

Local physicist feels photograph will interest UFO investigators

CAPE GIRARDEAU — Dr. Harley Rutledge, chairman of the physics department at SEMO University, believes a satellite photograph of an unidentified flying object he displayed Saturday will create quite a stir among UFO investigators nationally.

"It is the most clearly defined shape I've seen," declared Rutledge. "If you knew what I know about the UFO scheme, you would be very excited about it."

The photograph, taken in October of 1973 and acquired by a civilian employee of the Air Force at a base in Anchorage, Alaska, is regarded as significant because the U.S. government has verified it was taken by a satellite, making it the only official government satellite photo ever released of a UFO.

John T. Smith, of Anchorage, who was on duty the day the photo was taken, and his current partner in a construction business, James Bounds, have spent about three weeks trying to get the photo identified. The photo laid forgotten in a desk drawer of Smith's until recently, when Bounds discovered it and questioned Smith about it.

Bounds and Smith decided to have it researched, and after looking up names of UFO experts at

their library, and talking with several, they decided to bring the photo to Rutledge.

"We have put a lot of time and money into this," said Bounds, at a press conference Saturday afternoon. "We are satisfied, based on the experts, at this time, we have a valid satellite photo available to the public."

The two flew to Cape Girardeau on Oct. 25 to meet with Rutledge and spent the week researching the photo to verify it is an untouched satellite photo and to see whether the object could be identified.

The photo of the semi-rectangular object was taken by a defense weather satellite and was going 4,000-4,500 miles per hour and climbing out of the atmosphere, explained Smith.

Smith pointed out that at the time the photo was taken, it was determined the object did not belong to the United States or Soviet Union.

All three men Saturday stressed they were not calling the object alien, but were only saying it could not be identified.

Smith said it is also significant that the photo is clearly an object. "This is not a blinking light — this is an object," he stressed.

The photograph has never been

published and Smith and Bounds have not decided when that will happen.

The two have decided they would prefer to take the scientific approach to the photograph rather than the sensational approach that might prove more lucrative.

Several national newspapers have offered to buy the photo and information about it. Bounds displayed a contract from the National Enquirer offering to pay \$50,000 up front for the photograph, but they determined for now the photo should be studied on a scientific basis and contacted Rutledge.

Smith and Bounds planned to return home to Anchorage, after a press conference Saturday night in St. Louis, and will keep the photo, though Rutledge will have a copy.

Rutledge, who has studied UFOs since 1973, plans to do further research to determine what part of the Soviet Union the object was over when it was taken and talk with other experts to try and identify the object.

"I have a photo of an object I know is a UFO," summed up Smith. "We have come down here to see a guy who is a world renowned expert to try and identify it."