

The Day the U.S. Air Force Tried to Catch a UFO

... And Almost Wrecked Military Security Screen

Air Force planes have streaked in pursuit of uncounted UFOs — but the public has never been told officially that flying saucers are here. Sightings are suppressed because Air Force officials fear national panic if the truth comes out, declares Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe in an absorbing new book, "Aliens From Space." Keyhoe's impressive credentials include 13 years as director of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), a civilian investigative group composed mainly of retired military leaders. He also has authored three previous best-sellers on UFOs. Here, in the second part of a series from his new book, Keyhoe tells of AF attempts to capture a UFO.

By MAJOR DONALD E. KEYHOE

A large flying disc that descended near Redmond, Oreg., set off one of the most desperate pursuits the Air Force ever attempted — and almost wrecked its long-standing censorship of UFO incidents.

The Air Force scrambled six F-102 jet fighters from their base at Portland. As they took off, the AF radioed the pilots of a B-47 bomber and an F-89 fighter on routine flights nearby, ordering them to join the F-102s in a secret mission. The purpose: To capture the UFO — and its crew.

The pilots knew the tremendous importance of the mission. If they were able to force the UFO down without seriously damaging it, the AF would learn the UFOs' technical secrets.

The first known witness of the Red-

mond incident on Sept. 24, 1959 was city policeman Robert Dickerson. He was cruising at the edge of town when the glowing disc plunged out of the sky, then hovered at 200 feet.

For a few minutes the strange machine remained motionless. Then it climbed up past Redmond Airport and stopped again, hovering northeast of the field. Dickerson reported the UFO to Flight Specialist Laverne Wertz.

Through binoculars, Wertz and other Federal Aviation Administration men scanned the disc and clearly saw odd tongues of flame around the rim.

Wertz teletyped the Air Route Traffic Control Center at Seattle. Within minutes, the AF told Seattle that the Portland jets were being scrambled, also that AF radar was tracking the UFO at Klamath Falls, Oreg.

At Redmond, the FAA observers were still watching the UFO when they heard the roar of jets. As the planes dived toward the spacecraft the

tongues of flame vanished. Then a fiery exhaust blasted from the bottom of the disc. Accelerating at terrific speed, it shot straight upward, almost in the jets' path.

The nearest pilot frantically banked to avoid a collision. As the UFO shot up past him another jet, caught in the churning air from the machine's exhaust, almost went out of control.

Three other pilots pulled out of their dives and climbed after the fleeing disc. But even with extra speed and their afterburners they were quickly left behind. Even after the AF pilots gave up the hopeless chase, the radar operators were still tracking the UFO.

When the pilots landed, they were ordered by AF Intelligence not to discuss the incident. But hundreds of Redmond citizens had heard the diving jets and a few had seen them. Others reported seeing an odd glow in the sky. The AF explained the flight as a routine checkup caused by a false radar return — and the glow as something imagined by excited witnesses.

But within hours, this censorship was threatened. AF Headquarters had the FAA order Flight Specialist Wertz to go up in a plane and check for radioactivity with a geiger counter. The results, teletyped to the AF, were never released — but a newsman somehow learned of the test and broke the story.

The leak alarmed headquarters. A test for radioactivity by the FAA — and ordered by the AF — would lead the public, and Congress, to believe that AF denials of the incident were false. So headquarters put out this incredible official explanation: The object seen near Redmond was probably a weather balloon.

This was preposterous, of course. Balloons drift with the wind, and could hardly outdistance 600 m.p.h. jets.

As the Redmond excitement died

ALIENS FROM SPACE... THE REAL STORY OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

MAJOR DONALD E. KEYHOE
(U.S. SECRET)

If your escalator to success is stalled, try using the stairs.

— Long Island Builder

down the AF censors thankfully relaxed. Now, they thought, the Redmond case was safely buried.

But unknown to the AF, NICAP had obtained certified copies of the FAA logs. They described the UFO and included the AF confirmations of radar tracking, scrambling of the Portland jets, and the Klamath Falls report on the UFO's evasive operations after the AF attack failed.

Threatened with an end to secrecy, the AF censors risked the only step that might save them and announced they had found the true explanation:

The FAA observers and Redmond witnesses had seen the planet Venus.

This was as ridiculous as the balloon story, if not more so. But the Venus answer is still listed as the proved explanation — one of the biggest deceptions in the long AF cover-up of UFO incidents.

NEXT WEEK: American scientists tune in on a message from outer space — only to have their astounding success debunked by military leaders.

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