

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Place : Tularosa, NM

Date: 28 May 95

I, Bernard D. Gildenberg, GS-14, (Ret), hereby state that James McAndrew was identified as a Lieutenant, USAFR on this date at my home and do hereby, voluntarily and of my own free will, make the following statement. This was done without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I became involved in high altitude balloon development while an undergraduate student at New York University (NYU). Following graduation I was hired by the Air Force at Holloman AFB and worked continuously as both a meteorologist and aerospace engineer at the Balloon Branch from 1951 until my retirement in 1981. My job responsibilities were to forecast the weather and fly by remote control, high altitude balloons for many different scientific projects. During this time, I became internationally recognized as an authority on high altitude balloon trajectory forecasting. I have published numerous technical reports and articles.

The first project in which I was involved, while still an undergraduate student at NYU, was the acoustical detection of nuclear explosions. The name of the project, Mogul, was classified and I didn't know this name until several years ago. Based on my experience with this project I am certain project Mogul was responsible for some portions of what has become to be known as the "Roswell Incident".

Following project Mogul I was involved in perfecting high altitude balloon technology and made many test flights with large polyethylene balloons from Holloman AFB. I worked extensively on atmospheric sampling projects and biological flights in which the balloons lifted small animals to altitude for cosmic ray experiments. I also worked on the Moby Dick Project that collected meteorological data and the classified Gopher (119L) reconnaissance project.

I was relied upon to forecast the weather, conduct climatological studies, predict balloon trajectories, and to hit with precision, ground targets both on and off the White Sands Missile Range. Balloon trajectories in New Mexico below the tropopause, are predominantly towards the east-northeast, when launched from Holloman AFB with the exception of July and August when balloons remained over the Holloman area. At high altitude, above the tropopause, trajectories are generally westerly during the summer and easterly during the spring, fall, and winter. As a result these winds, the Holloman balloon branch recovered many, probably hundreds, of balloons and scientific payloads from the Roswell, NM area over the years.

During the time of the year when trajectories were to the east I attempted to drop the equipment near accessible non mountainous areas and paved roads. The main target area was the first large north-south road on the other side of the Sacramento Mountains from Holloman AFB, Highway 285. This road goes north and south through Roswell. The



standard procedure was to preposition military recovery crews near the projected point of payload impact. The crews consisted primarily of Air Force members in uniform and they operated military vehicles. I often directed these crews to "standby" along the shoulder of Highway 285, both north and south of Roswell until the balloon was in position. The recovery crews received detailed instructions from tracking aircraft that led them to the exact location of the payload. The recovery vehicles included, depending on the mission, a crane, weapons carriers, communications van, and occasionally tanker trucks to refuel the aircraft that would sometimes land on nearby roads.

During the time of the year when balloon trajectories were to the west, I attempted to drop the payloads in the Rio Grande Valley. I also aimed for another valley, the flat area north of Truth or Consequences that includes the Plains of San Augustin. In addition, many remote balloon launch sites were located throughout the Rio Grande Valley west of the White Sands Proving Grounds. Launch crews were also mostly military and used much of the same equipment as the recovery crews.

I had extensive involvement with Project 7218 that later became Project 7222. This project studied the free-fall characteristics of anthropomorphic dummies dropped from balloons from altitudes up to 100,000 feet. The missions usually consisted of two dummies attached to a suspension rack that I directed to be released at altitude. Depending on the wind conditions and time of year, the dummies, on many occasions, landed in the Roswell area. I recall some difficulties in the release mechanisms of the dummies that resulted in some of them free-falling to the ground while they were still attached to the rack. Someone without a good vantage point or not associated with the project might mistake these dummies for "aliens" due to their odd flesh tones and abstract human features.

I also recall an accident involving a manned balloon flight. I remember this event clearly because I am also a balloon pilot and had an accident approximately two years before. The accident occurred on a flight that Capt Joe Kittinger was "checking out" two back up pilots for his high altitude missions. The balloon was launched around midnight from behind the Balloon Branch at Holloman AFB. I remember that some of the steel ballast used by the balloon caused a "fireworks" display when it contacted some nearby power lines during the launch. I was operating the control center for this flight and I received notification from the communications vehicle that was following the balloon that there had been an accident north of Roswell. I later learned that the gondola had rolled over during a practice touch and go landing and one of the pilots had been struck in the head and injured. I recall speaking to Capt Kittinger about the accident and I saw the injured pilot. Although his injury was not serious, his head had considerable swelling and he looked very odd.

I also worked with Capt Kittinger on Project Stargazer. I also had met several times the civilian scientific advisor Dr. J. Allen Hynek. Dr Hynek was thoroughly familiar with the balloon operations at Holloman and visited the Balloon Branch numerous times. This project experienced some difficulties and only one manned flight was conducted.

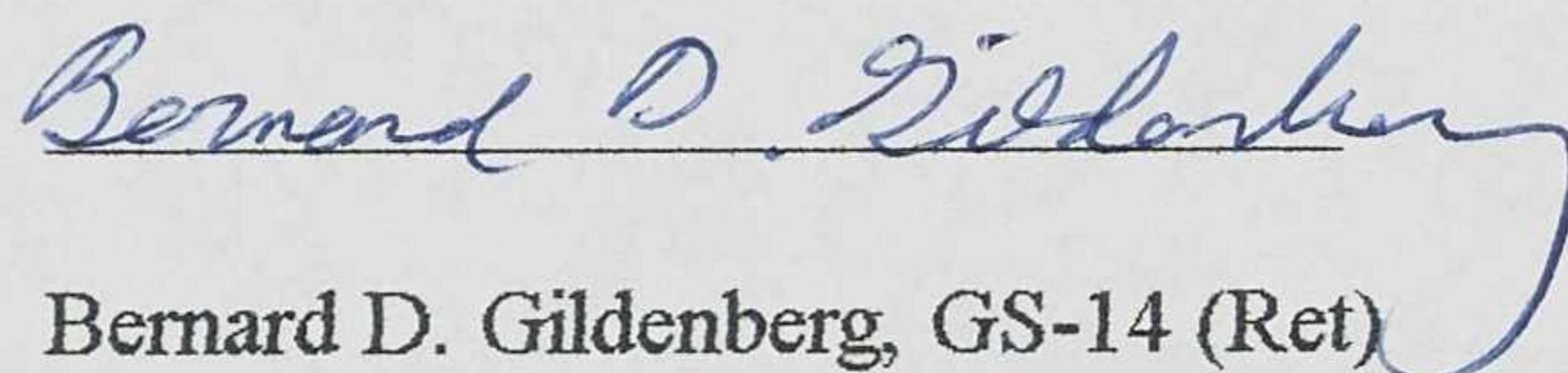


Another project I was involved with was the Air Force investigations of UFOs, Project Bluebook. Since I was a meteorologist and amateur astronomer I evaluated, starting in 1951, local sightings of UFOs. New Mexico had alot of sightings because of the good visibility and the many experimental projects of the White Sands Proving Grounds. During my time on Project Bluebook there wasn't any sightings that we could not explain. Nevertheless popular literature still refers to some of these sightings as unexplained.

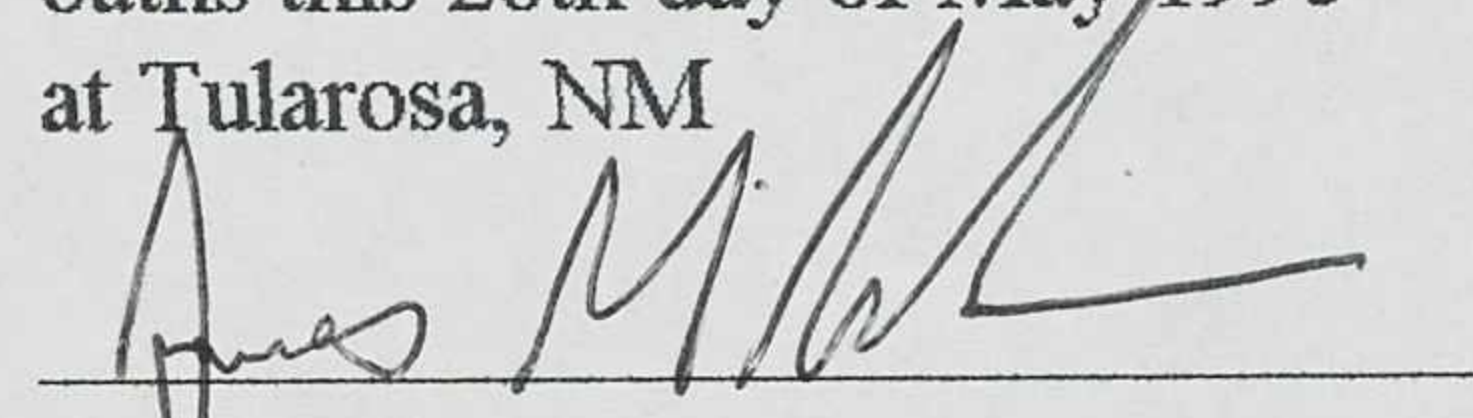
Another project with which I was involved, was the NASA Voyager and Viking Projects. These space vehicles were tested by launching them from our balloons at extremely high altitude to simulate the atmosphere of Venus and Mars. To utilize the instrumentation on the White Sands Missile Range I elected to launch the balloons and attached space vehicles from the Roswell Industrial Air Center, formerly the Roswell Army Airfield. The Holloman Balloon Branch made approximately eight launches of these two vehicles from Roswell. In appearance the Viking and Voyager probes could be mistaken for a flying saucer. They were both unclassified highly publicized projects and I do not recall getting any UFO reports for these flights. I believe one of these probes is on display at White Sands Missile Range and its known as the "flying saucer".

I am not part of any conspiracy to withhold or provide misleading information to the United States Government or the American public. There is no classified information that I am withholding related to this inquiry and I have never been threatened by U.S. Government persons concerning refraining from talking about this matter.

SIGNED:

  
Bernard D. Gildenberg, GS-14 (Ret)

Subscribed and sworn before me, an individual authorized to administer oaths this 28th day of May 1995 at Tularosa, NM

  
James McAndrew, 1st Lt, USAFR

WITNESS(s):

\_\_\_\_\_