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THE PENTACLE LETTER AND THE BATTELLE UFO PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

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J. Allen Hynek
1910 - 1986

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EDITORIAL

HISTORY LESSON

This issue focuses on a crucial episode in UFO history: the events that led up to the preparation of *Project Blue Book Special Report No. 14*. Jennie Zeidman and Mark Rodeghier also look, less directly, at the CIA-sponsored Robertson panel which along with *Report 14* "made the subject of UFOs scientifically unrespectable," in the words of J. Allen Hynek. Ironically, while *Special Report 14* was presented as the definitive debunking document, its data unambiguously pointed to an opposite conclusion, offering a virtually irrefutable statistical argument for the existence of UFOs as extraordinary phenomena demonstrably unlike identifiable flying objects.

Zeidman and Rodeghier's remarkable investigation of the "Pentacle letter" also provides us with an object lesson in the importance of knowing one's history. The letter figures prominently not only in Jacques Vallee's *Forbidden Science* but, we learn, in Vallee's career as a UFO theorist. On page 428 he writes, "Could it be that Pentacle's clever, detailed recommendations to set up deliberate artificial UFO flaps and simulated cases in selected areas was actually implemented? Is that the explanation for some of the bizarre sightings we were to observe in later years?"

The answer to these questions happens to be no, as Vallee ought to have known; instead he went on to write *Messengers of Deception* (1979) and *Revelations* (1991) under the mistaken impression that he had stumbled upon positive proof of a conspiracy to manipulate UFO and paranormal events. The purpose of this manipulation, he further theorized without evidence, was and is to affect human consciousness.

The point is not to bash Vallee, who has already taken his share of knocks in *IUR*'s pages (if, it must be said, hardly anywhere else), but to warn those who get their history secondhand to be sure they're hearing it from somebody who really does know more than they know. The Pentacle letter—"Pentacle" is Vallee's portentous code name for Howard C. Cross of the Battelle Memorial Institute—has already inspired some less than insightful commentary in the popular UFO literature. Such things, once loosed, are never quite recaptured, especially when they play on conspiratorial fears.

And here the damage is particularly egregious: Vallee's theories have hugely influenced international ufology. It is unsettling to learn now that they are based in significant measure on a stunning misinterpretation of a document

whose meaning should not have been that difficult to fathom even in 1967, when Vallee first saw it. That this misreading should have gone unchallenged in Vallee's mind up to the time *Forbidden Science* was published borders on the incomprehensible. That many readers and commentators should have accepted this misinterpretation without question rests squarely in the realm of the entirely predictable.

Ufologists ignore their history at their peril. One consequence is that many of our number have little sense of what made the UFO phenomenon look interesting and evidential in the first place. The cases that did that were the kinds that the Battelle Memorial Institute and Project Blue Book considered and which (in common with later would-be debunkers) they could only explain away but never explain—cases that remain as puzzling and as suggestive today as they were then. Relatively few of these could be characterized as "high strangeness" sightings of the sort that have practically defined latter-day ufological discourse. These were, rather, the kinds of reports—well-investigated close encounters, multiple-witness daylight-disc sightings, radar/visual events—that the revisionists who have tried to write the extraterrestrial hypothesis out of ufology's universe routinely ignore.

These kinds of reports lend no support whatever to paranormal or psychosocial theories, which take their inspiration from a confusion of scary stories with UFO evidence. Paranormalists think scary stories are UFO evidence, and psychosocial speculationists, who think they are evidence of nothing but the operation of cultural and psychological forces on susceptible psyches, declare they are also all the evidence that exists for UFOs, which therefore do not exist. Both propositions are false and ahistorical.

This is not to say that the UFO phenomenon may not have bizarre aspects—as, of course, we would expect it to have if extraterrestrial intelligences are responsible for UFO sightings—only that reports that are highly strange are usually lowly evidential. We pay attention to the abduction phenomenon, for example, because there is a larger UFO phenomenon of which it gives every indication of being a component. Remove abductions from that context, and they become peculiar anecdotes alleging experiences that are difficult either to prove or to disprove, claims which offer up extraordinary possibilities with evidence which, while sometimes intriguing and suggestive, is insufficient on its own to sustain them. In other words, the abduction phenomenon has

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THE PENTACLE LETTER AND THE BATTELLE UFO PROJECT

BY JENNIE ZEIDMAN AND MARK RODEGHIER

In his 1992 book *Forbidden Science* Jacques Vallee devotes much attention, and a great deal of emotion, to a letter he found in J. Allen Hynek's papers on June 18, 1967. Dated January 9, 1953, this letter, written by someone to whom Vallee assigns the code name "Pentacle," is classified SECRET—Security Information. It is not on letterhead and is addressed to Mr. Miles E. Goll (not "Coll" as reported elsewhere) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for the attention of Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, then head of Project Blue Book.

This letter so affected the young Vallee that he writes it "was the main reason for my return to Europe in 1967," after he completed his Ph.D. at Northwestern University. In his view the Pentacle document amounts to damning evidence that there probably was in 1953, and still is, a secret government study of UFOs. The letter discusses how Pentacle and his team have analyzed "several thousands of reports" and goes on to suggest that an "agreement between Project Stork and ATIC [Air Technical Intelligence Center, Wright-Patterson] should be reached as to what can and cannot be discussed at [the Robertson panel meeting]. . ." Pentacle also recommends that an experiment be conducted so that "reliable physical data can be obtained" about UFOs, an experiment which would involve "[m]any different types of aerial activity . . . secretly and purposely scheduled within the area."

On first reading, this material sounds potentially sensational, and Vallee and colleagues pressured Hynek to confront the author of the letter to demand an explanation. Hynek, who had known Pentacle since the early 1950s, did so in October 1967, but he was rebuffed and learned nothing about the meaning of the document or motivation of Pentacle and his organization.

In the epilogue to *Forbidden Science*, Vallee calls the Pentacle letter an "intellectual scandal." He believes that science was betrayed when the Robertson panel, meeting in January 1953, was barred from access to the research of Pentacle and his group. That panel's recommendations were responsible for the downgrading of Project Blue Book and the demise of any serious *overt* government interest in the UFO phenomenon after 1953.

Jennie Zeidman, an IUR contributing editor and CUFOS board member, worked as J. Allen Hynek's assistant between 1953 and 1956. Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of CUFOS.

If Vallee's interpretation of the Pentacle letter is correct, then it is, indeed, a major document in the hidden history of the UFO phenomenon. But are his conclusions correct? If not, what were the likely motivations of Pentacle and his colleagues? Why was the letter written in January 1953 and addressed to Project Blue Book, not Air Force Intelligence in Washington? Why was a secret experiment proposed?

This article will address these questions and will examine how other researchers, including Hynek, have evaluated the letter in their published work. We will provide a close reading of the letter's text and explain what the author most probably meant or implied. Importantly, we will present information gleaned from interviews with Pentacle's surviving colleagues. Additionally, we will provide historical context for the letter by reviewing key elements in the history of the Air Force investigation of UFOs in the early 1950s.

Before we go further, however, please read the Pentacle letter itself, displayed as Exhibit 1, so that you can relate the comments that follow to the actual document. This version is slightly different from the copy published by *UFO* magazine earlier this year, as will be explained below.

THE CUFOS INVESTIGATION

When *Forbidden Science* was published in June 1992, we at CUFOS read the book closely because Allen Hynek, who figures prominently in the volume, was our colleague and the founder of CUFOS. But we were surprised to read Vallee's description of the Pentacle letter, because Hynek had never discussed the letter with anyone (except those whom Vallee mentions in the book). We decided straight-away to investigate the circumstances surrounding the Pentacle letter.

It was immediately obvious, even though Vallee did not reproduce the letter, that it originated at the Columbus, Ohio-based Battelle Memorial Institute, which conducted the study that became *Project Blue Book Special Report No. 14*, released in October 1955. Jennie Zeidman (hereafter JZ) worked with Hynek during the period when the letter was written, as she has related in her article "I Remember Blue Book" (March/April 1991 *IUR*). She was familiar with many Battelle personnel because of this work and later

SECRET
Security Information

G-1579-4
cc: B. D. Thomas
H. C. Cross/A. B. Westerman
L. R. Jackson
W. T. Reid
P. J. Rieppel
V. M. Ellsey/R. J. Lund
Files.

January 9, 1953

Mr. Miles E. Goll
Box 9575
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio
Attention Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt
Dear Mr. Goll:

This letter concerns a preliminary recommendation to ATIC on future methods of handling the problem of unidentified flying objects. This recommendation is based on our experience to date in analysing several thousands of reports on this subject. We regard the recommendation as preliminary because our analysis is not yet complete, and we are not able to document it where we feel it should be supported by facts from the analysis.

We are making this recommendation prematurely because of a CIA-sponsored meeting of a scientific panel, meeting in Washington, D. C., January 14, 15, and 16, 1953, to consider the problem of "flying saucers". The CIA-sponsored meeting is being held subsequent to a meeting of CIA, ATIC, and our representatives held at ATIC on December 12, 1952. At the December 12 meeting our representatives strongly recommended that a scientific panel not be set up until the results of our analysis of the sighting-reports collected by ATIC were available. Since a meeting of the panel is now definitely scheduled we feel that agreement between Project Stoof and ATIC should be reached as to what can and what cannot be discussed at the meeting in Washington on January 14-16 concerning our preliminary recommendation to ATIC.

Experience to date on our study of unidentified flying objects shows that there is a distinct lack of reliable data with which to work. Even the best-documented reports are frequently lacking in critical information that makes it impossible to arrive at a positive identification, i.e. even in a well-documented report there is always an element of doubt about the data, either because the observer had no means of getting the required data, or was not prepared to utilize the means at his disposal. Therefore, we recommend that a controlled experiment be set up by which reliable physical data can be obtained. A tentative preliminary plan by which the experiment could be designed and carried out is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Based on experience so far, it is expected that certain conclusions will be reached as a result of our analysis will make obvious the need for an effort to obtain reliable data from competent observers using the necessary equipment. Until reliable data are available, no positive answers to the problem will be possible.

Exhibit 1. The Pentacle letter.

associations with Battelle, and she proposed that the mysterious Pentacle was Howard C. Cross, in 1953 an associate coordination director at Battelle.

Reviewing Hynek's books, Mark Rodeghier (hereafter MR) found a reference to this letter in both *The UFO Experience* (1972) and *The Hynek UFO Report* (1977). Hynek's first disclosure of it added to our initial confusion, since he did not mention that the letter was classified Secret; to the contrary, he discussed it as an innocuous, though scientifically proper, document. (A further discussion of Hynek's analysis is in a later section.)

As Vallee notes in *Forbidden Science*, Hynek's papers were a tad disorganized. Knowing this all too well, MR and a colleague, Mark Chesney, decided to search through Hynek's papers for a second copy of the Pentacle letter. In short order we found the document you see in Exhibit 1. This confirmed JZ's guess that Howard Cross was the author, and the cc.'s on the letter supplied the names of other Battelle personnel, whom JZ recognized as real Battelle employees.

Our copy of the Pentacle letter is somewhat different from other published versions. Ours appears to have been an earlier, hastily typed draft, possibly

done by Cross himself. It contains hand corrections and additions. Given that the Robertson panel was to meet only five days after the date on the letter, we expect that it was indeed written in some haste. How Hynek acquired the copy is uncertain, but he spent enough time at the Battelle offices that his coming across a copy there is easily imagined. Our copy is not the only one Hynek had, of course, since we did not discover ours in the peculiar place where Vallee reports he and Hynek stored their version (see below). We can be confident that our copy did not come from the Air Force, since Battelle would not have sent such a sloppy document to the government.

As we studied the letter (hereafter called the Cross letter), we were mystified as to how Vallee, Fred Beckman, and others could have misread it so egregiously. Our interpretation of what the letter was about and why it was written is diametrically opposed to Vallee's. Moreover, while one can somewhat understand how, in 1967, the Cross letter was interpreted as evidence of government duplicity, it is impossible to see it as such today.

Since we didn't see the letter as particularly critical (nor, it seems, did Hynek) and because it was classified Secret, a decision was made by the CUFOS

SECRET
Security Information

E. Goll -2- January 9, 1953

We expect that our analysis will show that certain areas in the United States have had an abnormally high number of reported incidents of unidentified flying objects. Assuming that, from our analysis, several definite areas productive of reports can be selected, we recommend that one or two of these areas be set up as experimental areas. This area, or areas, should have observations posts with complete visual skywatch, with radar and photographic coverage, plus all other instruments necessary or helpful in obtaining positive and reliable data on everything in the air over the area. A very complete record of the weather should also be kept during the time of the experiment. Coverage should be so complete that any object in the air could be tracked, and information as to its altitude, velocity, size, shape, color, time of day, etc. could be recorded. All balloon releases or known balloon paths, aircraft flights, and flights of rockets in the test area should be known to those in charge of the experiment. Any different types of aerial activity should be secretly and purposefully scheduled in the area.

We recognize that this proposed experiment would amount to a large-scale military maneuver, or operation, and that it would require extensive preparation and fine coordination, plus maximum security. Although it would be a major operation, and expensive, there are many extra benefits to be derived besides data on unidentified aerial objects.

The question of just what would be accomplished by the proposed experiment occurs. Just how could the problem of these unidentified objects be solved? From this test area, during the time of the experiment, it can be assumed that there would be a steady flow of reports from ordinary civilian observers, in addition to those by military or other official observers. It should be possible by such controlled experiment to prove the identity of all objects reported, or to determine positively that there were objects present of unknown identity. Any hoaxes under a set-up such as this could almost certainly be exposed, perhaps not publicly, but at least to the military.

In addition, by having resulting data from the controlled experiment, reports for the last five years could be re-evaluated, in the light of similar but positive information. This should make possible reasonably certain conclusions concerning the problem of "flying saucers".

Results of an experiment such as described could assist the Air Force to determine how much attention to pay to future situations when, as in the past summer, there were thousands of sightings reported. In the future, then, the Air Force should be able to make positive statements, reassuring to the public, and to the effect that everything is well under control.

Very truly yours,
H. C. Cross.

board that we not be the party to reveal the actual document or names thereon. Nor did we see an urgent need for an article about the Cross letter, though we continued research which might lead to a fuller understanding of its historical significance. That work included interviews with several former (and current) Battelle employees by JZ and MR.

The full two-page letter has now appeared in the popular UFO literature, so we feel free to reveal it in full and discuss it openly. To begin our consideration of the document, we must review some of the history of the Air Force UFO study, a venture that will help us understand more than just the Cross letter.

AIR FORCE UFO STUDY BEFORE THE ROBERTSON PANEL

The following chronology/interpretation was constructed from several sources, including documents from Air Force Intelligence files, Ruppelt's *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (1956), David M. Jacobs's *The UFO Controversy in America* (1975), and Blue Book documents.

From the summer of 1947 until early 1949, the Air Force took UFO investigation seriously. But after Project Sign's report was released in early 1949, the Air Force downgraded the UFO project, changed the name to Project Grudge, and reduced the resources available for investigations and analysis.

In September 1951 Grudge officer Lt. Jerry Cummings was called to the Pentagon by Maj. Gen. C. B. Cabell, who blasted the project's disorganization. Cabell ordered an overhaul and upgrade of the investigation unit. His actions led directly to the appointment of Capt. Ruppelt as head of Project Grudge in the fall of 1951. Ruppelt appointed Hynek chief scientific consultant to the project (previously Hynek's services had been underused).

Ruppelt was quick to call on other scientists for assistance, in addition to Hynek, and visiting scientists told him that the most crucial missing elements in UFO reports were better estimates of size, velocity, and altitude. This advice, plus Ruppelt's good sense, led to a continuing quest to gather better, more reliable, *instrumented* data. For example, Gen. Cabell thought that electronic detection of UFOs with radar might be profitably combined with photographic equipment, so Ruppelt began work on this idea.

Meanwhile, Ruppelt, with his superiors' approval, contracted with Battelle on a study he called "Project Bear" in his book. This study was to be a comprehensive statistical study of the properties of reported UFOs and the witnesses. Battelle received this contract because of its ongoing work for the Air Force, in particular, Project Stork (see below). Project Bear was classified Secret. The scientists and engineers at Battelle also worked as advisers to Ruppelt on individual UFO sightings, adding their expertise to Hynek's.

By January 1952, in *Project Grudge Status Report No. 3*, Ruppelt reports that the staff has noted the tendency of

UFOs to concentrate in some geographical areas, including White Sands and Albuquerque, New Mexico (and Dayton and Columbus, Ohio!). This made it feasible to attempt to gather instrumented data.

All through the early part of 1952 Ruppelt was searching for better ways to collect UFO data. These included negotiating an agreement with the Air Defense Command to organize the Ground Observer Corps to act like a UFO-spotting network. In *Report No. 5*, an "organized" watch for UFOs (with cameras) at Holloman AFB in New Mexico is mentioned. Also about this time, Dr. Joseph Kaplan, a member of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, suggested to the project that cameras be equipped with a diffraction grating to obtain a spectrum for elemental analysis, an idea that was pursued diligently for the next year.

In March 1952 Project Grudge was upgraded further and the name changed to Project Blue Book. Ruppelt continued in command. About this time Ruppelt contacted the Air Force Technical Advisory Group (the "Beacon Hill Group") at Cambridge Research Laboratory in Massachusetts. The group recommended the deployment of various detection devices in areas of UFO-sighting concentration, including sound-detectors.

As Jacobs writes, "By June 1952 Project Blue Book was a dynamic, ongoing organization." Several Pentagon intelligence personnel believed the ultimate solution to the UFO problem was extraterrestrial (the staffers at Blue Book were certainly open to this hypothesis), and as the reports increased in June to an all-time high, Ruppelt was directed by intelligence officers to obtain more information of scientific value. Kaplan and the RAND Corporation were consulted and they suggested putting long-focal length cameras, double-lensed (one with diffraction gratings) in UFO hot spots.

AN ASIDE

We are reviewing the history of Projects Grudge and Blue Book at some length because, without it, one is at a loss to fully understand the Cross letter. As is clear, Ruppelt and his staff had, by June 1952, begun serious efforts to gather more reliable physical data about UFOs, exactly the concern of Cross and his colleagues. The general concept broached by Cross in his letter, therefore, was hardly new or unique in January 1953. All the efforts at collecting hard evidence eventually came to naught, however, in large part because of the recommendations of the Robertson panel.

As Blue Book personnel struggled to upgrade their data-collection procedures, Battelle continued with Project Bear. By May the standard questionnaire to be used to record all pertinent data had been designed. A panel of 12 engineers and scientists, including a psychologist, had been established to assist Ruppelt and his staff in evaluation. In short order, Battelle began processing sighting reports and placing the information on IBM punch cards.

THE 1952 FLAP AND BEYOND

The huge flap of July 1952 and subsequent publicity occupied so many of Blue Book's resources that no status reports were written between May and December of that year. Washington could no longer ignore UFO reports, and the CIA became actively involved, ostensibly because of concerns about how UFO reports clogged intelligence channels. A new project was set up in the agency's Plans and Estimates division to consider the UFO problem. On August 22, at a briefing with the Air Force, the CIA severely downplayed explanations for UFO sightings involving technology in favor of mundane psychological and atmospheric phenomena, a position at variance with that held by many officers at Wright-Patterson and the Pentagon.

Since early 1952 Ruppelt and others had hoped to form a scientific advisory council for the project. This council would study UFO reports and design technical data collection procedures. (Battelle's contract was not defined in this manner, and Ruppelt was hoping to draw on the expertise of scientists from around the nation in this council.) After the flap, this idea mutated, under CIA influence, into a brief review of UFO data by a group of scientists, to be followed by a more extensive review by a panel of the highest prestige.

Meanwhile, in the fall, Blue Book's plans for gathering physical data continued to crystallize. The project's data collection ideas had become a specific scheme to put spotting stations with special equipment, including diffraction cameras, in a grid over northern New Mexico (New Mexico, as noted, was a hot spot for sightings). This was to be an expensive study (about \$250,000 for setup); yet ATIC at Wright-Patterson approved the plan and sent it to the Pentagon.

As for Battelle's project, the institute had decided, late in 1952, to cease accepting new sighting reports from Blue Book after the end of the year because it believed enough data were in hand to fulfill its contract (Blue Book would continue to use the Battelle-designed questionnaire, however). The tedious work of reducing reports to IBM punch-cards was mostly completed by the end of 1952.

It is at this juncture that the CIA's influence became most nefarious and that government UFO investigation was forever altered. The CIA connived to get the UFO problem defined as a security, not a scientific, issue. At a meeting on December 4 in the CIA director's office, other agencies, including the Air Force, were pressed to agree to a "review" of the UFO problem. This review became the Robertson panel. Such a high-level review had actually been "approved" in one hour by the CIA after it was recommended by a group of high-level scientists visiting Blue Book. In short, the fix was in.

At a meeting on December 12 with ATIC and CIA personnel (at Wright-Patterson most probably), Battelle learned of the planned "CIA-sponsored meeting," to be held

about a month from then. It appears that Ruppelt generally approved of the proposed Robertson panel's review; Battelle, obviously, did not. And therein lies the story of Howard Cross' letter.

THE CROSS LETTER AND BATTELLE

In our brief summary of Air Force UFO investigation, we have demonstrated that prior to January 1953 the Air Force was seriously considering means of gathering more reliable physical data about UFOs. These methods included the use, in locations with large numbers of reports, of various forms of instruments or detection devices, including cameras with diffraction grids, noise detectors, radarscopes, and regular cameras. By the time of the Cross letter, Blue Book planned to (and later did) put cameras in northern New Mexico to implement these ideas. Thus the concept of doing a controlled experiment to obtain physical data, as advocated by Cross, was hardly new.



Howard C. Cross

Why did Cross present a similar idea in his letter of January 9, 1953? Why did Battelle "strongly" recommend that a scientific panel not be set up until the results of its analysis were complete? Is this evidence of scientific collusion, of scientific integrity, of attempted manipulation of the Robertson panel, or what?

To answer these questions, we must better understand just what Battelle Memorial Institute is and what it does. In *Battelle Today*, No. 73, January 1993, its quarterly external newsletter, the organization describes itself this way: "Battelle is an international technology organization that serves industry and government in developing, managing, and commercializing technology. . . . Battelle's services include . . . management of large programs with high technical content. Major business areas include . . . national security." Battelle engineers have worked on many well-known technologies, including xerography, the grocery store check-out bar code, laminated coins, and the ground transport system for the Dallas-Fort Worth airport.

In the very early 1950s, Battelle entered into a contract with the government to study Soviet capabilities for technological warfare. Given the code name Project Stork, this work continued for many years. The men listed on the Cross letter were all part of Project Stork in 1953. One of us (JZ) worked on this project during the mid-1950s and knew or met all these Battelle employees. Stork was one of many secret projects Battelle conducted for the government during the Cold War. We wish to emphasize, because it has been misreported elsewhere, that Project Stork was not solely or primarily a UFO research project.

Howard Clinton Cross, a native of Washington, D.C.,



William T. Reid



Perry J. Rieppel

came to Battelle in 1929. In the course of a long and distinguished career (primarily in metallurgy), he rose through the ranks and was at various times adviser to such agencies at the Office of Scientific Research and Development, the National Defense Research Committee, and the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics. He died at age 88 on March 30, 1992 (thereby, like so many witnesses sought for the CUFOS Roswell investigation, passing away before he could be interviewed about his role).

JZ remembers Cross as a white-haired, square-faced, no-nonsense old salt whom she feared and respected 40 years ago. He had, at times, a brusque demeanor, especially when he felt someone or something was wasting his time.

A brief synopsis is in order for the other names on the letter:

- *Bertram David "Bert" Thomas* was, in 1953, an acting director of Battelle, and later, the director. Thomas had a Ph.D. in chemistry and came to Battelle in 1934, retiring in 1968.
- *Arthur B. Westerman*, a metallurgist like Cross, came to Battelle in 1942 as a research engineer.
- *Lloyd R. Jackson*, a Battelle coordination director, had a degree in metallurgical engineering and came to Battelle in 1939.
- *William T. Reid* was a technical director and had a B.S. degree in fuel engineering. He had been with Battelle since 1946.
- *Perry J. Rieppel* was a division chief in 1953. His specialty was welding engineering and he came to Battelle in 1943.
- *Vernon W. Ellzey* was a geologist and mineral economist (Battelle hired several geologists in those days and retrained them, according to Art Westerman). JZ mentions him in her *IUR* article as the man who carried UFO reports from Battelle to Hynek in this period.

By January 1953 Battelle had coded several thousand UFO reports but had not begun any serious statistical analysis. Its personnel were, however, intimately familiar with UFO reports, since they had been engaged in evalua-

tion conferences with Blue Book personnel to decide upon an explanation for every report received. As we have indicated, the Battelle UFO project was only a small part of Project Stork, but the latter project was so secret that, 14 years later, Hynek would still believe that Project Stork dealt only with UFO research. This secrecy, and Battelle's attitudes toward its clients, are crucial for an understanding of the Cross letter, as we explain below.

We next turn our attention to the letter's contents, interspersed with our own commentary and information gathered from some of the men to whom Cross sent a copy of his letter.

ON THE MATTER OF ARTIFACTS . . .

During the 1940s and 1950s Battelle was surely one of the premier metallurgy research facilities in the world. It therefore occurred to CUFOS that Battelle would have participated in the analysis of any UFO artifacts for the government. Battelle was well established as a trusted and respected facility for Top Secret work (including the Manhattan Project). Its staff included top metallurgists, welding technology experts, physical chemists, and fuel application specialists. Battelle's proximity to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (60 miles) made even daily commuting feasible. The supposition that Battelle analyzed Roswell (or other) UFO artifacts is a simple and obvious theory. William of Occam would have approved.

Accordingly, in the course of our investigation, CUFOS has delved (both subtly and overtly) into this possibility. And come up wanting. Much to our surprise and initial puzzlement, none of our interviews and none of our other research have yet provided any evidence that Battelle has ever been in possession of UFO artifacts, for Roswell or any other UFO case.

Meanwhile, we have learned that Battelle did have a "meteorite analysis" project, probably during the early 1960s. We believe the project studied the characteristics of meteoritic surfaces that had been subjected to passage through the earth's atmosphere for application to space-craft re-entry technology. As expected, we have also learned that during the Project Stork years specimens of Soviet-bloc technology were examined at Battelle. These were obviously of terrestrial manufacture and not mysterious.

As for the elderly gentlemen whom we interviewed (one is 85 and in a rest home), they were glad for company and would have regaled us with stories of Battelle and their work for hours, had we the time and inclination. Their choice of words, their directness, their body language all indicate that *to their knowledge* no UFO artifacts were ever analyzed at Battelle. — Jennie Zeidman

INTERVIEWS WITH STORK PERSONNEL

During the past six months we have interviewed, more than once, Art Westerman, Perry Rieppel, and William Reid, all of whom still live in the Columbus area. Each was cordial and open, and none hesitated to discuss the Battelle UFO study or, since it has now been revealed, Project Stork. It certainly helped that JZ was involved because her husband works for Battelle, and she participated on Project Stork in a minor role and thus knew some of these men personally.

Only one man, Westerman, recalled the Cross letter, but only vaguely. He thought it was possible he had helped draft it, since he had worked so closely with Cross. The other two, upon reading it, recognized it as typical of Cross and Battelle, and the letter helped to stimulate their memories of the era.

THE CONTENTS OF THE CROSS LETTER

Readers can study the letter for themselves, so we will not repeat here every phrase in the document. We instead draw your attention to certain key phrases or comments, by paragraph.

First, the letter was sent to Miles E. Goll, who was Battelle's official contact in ATIC at Wright-Patterson. Goll would simply pass the letter on to the intended recipient, Capt. Ruppelt. (On other Blue Book documents, Goll is listed as a Lt. Col., Acting Chief, Analysis Division at ATIC.)

Paragraph 1: Cross states that he is making a preliminary recommendation to ATIC (not the CIA, note), based on "experience to date" in analyzing thousands of reports.

He is not making this recommendation to Air Force Intelligence in Washington or the CIA because Battelle's contract was with ATIC, represented by Capt. Ruppelt. Since no one believes that Ruppelt was part of some government cover-up, the fact that the letter was sent to him makes it extremely unlikely that Cross would openly discuss a truly secret project.

Paragraph 2: Cross writes that this recommendation is premature and is forced because of the scheduled CIA-sponsored meeting, to which Battelle strongly objected. He suggests that Project Stork and ATIC agree about what can and cannot be discussed at the meeting concerning their preliminary recommendation.

All three men we interviewed stated emphatically that Battelle is uncommonly loyal to those who sponsor its work. In the case of the UFO project, the sponsor or client was ATIC. What this implies is that Battelle was

not going to supply information to the Robertson panel, i.e., the CIA, about "Project Bear" without ATIC approval. Recall that Hynek was going to attend the panel's meetings as an "associate" member, where he might be asked to reveal details about the Battelle study.

Battelle never discloses particulars of its work to anyone except the client, whether that be an agency of the government or a fast-food chain. A current Battelle employee told us that even today, if one government agency asks for a copy of a report Battelle prepared for another government agency, that report is not released without client agency approval.

The upshot is that there is nothing sinister about Battelle's concern about what can and cannot be discussed at the Robertson panel. Instead, what we see at work is, in part, Battelle's natural concern that a client's project be safeguarded. A second reason for the suggestion is the subject of paragraph 3.

Paragraph 3: Here Cross introduces the idea that Vallee found so appalling. Cross states that even the better reports lack critical information, making identification impossible. He therefore recommends that a controlled experiment be

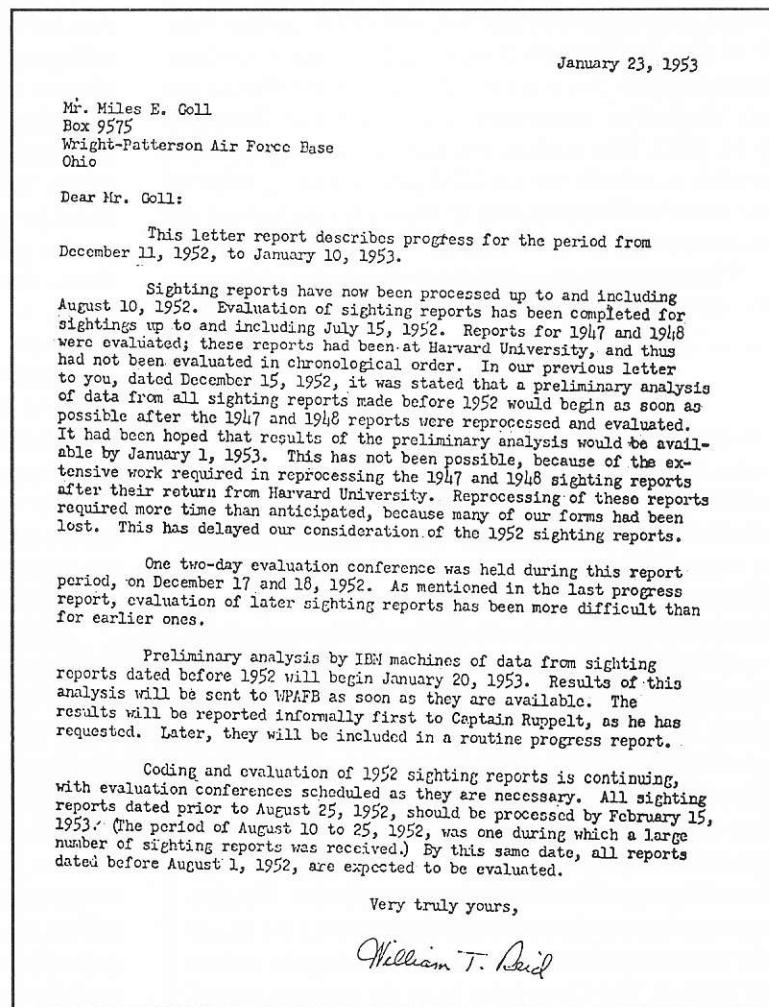


Exhibit 2. Letter from William Reid to Miles Goll.

set up, which he describes in the remainder of the letter.

We now know that this idea was not new in January 1953, though we don't know how many of the ideas about the collection of physical evidence had been previously discussed with Battelle personnel. We naturally posed this question to our interviewees, but all three said they had only vague recollections about the details of the project and no specific memory of previous similar suggestions by other scientists. Perry Rieppel said that as far as he could recall, the exact idea expressed in Cross's letter was his own, and he may be correct, for all we know (but the idea was not unique to Battelle, in any event).

Paragraph 4: The somewhat obscure wording here refers to Battelle's very limited experience in analyzing the thousands of reports collected by the Air Force. Cross says that until reliable data are available, "no positive answers to the problem [of the origin of UFOs] will be possible."

The actual Battelle analysis did not begin any earlier than January 20, 1953, as outlined in a letter Reid sent to Miles Goll on January 23 of that year (see Exhibit 2, also retrieved from the Hynek papers). Consequently, what Cross means when he uses the word "analysis" is not the statistical results that were the major portion of *Special Report No. 14*; instead, he refers to the expertise gained by Battelle personnel as they worked with Ruppelt and his staff to evaluate sighting reports. For example, the Reid letter refers to one such "evaluation conference" that occurred on December 17–18, 1952. This work demonstrated to the engineers and scientists at Battelle that the UFO data then being collected were not of sufficient quality to draw any conclusions and thus to meet the needs of Battelle's client, the Air Force.

The men we interviewed emphasized this point repeatedly. All expressed dismay, after 40 years, with the quality

THE PENTACLE PAPERS

Arguing the authenticity of UFO documents has long been a pastime for serious ufologists, even before the release of the MJ-12 documents. Within a short time of the Cross letter's publication in *UFO*, Battelle received a letter challenging the existence of Project Stork and Howard Cross! (Battelle did not respond to the letter.) Half an hour's literature searching could have saved the writer 29 cents. Cross and all but one of the "cc's:" are listed in *American Men and Women of Science*. Project Stork and its mission have already appeared several places in the literature. The letter was cited by both Hynek and Jacobs in the 1970s. Further, the "G" number at the top of the letter is an authentic Battelle government project identifier. Nor were any red flags raised by any of the distributees we talked to. We give zero credence to the possibility that the letter is a recent (or even early) invention aimed at clouding the waters of ufology. The Cross letter is, to the contrary, one of ufology's more straightforward documents.

of the data they had been required to evaluate. None had any faith in data from untrained observers or sighting information unsupported by instrumental data.

This point must be remembered: the only UFO data available, as far as the Battelle team was aware, were the reports it had received from Blue Book. Believing the information was of poor quality, Cross and his colleagues would have naturally been concerned that the Robertson panel might draw faulty and premature conclusions from its too brief review. We believe this was probably the prime motivator for their recommendation that the panel not be held, and it was also the rationale for their proposed experiment.

Paragraph 5: This paragraph is the heart of the letter. From the work of Ruppelt and their own data, Cross states that certain areas show a higher concentration of reports. This affords the opportunity to conduct an experiment in these areas, where all necessary instrumentation will be placed, plus ground observers, to obtain "positive and reliable data on everything in the air over the area." He then adds that various types of "aerial activity should be *secretly* and purposely scheduled" in this locale (emphasis added).

Vallee sees something malevolent in this last recommendation, but only those with a conspiratorial turn of mind will agree with him. Clearly, what Cross is suggesting is the element that will make this a *controlled* experiment: a manipulation of the initial conditions to allow for a statistical comparison of observations influenced by one (or more) effects. For example, the simplest drug experiments consist of one group given a new drug, with an unknown effect, and another group given a placebo, with a known, nonexistent effect. Another use of control is the calibration of instruments, so that measurements can be related to known standards.

Engineers and physical scientists are especially conscious of the need to calibrate their measuring instruments, and introducing known aerial phenomena into the experimental area was therefore a routine suggestion (and seen as such by our three interviewees). In rough analogy, the known aerial activity would act as the calibration standard, the purported UFOs as an unknown effect, to be measured by the instruments and ground observers.

As further evidence that such a suggestion was natural and good scientific practice, Dr. Walter Riedel of Civilian Saucer Investigation, Los Angeles, had proposed independently in 1952 that aerial pyrotechnics over the ocean be used to test the accuracy of civilian reporters.

We suppose it was the use of the word "secret" that drew Vallee's attention and influenced his interpretation, but it is obvious that any scheduled aerial activity had to be unannounced, else the observers could prepare beforehand (UFOs, after all, don't announce where and when they will next appear). Moreover, in any double-blind experiment, participants are not told whether they are in the experimental or control group, so Battelle's recommendations were simply standard scientific methodology.

Paragraph 6: Here Cross admits that he is proposing a massive undertaking, requiring extensive security, for reasons explained above.

Paragraph 7: Cross describes the major benefit of such an experiment, which would be either to explain all reports as generated by conventional phenomena or to “determine positively that there were objects present of unknown identity.”

All three men we interviewed told us that Battelle took its UFO work seriously but harbored no hope of providing a definitive answer to the Air Force under the terms of its contract, given the unreliable and inaccurate nature of sighting data. Battelle, like any conscientious organization, didn’t want to do a job that was less than thorough or complete, and so Cross was proposing an experiment that would allow it to fulfill the goals of its contract with the Air Force (and provide additional income for Battelle, as our interviewees admitted). As stated in page vii of the summary of *Special Report No. 14*, the analysis of the evaluated UFO reports had three goals, including “an attempt to determine the probability that any of the UNKNOWNS represented observations of technological developments not known to this country.” The proposed experiment might make this possible, but by January 1953, the Battelle personnel could already see that this probability could not be reliably estimated from the data that had been submitted to them.

Paragraph 8: This paragraph builds on the last. It politely hints that the results of the controlled experiment will allow the data then collected for the last five years (since the summer of 1947), to be reevaluated. In other words, says Cross, we have to calibrate our instruments, which are chiefly the witnesses, who have supplied essentially all the information gathered from previous sightings.

Paragraph 9: This concluding paragraph is straightforward. In it Cross summarizes the chief benefits of the experiment Battelle is proposing. It is important to note how Cross phrases his argument here. We discussed above how the 1952 wave caused certain agencies in the government to pay special attention to UFO sightings. The CIA, we believe, was so concerned that it organized the Robertson panel to essentially debunk the idea that UFOs represented an unknown phenomenon. Cross, aware of this existing governmental anxiety, writes that the experiment “could assist the Air Force to determine how much attention to pay to future situations when, as in the past summer, there were thousands of sightings reported.” As further evidence that Cross is aware that the Air Force sees UFOs as a public-relations nightmare, he adds that the proposed Battelle experiment will allow the Air Force to tell the public that “everything is well under control.”

OTHER RESEARCHERS’ VIEWS

In *Forbidden Science* Vallee writes that after he found the Pentacle letter, he revealed its existence to only a few

colleagues. Maintaining this secrecy for years, he even went to the extraordinary length of returning the document to Hynek, placed behind a reproduction of *The Lady and the Unicorn* tapestry to insure its security. In his epilogue Vallee explains that he did not publish the text of the Pentacle letter or reveal the name of its author because he could not determine if it was still classified Secret. He fails, though, to inform the reader in these concluding remarks what Hynek himself wrote about the Pentacle letter in his two major books. This may be because Hynek’s treatment of the letter was so matter-of-fact, mundane, and at odds with the suggestion of a cover-up that it would have undercut Vallee’s view of the letter and its place in UFO history.

In 1972 Hynek’s *The UFO Experience* saw print. This was only a handful of years after he, Vallee, and other colleagues had discussed the Cross letter which, according to Vallee, all saw as highly explosive and still secret. Yet in a chapter entitled “The Air Force and the UFO,” Hynek had this to say about the letter:

...in a proper scientific spirit the officers of Battelle had pointed out that there was a distinct lack of reliable data and that even the well-documented reports presented an element of doubt about the data. They called for an upgrading of the data before any broad policy decisions were made, and they implied (though they were too diplomatic to say so) that the whole Robertson panel was premature and not likely to get any place.

There is no doubt that Hynek is referring to the Cross letter, because in a footnote he states, “A letter of January 9, 1953, addressed to the attention of Capt. E. J. Ruppelt, first head of Blue Book.” There is no hint by Hynek that the letter is still secret, and obviously he had no qualms about revealing its existence. Moreover, he makes no claims that the Battelle suggestions were sinister or that the letter is evidence of a cover-up, as Vallee believes. Nor does Hynek mention anything about how terrible it was that Battelle’s research was not supplied to the Robertson panel. Instead Hynek treats the Cross letter as we have, as an honest effort by Battelle to present its point of view about how best to learn something reliable about the UFO phenomenon.

Hynek presents a similar view of the letter in *The Hynek UFO Report*, published five years later. He writes:

When Battelle heard of the CIA’s intent to convene the Robertson panel, an urgent letter, classified SECRET ... was dispatched to the CIA via the Blue Book office. It strongly recommended that the scientific panel be postponed until the Battelle study was completed. Even Battelle did not realize that the primary issue was not science but national security!

Here Hynek identifies the letter as classified Secret but again unhesitantly discusses its content. Unlike Vallee, he suggests in the last sentence that Battelle was not really

privy to the highest levels of decision-making on UFOs, a point with which we concur. He deems the proposed experiment unworthy of mention.

Another authority on the early years of government UFO study is David Jacobs, who wrote the definitive (until the early 1970s) history of UFO study, *The UFO Controversy in America*. In his chapter on the Robertson panel, Jacobs discusses the Cross letter without naming its author or providing its exact date. He writes:

Since the need for precise data was important for identification, Battelle suggested that the Air force [sic] set up controlled experiments in areas of high UFO activity. . . . Once Battelle had data from these controlled experiments, it would apply the information to past unidentified sightings and would lay the flying saucer controversy to rest once and for all. Furthermore, the Air Force would benefit because . . . [it] could make positive statements reassuring the public that the military had everything under control.

As with Hynek's evaluation, Jacobs does not suggest that Battelle had already completed a massive research study whose results were not supplied to the Robertson panel. Instead, he recognizes that any Battelle conclusions were preliminary and that Battelle believed the data it had been given by Blue Book were unreliable, thus making it difficult to reach firm conclusions. Nor is Jacobs, who is more knowledgeable about the history of UFO study than Vallee, shocked by the tone or implications of the letter.

We have argued in this article that the Cross letter is not evidence of manipulation of the Robertson panel. Nevertheless, we still believe that elements of the government acted dishonorably concerning the formation and conduct of the Robertson panel, which was most likely manipulated to produce a negative conclusion. On that broad issue we and Vallee concur.

But the interesting question is not about the meaning of Howard Cross's letter, which is perfectly clear if read with knowledge of UFO history and Battelle's role in same. Nor, as we have shown above, were Battelle's suggestions to do a controlled experiment anything but good scientific practice applied to the UFO question. Furthermore, there is no evidence that when Cross writes "our experience to date in analysing several thousands of reports," he is referring to any but the 3,000 or so reports Battelle received from Blue Book. In our face-to-face interviews and analyses of various documents, we have established to our own satisfaction that this was indeed the case. Certainly the Battelle study was secret at the time, but its conclusions were not hidden from the Robertson panel because it had no conclusions to hide.

Instead, we find fascinating what our interviews and the letter have revealed about *Blue Book Special Report No. 14*

and the attitudes of the Battelle staff who conducted the work and wrote the report. We begin the next section with a review of additional information we gleaned from our interviews.

THE BATTELLE UFO STUDY

As we discussed the Cross letter with Westerman, Reid, and Rieppel, conversation naturally veered to the larger project (Stork) of which Battelle's UFO work was but a small part. It has been thought that Battelle was paid well for its UFO work. For example, Vallee writes (p. 196), "*It is said* [our emphasis] that they were paid the sum of \$600,000 for it, a very large amount in 1953. . . ." No source for this figure is supplied, though one might conjecture it was Hynek.

Our interviews with the three Cross-letter distributees establish that, on the contrary, Battelle received no additional money for this project. Project Stork was, first and foremost, an effort designed to gain knowledge of Soviet technological capability. The UFO study was added to it as additional work. Our interviewees estimate that the amount of Stork money siphoned for the UFO work was on the order of \$150,000, or maybe only half that.

Without exception, our interviews indicate that Battelle engineers received little intellectual satisfaction from their UFO work. At no time did the Battelle staff entertain the idea that the UFO phenomenon represented Soviet technology, which was its main concern. Therefore, the project was a distraction from its primary work; consequently, the interest and time devoted to it were low. None of the three men said that they spent more than 25 percent of their time on UFO work, and one (Reid) thought he had devoted only about 10 percent of his time.

All three men we interviewed expressed dismay, even after 40 years, that Battelle had become involved in the UFO business. They had low expectations of what they might discover, and their attitudes are perfectly summed up by Rieppel's comment that "it seemed like a dummy of a project."

The UFO project was so much an integral part of Project Stork that our interviewees indicated that the former had no separate name at Battelle. Of course, there must have been a contract number so the Air Force could be billed for the

continued on page 19

Errata

As many *IUR* readers noticed, the Brooklyn Bridge connects Manhattan to Brooklyn, not New Jersey as the caption on the cover of the March/April issue proclaimed. . . . Another typo appeared in the "No Comment" letter from Gary P. Posner. In part, the sentence should have read, ". . . the 1978 'ambulatory schizophrenia' remark attributed to me in the same editorial . . ."

JESSE MARCEL AND THE ROSWELL INCIDENT: AN EXCHANGE

BY CHRISTOPHER D. ALLAN AND KEVIN D. RANDLE

In his article “Don’t Bother Me with the Facts” (*IUR*, January/February) Kevin Randle claims I have made some unwarranted assumptions about the Roswell incident and the chief witness Maj. Jesse Marcel. I have corresponded with William L. Moore on the same matter, and it is clear that I have underestimated Marcel’s memory recall of the events of 1947. Nonetheless the problem will not go away that easily. Several important points remain outstanding.

The question of Leonard H. Stringfield’s 1978 paper for the Mutual UFO Network symposium is one. I find it hard to believe that Stringfield could not have revised his paper in time to present it at the conference (in late July) when he had first written it in early April *if he had thought Marcel’s testimony of sufficient importance*. Three and a half months is plenty of time to review and include new evidence if such evidence truly merits it. The only conclusion I can draw is that Stringfield did not, in 1978, consider Marcel’s testimony as compelling as the other crash/retrieval cases he presented. There were no alien bodies, for one thing, and indeed Marcel never once mentioned bodies in any of his testimony, even though he was undoubtedly the chief first-hand witness. All credit to him. It would be difficult now for Stringfield to recall exactly what Marcel told him in that first phone call in April 1978 as opposed to what was related in later calls during 1979, after he had seen the press reports and Moore and Stanton T. Friedman had got at him. Note that Stringfield’s narrative in mid-1978 makes no mention of strange writing either.

I agree that the press reports do not suggest anything resembling the “crash” or “explosion” of a spaceship (though they do talk about “lettering” and the material “toughness”). Therefore, where did Marcel get the crash and explosion idea? He *may* have got it through gradual familiarization with the UFO subject over the years, or he may have got it from Friedman’s original phone call in February 1978. What we may be quite certain of is that he did not, repeat not, get this idea at once on that day in July 1947.

I take strong exception to Randle and Schmitt’s allegation on page 204 of their *UFO Crash at Roswell* (1991)—also hinted at on page 55—that “Marcel would insist that they knew the moment they saw the debris field that the

crash was of something that had not been manufactured on earth.” In fact this claim is just poppycock. There is simply no evidence to suggest Marcel ever thought any such thing in 1947; the only evidence is what he allegedly told ufologists 32 years later. If Marcel was genuinely baffled by the debris he saw in 1947, his mind would have far more favored a secret American or Russian (or even captured German) device rather than something “not manufactured on earth.” The same can be said for his young son Jesse Jr., who wrote in 1981 that “the crash and remains of the device that I happened to see have left an imprint on my memory that can never be forgotten.” Too bad he forgot all about it and never told anyone for 30 years until having his memory “refreshed” by his dad and Friedman.

There is no reason to suppose Marcel was familiar with *every* device being secretly developed in the United States either. *All* such reasoning is again based on his memories and on what he said in 1979 and 1980, not his position in 1947.

Randle is wrong about the Bob Pratt interview. According to Randle’s own “time line” (*UFO Crash*, page 218) this interview was in May 1979—well after Moore and Friedman had interviewed him.

I consider the fact that nobody, including Marcel, kept any press clippings of the event to be highly significant, whatever Randle says about Marcel’s thought processes. Here is the (allegedly) most sensational event to have ever happened on earth in recent times, with, we are told, several hundred persons involved in varying degrees, with some 20 or so directly involved. Yet not a single one had kept the slightest record of it, either of press reports or of personal notes or diaries, or of contemporary photographs. Then suddenly 32 years later they all open up, as if by magic, to some crashed-saucer proponents. It is all a bit much to swallow, but I suppose Randle has an answer to this. Perhaps he will elaborate in his next book.

If the “spaceship crash” was just that, then some of these numerous witnesses ought, one would suppose, to have gotten in touch with some prominent UFO group such as the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena or the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (both flourishing during the 1950s and 1960s) and told them of their earth-shattering knowledge. None did, did they? Neither did any of them offer their “facts” to the Condon Committee, despite the national publicity given to the latter, or indeed to

Christopher D. Allan follows the UFO scene from his home in England. Kevin D. Randle is an IUR contributing editor.

any scientific institution of any kind. And we still don't know how many of these people had read or heard about Frank Scully's 1950 bestseller *Behind the Flying Saucers* and the crashed-saucer rumors that popped up in New Mexico for years thereafter. Again, I shall expect Randle and Schmitt's answer to all of this in their new offering, *without* invoking the witnesses' "oath of secrecy" nonsense.

In which 1978 interview did Marcel talk about "strange writing" or "hieroglyphics"? Was it really 1978, or was it 1979 or 1980, *after* he had seen the newspaper stories?

The phrase "not of this world" was not in Stringfield's paper, and there is absolutely nothing to suggest Marcel's thoughts were in this direction after 1947.

We might learn a lot if we had an unedited recording of the very first phone interview that Marcel had with Friedman in February 1978, to see just how much prompting and suggestibility there was. In his 1992 paper Moore makes a significant remark (page 5): "Stanton Friedman, as much as I respect the man, is only mediocre [as an interviewer]; he insists upon talking too much, and I have watched him lead witnesses time and time again."

I am perfectly willing to revise my views about Roswell if someone could finally produce that one vital piece of hardware: wreckage, humanoid remains, or incontrovertible official documentation of a crashed spaceship, in New Mexico or anywhere else. But it never turns up. Perhaps Randle and Schmitt will produce something new in their next book, but I remain skeptical.

Having said that, I concede that I have never interviewed a single Roswell witness and so am arguing solely from the viewpoint of a (I hope) rational and intelligent outsider.—*Christopher D. Allan*

Kevin D. Randle responds:

Once again we are treated to Christopher Allan's assessment of a situation that he has admitted he has not investigated. While it is true that legitimate questions deserve legitimate answers, it is not true that we should have to answer the same questions over and over again because the asker simply does not like the answer.

Stringfield was quite clear on the sequence of events surrounding his 1978 paper. Stringfield submitted the paper prior to his interview with Marcel. Period. Therefore, there could be no mention of Marcel's testimony in that paper. If Allan has a problem with that, he should write MUFON director (and symposium proceedings editor) Walter H. Andrus, Jr., to learn the mechanics of the production of the symposium book.

Stringfield *did* update the paper he presented at the MUFON conference in 1978. That is why two versions of the paper exist, one produced before he talked with Marcel and one after. Stringfield himself said he believed the testimony to be significant. I don't have to speculate about Stringfield's attitude on first hearing the Marcel testimony. I asked Stringfield about it.

When Allan begins to write about Jesse Marcel Sr., he

moves into the realm of speculation. There is no evidence that Marcel was "led" through his conversations with any UFO researchers. In his 1978 interview with Bob Pratt Marcel said, "It came to earth but not from earth." (I should note that Allan has confused the date of the interview, 1978, with the date of an article published in 1979. That's partially my fault for the way the time line was constructed.)

As for the evidence concerning Marcel's 1947 belief that what he retrieved was from an alien craft, we must rely on the testimony of those who knew Marcel then, though it seems Marcel left ample record. Allan just chooses to ignore this inconvenient testimony. According to Jo Boehms, a next-door neighbor of the Marcels, Jesse Jr., told her, in 1947, that he and his family had a flying saucer in the kitchen. He was referring to the box of debris Marcel took home to show the family.

We can also learn from Jesse Jr., that his father believed, in 1947, that the material was from a spaceship. Those who knew Col. William Blanchard, commanding officer of the 509th Bomb Group and Marcel's superior, say he thought, at first, that his officers had recovered something of Soviet manufacture but, on review, decided that it was not something made on earth. The first opinion was the one he held *before* he viewed the material.

According to Allan, there is no reason to believe Marcel was familiar with every aerial device. Yet Marcel indeed claimed as much. His records and files at the 509th would have contained a great quantity of information, especially about foreign craft, because it was his job to identify such.

We can draw no conclusions about anyone's holding onto the news clippings. Marcel is not around to ask. The suggestion that no one kept any notes or records on this event is untrue. (I should point out here that Friedman learned of Marcel through a Marcel friend who had heard the story. In other words, it is nonsense to intimate, as Allan does, that Marcel's failure to report the Roswell event to the UFO community prior to 1978 is evidence that Marcel was speaking about it to no one before 1978.) Nor is it true that 32 years later, "as if by magic," the witnesses opened up. The stories had been told from the beginning.

Moreover, the suggestion that NICAP and APRO never received crash stories is wrong. NICAP habitually discarded such reports, according to a number of former NICAP volunteers with whom I have spoken. APRO, on the other hand, did carry stories of crashes.

As for the "oath of secrecy nonsense" I note that several persons have refused to answer questions and cited secrecy commitments as the reason. I have the original taped interview with Maj. Edwin Easley who told me flat-out that he could not talk about the Roswell event because he had been sworn to secrecy. Allan may not like it, but that's the way it is.

The phrase "not of this world" may not have appeared in Stringfield's revised paper, dated July 20, 1978, but it is what Stringfield told me. According to Stringfield, Marcel

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RADAR/VISUAL UFOs AND AIR FORCE DEBUNKING

BY RICHARD HALL

A radar/visual jet-interception case dating back to 1956 provides a striking example of either official cover-up or pitifully inadequate analytical capabilities on the part of the Air Force. The case was first publicly reported by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) based on a leaked Air Force intelligence report. (For the text, see pages 5-6 of *The UFO Evidence* [1964].) Of special interest is the fact that the report leaked to NICAP contains more information than the version stored in Project Blue Book files at the National Archives, including the internal analysis of Air Force specialists contradicting the official explanation later released. It also suggests an important line of research that could lend technical support to the reality of UFOs as someone's hardware.

As reported by NICAP, two jet-interceptor pilots were practicing radar-controlled intercepts on each other somewhere in the Far East in December 1956, though the exact date and location were deleted from the report leaked to NICAP. The Blue Book case file, recently provided to me by Herbert S. Taylor, gives the date as December 17 and the location as near Itazuke Air Base, Japan (34° N., 131° E.).

On one intercept run the pilot picked up a large, unexplained radar blip estimated to be of an object the size of a B-29 bomber about 20 nautical miles away. Ground radar was not showing anything, so the pilot requested permission to investigate and closed in at over 700 mph. At eight nautical miles distance a round object became visible exactly where radar showed it. The pilot got a radar lock-on, but as he continued to close in, his radar was suddenly jammed by strong interference. Using an antijamming procedure, he was able to continue tracking the UFO for 10-second periods until the interference returned.

The interceptor closed within five nautical miles but

could get no closer. At his closest point to the UFO, the pilot saw a nonreflecting object, golden-tan in color, which appeared to be making a shallow left turn. "It had the appearance of being circular on the bottom," according to the leaked report. Finally the UFO was observed on radar "moving up and away at from 1500 to 1800 knots." This was stated to be an estimate, since the rate of departure was faster than the onboard radar could track.

Under "Comments of the interrogation officers" the leaked intelligence report stated, "The fact that no unidentified tracks were observed by ground radar should not be given much weight in evaluating this report. Both the jet aircraft involved required IFF"—an identification code transmitter system to identify them on radar.

The Blue Book file, on the other hand, includes a two-page teletype report dated December 19, 1956, from the Far East Air Force Commander addressed to the Commander, Air Defense Command, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Command, Air Technical Intelligence Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio; and Headquarters, USAF, Washington, D.C. It reports essentially the same story: a radar target at 20 nautical miles, the radar lock-on and closure to five nautical miles, and the visual sighting. At the closest point, according to the Blue Book report, the "range gage [sic] and blip started moving very rapidly towards top of scope. . . . Pilot estimated object speed, upon radar disappearance, at 1500 to 1800 knots." This confirms the NICAP version.

The teletype report adds that "interference resembling ECM [electronic countermeasures] was experienced by both the observing pilot and wingman. Observing pilot experienced pulses running down the GIZZLE band approximately 1 1/2 inches apart. Every time the pilot pushed the anti-jam button, activity disappeared but returned in 10 seconds. Interference was picked up at the time the object disappeared from the scope. Wingman experienced many pinpoints on the scope presentation during the same period."

The Air Force analyses in the Blue Book file are a story in themselves. Suffice it to say that the analysts highlight all the negative factors that would seem to suggest a conventional explanation (e.g., weather balloons launched in the area were round and tan-colored; ground radar and the other airborne jet failed to track anything) while ignoring well-witnessed and technologically confirmed anomalies such as the electromagnetic effects and the rapid upward departure

Richard Hall, an IUR contributing editor, worked for NICAP in the late 1950s and 1960s. A former editor of MUFON UFO Journal and the author of Uninvited Guests (1988), he is now the chairman of the Fund for UFO Research. He urges persons with appropriate technical background in radar-screen displays and radar-wave propagation, including anomalous propagation, to submit proposals to the Fund (Box 277, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712) for a study of radar/UFO cases.

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 17 December 1956	2. LOCATION Itazuke AB, Japan		12. CONCLUSIONS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Was Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Was Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Was Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Astronomical Radar: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spurious return <input type="checkbox"/> Others <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Data for Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT 17/0620Z	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Radar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air-Visual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air-Intercept Radar	5. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	6. SOURCE Military Air
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION Visual 3-4 minutes Radar 7-8 minutes	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS one	9. COURSE - - -	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING UFO observed as blip on radar of lead plane not visible on radar or visually by trailing plane 6 miles behind. Plane under GCA control & object could not be picked up by ground radar. Object was observed visually was tan color, flat on bottom, round on top.	11. COMMENTS Radar sighting evaluated as spurious return or false target since obj could not be picked up on other radars in area. Visual observation evaluated as WX balloon		

ATIC FORM 329 (REV 26 SEP 52)

of the UFO. The logic used, and especially the assumptions made, are instructive in any assessment of the question of whether UFO history can be understood primarily in terms of official foul-up as opposed to official cover-up.

An attachment in the Blue Book file, bearing the name of Col. Gordon C. Hoffman, USAF, AFOIN (Air Force Office of Intelligence), states quite correctly, "It is extremely difficult to discount sightings which involve both visual and radar sightings." He goes on to suggest without any technical or scientific justification, however, that the radar sighting was a "false target" only coincidentally associated with a visual sighting of a balloon. An extremely lame *ad hoc* explanation was that "it would seem that unusual weather or transmission conditions which affect radar transmissions might also affect visual transmissions [sic] thereby providing freak visual observations."

The blatant attempts by Air Force Intelligence analysts to rationalize away a clearcut and well-documented anomalous event tells us worlds about internal Air Force analytical capabilities in that era, and about the general inability of human beings (including Air Force intelligence personnel) to comprehend and react constructively to events that do not fit any familiar mold.

Among the more interesting insights to be gleaned from comparing the 1960s leaked Air Force intelligence report with the version finally stored in the National Archives is the discovery that neither contains the whole story. More importantly, the version leaked to NICAP contains information that puts the lie to the version that is stored in the Project Blue Book files and that seeks to convince us of a conventional explanation.

Ultimately we are forced to conclude that someone is tampering with UFO information stored in military intelligence files in order to mislead us and withhold vital information. The attempts to discredit and debunk important cases do not stand up under critical scrutiny by persons who know the facts. ♦

THE AUCKLAND STAR, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1957

Jet planes chased big flying object

WASHINGTON, Thursday.—An Air Force jet chased a "circular flying object" that was at least 250 feet in diameter last December, the National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) said today.

NICAP, a privately-financed research organization, said it obtained the report from a "Far East Air Force office" where the incident took place. Air Force headquarters in Washington had no immediate comment.

According to the report, published in NICAP's monthly magazine, *UFO Investigator*, a jet pilot picked up a strange "blip" on his radar. The object was the size of a B-29 bomber, the report added, and the pilot headed towards it at more than 800 miles an hour.

"At eight miles range, a large round object appeared directly ahead," the magazine quoted the Air Force report as saying. "By this time, the jet's radar was in 'lock-on' position, automatically guiding the jet towards the UFO (unidentified flying object). A moment later, the radar was jammed by a strong interference. Using anti-jam pro-

cedure, the pilot switched frequency. For 10 seconds this eliminated the mysterious interference pulses, then they came again on the new frequency. But they were not strong enough to break the radar lock-on and the jet held its course.

"The jet closed to within five nautical miles of the object and could not close further."

Turned away

"When the pilot was closest to the unidentified object, it appeared to make a shallow left turn. It had the appearance of being circular on the bottom."

The magazine said the Air Force report described the object as "a golden tan, with no sun reflection." It said the object moved up and away at an estimated speed of 1800 to 2100 miles an hour.

Air Force electronics experts, it added, checked the plane's radar after the pilot landed and found it working perfectly.

N.Z.P.A. Reuter

DISK WITH ROTATING CUPOLA OBSERVED NEAR STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR BY RUSSIAN SHIP IN 1984

Special thanks to Sergey Romanov, Tuapse, Krasnodar region, Russia, for providing us with this case summary and the accompanying illustrations.

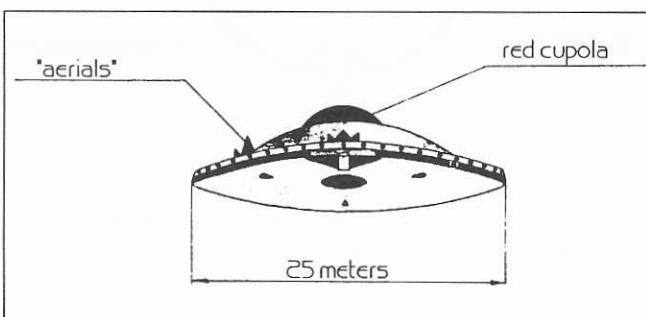
Date: Mid-June 1984

Time: 4:10 p.m.

Place: The Mediterranean Sea, 20 nautical miles east of Gibraltar

Weather conditions: Calm, with large cumulus clouds overhead, clearing at the horizon

Observers: Alexander Globa and Sergey Bolotov, on board the Russian tanker "Gori"

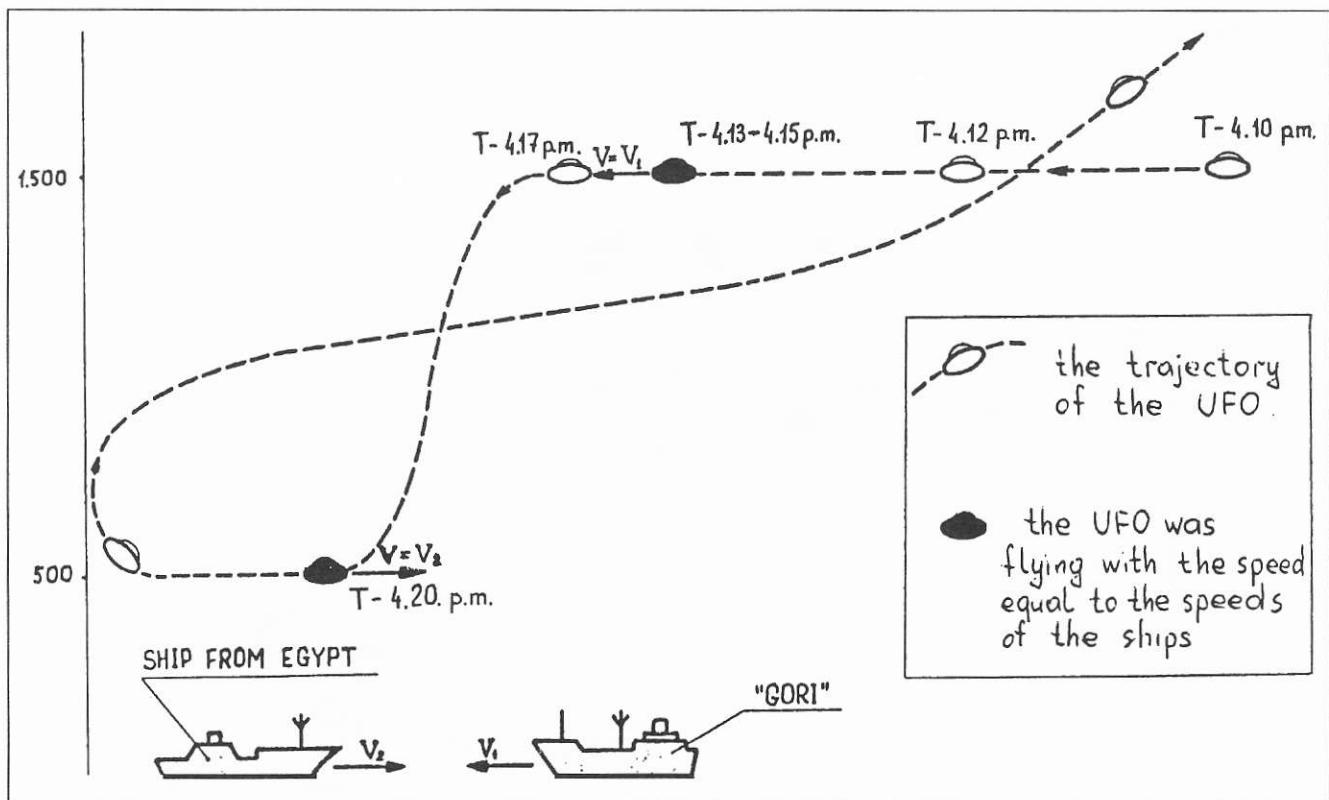


The tanker "Gori" was moving at a speed of 15 knots west towards Gibraltar. Globa, a seaman, and Bolotov, the mate of the watch, had just started their watch on the bridge at 4:00 p.m. After ascertaining that there were no other ships coming towards them, Bolotov asked Globa to go and find some binoculars.

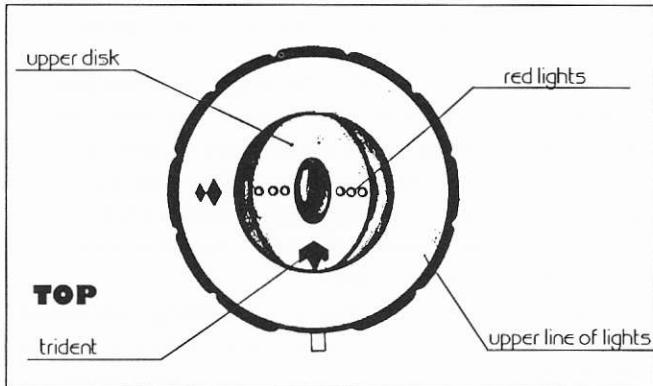
At 4:10 Globa returned to the bridge with two pairs of 7.5x binoculars and saw that Bolotov was watching an object that he thought was an airplane with its landing lights on. The object was flying towards the ship's stern at about 30° elevation and at an altitude of no more than 1,500 meters (4,920 feet). They estimated it to be approximately two nautical miles away from them.

Globa described the object as a "frying pan turned upside-down" with a shiny, metallic-gray surface. It emitted very bright, irregular flashes of light. For a time it seemed to be following the tanker on a zigzag course.

At 4:12 the object suddenly increased its speed and soon arrived at the ship's position. Turning to the south, the object kept pace with the "Gori" for three minutes and made a few gyrating motions that permitted the observers a good look at its structure through their binoculars.



The UFO was perfectly round and perhaps 20–25 meters (66–82 feet) in diameter. Globa and Bolotov compared its apparent size with that of an Antonov An-24 transport aircraft (23 meters long) at a height of 1,500 meters. It seemed to be composed of two separate segments rotating slowly in opposite directions. The lights on the object looked like portholes on the circumference of the lower segment, which was very smooth and yellow in color. There was a round black spot in the middle of the bottom portion of the object. Three smaller, pie-shaped spots formed a triangle around the large spot.



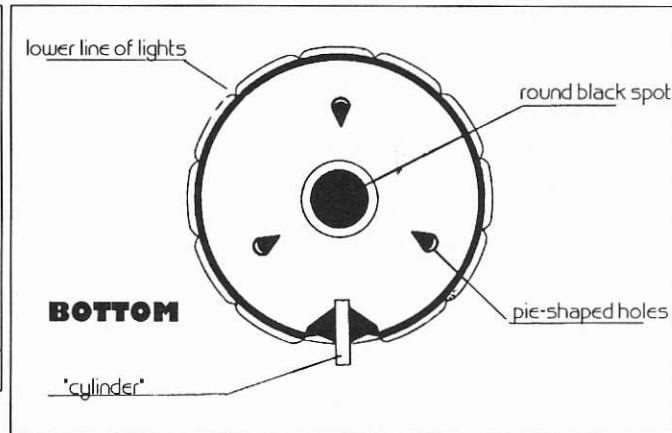
A cylindrical object like a tailpipe was situated at the junction of the two rotating segments. This was the source of the flashes of rosy, neonlike light that they had seen from a distance. On the upper side, the significant features were a rotating black object in the shape of a "trident" and a large red cupola or dome.

After a few minutes the object stopped gyrating and moved slowly away from the ship towards the southwest. The cylindrical object began to emit different shades of red and yellow. At 4:20 p.m., the observers noticed another ship

approaching to the left. The UFO flew quickly to the oncoming ship's position and hovered above it.

By this time the entire crew of the "Gori" was watching the spectacle. Captain Sokolovsky and chief mate Butakov contacted the vessel, which was an Egyptian dry cargo ship en route to Greece. They confirmed the presence of the UFO overhead.

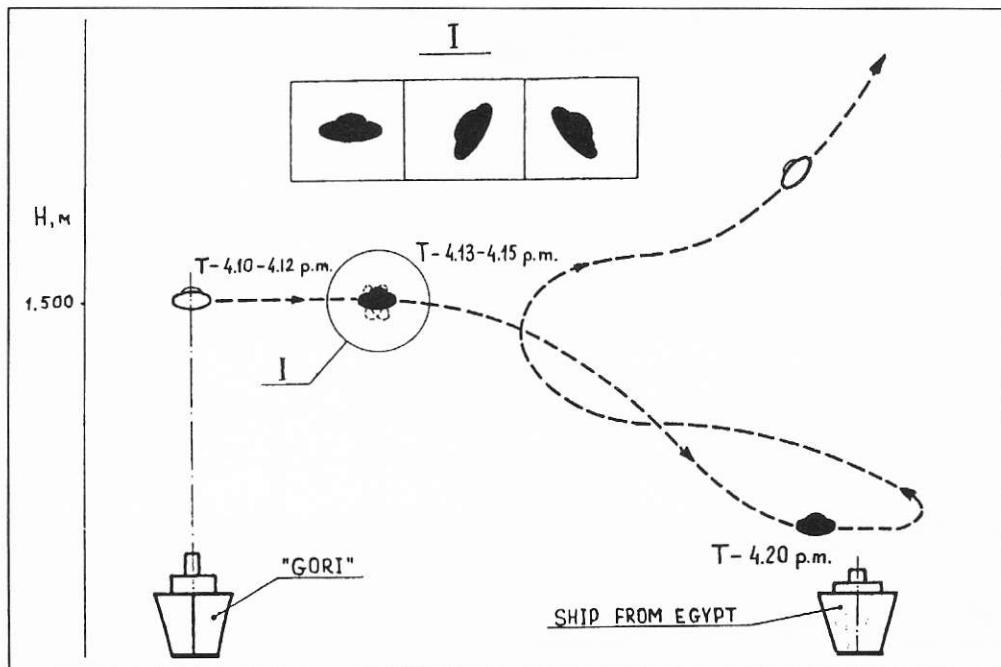
After hanging for a minute and a half, the object moved back towards the "Gori," ascending rapidly at an angle of 40–45° and veering to the right. At its fastest, the observers compared its speed to that of a supersonic pursuit plane. It



flew through the clouds, disappearing and reappearing at intervals. The object shone in the sunlight "like a steel blade." Before it was completely lost to view, the crew members saw one last bright flash of light.

The observation lasted a total of 12 minutes.

For more information on this event, write to Sergey Romanov, P.O. Box 509, Central Post Office, Tuapse, Krasnodarsky kray, Russia, 352800. ♦



PENTACLE—continued from page 12

evaluations produced and reports written, but there was no internal code name at Battelle.

Amazingly enough, all three men said that higher level personnel at Battelle did *not* do the bulk of the project's work. Though no one could recall who was on the committee of 12 or so mentioned in *Special Report No. 14* (which developed the project questionnaire, among other tasks), Westerman thought they were all Battelle employees or direct consultants, not outsiders. This makes sense given the classified nature of Project Stork. (In an amusing aside, Westerman noted that the UFO work at Battelle was worth "one hush" for its secrecy level.) The actual work of the project, then, was done by lower-level engineers and scientists. The names on the Cross letter were all at or near the managerial level, with the possible exception of Ellzey.

We asked all three which staffers had actually written the original drafts of *Special Report No. 14*. None could recall for sure, but Westerman thought it might have been Ellzey. He quickly added that Cross would have reviewed the report before it was sent to the Air Force.

After the passage of so many years, because they didn't find the UFO work particularly interesting and because they didn't work full-time on the project, they remembered little about the day-to-day work of UFO-report evaluation. At one point Reid exclaimed that they had certainly seen "lots of lousy pictures," but none could recall particular cases or investigations clearly. Westerman did say that Ruppelt was a "reasonable" Air Force officer with whom to work.

Concerning the Cross letter, our interviewees evaluated its meaning and intent in terms similar to our interpretation advanced above. Two of them added that Cross had several motives in writing the letter. A primary interest was to tell the Air Force that better data were needed, for Battelle or the Robertson panel. Possibly of equal importance was the effort to secure additional, paid UFO work for Battelle, since Battelle was and is dependent on the income from clients' projects.

It is important to emphasize that none of the men had any overt reaction upon being shown our copy. They evinced not the slightest concern that we had in our hands a document ostensibly classified Secret. Why, then, as reported by Vallee, did Cross on October 17, 1967 (a date documented by Hynek's expense records for Blue Book), react so forcibly when "confronted" by Hynek about the existence and meaning of the letter he had written 14 years before?

The answer depends upon an understanding of the Battelle/client relationship and the status of government UFO investigation today and in the late 1960s. We have already noted that Battelle takes very seriously its commitment to a client to safeguard any information or documents produced in a project. This information belongs to the client, not Battelle. As reported in his recent article (Vol. 8, No. 3) in *UFO*, Keith Chester received a letter in 1991 from Paul T. Santilli, the general counsel of Battelle. This letter reads, in

part, "if we did have such information [on UFOs], it would be the property of our client—not Battelle—and, FOIA notwithstanding, we are not permitted to release such information without a directive from that client."

We thus surmise that when Cross learned Hynek had a copy of his letter, which was still the property of the Air Force, not Battelle, he became concerned because he didn't know how Hynek had acquired his copy. Moreover, he couldn't discuss the letter with Hynek, who was not an Air Force official (and who was no longer even a consultant for the Air Force *through* Battelle, since his contract had been transferred to McGraw-Hill in 1965). Additionally, the Air Force UFO study was still in progress and the files had not been released to the public, so Cross had every reason to be close-mouthed about his letter. (We also learned from our interviews that some Battelle staffers had somewhat negative opinions concerning Hynek's role in the UFO project. Perhaps these also contributed to Cross's rudeness.)

Conversely, when we showed the letter to our interviewees, the Air Force UFO project had long been shut down, and since they believe there was (and is) nothing to the UFO business, it must have seemed reasonable to talk. They knew, too, that one of us (JZ) had actually worked on Stork for Battelle. Unlike Cross in 1967, all are now retired, which might lead to relaxed attitudes about some aspects of their former work (each, for example, was willing to discuss Project Stork's real mission, if in somewhat general terms).

We asked the three what happened to the Battelle UFO files. All said that as a matter of course files are either returned to the client or destroyed, and that the same fate most probably befell the UFO files. Thus is it not some scientific travesty or evidence of conspiracy that the UFO files no longer exist at Battelle, but simply a matter of that organization following standard practice that provides an ironclad guarantee to its clients. It is a shame that the files no longer exist, but the cases upon which they were based are in the Blue Book records.

Naturally we inquired as to whether or not Battelle's proposed experiment was ever carried out. The answer was an emphatic no, which jibes with what Ruppelt reports in his book.

BLUE BOOK SPECIAL REPORT NO. 14

We conclude this article with what we believe is an important insight into the manner in which Battelle handled the UFO project and wrote its final report (which became *Special Report No. 14*).

Compared to the infamous Condon Report, Battelle's final report is a model of scientific honesty. Nevertheless, there are parallels between the two in the divergence between the body of each report and the conclusions based on that evidence. In Condon's case, as has been amply documented, Condon blatantly ignored the work of his own team, for reasons that may have been personal, professional, organizational, or a combination thereof. In the case of

Battelle, the situation is much less egregious, but the authors of *Special Report No. 14* did seemingly disregard the intriguing statistical findings of the study.

Battelle states its primary goal in the UFO project thus: "This study was undertaken primarily to categorize the available reports of sightings and to determine the probability that any of the reports of unidentified aerial objects represented observations of 'flying saucers.'" By "flying saucers" Battelle meant, as defined in the introduction, "a novel, airborne phenomenon, a manifestation that is not a part of or readily explainable by the fund of scientific knowledge known to be possessed by the Free World." (Notice how this leaves open the possibility of Soviet technology, not surprising given the goal of Project Stork.) Though the definition states "airborne phenomenon," it is immediately followed with the statement that this "would include such items as natural phenomena that are not yet completely understood [or] *psychological phenomena*" (our emphasis). It is hard to imagine an airborne psychological phenomenon, and this confusion of mission is central to an understanding of the Battelle study.

From our interviews, it is clear that, no matter what was written in the report, Battelle understood its charge to be the determination of whether any reports were caused by structured technological vehicles. That is certainly the question that was on the Air Force's mind in 1952 when the Battelle project began, and it is the natural question to be investigated by engineers, who comprised the bulk of the project staff and were the managers of the endeavor.

Our interviews revealed plainly that Westerman, Reid, and Rieppel think like engineers when it comes to their work, and they carried this attitude with them to the UFO project. Engineers are not just trained in various physical sciences; they also expect in their work to analyze physical specimens, conduct experiments, and make physical measurements (recall the main point of the Cross letter). This was not possible in the UFO project because no physical evidence was available (see the sidebar "On the Matter of Artifacts"). Instead, they worked with witness reports which were often unreliable.

In its summary to *Special Report No. 14*, Battelle states that "it is considered to be highly improbable that reports of unidentified aerial objects examined in this study represent observations of technological developments outside of the range of present-day scientific knowledge." In the conclusions the authors reiterate this point, stating too that "the probability that any of the UNKNOWNs considered in this study are 'flying saucers' is concluded to be extremely small," then adding the telling comment, "since the most complete and reliable reports from the present data, when isolated and studied, conclusively failed to reveal even a rough model." We return to this point below.

In two articles in the old series of the *Journal of UFO Studies* ("Scientific Investigation of Unidentified Flying Objects," parts 1-2, *JUFOS*, vols. 1 (1979) and 3 (1983)), Bruce Maccabee has exhaustively considered the statistical

results of the Battelle study. He notes that the authors did not mention these findings in their concluding remarks, perhaps because they could be seen as contradicting their conclusions. Maccabee points to these intriguing results: (1) that the sightings labeled "Excellent" in quality are more likely to be classified "Unknown"; (2) that the unknowns were, in general, visible long enough to have been identified but were not; (3) that cases from military observers, who were better witnesses, had a higher percentage of unknowns; and (4) that the characteristics of the unknowns did not match the knowns on such things as color, shape, speed, and duration.

Why would the authors of the report have ignored these incontrovertible findings? The Battelle staff were engineers, and engineers were not accustomed in 1953 (or today) to searching for statistical relationships in data that came from humans, not scientific instruments. As further evidence of this point, the Battelle team took 12 of the most reliable unidentified reports and tried to construct a working model of a UFO. If, as an engineer, you are attempting to determine whether some UFOs are structured craft, then the exercise makes sense. But when the effort, not surprisingly, failed, the conclusion was not that the project might be impossible because of the limitations of human testimony, or that there might be more than one model of UFO involved, or that some natural phenomenon might be the root cause. No, the conclusion was that "there is a low probability that any of the UNKNOWNs represent observations of a class of 'flying saucer.'"

We therefore suggest that since the Battelle team couldn't construct a UFO model and because of the participants' training and scientific mindset, the exclusive use of statistical data to conclude that some structured craft were being reported was essentially inconceivable to them. It was far easier and conservative to ignore the statistical tests when writing the report. This is not scientific dishonesty: it is a real-life instance of how presuppositions may affect the work of scientific projects.

While we didn't discuss the report in these terms with our interviewees, one recalled the impossibility of building a model, and all of them commented on the unreliability of witness testimony. Not one noted that their goals included the search for psychological phenomena or unexplained natural phenomena that might explain some reports. Our interviewees, then and now, thought of the focus of their study in terms of whether it could be demonstrated that UFOs were structured craft.

SUMMARY

Our investigation of the Cross letter led us to a reconsideration of the Battelle UFO study. Though somewhat flawed, it remains one of the best scientific studies of the UFO phenomenon. Far from being evidence of government manipulation of the Robertson panel or of the existence of a secret study not part of Blue Book, the Cross letter was, in a very real way, a shining moment for Battelle. The institute

attempted to prevent the CIA from proceeding with the Robertson panel because the effort was premature, too brief, and doomed to fail because reliable data were not available.

We can quibble with this last point, but if Cross and colleagues had succeeded, who knows how it would have changed the history of UFO study? ♦

NEW ABDUCTION DOCUMENTARY DEBUTS

A feature-length documentary video about UFO abductions produced and directed by two CUFOS associates premiered at the School of the Art Institute's Film Center in Chicago on June 3, 1993. Filmmakers Sharon Sandusky and Allen Ross, both graduates of the School of the Art Institute, interviewed abductees who attended Leo Sprinkle's 12th Rocky Mountain UFO Conference in Laramie and the MUFON Conference in Chicago in 1991, as well as researchers Budd Hopkins, David Jacobs, and John Carpenter.

The documentary, entitled "Ordinary Conversations about Extraordinary Matters," includes portions of a videotaped hypnotic regression session conducted by John Carpenter with Skye Ambrose, who recalls her childhood abduction by telepathic entities. Another highlight is an entertaining view of the contact experience by contactee and "one-quarter Native American" Ione Allison, whose pragmatic attitude towards the paranormal is refreshingly unique.

Sandusky, who also assisted in the production of the CUFOS video *Contact UFO: Alien Abduction*, once made a comically macabre short that mixed a manic loop of Wayne Newton singing "Danke Schoen" with footage of lemmings leaping off cliffs.

At this time no plans are yet formalized for the documentary's release to home video. ♦

MARCEL—continued from page 14

used those words in their first conversation. Allan may not like it, but that is what the facts say.

I will not defend Stan Friedman, but to criticize a witness because a researcher has done a poor job in the past is not the same thing as discrediting that witness, especially when the witness has left a body of public statements. Marcel spoke to dozens of others about his experiences in 1947. He spoke to some of them before any "UFO researcher" found him. His story did not change.

If Marcel was the sole reporter of this tale, then we could reject it if we were so inclined. But there are too many others telling similar tales about this event in New Mexico—eyewitnesses whom Allan prefers to disregard rather than hear what they have to say. Like other would-be debunkers, Allan hears only what he wants to hear.

I'll end this the same way I concluded my previous *IUR* article, with an added emphasis: "We must stick to the facts and speculate only cautiously. Does this mean that such questions shouldn't be asked? Of course not. *But once the answers have been offered, we must move on.*" ♦

FILM REVIEW: FIRE IN THE SKY

Nearly 18 years after Travis Walton's famous abduction, Paramount Pictures has brought us *Fire in the Sky*, a loosely factual interpretation of Walton's experience. Under Tracy Tormé's pen and Robert Lieberman's direction, the film unfolds at a relatively slow pace as Walton's co-workers explain what occurred that fateful night in November 1975.

Travis, as adequately portrayed by D.B. Sweeney, is abducted by a glowing orb-like UFO. His friends inevitably come under suspicion for murder. Mike Rogers (Robert Patrick of *Terminator 2*) spends the majority of the film trying to convince local authorities (Noble Willingham and James Garner) and fellow townspeople that Travis was indeed taken by a UFO and not murdered by himself or fellow workers who were clearing a mountainside of trees. This aspect of the film, at least, holds the viewer's interest.

One must credit the filmmakers for telling a moderately engaging story by focusing on the disappearance of Walton and its effect on his friends and the residents of Snowflake, Arizona. While the pacing is rather sluggish, things liven up as Walton is discovered naked and cowering in a town 25 miles away. Through a series of flashbacks aided with dazzling visual effects Walton relives his horrific abduction.

At this point Hollywood liberally applies its own sense of reality to the script. Though the abduction is portrayed quite stunningly it is far from representative of Walton's encounter. Gone are the smooth, angular features of the spacecraft; instead generous amounts of ultraslime and *Alien*-type biomechanical settings are the desired stagings. Also missing is Walton's description of a "planetarium" or viewing screen in the ship and his confrontation with humanoid beings on board. The medical exam depicted in the film is much more intense than Walton originally related, featuring an extremely unpleasant restraint and eye exam.

Fire joins only a handful of serious UFO-related films produced throughout the years. Philippe Mora's *Communication* (1989) depicted Whitley Strieber's numerous abductions as a visually stylish exercise, but it was ultimately an unsatisfying account of UFO abduction experiences. Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) remains the best treatment, ably encompassing nearly all components of the phenomenon in an exciting and accessible manner. Television's foray into the subject was *The UFO Incident* (1975), portraying the Betty and Barney Hill abduction. It is the best account to date, concentrating on the human dimensions of the case and its effects on the principals. Tormé's own handsomely produced venture, *Intruders* (1992), was an effective composite of current UFO abduction cases, though its much too literal conclusion focused on the arguable genetic engineering hypothesis.

Other offerings have been B-type productions. Mercifully *Fire* avoids these trappings, bringing a modestly well-told and emotionally satisfying tale to the medium. —Chris TalarSKI ♦

LETTERS

THE LINDA CASE

To the editor:

It was a rewarding experience to read the March/April issue of *IUR*, devoted to the alleged abduction of Linda Napolitano in lower Manhattan, an important case on which the reputation of some well-known ufologists seems to hang.

The best part of this issue is Budd Hopkins's attempt to squeeze out of an untenable situation. Since scientific argument is almost impossible to refute, especially for those who are not scientists, Hopkins's only option was the personal attack. But indeed he is correct in his assessment of my physical handicaps. I am more than 25 years his senior; my eyesight is not what it used to be, and to top it off, during his talk in Albuquerque I was seated at a place where I could hardly see the screen. The view time of the slides of interest was unquestionably not more than the time Mrs. Kimball had on the bridge (one minute or less, according to Hopkins), sufficient for her to prepare those detailed drawings.

If Hopkins knew more about the way the scientific mind works, by reading my piece he should have realized that while writing it (this past February) I had to have copies of the original drawings in front of me. I was not referring to the "wrong drawing": the one allegedly made by Richard (if such a person exists) shows Linda's hair flying to the left of her face (another discrepancy on which I don't care to dwell here) and has a different perspective, showing the UFO from below.

The drawing reproduced on page 14 of the issue is the correct one, or—as many would say—the smoking gun. What it shows is an enlargement of the area framed by the iron grid of the bridge, and it depicts Linda's tresses on the right side of her face. Mrs. Kimball could not have seen this simply because their width is below the resolution of the human eye.

In addition, the information contained in the drawing is sufficient to develop an independent argument for a hoax. It shows Linda in full length (and we know how tall she is), and we know the exact distance to the bridge. We also have been told the dimensions of Linda's window. Therefore an elementary calculation . . . but this is a different story which I reserve for the future.

As for my second point, it still stands, because the published narratives of Mrs. Kimball's experience *do not mention blue lights*, while emphasizing the color red which made her think a building was on fire in Manhattan.

Hopkins's response to my third point reproaches me for things I did not even mention in my paper, namely Kimball's allegation that the UFO flew behind a building. If my memory is bad, Hopkins's is nonexistent, since he obviously could not remember what he had just read:

"[W]hile she could have seen through the right-hand window the craft gaining altitude and veering toward the

rear of the car in order to clear the bridge, it is obvious that her line of vision would have been obstructed first by the roof of the car, and not by a structural part of the bridge itself, way above the roadway and pitch-dark to boot."

Sorry, Budd, no buildings mentioned. I did not pretend what you pretend I did. Moreover, the wealth of detail on the ironwork of the bridge and the buildings in the background only confirms a visit to the bridge *a posteriori*.

Willy Smith, Ph.D.

UNICAT Project

Longwood, Florida

To the editor:

Anybody who takes a quick look at the horizon can verify that Willy Smith's "irretrievable" problem with "Janet Kimball's" testimony (March/April *IUR*) is fallacious. He claims that three-inch-wide hair is unresolvable to the human eye at 1,560 feet. (This is about two and a half blocks on his map.)

My middle-aged eyes can see a quarter-inch telephone wire at a quarter-mile—a mile in good conditions. This is over 10 times better than Smith's claim. Readers are invited to make their own verifications. By his formula the telephone pole itself should be unresolvable a mile away. (A mile is about 25 telephone-pole spacings, or 10 blocks.)

To paraphrase Smith: "When an alleged expert provides analysis which is verifiably incorrect, his or her credibility evaporates, and all the analysis becomes suspect."

Jeffrey Sainio

MUFON Staff Photoanalyst

Hartland, Wisconsin

To the editor:

You erroneously accuse Hansen/Stefula/Butler of revealing Linda's real last name in their white paper published on January 8, 1993. In truth, her last name was first revealed three months earlier by Jim Moseley in the September 5, 1992, issue of *Saucer Smear*. I trust you will correct your error in the next issue of *IUR*.

Philip J. Klass

Washington, D.C.

To the editor:

What's truly distressing is the extensive devotion of space in UFO publications to ego-fueled controversies that may muddle issues more than clarify them. Internecine warfare in private is a distraction to those involved; when it erupts perforce into the limited space of our few reputable UFO publications, it becomes counterproductive for the entire

UFO community. When facts and circumstances become subordinate to character disparagement and righteous indignation, objective research and scholarly erudition suffer.

Robert H. Coddington
Richmond, Virginia

FIRE IN THE SKY

To the editor:

I have just seen the movie *Fire in the Sky* allegedly based on Travis Walton's book *The Walton Experience* (1978), which I own. I am still wondering—perhaps I am a victim of missing time—which part of the book this film is based on. It certainly does not involve Walton's brief recollection of his abduction.

The film sequence, which is a clever mix of the work of Dr. Mengele and *Clockwork Orange*, bore little resemblance to the Walton narrative. I understand the meaning of literary license, but I thought the true story had some importance, especially in a movie billed as "based on the true story."

Did the aliens resemble Ross Perot, or did I dream it?

Brian Parks
Torrance, California

ROSWELL MATTERS

To the editor:

For many months in 1992 I attempted to mediate the unfortunate ongoing dispute between the two pairs of New Mexico crash investigators: Kevin Randle and Don Schmitt on one side, Stan Friedman and Don Berliner on the other. I did so because of a strong conviction that their quarreling was harmful to ufology and that with our limited resources and the overriding importance of the Corona/Roswell case we need to patch over our differences and work together. I hoped at least to persuade them to cool down the rhetoric and cooperate in important areas.

Though my effort was almost a complete failure—there were plenty of inflated egos, pettiness, and illogic evident on both sides—it was educational for me in many ways that are beyond the scope and purpose of this letter. I will try to take the lessons I learned and put them to work in the future. At the outset, I promised to go public with my findings if I agreed with one or more of the principals on some important point that was in dispute. I took grievances and complaints from both sides and asked the other side to reply. Precious little was resolved by this means, but I feel a duty to report on one item.

Randle alleged that Friedman and others, apparently acting in concert, had attempted to interfere with publication of the book *UFO Crash at Roswell* (then in preparation) by

contacting the publisher, Avon Books, making charges of plagiarism and generally impugning Randle's character and integrity. I asked Randle for documentation, which he provided. I asked Friedman for an explanation, and he never replied.

The documents show that in June and July 1990 Friedman, Bill Moore, Jaime Shandera, and Whitley Strieber (who said he owned rights to *The Roswell Incident*) barraged Avon Books with letters and phone calls alleging plagiarism, and Friedman and Moore (before their falling out) demanded to see the manuscript. When they were rebuffed, Moore and Shandera later escalated their attack and threatened a lawsuit. A letter dated August 17, 1990, accused Randle and Schmitt of a "willful conspiracy" to steal their material, "copyright infringement," "slander," "fraud," and other acts. Moore and Shandera then repeated the threat in a letter dated March 15, 1991, and sent a copy to Avon.

Other repeated *ad hominem* attacks shall go unmentioned. The concerted effort to derail the Randle/Schmitt book is indefensible.

Richard Hall
Brentwood, Maryland

To the editor:

I hope somebody of scientific open-mindedness will have the means to make further on-site investigations of the Roswell incident. Perhaps something of a physical nature can still be found.

I do not think it is mandatory that a metal or other material from another world has to be of unearthly composition. If others have an advanced technology far beyond ours, they could have similar alloy metals to ours. The difference could be in the percentages of trace impurities or ingredients. The same chemical elements are no doubt present all over the universe.

Robert D. Null
Maiden, North Carolina

UFOs (?) OVER LEIPZIG

Ufo über Leipzig: Auch die Polizei hat's gesehen

According to the *Journal für UFO-Forschung*, published in Lüdenscheid, Germany, several people observed a large, brightly illuminated disk over the city of Leipzig on December 16, 1992. The UFO was said to have a large triangular window at its base. When the initial sighting by Werner Noeske was published by the newspapers, additional witnesses came forth.

However, an investigation revealed that two unrelated events contributed to the sightings: (1) a "sky tracker" searchlight common in European discos, and (2) a cargo plane that made routine flights at the same hour. A photograph confirmed the latter identification.

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yet to produce its own version of the RB-47 radar/visual case or the Trans-en-Provence CE2. We give abduction reports serious consideration because UFOs show up on radar and leave traces on the ground. These things, like Battelle's statistical findings, make abductions—as well as other high-strangeness episodes—seem at least possible.

History does not simply remind us of how we got to where we are. It also provides us with fresh insights into the UFO phenomenon. I learned as much not long ago when I returned to the airship question, which had intrigued me for three decades, as I was conducting research for a book on early UFO history (published in 1992 as *The Emergence of a Phenomenon*). These turn-of-the-century reports had seemed so wildly at variance with modern UFO reports that they gave rise to an interpretation from which much paranormal and psychosocial theory evolved: The airships, it was surmised, looked like human devices because aerial phenomena are reflective of the cultural environment in which they are seen.

I confess to being the first writer to suggest as much (in a 1965 *Flying Saucer Review* article), and this hypothesis has long been an article of faith among those proposing alternatives to the ETH. Unfortunately, it rests on a dubious assumption: that Midwestern press accounts are a reliable guide to the sightings that comprised the great airship wave of the spring of 1897. It was clear that most of the press treated the airship scare as a huge joke, and editors, correspondents, and hoaxers in the provinces delightedly cooked up outrageous yarns which decades later influential ufological theoreticians took to be accounts of real events incompatible with the ETH.

John Keel, for example, wrote that sinister "ultraterrestrials" had engaged in a "grand deception" in which they constructed dirigiblelike craft and flew them over Chicago and other cities; they also staged landings "in relatively remote places and [contacted] a few random individuals, telling them the 'secret invention' story" so that when these deluded witnesses told of their experiences they would "lend further confusion to the situation." Vallee argued that the "American inventors" who figured in the landing stories were supernatural beings in disguise, akin to the fairies and demons of earlier ages and to the putatively extraterrestrial humanoids of today.

In the absence of 1897 "airshipologists" who could have collected reports directly from witnesses, such speculations appeared to be the only alternative to outright dismissal of the airship wave. After all, only press accounts survived, and as unreliable as these clearly were (as almost everybody came to agree eventually, after ufologists successfully debunked some of the more spectacular yarns), these were all we had. By the time ufologists turned their attention to serious airship research in the 1960s, there were no living witnesses.

Or so it appeared. My research took me to the CUFOS archives, which also contain masses of material from Blue Book, NICAP, both CSIs (New York and Los Angeles), and the private files of noted ufologists. Included in all this were numerous letters witnesses had written to organizations and individual researchers. Some of these letters, typically written in the early 1950s, were from old people recalling sightings made around the turn of the century. Though not one of them used the term "airship," it suddenly came to me that this was precisely what they were describing.

Their descriptions matched those recounted in the more conservative American newspaper accounts as well as ones in British, Irish, Australian, and New Zealand newspapers from the early years of the 20th Century. (Foreign newspapers afforded sightings more sober coverage, in part because the craft were suspected to be German vehicles engaged in aerial espionage.) Here there were no tales of landed airships with garrulous occupants purporting to be earthly inventors, only matter-of-fact, strikingly consistent descriptions of dirigible-shaped craft, not in themselves luminous but carrying lights along the side, often sporting a brilliant searchlight, sometimes displaying wings or propellers, and capable of hovering or abruptly accelerating to great speed.

I was further startled, as I worked my way through decades of cases, to find that reports of this sort of UFO did not end in the early 1910s, as researchers had always assumed, but continue virtually to the present. The UFO literature is full of sightings like this. One (from Pittsburg, Kansas, 1952) even is listed among the relatively few "unknowns" in *Project Blue Book Special Report No. 14*. In 1957, when one appeared over (of all places) McMinnville, Oregon, a newspaper story actually remarked on its resemblance to an "airship."

We now know, in short, that for the duration of its presence (recognizable reports go back to the early decades of the 19th Century) the UFO phenomenon has been remarkably stable in appearance and behavior. No "reflective" manifestation, it seems to have an objective existence apart from cultural context and witness expectation. To explain it, we need not draw on unverifiable supernatural fancies or unfalsifiable pseudosocial speculations. We would do better to heed our history and to proceed from there well grounded in its lessons. — Jerome Clark

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