

20 Years Later, Kecksburg 'Light' Little Clearer

By DAVE LESTER
Of The Tribune-Review

An amateur group of UFO investigators say newly obtained government documents have shed light on some strange happenings in Kecksburg 20 years ago, but the additional information has not led them to any conclusions about a fiery, bright orange object believed to have crashed near the Westmoreland County community.

Nor has the military lifted the veil of official secrecy surrounding an intensive search of a heavily wooded area where a blue light was observed Dec. 9, 1965.

The Air Force's explanation that the object was a meteorite has never satisfied Stan Gordon, director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained.

Other investigators, who mapped the flight of the object from Michigan to Pennsylvania, said it made an abrupt turn in flight, a change in course not possible for a meteor or bolide.

Gordon also doubts that the military would have shown much interest in a meteor, while the Kecksburg incident brought military and other government units to the tiny community.

And there was an air of secrecy about the military's activity that belies the discovery of meteorite particles. State police issued a statement that a thorough search of the woods was conducted and nothing was found. The area was roped off and civilians were not allowed in the area. Gordon says there were reports of an empty military truck brought into the site which carried something out, but he has never been able to confirm through the military if anything was discovered in the area of a steep ravine.

Gordon says there were also rumors that late at night a truckload of small trees and bushes were brought in and planted to disguise the site.

Gordon speculates that the military spent the evening transmitting information to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and NORA D's Cheyenne Mountain installation in Colorado from a command post set up at the Kecksburg fire hall.

"Meteorites do not stir the military units to move to try to recover something," says Gordon. "We feel the public has a right to know what indeed crashed in the woods in Kecksburg at that time."

UFO Info Week Begins

By The Tribune-Review

The second annual National UFO Information Week will be observed beginning today by the Mutual UFO Network of Seguin, Texas.

MUFON is the largest international UFO research organization conducting serious study of UFO phenomena.

The Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, a statewide clearinghouse for UFO reports, will have an exhibit of UFO-related material Saturday at Westmoreland Mall near Greensburg.

The exhibit will feature slides and photos of UFOs, a display of books and government documents and various physical evidence obtained by PASU during investigations.

People who have had past or recent UFO sightings or other strange experiences are asked to write to PASU at 6 Oakhill Ave., Greensburg, Pa., 15601. The 24-hour Pennsylvania UFO hotline is 412-838-7768.

Observers may report experiences without fear of ridicule or publicity.

Among the military personnel was the 662nd Radar Squadron based at a U.S. Army support facility in Oakdale and members of Project Blue Book, a special unit which operated out of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base at Dayton, Ohio, for the purpose of investigating UFOs.

Says Gordon: "Why after more than 20 years is the government continuing to keep this quiet? Why aren't there any records anywhere to show the unit was in-

involved in this, what the object was or what was done with it?"

Through requests for declassified documents under the Freedom of Information Act, Gordon discovered an Air Force memo that mentioned that a three-man team was dispatched to Acme to investigate and pick up an object that started a fire. When investigators first requested records of the unit in the hope that documents might shed light on the incident they were told that they

could not be located.

In recent months, some records have surfaced, but Gordon says he is disappointed that they make no mention of the unit's involvement in the Kecksburg search detail.

Although the records contain information and operations for the month, including code names of different exercises — Desk Top 7, Cree Arrow 1 — no mention is made in the operations manual of the unit's assignment at Kecksburg.

"There is no mention at all for anything Dec. 9," says Gordon. Now everybody we talked to in the military said they can't possibly understand how in peacetime or wartime you could move personnel and military equipment without there being a report on it. "Why isn't there even an operations report for that day when we know they were directly involved?"

Gordon says a 1961 Air Force intelligence document describing the function of a three-man team offers the first clue that there are specialized units involved in UFO retrievals.

Among their functions, the records indicate, is the quick retrieval of UFO and known Soviet

bloc aerospace vehicles, weapons systems or residual components of such equipment.

"It's the first good documentation there were, and still are, specialized teams used for quick response to pick up UFOs or debris or foreign space equipment," says Gordon.

According to Gordon, other documents support the belief that the Air Force continued to investigate UFOs under such code names as Project Moondust, even though the Air Force's official investigation into UFOs ended in December 1969, the same month the 662nd Radar Squadron was deactivated.

"Indications are it is still active, possibly under a different name but it's being done under the cover of NASA, the Department of State," says Gordon.

His group is still trying to get the word out that it is investigating the incident and has appealed to anyone who may have witnessed the falling object to contact them. "We would also like anybody at all who was at the scene that night, especially anybody who saw any of the military personnel, vehicles or operations during the night to contact us."