. As they drove on down the country road, they began to notice animals—skunks, opossums, raccoons, dogs, cats, and rabbits—all over: "They were out running around like they were excited."

What technology responds to a person's voice (or thought) at a long distance, creates a zone of silence, and releases some gush of nervous excitement as it leaves?

Case Three: Shelby, Ohio, February 1979. A woman was visiting her aunt and they were just sitting down to view a favorite television show when a bright light shone outside the window. They looked outside and saw a bright light hanging in the air behind their dog kennel in a field. The woman went out to investigate. Two more lights appeared and one by one went into the original light. That light disappeared and was replaced by red and green lights, which resolved into a great number of lights of both colors on an object.



As she approached the field near the house, the object began to move towards her. She could not count the number of lights as it passed overhead. It appeared as big as a large jetliner with bolts on the bottom as large as volleyballs. As the huge oval craft moved overhead, her dog began whining and cowering, and she thought of her previous dog Poochy and felt that he would never have acted so unprotectively in the same circumstance.

As she had that thought, "I just had an awful pain in my head and I fell down to my knees immediately. At the time I thought this is absolutely crazy, but I can remember everything about Poochy that ever happened to us in the whole time that I had him. It was like everything was all in my head."

As the object moved slowly away with a soft whirring noise, she got back to her feet. Her aunt, who watched the object first from inside and then from the other end of the house, said, "It's gone! It never came out on the other side of the house!" The object just passed (somehow) across the road over a neighbor's house and then (somehow) left the area.

The woman and her aunt went back inside . . . and their television program was over, and a second show was just going off the air.

"I said, wait a minute, I don't understand this, we

weren't outside that long. I said, how long do you think we were outside? And she says, 'maybe five minutes.' And here we figured there was almost maybe 45–50 minutes gone from the time we saw it, went outside, and came back in, that we couldn't account for, that it was gone."

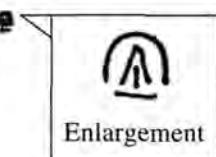
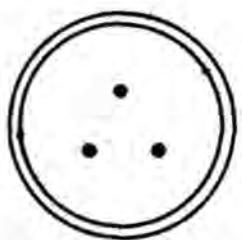
She then reported that she had this headache for perhaps weeks thereafter, before she finally shook it off.

What kind of technology activates memory packets in the brain, dislocates in space, and plays with time?

Case Four: Salisbury, North Carolina, in the early 1970s. A family was woken up by a humming noise outside their house late at night. It sounded something like an electric generator. But they did not rise to investigate it. The next morning, they discovered a circular mark in their front yard. It was a ring of depressed grass about 15–16 feet in diameter and about nine feet wide. Inside of this circle, the grass was not depressed, except for three circular "pod marks" arranged in a triangle.

As the witness stated, "There were three markings on the inside of the circle, where it looked like something had set down, some type of, you know, an object." Scattered in the yard was an odd material, "big wads of it, looked something similar to like a filter out of a cigarette."

And separated from the circle, by about three or four feet, was a small insignia or symbol, also formed by depressing the grass. (Upon viewing the CUFOS photo exhibit, the witness told Timmerman that the symbol was very similar to the one shown seen by Lonnie Zamora in connection with the famous Socorro, New Mexico landing case.) As time went by, the grass in the depressed circle browned and died.



Enlargement

What technology leaves imprints on grass that later causes the vegetation to die? What technology leaves behind symbols, and why?

Case Five: Concord, North Carolina, March 23, 1987. A woman heard a crash outside her home in the evening and went to the window to investigate. Though partially obscured by a tree and its limbs, there was no question that she was looking at a domed disk parked in her backyard. The dome was about six feet in diameter and the whole craft about 25 feet high.

From the dome came the brightest orange light that she had ever seen, so bright that she could only look for a while, turn away, recover, and look again. (The light created shooting pains in her eyes, so that her eyes didn't



fully recover for two to three days.) The orange light filled the back of her yard so thoroughly that it seemed tangible.

"It was so dense that my outside light looked just like a small light bulb, couldn't see the post at all. . . . My neighbor heard the noise and she said that everything down there at my house looked real orange. And all around it looked like it was just a thick orange fog."

The lower part of the craft looked blue-silver, especially what seemed to be an extended 18-20 foot wide ramp. The object was about 75 feet from the witness. Her eyes were hurting and she didn't see it leave. No ground marks were found the next day. Two days later, her grandson visited and was told the story. He walked the area and held up some keys to the fence gate at the dog lot, which was close to the scene. The keys swung over on their own and hit the metal post, indicating a magnetic field.

What technology creates thick but blinding light and leaves behind remnant magnetism?

Case Six: Near New London, Connecticut, Spring 1983. A woman who was the night supervisor at a local hospital was driving to work at about 10 p.m. A light seemed to flick by quickly in the sky ahead. It stopped above the treetops and shined a searchlight-like beam down on the woods. She pulled over to watch. Abruptly it moved and was in the road directly in front of her. She said, "The eerie thing is there's no cars on the road, and this is a well-traveled road. . . . All of a sudden, a peace came over me, and I don't know what it was."

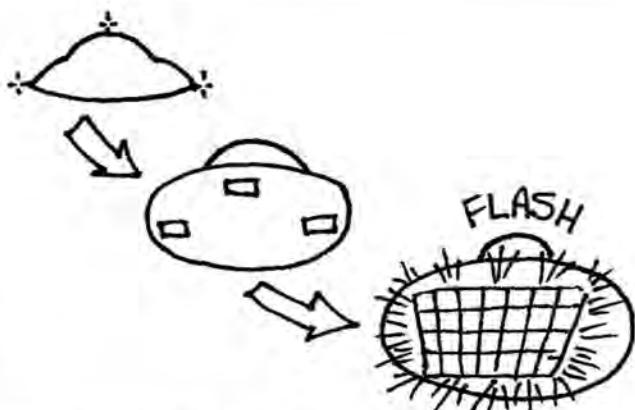
The object was round, and besides the light beam, had blue, yellow, red, and white lights flickering in a circle. Then she blanked out. When she came to, she was feeling comfortable in her car, but the engine, lights, and radio had been turned off. Also, very uncharacteristically for her (as a woman traveling at night), the window was rolled down. The car stalled when she tried to start it, then caught, and she went on to work.

As she explained, "I was late to work that night, the first time I had been late in 15 years, I swear. I walked in about five after 11 and everyone asked me what happened. I said, 'Nothing. Why?' And they said, 'Well, you look so strange.' That whole night I was like walking on clouds."

What technology alters traffic, meddles with time or memory, and creates euphoria?

Case Seven: Wells Township, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, December 27, 1967. At about 9 p.m., two people were traveling along a back road when they saw three lights at the horizon. They stopped their car as the lights approached, and it became apparent that the object was a domed disk. It was following the road at a height of about 300 or 400 feet.

As it closed to less than a mile ("a thousand yards"), it made a banking movement that revealed square, fluores-

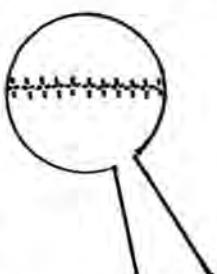


cent panels on the bottom. The dome light in their car came on simultaneously with the banking maneuver, and the whole bottom of the UFO flashed: "There must have been a hundred of these panels on there."

All this occurred in an atmosphere with absolutely no noise. The two witnesses got back in their truck and drove off. The saucer continued to follow them for a while, then banked away and moved off towards Elmira, New York. About 20 minutes later, the parents of one witness reported that they had a power failure where they lived on Elmira's south side.

Again we have our curious, performing technology which seems to have gotten a little too overenthusiastic with a city's power supply.

Case Eight: West Seneca, New York, August 1973. Three people were sitting in their front yard when a low hum directed their attention to an object above the garage. It was a silvery half-egg with glowing orange-and-blue overtones. It began a slow descent towards the roof of the garage, and when it was only five feet above the roof, one of the witnesses yelled, "Stop! You'll crush the garage!" At that moment the object stopped, hovered briefly, and shot away straight upwards.



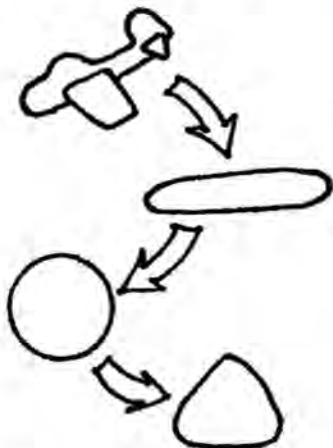
Two days later, one of the witnesses (this time alone) heard the same hum at about the same time in the evening (between 10 and 11 p.m.). Moving down his street was what appeared to be the same object. The "egg" or disk was only three to four feet above the pavement and covered the width of the road. The witness felt compelled to leave the house and go towards the object, which stopped at the end of his driveway. He walked forward until he was only four to five feet away. "I didn't feel any heat, actually I didn't feel anything at that point, other than that I knew I was moving towards it."

Then his dog barked, and he snapped back into his

senses, and backed away. The object waited a moment, then slowly moved away about 20 feet down the street, quickly rose upwards, and vanished rapidly at a 45-degree angle of flight.

Here we see a technology of response, compulsion, and environmental or mental manipulation.

Case Nine: Near Tyler, Texas, September 23, 1973. At about 5 a.m., a truck driver was traveling a familiar route to work. A small "cub airplane" seemed to fly directly in front of another car on the road and nearly caused a wreck. (The witness is very sure that this was in the shape of a small plane.). The plane flew up over the side of the road and hovered above the trees, whereupon it changed into a long cigar shape, looking like an elongated balloon with lights.



The truck driver stopped and got out of the truck to watch. The cigar moved off, then came right back at him with a new, round shape. It began to light up and display many multicolored lights. The object was now over the top of a nearby house. It made a low, "loop-loop-loop" thumping sound, but no one in the house roused, and no other vehicles had stopped to watch.

Then a large, bright, square light seemed to descend and swing from the object. It seemed to approach the truck, go past, and come back at him. This scared the trucker so much he decided to jump back in the truck. But, he said, "I thought I jumped into it, but when I came to myself I was standing holding the truck door. I got so nervous I think I passed out. Sometimes I think this thing picked me up. I had some marks on my hip, marks on my shoulder."

He remembers seeing the big machine ("larger than the house") morph from a round shape into a triangle, move backwards, and go out of sight.

What kind of technology shifts shapes?

Case Ten: Bethel, Alaska, September 3, 1976. Early in the morning, the witness heard a very high-pitched whine, and looked out onto the tundra where a small (2½-3 inches in diameter) white beach ball seemed to be moving in the air, close to the ground. After a while it tilted so that she could see that it was a disk with a rotating "platinum-shiny" area in the middle. The object arced upwards, then back down, and seemed to just disappear into the ground.



As soon as it entered the ground, the sound stopped. On inspection, she found no ground marks or evidence where it had disappeared.

Following this incident by about a month, the same witness and a little dog were on her porch facing the area of the sighting. She went inside for a couple of minutes and the dog wandered off. She immediately began to search for her, following tracks in the fresh snow, but she couldn't find her. As she said, "It was snowing. And her little tracks went out there and she just disappeared. . . . She weighed maybe five pounds max. So possibly some owl or something could have [gotten her]. But there wasn't, you know, any other disturbance in the snow."

Since these events, the witness feels that she has had a few very unusual light-projecting experiences which result in vivid dreams or out-of-body experiences. The content of the experiences is difficult to describe. Here are some of her words:

I had the feeling of movement, and there were these enormously huge objects that were like suspended in space, that were all around me. And they were very bright shining.

They were all different kinds of geometrical shapes and forms. I can't begin to explain to you what they looked like. They were just beautiful; I've never in my life seen anything like it before.

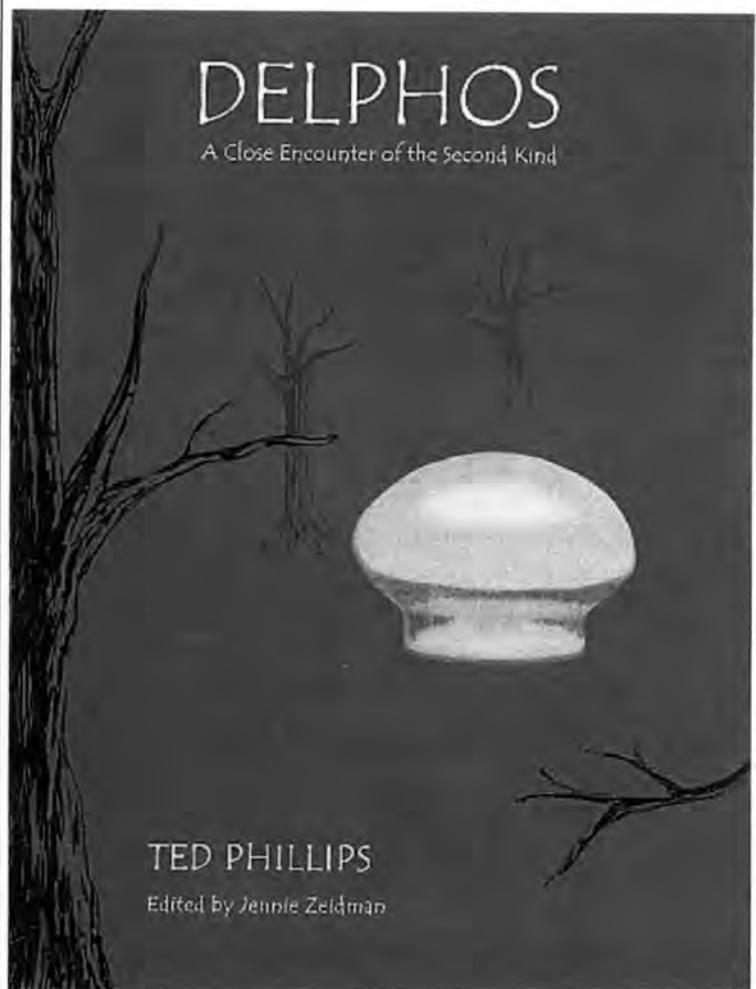
But they were immense. And I have a feeling like it was an invisible corridor that I was moving down. I remember saying to myself at the time: I wonder what it is that they want?

So, dear lady, do we.

This concludes our adventures into the Timmerman Files. Look for a monograph of their contents (1,200 or so cases) in a Fund for UFO Research publication sometime in 2003. ♦

THE KING SPEAKS ON SAUCERS

After a nocturnal-light UFO sighting in 1965 at his home at 525 Perugia Way, Bel Air, California, Elvis Presley grinned and said to his bodyguard and friend Sonny West, "They will come but they won't hurt us. If they make contact, we can't be afraid, because they are not going to hurt us." Elvis was convinced there were people on board.—Steve Dunleavy, *Elvis, What Happened?* (New York: Ballantine, 1977), p. 171.



TED PHILLIPS

Edited by Jennie Zeldman

The special monograph *Delphos: A Close Encounter of the Second Kind* has recently been published by the UFO Coalition and is available through CUFOS. The Delphos, Kansas, physical trace case from 1971 is one of the most important in UFO history, and is probably the most extensively studied U.S. trace case. The newest analytical techniques were used to examine existing soil samples from the case, extending the earlier analyses. This summary report describes the incident, providing for the first time the complete chronology of the reported events, the witness testimony, the extensive investigation by Ted Phillips, and the extensive analysis done by several labs. The Delphos case offers a strong rebuttal to doubters who maintain that scientific investigation of UFOs is impossible because there is nothing to investigate.

The monograph can be purchased for \$20.00, including postage (U.S. orders). For foreign orders by surface mail, add \$4.00. For airmail, inquire for cost to infocenter@cufos.org. Send orders to:

CUFOS
2457 West Peterson Avenue
Chicago, IL 60659

UFO OR BALLOON?

If you saw the object in the photo flying in the sky, it wouldn't be surprising if, at least initially, you believed it was a UFO. It's round, with no obvious source of propulsion and no wings. Yet this intriguing object is a hi-tech balloon developed by the Canadian company 21st Century Airships (www.21stcenturyairships.com), in Newmarket, Ontario.

The company was founded in 1988 with the goal of improving airship technology. It claims to have developed a revolutionary new type of airship that is spherical yet maneuverable, has no external gondola (like the Goodyear blimp), can land and take off from water, and is capable of high-altitude and long-duration flights. The airships are "powered by a hybrid electric system driving large, slow-turning propellers," and have "an extremely low noise profile."

Whether or not these spherical airships are currently being used for surveillance missions by the government is not discussed on the Web site, but it is difficult to believe that this technology will not be so used in the near

future. Such use may lead to odd reports, especially when seen from a distance at night. The airships have been used for advertising for several years (including one that looked like a baseball), but in that case, their purpose and nature was obvious.



RAMEY MEMO—continued from page 14

and a person's cognitive style. Ufologists, therefore, are probably among the least desirable or effective people to be trying to decipher the document. Instead, it seems reasonable to pursue research on the memo only if certain methodological criteria are set. We offer some thoughts about such a protocol based on discussions with personnel from the Illinois State Archives and David Rudiak, a well-known investigator of the document.

First, to be methodologically consistent we recommend that standardized computer enhancement be used on the best raw data in existence (possibly Stanton Friedman's CD of scans of the negatives) using comparable software programs. Analysis should be conducted by at least three independent and blind laboratories that specialize in the area of reading and transcribing archival documents. With this triangulation approach, we can reasonably estimate the inter-rater reliability (and hence validity) of the resulting interpretations. For example, do the laboratories show statistically significant agreement on specific words in precise locations in the text? It is possible at this point to calculate an intra-class correlation on the solutions published thus far, but we feel this would be inappropriate since the majority of the previous investigators did not follow a standardized analytic protocol and were not blind to the context and thus possible content of the document, or to what other investigators were reporting.

Second, we must be cautious in interpreting any statistically significant outcomes of a blind, triangulation study. Prior to having independent laboratories decipher the message, we might also request them to perform preliminary analyses on the structure of the document. This might reveal some insights into what kind of document it is, even if the same laboratories cannot decipher the content of the document. David Rudiak proposed some lucid guidelines in this respect:

A. Determine the letter spacing and position through alignment of columns of clearly visible text and extrapolating to poorly visible letter positions.

B. Determine length of words, assuming no typographical errors and misspellings, and adhere to those word counts.

C. Assuming initially that the message is written in proper English instead of some type of cryptic military (or other) shorthand or jargon, the sentences should obey rules of English grammar and obey rules of syntax and semantics. In short, the message should make sense and be consistent in content instead of sounding disjointed. Although, if the memo is, in fact, a military message, then assumptions about the military shorthand and jargon could complicate and possibly invalidate the conclusions being drawn.

Rudiak and other investigators must be commended for their creative and tireless studies of the Ramey document. What the present and previous studies have

demonstrated is that parts of the document are readable and perhaps even ultimately interpretable. What is needed at this stage is outside corroboration that can only come from triangulated, blind analyses from well-qualified laboratories and a set of stringent guidelines to evaluate any of their positive findings. Statistical analysis of a computer-enhanced photograph of the document is no substitute for having the original or a good verifiable copy.

The main value in pursuing research on this document would be to provide additional data to refine current hypotheses for what crashed near Roswell and possibly to provide a boost for morale in the field of ufology. Of course, more advanced and systematic triangulated studies of the document could reveal content that bears favorably on a conventional explanation for the crash debris. The field should be prepared for such a verdict as well, and treat the findings with the same respect as they would if the findings were pro-extraterrestrial craft.

It seems that a call for funding of such a large-scale investigation of the document is justified. While such a study would admittedly be expensive, it would have a long-lasting effect on the Roswell case from this point on, and it might also have a healing effect for the field. The first author (Houran) recently criticized researchers of the Roswell case for abusing the available data and not working together to bring cohesion and rationality to the case. Yet, the first author's experience while working on the problem of the Ramey document has been quite different. Reliable investigators, while not always in agreement, were willing to share data, their findings, discuss their methodology, and engage in constructive debates. This was not the state of affairs when the first author prepared his original commentary. Whatever the outcome, working collectively and systematically on the Ramey document may bring the researchers (and organizations) even closer together. Only through a concentrated effort among qualified investigators and responsible discussion of the available information in peer-reviewed forums can we bring some firm resolution to the mystery of what crashed near Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express appreciation to Donald Burleson, Stanton Friedman, and David Rudiak for materials and discussions applied in this research. A longer version of this article appears as "A Message in a Bottle": Confounds in Deciphering the Ramey Memo from the Roswell UFO Case," *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 45–66.

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LETTERS

MYSTERY ALPERT OBJECTS

To the editor:

The article by Joe Nyman and Barry Greenwood, "The July 1952 Coast Guard Photo Revisited" (*IUR*, Winter 2001-2002), makes no comment on the dark, blurred object at upper left. Since Alpert, the photographer, does not mention it, and since the photo was taken looking through a window screen, one assumes it is a nearby object on or near the screen. The other alternative is a distant object associated with the anomalous objects. Also unmentioned is the white, oval object in the middle of the photo, at the back of the parking area. This is very probably a large boulder (consistent with the glacial debris surface geology of the area), but it does look odd in this context.

Michael D. Lampen
San Francisco

Editors' note: In an August 2, 1952, article in the *New York Herald Tribune* that discusses this case, reporter C. B. Allen noted, "Only after the pictures had been given out did Coast Guard headquarters discover what appeared to be a far more perfect 'saucer' than the aerial lights neatly grounded at the edge of a parking lot in the foreground of the picture. Officials whose attention was called to it frankly admitted they had not noticed it before and that it had them 'stumped.' A telephone call to a Coast Guard information officer in Boston, where the Salem story was handled, disclosed that it was a big, whitewashed stone which had been in the parking lot for years." This is one minor mystery solved.

COMETA CORRECTIONS

To the editor:

I apologize for having made a double mistake in my article on the GEPAN/SEPRO UFO project (*IUR*, Summer 2000, pp. 20-22, 30), as noted by Claude Maugé (Spring 2002, p. 26).

In checking my sources, I found that the mistake is partly in the Cometa Report, in the first sentence of its introduction (page 7).

It names a General Blanchard as president of the first IHEDN committee, in 1976. In fact, it replicated a mistake made in the publication of the report of the committee in the review *Defense of IHEDN*, no. 11, February 1978. The name of General Jacques Blanchard was given instead of General Jacques Richard. So, that mistake is now duly corrected, and the date as well: 1976, not 1974.

That said, I disagree with Maugé's opinion regarding the Cometa group, which he finds "naïve" because it acted as if the French government were not aware of UFOs. If UFOs are real, he says, the French government, or at least its intelligence services, must know it.

I don't think they were naïve at all. What they told me is that they wrote that report because they felt that the UFO subject had been buried and was at least seriously underestimated in France.

Also, they wanted to point to the peculiar attitude of the U.S. government, still denying the reality of UFOs. I think they were quite right on those two issues.

Gildas Bourdais
Courbevoie, France

ETs AND EVOLUTION

To the editor:

An article by Ian Crawford ("Where Are They?" *Scientific American*, July 2000) asks why SETI programs have not detected technological civilizations in other planetary systems. His answer is that advanced ET civilizations don't exist; otherwise, the first to emerge with spacefaring could have done so billions of years ago, then propagated throughout the Milky Way and colonized it within a few million years (an instant in our galaxy's 12 billion years), and possibly have precluded the evolution of humankind. My answer, in two parts, is in some ways hypothetical, as Crawford's is, but I believe it is more plausible and accords with the UFO evidence.

Part One: Advanced ET civilizations do exist—and endure—yet none has surpassed us nearly as far as one might think, even assuming that life on their planets began billions of years before it did on Earth. Why? During the earliest several billion years of the galaxy's history, elements needed for Earthlike planets and life did not exist; successive generations of stars and supernovae produced (and continue to produce) the series of elements and dispersed them into interstellar space.

Consequently, organic compounds formed on planets, comets, and in space. Circulating throughout the galaxy, organic and inorganic material fell on planets. It initiated life on barren but habitable worlds, and accelerated evolution on those where life had already begun. Also, microorganisms continually escaped from planets, established life, and boosted evolution on other planets. Newer elements, added more recently in the course of element creation in the galaxy, enabled the development of more advanced forms of life.

Eventually sentient beings arose, achieved interstellar travel capability, and have been augmenting the process. They send probes to seed life and foster evolution on planets. They've embarked to propagate throughout the galaxy. However, they do not outright colonize or take over planets, but accelerate and guide the evolution of intelligence with the goal of bringing it up to their level and integrating with it. Therefore, the later life arises on a planet, the more it is helped by immigration and the faster it evolves, tending to catch up. Galaxy-wide, evolution initially creeps along and advances sporadically, then becomes more and more compressed.

Although life in our galaxy may have begun somewhere a billion or more years earlier than on Earth, it may by now have evolved only millions or thousands of years before life on Earth. Thus, advanced ETs probably arrived here relatively recently. It follows that the colonization of the galaxy is still underway, although it could be completed in a short time compared to the galaxy's age.

If ETs had first come here some millions of years ago, by promoting our evolution they could have brought humankind up to its present biological, technological, and

social state in a much shorter time than otherwise would have occurred—and closer to their state.

Still, why wouldn't their presence on Earth be more obvious? And why would their occupancy on other planetary systems be invisible to SETI programs? Wouldn't advanced civilizations be conspicuous, with their multifarious artifacts and enormous use of energy?

This brings us to Part Two: As civilizations advance to stages above humankind's current level, they all use less energy and materials. Eventually, they use minuscule amounts of these economic and technological resources, and tend to achieve their objective by minimal means, over long periods of time by our reckoning. (And this is another reason for the incomplete colonization.)

It contradicts the conventional wisdom of progress associated with forever accelerating energy use. That was represented in an ancillary article to Crawford's (by Andrew J. LePage) which mentions the theory that civilizations as they advance far beyond ours would use exponentially greater energy, developing type I, II, and III supercivilizations—the last commanding power equivalent to that of a galaxy. If they existed, they would be correspondingly observable in the heavens and probably dominant on Earth.

Nothing like has been seen; but these ideas are a conjecture, an extrapolation of the trend in human history. In our own world, we see increasing environmental impact by, and constraints upon, our longstanding economic growth. Society's continuing investment in this material and population growth generates proliferating diseconomies—counterproductive costs, including resource scarcities, pollution, urban sprawl, global warming, and extinctions. Soon, any gain in the overall net benefits can be realized only by society's investing predominantly in conservation and efficiency and in the growth of the *value* of products. I suspect that economic reality universally brings a transition to a new growth mode of decreasing material and energy quantities and increasing values, which I call "qualitative (or net) growth," from our obsolescent "quantitative (or gross) growth."

There is no physical or time limit to the new kind of progress. But change in advanced societies surely must decelerate along with decreasing quantities of energy and materials used. Two important causes of deceleration are the accumulating mass of mature technologies and the approaching of various limits. This, too, relates to possibilities suggested above: the ET's long-time presence at Earth, and our ability to catch up to them. One could infer that establishing, preserving, and enhancing life and intelligence are high priorities for interstellar ETs, but their promotion of evolution is judicious and discreet. Unfortunately for SETI, they do not pollute space by inefficient broadcasting, but instead use an unknown-to-us method of targeted intercommunication.

Raymond M. Reddy
Albuquerque, New Mexico

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

To the editor:

Thanks again for digesting the 2001 survey of Canadian UFO cases (Mark Rodeghier, "UFOs in Canada, 2001," *IUR*, Winter 2001–2002, pp. 15–17). It captured the gist of what we found. The one quibble I have is to note that the large increase in cases is not entirely due to witnesses reporting their sightings to Peter Davenport's National UFO Reporting Center, although that source for reports has increased markedly. If you look at just the reports obtained through the Canadian government, especially those I receive through Transport Canada and National Defence, the numbers have increased there as well. I think the increase is due to people's increasing awareness that there are places to contact about their experiences, whether that means NUFORC, the government, UFO Research of Manitoba, or wherever.

Recently, Brian Vike in British Columbia and Stanton Friedman on the east coast were swamped with phone calls when they appeared in their local media, requesting secondary reports to support an initial sighting. I suspect that the public is eager for an opportunity to report UFO experiences, in Canada or the United States.

Chris Rutkowski
Winnipeg, Manitoba

THOSE FABULOUS FIFTIES

To the editor:

This, the 50th anniversary of the spectacular Nash/Fortenberry sighting, is a relevant benchmark by which to comment on the articles in the Spring 2002 *IUR* by Thomas Tulien ("The 1952 Nash/Fortenberry Sighting Revisited," pp. 20–23, 27–28) and Michael Hall ("Was There a Second Estimate of the Situation?" pp. 10–14, 32).

These researchers have been helpful indeed in digging up new background information about the history of ufology. Nothing happens without a basis in previous events and characters, but history, as a professional or even an amateur business, is tricky. The modalities of historical interpretation change significantly with time; still, every set of events has past referents. Perhaps only more digging would better determine whether or not and to what extent there may have been a second Estimate of the Situation around 1952.

The significance of any U.S. armed forces Estimate is that it is ultimately a finished, official element of the U.S. military planning process. Estimates are one of approximately five basic parts of any operational plan (OPLAN). To have made and recorded an OPLAN is to have contemplated a military operation.

My own evaluation of the Air Staff rejection of the Project Sign Estimate is that its discussion of the ETH was politically untenable, regardless of whether or not the Estimate would have caused panic if released to the public. General Hoyt S. Vandenberg was an exceptionally politi-

cally astute general officer, who, before becoming USAF Chief of Staff, was Director of Air Force Intelligence and the second Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) between Souers and Hillenkotter prior to the establishment of the CIA. He left the DCI position to become Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Air Force in order to position himself as the first deputy chief of staff for the then new U.S. Air Force, and thus in line to become Chief of Staff. His uncle was then a U.S. senator from Tennessee. Then, as now, intelligent people could reasonably hypothesize that at least some UFOs are interplanetary spacecraft visiting Earth, but in the corridors of power and politics, only proof counts.

In any case, what if at least some flying saucers at the time were experimental aircraft or classified aeronautical projects, perhaps extrapolated from captured WWII German hardware or technical documents? There are, after all, nearly 100 patents of record for man-made flying saucers, starting in 1947. Many of these are assigned to defense aerospace and electronic corporate contractors, some of which employed Project Paperclip expatriated German scientists, engineers, and technicians. The late Air Force General Donald Putt, cited by Loedding in the media in 1954, was in charge of Paperclip for the Air Force.

May we suppose that even in 1948–1952, flying saucer motifs were employed as cover and deception (C&D) to enlarge the security protecting advanced aircraft projects? The basis for this is contained in the conclusions and recommendations section of the Air Force's Project Grudge report of August 1949. It appears that Donald Keyhoe got wind of it some three months before the Grudge report was issued.

We can further speculate that the "celebrated scientist" to whom Loedding referred (in the 1954 *Trenton Sunday Times-Advertiser* interview mentioned by Hall) might have been Dr. Irving Langmuir, who had been the head scientist of an experimental cloud-seeding project in New Mexico in 1947.

Speculation can be useful in research. For example, we could speculate that the unidentified media man whom Captain William Nash encountered in 1952 in the WJZ studio in New York City might have been the redoubtable Frank Edwards, who, it is evident from his books, enjoyed a certain amount of insider contacts with respect to U.S. military plans for exploring space as early as 1950.

Perhaps most interesting would be identifying the high-level group of experts who were studying the UFO question as early as 1952 (or even before) according to Edward Ruppelt, which Hall discusses in his article. Ruppelt intimates that this group self-initiated a UFO inquiry because of the ET-origin hypothesis; however, we don't know if this was the case, hence the mystery.

This group could not have been the vaunted JASONS—a secretive group of scientists who have long advised government agencies on defense programs, including classified programs, involving significant technical chal-

lenges—otherwise meeting Ruppelt's criteria, because the JASONs were not established until 1960.

The group could have constituted an official committee established for a larger purpose, adopting the UFO question of the time, a period made uniquely significant in history because it occurred during the Korean War.

It could have been the Brownell Committee of 1951–1952, whose report led President Truman to the secret establishment of the National Security Agency.

Or, more likely, it could have been the Psychological Warfare Strategy Board (PWSB), established in 1951, the antecedent of which dates to mid-1947. The PWSB was the first institutionalized covert operations committee of the National Security Council, which had many successors under several administrations after Truman's, including the first Eisenhower administration, for whom the late Lt. Col. (ret.) Philip J. Corso was a staff officer. Corso worked with President Eisenhower's special advisor for psychological warfare, the indomitable C. D. Jackson.

Truman was particularly intrigued by the possibilities of psychological warfare, as was Eisenhower. By the time Eisenhower became president, Truman's PWSB had produced 44 psychological warfare projects, developed by 36 ad hoc panels, of which 12 projects then were being implemented. In 1985, a former CIA clandestine services operator told an eminent European ufologist that the CIA had conducted a UFO psychological warfare operation inside the Peoples Republic of China in the early 1960s.

Especially interesting in both articles is the history of the Air Force's immediate investigation of the Nash/Fortenberry UFO encounter 50 years ago. It is remarkable that the Air Force's investigating officials were five in number, four of whom were agents of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI). The fifth was a field-grade wing intelligence officer. Considering that this event occurred during the Korean War, this staffing of the immediate inquiry shows unusually high interest. Normally, an inquiry by one or two OSI agents would be sufficient, together with one or two company-grade intelligence officers. This level of concern is reported for several other UFO encounters during and well after the period of interest of the Hall and Tulien articles.

AFOSI investigates crimes affecting the Air Force and it is also USAF's counterintelligence agency. Counterintelligence activities focus on protecting against inimical, foreign intelligence operations. As such, CI organizations may plan, execute, and monitor cover and deception programs and activities intended to enlarge and strengthen security regimes, including C&D espionage operations.

Captain Nash's account of the Air Force investigators' responses to the question about whether or not there was UFO hardware at Wright-Patterson AFB in July 1952 is very interesting. Typically, OSI agents provide little or no response to questions from those whom they are interviewing. For an OSI agent conducting an investigation to respond to Fortenberry's question about captured UFO

hardware in the affirmative is exceptional, particularly if there was UFO hardware at Wright-Patterson at the time. I interpret, at a minimum, the response of Major Sharp (the wing intelligence officer) to the same question from Nash when all seven participants were together in the same room, as implying that there would be no discussion of any kind of the subject of captured UFO hardware when all parties were together in one room. I conjecture that at that point in the interview, Sharp had been told that Fortenberry previously had asked this question one-on-one with one of the OSI agents, and also how the agent had responded.

Recall that about two years before the Nash-Fortenberry event, Frank Scully's *Behind the Flying Saucers* had been published. Whether or not it was referring to a hoax (which now seems likely), the book had been the first discussion of the intriguing notion that the Air Force might be in possession of UFO hardware at Wright-Patterson.

James T. Westwood
Unionville, Virginia

WORLD-WIDE UFO PHOTO CATALOG

To the editor:

I address this letter on behalf of the Anomaly Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to UFO research based in Spain (see www.anomalia.org).

We are developing FOTOCAT, a worldwide catalog of UFO and IFO photographic cases that currently includes more than 2,500 entries. Our objective is to post it freely online for the benefit of all when the project is finished (that is, when it has achieved a truly representative sample of world UFO photography). We are also asking individuals or organizations to send us a list of the photographic cases that have occurred in your country so that we can compare it with our own records.

The only information required for each photo case is: date, location, name of photographer (if known), media (photo, film, video), and explanation (if there is one).

Your contribution will be duly acknowledged in the catalog's credits. It will also serve to prove that international cooperation in this field is really possible!

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BE A SPACE WEATHER FORECASTER

Forecasts of spectacular northern lights and other solar-generated events will become as commonplace as today's thunderstorm predictions, say scientists who met in Boston in September to plan the first five years of accelerated space weather research. To aid the effort, the National Center for Atmospheric Research will provide a computer model of Earth's upper atmosphere and unique information on solar dynamics, both from NCAR's High Altitude Observatory.

OF INTEREST TO CUFOS ASSOCIATES

GREAT AMERICAN DESIGNS OF PLANET EARTH AND CELESTIAL NEW JERUSALEM

Book author theorizes UFOs involved in creation-design of Earth and future biblical celestial New Jerusalem space-city and came to save our world from self-destruction. Book \$25.00. Kenneth Lloyd Larson, 200 North Commonwealth Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90004.

FLYING SAUCER DIGEST

A quarterly publication reporting on worldwide UFO sightings and happenings in ufology that has been publishing since 1967. We invite you to join us – four issues mailed on time for only \$10.00. FSD, 377 Race Street, Berea, OH 44017.

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a conspiracy, merely a reasonable way that they have each found of evaluating the evidence. Of course, it is not the only way to interpret it, although, as any reasonable person ought to admit, it could be the correct one.

Yet I return to the thought that no government agency has a right to be sure that they know the truth. Just because the MoD and these authors have concluded that there was never anything alien behind UFOs is not the same thing as proving that there was not. If this book achieves one thing above all others, it is to show the relative incompetence of government investigators, who were distracted by having so many other agendas that determining what was really going on was never really a primary goal. In fact, they were simply not the best people to handle UFO cases.

During the writing of this book the MoD announced that after 50 years they were closing their investigation into UFOs. Having seen what they did with those 50 years, I can only say: Thank goodness! ♦

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Are you looking for someone to talk with about UFOs? To discuss what you've read or seen on TV? I can help you organize a local group to share your interest in the UFO subject with others. I have created such a group in Ohio and would like to assist others to do the same. Send an e-mail to jptimmer@bright.net, or a self-addressed envelope to LAURA, P.O. Box 1621, Lima, OH 45802.

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ABDUCTEES AND THE PARANORMAL

BY MARK RODEGHIER

Several UFO investigators have commented over the years on the apparent paranormal aspects of close encounter cases. With the rise of the abduction phenomenon, investigators soon noticed that abductees claimed that they were quite likely to have paranormal experiences. Some thought that these experiences were triggered by the abductions, while others suggested that abductees were likely psychic before their experiences, and abductions occurred more often to those with psychic abilities. And there were other positions between these two extremes.

To help sort this out, Keith Basterfield, long-time Australian UFO researcher, and Michael A. Thalbourne, a psychologist at Adelaide University, recently conducted a study of abductees and their paranormal experiences and beliefs. Their paper, "Belief in, and Alleged Experience of, the Paranormal in Ostensible UFO Abductees," was published in the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* 2, no. 1 (June 2002): 2–18. Basterfield and Thalbourne, with the help of local investigators, contacted 21 abductees and had them complete the Australian Sheep-Goat Scale, which asks questions about beliefs and experiences of the paranormal (including ESP, psychokinesis, and life after death). As a comparison, 301 undergraduate psychology students (the usual control group for academics) also completed the scale.

The Sheep-Goat Scale score can range from 0 to 36 (each question is scored 0, 1, or 2 points depending on whether someone answers no, maybe, or yes). To illustrate, a sample question is "I believe I have had personal experiences of ESP." The average total scale score for the abductees was 29.5; the average score for the students was 15.2. A statistical test demonstrated that the abductees' average score was significantly higher than that for the students.

In fact, the abductees answered every question in the affirmative more often than the students. Thus, the abductees were more likely to claim they were psychic (71.4% to 7.6%); had at least one premonition of the future that came true (90.5% to 43.2%); believed that some people can contact spirits of the dead (76.2% to 40.9%); had at least one experience of telepathy between them and another person (95.2% to 32.9%), or believed that on at least one occasion "a physical event of an apparently psychokinetic origin has occurred in my presence" (52.4% to 12.3%).

Before we concur with the findings, we should consider the following two points. Research on UFO witnesses and abductees faces many challenges, and this study is no different. One problem is what social scientists call a *selection effect*: Are the abductees who volunteered to

participate more likely to say they have psychic abilities and experiences than those who did not? This is certainly possible since the study was identified as one about belief in psychic phenomena, so those more interested in the topic may have been more likely to complete the questionnaire.

A second more subtle complication is that the average age of abductees in the study was about 43, but only about 21 for the students. This is a large gap, and it is certainly conceivable that just living longer will give people more chances to have psychic experiences. Thus, while abductees may well have more paranormal experiences and beliefs than students, if we waited 20 years and asked these same students, they may have had similar responses to the abductees. While we can't wait 20 years to repeat the experiment, it would have been better to have recruited other adults as the control group. As noted above, the use of undergraduate students as a comparison group in psychology (and some parapsychology) experiments is a tradition that nevertheless has its drawbacks.

Even so, if we agree with the authors that abductees have more paranormal experiences and beliefs, we then are left with the most important question: Why? Are abductees made more psychic by their abductions, or are people who have more paranormal experiences also more prone to have abduction experiences? This study can't provide a definitive answer, but the researchers did ask the abductees whether "I am more psychic now than I was before my abduction." Intriguingly, half of the 21 expressed uncertainty, while about a quarter said "yes" and the other quarter "no."

Thus, abductees themselves are divided on this key question, the answer to which might go some way toward helping us establish the source of abductions. Without doubt, aliens might abduct people who are more prone to the paranormal, but a more parsimonious hypothesis is that, if the psychic abilities came first, the abductions are less likely to be physical in nature. But if the psychic abilities and interests are an outcome of abduction, then one can plausibly argue that perhaps the abductions are real events, and that contact with aliens, and their mind-control technology, somehow alters people's brains.

It would certainly be useful to see other researchers replicate this study on abductees in other countries. My own investigations with abductees tend to support the primary finding of Basterfield and Thalbourne that abductees are, indeed, more likely to report paranormal beliefs and abilities. But determining which came first, the abduction or the paranormal, remains an elusive goal. ♦