

# THE UNINVITED

SOMETHING DROPPED IN ON  
KECKSBURG UNEXPECTEDLY 25 YEARS AGO,  
AND THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUES TO  
DIVIDE THIS WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
COMMUNITY TODAY

**S**O, WHAT ON Earth landed in Kecksburg on Dec. 9, 1965? Or, as some would phrase it, what *outside* Earth landed there?

To this day, neither rocket scientists nor UFO buffs can say with any surety what — if anything — happened that Thursday evening in the still decidedly uncertain Westmoreland County village.

The only circumstantial evidence that something lit is what otherwise rational people say they saw: gliding fireball, angled landing, sparks, smoke, spacecraft in the woods. Many hung around until early the next morning to witness, they say, the military haul away an object that, covered with a tarpaulin, resembled a Volkswagen Beetle.

The Foreign Technology Division of the U.S. Air Force, then as today, says the sighting was a meteor that was never found. But astronomers note that a meteor the size of a Volkswagen Beetle would have transformed Kecksburg into Kratertown.

UFO researchers say eyewitness descriptions suggest something extraterrestrial, and they consider the Kecksburg incident one of

America's most compelling UFO mysteries. But some fed-up Kecksburg residents argue with folksy verve that it's all a well-orchestrated hoax perpetrated by UFO fanatics. "Nothing happened, nothing was found," insists Charles Hilland, whose farm borders the supposed landing site. "It's a lie!"

For more than two decades, the mystery lived on as a whispered curiosity in Kecksburg — until "Unsolved Mysteries," the NBC television series on unexplained phenomena, broadcast last Sept. 19 and again on Feb. 27 its version of the UFO landing. The show, which accurately detailed eyewitness accounts, turned quiet opinions into political philosophies, pitting true believers against certified skeptics. Feuds broke out between relatives, neighbors and community leaders.

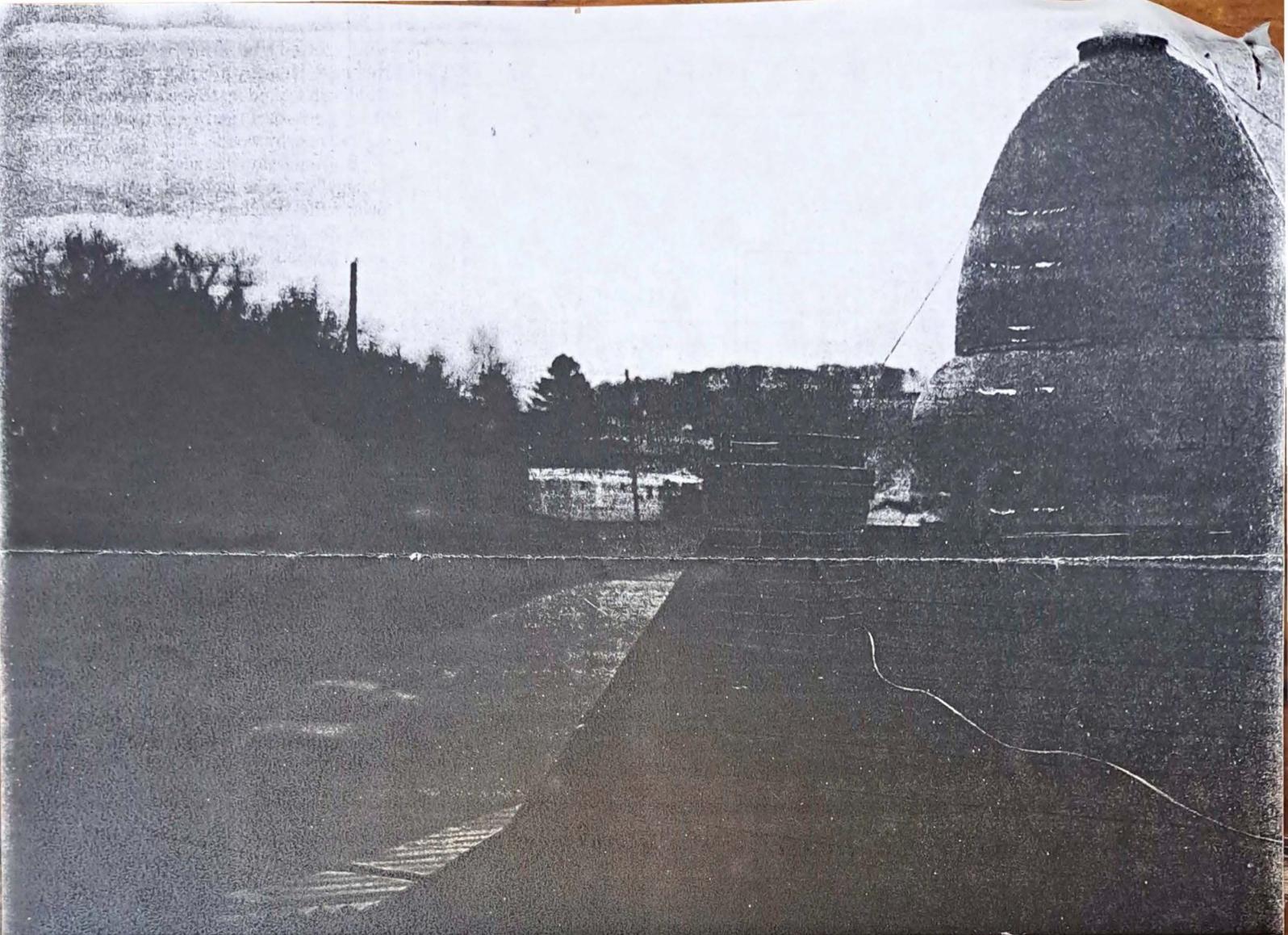
"It's caused some hard feelings," says Robert Bitner, 64, a former fireman who witnessed military activity that night and is convinced something landed. "Everyone couldn't be lying about this, and people don't have anything to gain by lying. People who did see it didn't go around bragging," Bitner says.

"They didn't bring in all those military people just for a meteorite."

Bitner hasn't spoken to his brother-in-law, Carl Porch, since Porch, Hilland and others conducted an unsuccessful petition drive last summer to stop the "Unsolved Mysteries" broadcast. Porch said he and Bitner were friendly relatives before film crews came to town. "We didn't hear anything about this for 25 years, until then," Porch says, insisting it's a hoax. "There's damn little that I know about this world, but this I do know."

Could it be a hoax? Was it a meteor that swooped down from the heavens and landed with pyrotechnical fanfare in Kecksburg's midriff? Perhaps it was Disney's Love Bug on rocket fuel, or E.T. displaying *Fahrvergnügen* in an intergalactic VW.

One plausible explanation seemed to be Cosmos 96 — a malfunctioning Soviet Venus probe that returned to Earth the day of the Kecksburg sighting. Eyewitness descriptions of the UFO and the stealth of the military recovery mission, especially in the context of the 1960s space race, seem consistent with the



## UFO mockup atop old Kecksburg fire hall heralds close encounter that has divided the town

theory that Cosmos 96 may have mistaken Kecksburg for the planet of love and beauty. But Helen Kavanaugh, spokeswoman for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, where the Foreign Technology Division is stationed, says there's no record of retrieval of Cosmos 96, or anything else from Kecksburg. Her comment: "We have nothing to say about it."

Still, the theory that Cosmos 96 was the culprit had enough going for it that some other opinions were solicited:

- Ivan Rumiantsev, press officer for the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., said Soviet and American space debris often drops onto foreign territory. But there's no proof that Cosmos 96 or any other Soviet craft landed in Kecksburg in December 1965, he reported. Strike one.

- Stan Gordon, director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, a Greensburg organization that's been studying the Kecksburg case since it happened, said its maneuvers and controlled landing — along with U.S. Space Command

data that Cosmos 96 returned to Earth 13½ hours before the Kecksburg incident — make it an unlikely candidate. Strike two.

- James Oberg, a Houston space engineer, author, Soviet spacecraft expert and renowned UFO skeptic, gave the Cosmos 96 theory a glimmer of hope. He said that as a Venus probe, Cosmos was designed to withstand entry into Venus' 900-degree atmosphere and powerful gravitational forces, and therefore could have landed on Earth intact. Also, amid the space race and Cold War of the 1960s, the U.S. military quietly encouraged belief in extraterrestrial spacecraft to divert attention from its secret missions to recover foreign space debris.

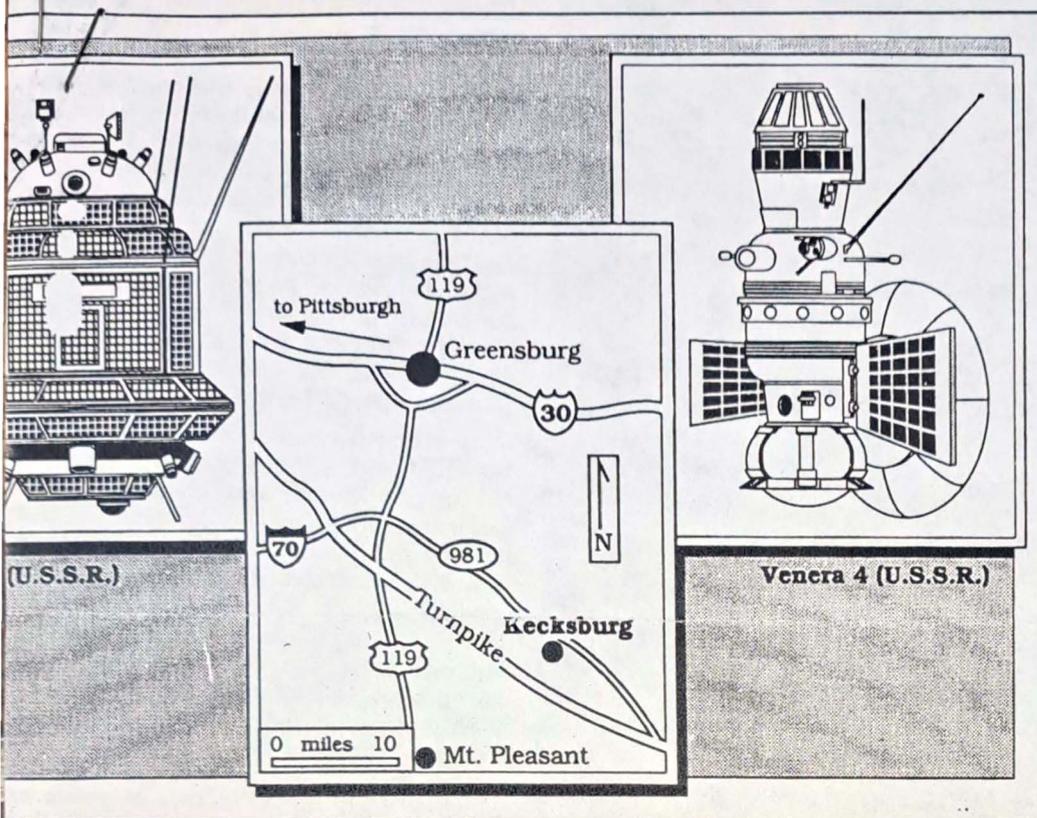
Finally, Oberg added that, because the United States and Soviets had an oral agreement to return the other side's spacecraft debris when it landed in their territory, secrecy was paramount if one power opted to keep the other's recovered debris. Oberg says the U.S. conducted secret recovery missions throughout the world to collect Soviet space debris until

1967 when a treaty to return such debris became effective.

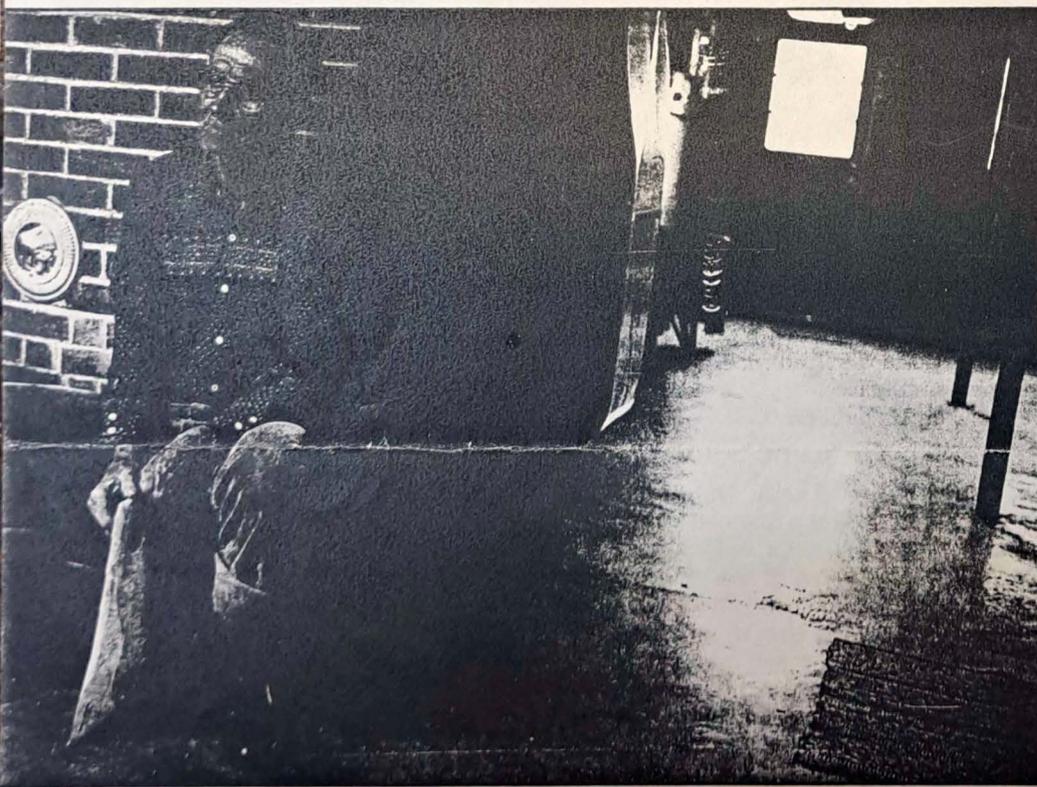
To test the Cosmos 96 theory, Oberg reviewed orbital coordinates for the probe that The Pittsburgh Press obtained from the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. Although Cosmos 96's orbit crossed Northeastern United States, he said the tracking coordinates prove it would not have come down in Kecksburg at 4:46 p.m. — the hour the fireball was seen there. The data buttresses the U.S. Space Command's claim that Cosmos 96 crashed in Canada at 3:18 a.m.

"Cosmos 96 is not guilty," Oberg concluded.

**D**EC. 9, 1965, was a dreary day in Westmoreland County. At quarter to 5, Jim Romansky was standing in a relative's yard near Latrobe, and Bill Bulebush was repairing his car in the driveway of his Mount Pleasant Township home. Bob Blystone Jr. was in his



Jim Conaway/The Pittsburgh Press



Mystery craft, according to witnesses, resembled Luna 3 or top of a Venus probe, shown flanking map above. Charles Hilland, who lives near the alleged landing site, says "nothing happened."

grandmother's kitchen in Kecksburg, while Mary Keto was preparing to leave her Mount Pleasant Township home for religion class.

Then it occurred. Blystone, then 15, describes it as an orange jet trail. Others say it was a roundish fireball that seared across the gray sky at low altitude. Leaving her house,

Keto spotted a hovering fireball just above the tree line. Hearing a UFO report on the radio, Bulebush looked up to see a fireball making S-turns, perhaps a figure eight, before descending into nearby woods.

Blystone says he saw the round "thingamajiggy" with a colorful trail glide slowly toward the treetops. "I would say it made a controlled landing at an angle. Then I saw a bluish gray puff of smoke or dust."

Bulebush hopped into his car and headed for the landing site. From a road in Kecksburg, he could see "arc-welding flames, bluish sparklers," through the trees. He parked his car and entered the woods in search of the object that, by then, had quit pulsing and fizzing. He soon found more than he expected.

"I can still see it behind that big tree," he says. "I was 15 feet away from it. It was burnt orange and had pushed the ground in. There were no doors or rivet marks — no nothing. It was about 12 feet long and 6 or 7 feet in diameter, like an acorn. It had a ring around it with backward letters, like a backward J and backward K. I was the only one there."

Shining a flashlight on the craft, Bulebush grew scared. "Then I could hear voices and see flashlights coming from all directions," he recounts. "I turned my light out and ran to where I'd come into the woods."

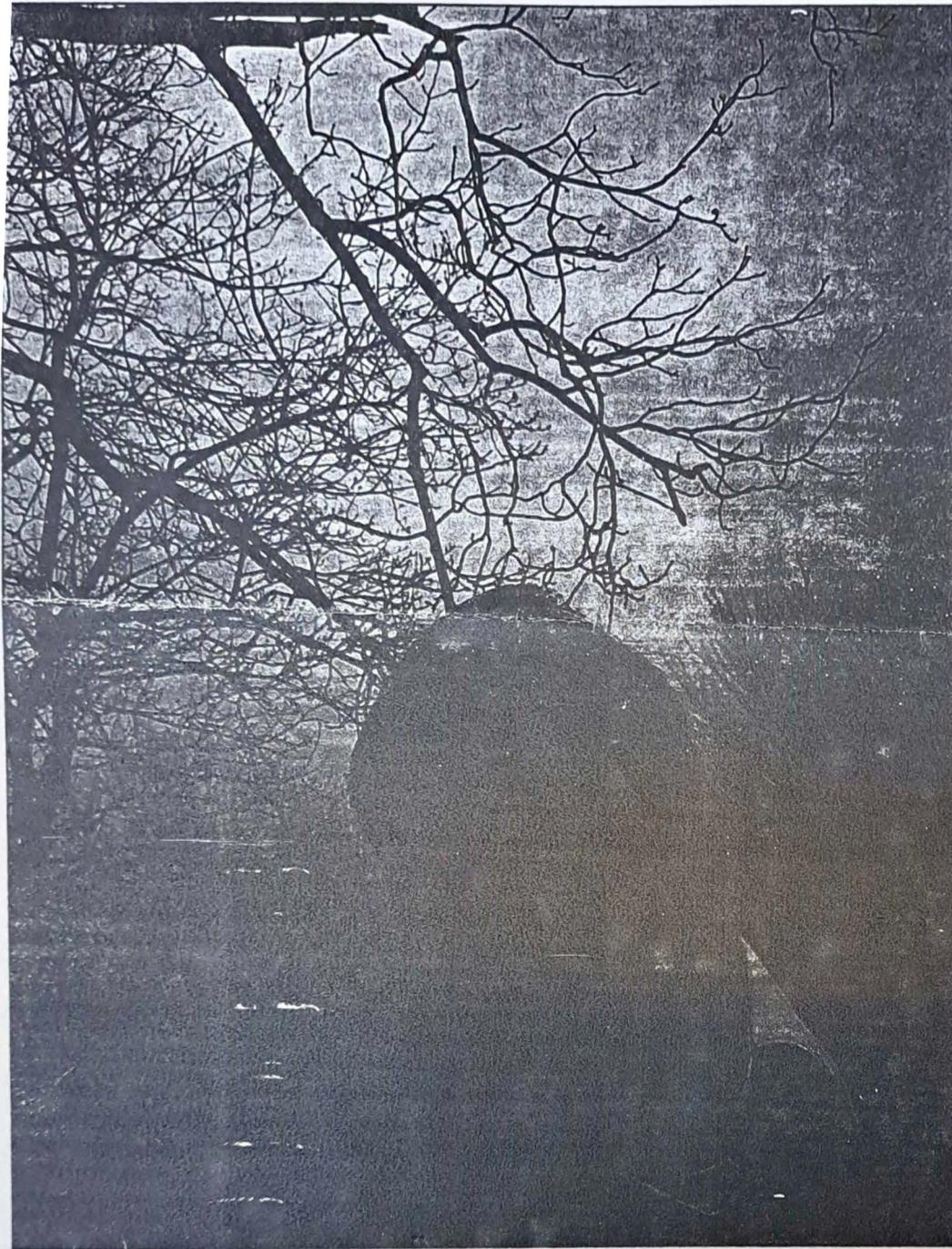
After Romansky saw a streak in the sky, the fire whistle sounded and he took off for the Lloydsville fire hall, where officials reported a downed aircraft near Kecksburg. Romansky and another fireman headed there and joined firemen from other communities in a systematic search of the woods.

Romansky says his group soon came across the acorn-shaped object. "There were no wings, motor or fuselage," he says. "We were dumbfounded at what we had stumbled across. It reminded me of a large acorn because of its shape and geometric configuration. There were no doors, windows or any means of getting inside — and no one was brave enough to go pound on it."

The writing on the girth of the craft, Romansky says, resembled hieroglyphics — lines, stars, circles, shapes. There was a dent in the metal, but no rivets, seams or welds. "Quite eerie," he recalls.

Soon, he continues, two men wearing long coats and standing "ramrod stiff" came through the woods. One announced that "This is now a restricted area to all civilian personnel," and ordered the firemen to leave. Heading back toward the Kecksburg fire hall, Romansky passed soldiers heading toward the acorn. Military officials (some say representatives of the Army, Navy and Air Force were present) later emerged from the woods and told firemen that the UFO was an unretrieved meteor. Romansky laughed in disbelief, as he does now. "I never thought that a quarter century later this would be one of the great mysteries of Western Pennsylvania."

Radio reports about the UFO landing left



Eyewitness Jim Romansky, then a fireman, found scene "quite eerie"

Kecksburg roads jammed with curiosity seekers. Bill Weaver of Norvelt was cruising in his red Oldsmobile convertible when he heard the bulletin. He turned onto a farm road in Kecksburg, and came upon others standing along a cow path, staring into a wooded hollow.

"I could see an object down there in the woods," Weaver says. "It was aglow — a light that wouldn't shut off. I saw something the whole time I was there. I wanted to know what it was but was too afraid to go down in." He says he also saw four men in white moon suits carrying a 5-square-foot white box into the woods on a stretcher.

Men in business suits eventually ordered him to leave, he says, but the 19-year-old

Weaver ignored the command. "Either move the car," they said, "or we'll take it."

John Hays, 10 at the time, remembers military personnel occupying his family's house (the house closest to the landing site), using the telephone and holding secret, serious conversations. Officers ordered his parents to send their children to bed, but Hays kept roaming downstairs to use the bathroom and get drinks of water. The rest of the evening, he was perched at his bedroom window. He watched a military truck that had entered the woods empty re-emerge with an odd-shaped cargo, he says. It reminded him of a Volkswagen Beetle under a tarp.

"I had a blast that night," Hays says. "It's something I will always remember."

**B**Y LUCKY coincidence that night, Mike Levine's guest on his KDKA radio talk show was newsman Frank Edwards, author of "Flying Saucers, Serious Business." By the time Edwards arrived for the 6 p.m. interview, KDKA's phone banks were aglow with people reporting "everything but little green men," recalls Levine, now a radio talk-show host at WASP in Brownsville.

"The descriptions we got from people were unbelievable," he says. "I thought it was the slickest promotion I'd ever seen in my life." When Levine asked Edwards how he'd done it (pulled off such a publicity stunt), Edwards replied, "Do what?"

The first reporter on the scene was John Murphy, news director at WHJB radio in Greensburg. Murphy was killed in a traffic accident several years later in California. But his ex-wife, Bonnie Millslagle of Swissvale says she's convinced Murphy saw something unexplainable that night.

"He said it definitely was not a meteor," she says. "He was convinced it was not something of this Earth."

Murphy produced a documentary on the incident, "Object in the Woods," but whole sections were edited out after eyewitnesses withdrew their stories in fear of police or military retaliation. Murphy did report that people saw flashing lights and the military place an object into a cement-lined drum.

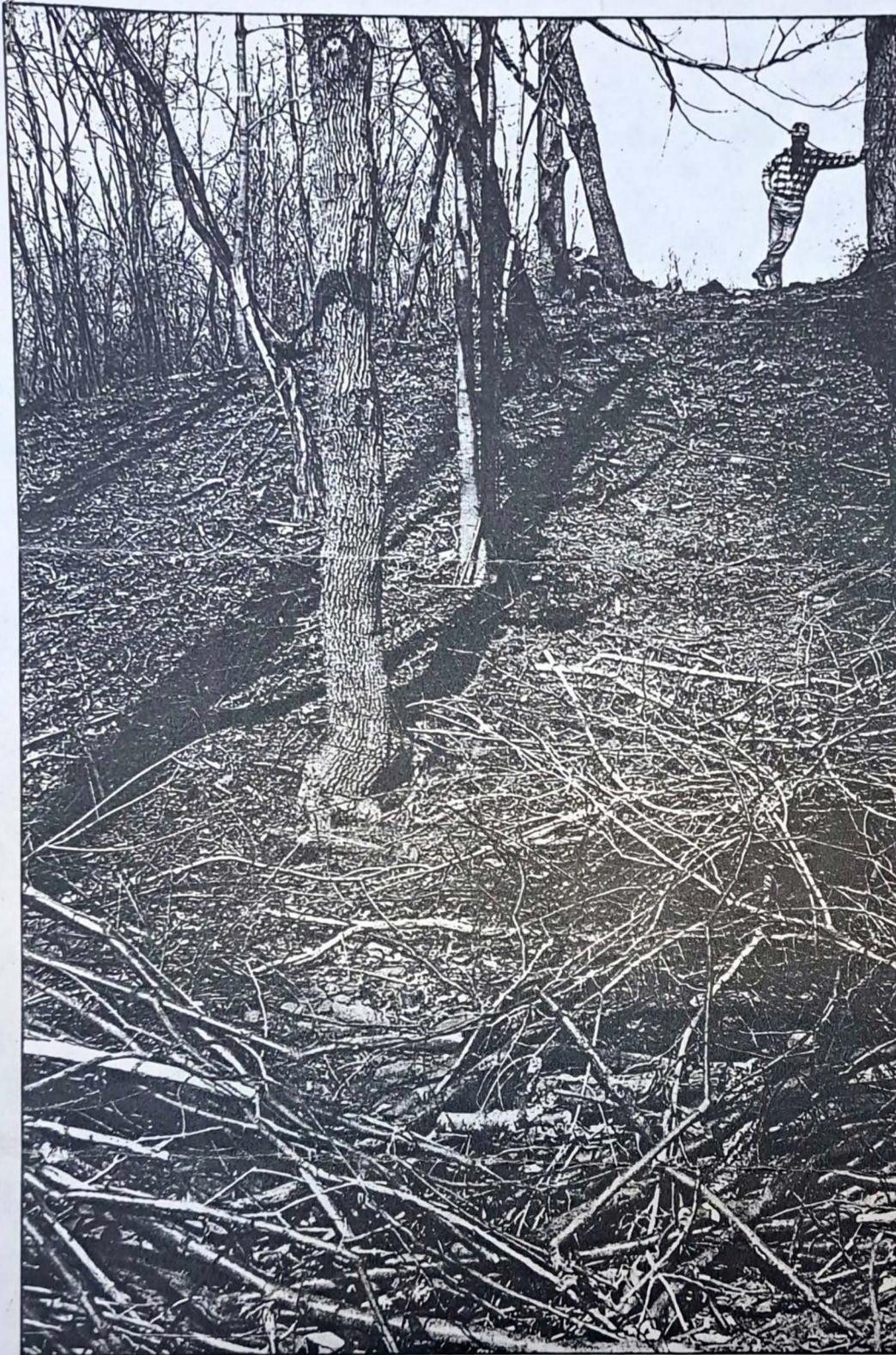
Bob Gatty, a Greensburg Tribune-Review reporter at the time, arrived in Kecksburg later in the evening. The Clarksville, Md. resident says he recalls the town overrun with military, but left after an officer told him a meteor had caused the commotion. Gatty reported the next day that nothing was found — that people miscalculated where the meteor had landed.

"I remember I got a lot of dancing around — a lot of dodging (from the military)," Gatty says. "I always suspected there was some missile that had been misfired and the military was embarrassed and kept it hushed up."

Working for KDKA-TV back then, Adam Lynch says he saw nothing except the military and people that night, and returned to the station with the military explanation of meteor. It seemed logical, he says, because the Geminid meteor storm occurs each December. "We weren't taking this seriously," says Lynch, a newscaster for WTAE-TV. "There's no doubt something came down, but it seems coincidental with the meteorite breakup."

Dr. William Everett, a retired Pittsburgh ophthalmologist, adds a different twist to the mystery.

He says Dr. Murray McCaslin, the highly respected chief of ophthalmology at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine, was asked by Air Force officials for a medical opinion on a Mount Pleasant boy who sustained opaque corneas during the Dec.



Carl Porch, standing near site of the controversy, calls it all a hoax

Kecksburg incident. The Air Force officers demanded McCaslin's full confidentiality.

But McCaslin was baffled by the patient's rare injury that left the clear part of the eye looking like "porcelain." Everett says McCaslin, now deceased, briefly discussed the mystery with him, but never again brought it up. An opaque cornea, Everett says, is a rare condition caused by eye exposure to chemi-

cals, intense heat or radiation. He said he's never treated a patient with opaque corneas in both eyes and declined to speculate on what may have caused the injury.

Monsour Medical Center and Jeannette District Memorial Hospital declined to make medical records available on patients treated in December 1965 for eye injuries. Neither the Pittsburgh Medical Eye Bank nor state

and local organizations that provide service for the blind had any knowledge or records anyone with such an injury.

Over the years, Gordon and other Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained members have interviewed "many dozens" of witnesses and collected signed affidavits as well as video and tape recordings of eyewitness accounts. Gordon has filled several file drawers with information about the Kecksburg UFO. But many witnesses are reluctant to discuss their experience with reporters. Others demanded anonymity and insisted that their names not be published.

PASU obtained an affidavit from a videotape interview of an Ohio man who said he delivered bricks to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base several days after the Kecksburg sighting. At the base, the man explains on the tape, he saw men in white moon suits working vigorously inside a hangar on the acorn-shaped craft. The bricks were to be used to build a lead-lined enclosure for the craft, he says.

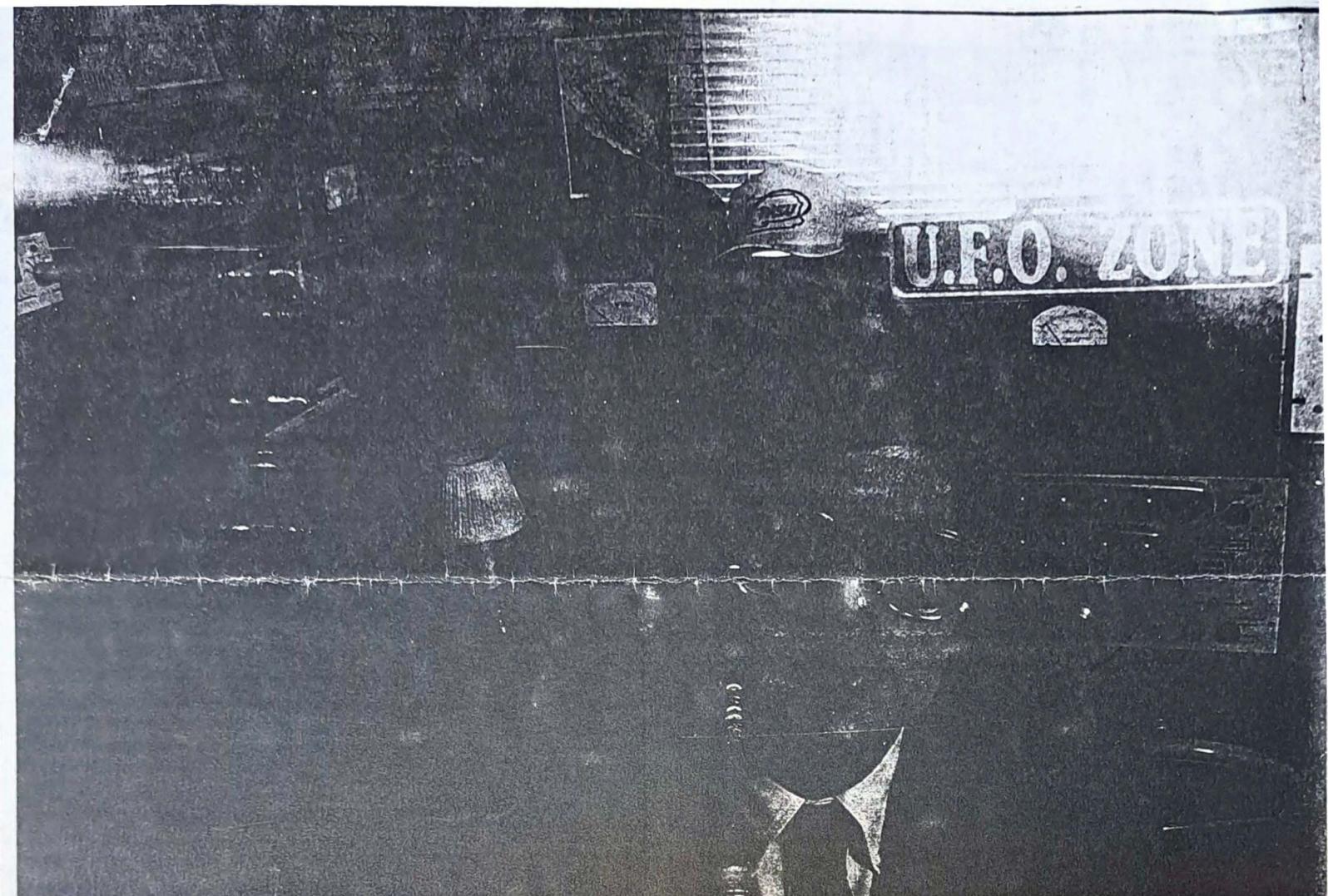
In all, *The Pittsburgh Press* interviewed about 30 people regarding their experiences including firemen, residents and those drawn to Kecksburg that night by curiosity. They offered similar accounts of the landing, the craft and the military retrieval. Although generally reluctant to talk about their experiences, many echoed Hays's explanation for going public with their stories: "I really want to know what it was," Hays says. "I'm tired of people telling me I'm crazy."

**T**HAT NO EXPLANATION offers a perfect fit adds both intrigue and frustration to the Kecksburg UFO incident.

The fireball trail is consistent with a meteor, but then, what was in the woods? The craft's ability to survive re-entry into Earth's atmosphere suggests an interplanetary landing vehicle, but none returned to Earth that day. Its size and acorn shape would even suggest a Soviet Fractional Orbital Bombardment system — a 1960s-era craft placed in orbit to carry intercontinental ballistic missiles. But had an "FOB" careened over the North Pole into the United States, the Kecksburg incident would be fully explained today in history books under the chapter titled "World War III."

"They just didn't shoot those things over Pennsylvania," says Curtis Peebles, an author, Cajon, Calif., author, reconnaissance satellite expert and UFO skeptic.

The Soviet's early Luna spaceships intended for the moon were acorn-shaped. Their whereabouts have been well-documented. Besides, Luna craft were not equipped with heat shields and would not have survived Earth re-entry. In the 1960s, the Soviets were busy launching Mars and Venus probes including Cosmos 96. But these probes v



U.F.O. ZONE

Stan Gordon, who researches unexplained phenomena, wants the government to set the record straight

too small to match eyewitness descriptions of the Kecksburg craft.

Although Cosmos 96 did not land in Kecksburg, its re-entry had an impact on the Kecksburg incident.

The Foreign Technology Division was a tight-knit unit that operated under the code name Moon Dust to recover returning space debris, Peebles says. The unit probably was on standby Dec. 9 because of re-entry of Cosmos 96, and may have hurried to Kecksburg on the chance that the fireball traveling from Canada to Western Pennsylvania was the Soviet probe.

Peebles and Gordon note that the incident is not listed in activity logs for the 662nd Radar Unit of Oakdale — the unit in Kecksburg that night — probably because the mission was classified. Yet it wasn't a military practice to track down meteors, or keep such searches classified.

"It's a puzzlement," Peebles says.

It's less puzzling for UFO researchers who feel the Kecksburg incident forces people to consider the possibility of . . . extraterrestrial visitors.

Eyewitness descriptions of the Kecksburg

UFO hovering and turning before landing leave UFO researchers convinced it was not some misguided Soviet missile or spacecraft.

"After 25 years, if it was a probe, what's the big secret?" Gordon says. "We can rule out a meteor and we can rule out space debris and we know it wasn't a plane crash. When you eliminate all the possibilities, two things remain. It was either a highly advanced space probe with very interesting capabilities for the 1960s, or we may actually be dealing with an alien spacecraft.

"But we could speculate forever," Gordon continues. "We're now making a detailed study of experimental U.S. probes of the 1960s. We have to eliminate all man-made possibilities. Whatever it was, it appeared to be a device much ahead of its time or more technically advanced than what existed."

Gordon says he hopes that military personnel involved in the recovery operation that night, or anyone else with information about the UFO incident, will contact him. He says PASU's research will continue until it comes up with a solution or forces the government to open its files on the retrieval mission.

"We hope to create enough interest in it to

put pressure on Washington, D.C., that will eventually lead to a government inquiry into the incident," he says.

But Peebles says many logical explanations still must be considered, including the possibility that it was a meteor, after all. He notes that the Kecksburg UFO incident didn't take on importance until recent years. It's possible, he says, that people saw a fireball, but 25 years later, their faded memories have given the imagination free play to turn vague impressions into sensational recollections.

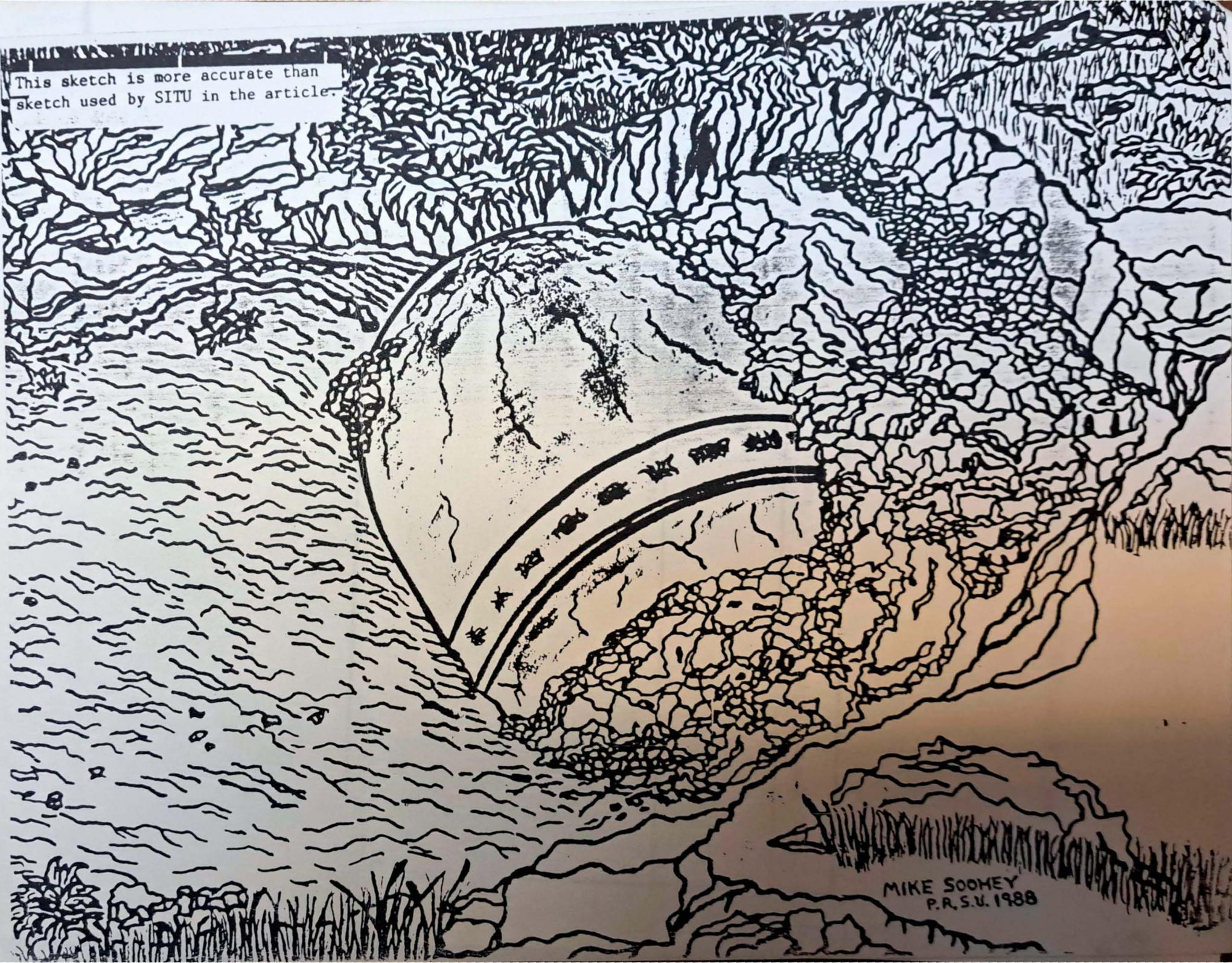
"I don't know if UFOs tell us much about aliens, but it tells us a lot about human beings," Peebles says.

But, for now, the Kecksburg UFO mystery has grounded the experts and given flight to mystery. It seems that only the Air Force's Foreign Technology Division can settle the spacecraft controversy that landed on the rural village a quarter century ago.

"The government owes Pennsylvania and the people of Kecksburg an explanation," says Gordon.

*(David Templeton is a Pittsburgh Press staff writer.)*

This sketch is more accurate than  
sketch used by SITU in the article.



MIKE SOOHEY  
P.R.S.U. 1988

Cover of one Air Force document pertaining to Kecksburg UFO Case

<b>1. DATE - TIME GROUP</b> 9 December 55 109/2115	<b>2. LOCATION</b> Indiana, Ohio Penna, Michigan, Canada
<b>3. SOURCE</b> Civilians (MULTIPLE)	<b>10. CONCLUSION</b> Astro (METEOR) ✓
<b>4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS</b> One	
<b>5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION</b> Seconds	<b>11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS</b> SEE CASE FILE
<b>6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION</b> Directional	
<b>7. COURSE</b> Descent	
<b>8. PHOTOS</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <b>IN FILE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

I received a call from Maj Holcomb, USAF  
Command Post, advising me to be prepared for a  
possible UFO report. AF release 203 was the only  
report at this time. AFEC Command Post called and  
informed me that Maj Liver's, Detroit Air Defense Sector,  
2026161, Ex. 741, called them and reported some  
very unusual sightings. Reports came to Maj Liver's  
from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

The time of sighting was relayed as 4:45 PM.  
Some reports stated that the object was orange and  
others stated it was white with a tail. I  
called Maj [redacted] [redacted] and  
assistants. He [redacted] to the base and called  
Maj Liver. A further call was made to  
the Oakdale Radar Site in Penna. A three  
man team has been dispatched to Acme, Pa to  
investigate [redacted] [redacted] object that started  
a fire.

A call was received from [redacted]

# Not everyone agrees meteor fell near Kecksburg in 1965

By Dave Lester  
TRIBUNE REVIEW

Shortly before sundown Dec. 9, 1965, a fiery bright-orange object was seen hurtling across the western Pennsylvania sky.

One volunteer fireman, who was then a teen-ager, recalls the trail the unidentified flying object created, describing it as a "round ball of fire" that came out of the north with a tail of flame traveling in the direction of Kecksburg. The object, he says, appeared to be making a gliding, controlled descent and moved at about the speed of a fast plane.

Minutes later he was summoned by the fire whistle. The word was that a plane had crashed in the Kecksburg area and searchers were needed to locate the wreckage and rescue any survivors.

But no plane was ever found and military officials were quick to dismiss the occurrence as a meteor.

Not everyone agrees with their conclusion and the interest the military demonstrated in attempting to recover a meteorite has left amateur investigators doubtful that the whole story has ever been told.

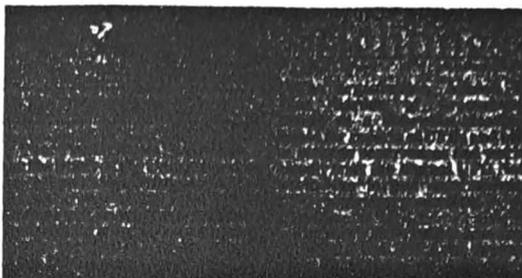
Amateur UFO investigators have doggedly pursued a paper trail they contend shows the military was keenly interested in recovering an object from a wooded area and then just as determined to cloak the whole incident in official secrecy.

More than 20 years later these sleuths are still searching for residents able to shed some light on the strange happening. Until recently members of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, a statewide clearinghouse for the UFO reports, has never been able to locate anyone who claims actually to have seen an object. Some of the people investigators have contacted demonstrate a reluctance to comment, perhaps out of fear of being ridiculed or that they would offend a security-conscious military.

Even the fireman who came forward with an eyewitness account 22 years later agreed to speak only on condition that he not be identified.

He says he's convinced an acorn-shaped metallic object he and a handful of others came across was not man-made. PASU investigators won't go that far, declining to drawn conclusions about what object if any was recovered. While they say they have no reason to discount his statement, they hope other witnesses will be encouraged to come forward.

Three-member search parties were organized along the lines of a grid and the searchers were issued flashlights and portable radios before being dropped off at different points along a road.



They had combed about a quarter of a mile of the woods when one of the parties began shouting that they found something. Being close by, the fireman's own search party was the second to arrive at the scene. Whatever came through the trees, he says, sheared off branches at a 20 to 30 degree angle. "It was just like they were taken off with a meat cleaver," he says.

The searchers anticipated seeing the wreckage of a plane. What they found instead was a large acorn-shaped metallic object which appeared to be embedded in a 25- to 30-foot long ditch apparently created by the impact. The ditch was several feet wide and 7 to 8 feet deep at one end.

The team that discovered the object called the command center to report their find. None of the searchers ventured into the ditch to examine the object close up but from their vantage point they could tell it was no conventional aircraft. They could not recognize any part of it. There were no windows, props or wings and no evidence that the craft had been occupied.

Although the fireman says there was no concern voiced about radiation, "none of us," he says, "had the guts to go down into that hole."

They were puzzled, he says, that the object had remained intact after crashing to earth.

"We all assumed it was a plane but when a plane crashes there are pieces all over." He described it as circular in shape with a bumper around the radius that bore raised markings that reminded him of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. The metal, which he described as grayish pale gold in color was crumpled much like a deflated beachball. "It was a color you just don't normally see," he says.

No evidence remained of the fireball that had been observed only hours before. The metal did not even appear to be scorched and the observers could detect no heat or see any glow from the metal.

"We just didn't know what to make of it," he says.

The fireman could not recall who it was that relieved the search teams, but he did remem-

ber that a state trooper and another man who appeared to be in authority were there. Shortly after the searchers were able to return to the fire hall, Air Force and Army personnel took control of the station. A command post was set up in a nearby house. The searchers were not permitted to enter the fire hall once the military arrived.

The fireman recalled one non-uniformed man who appeared to be in charge. "He just reeked of authority," says the fireman. "There was military everywhere."

By the time the searchers were dismissed, military guards with sidearms had taken positions outside the fire hall.

It must have been approaching midnight, the fireman says, when a flatbed truck came down the road under heavy military escort. A tarpaulin concealed what appeared to be a large cargo.

"They didn't waste any time getting it out of there," he says.

Even though it was clear to members of the search team that the object they found in the woods was manufactured, they were told by the military it was a meteorite. "Things weren't jibing," the fireman recalled. "I've seen meteorites and seen pictures of satellites."

The fireman says he is convinced the military offered the ruse of a meteorite so as not to alarm the public. "If it was a meteorite, why the big secret? Knowing what I know now, I would say it was definitely alien," he says. "They knew it and wanted to keep it away from the public to avoid panic."

Although no one ever told him not to discuss what he saw, the fireman says he never considered telling his story until he overheard people discussing the Kecksburg incident at a UFO exhibit at a shopping mall.

The experience, he says, of seeing something close up that he believes is not from this world, changed his whole life in very subtle ways.

The memory of that mysterious object found in the woods, he says, is "something I'll carry to my grave. I saw something that probably changed a lot of the way I think, the way I look at things."

# 'Fireball' Lands Near Pittsburgh; Seen in 7 States

*Special to The Inquirer*  
PITTSBURGH, Dec. 9.—A brilliant ball of fire which was seen streaking across seven states and Canada Thursday night crashed into woods 20 miles south of here. Flaming objects falling from it touched off fires in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The Army and State Police sealed off the wooded area with the explanation:

"There is an unidentified flying object in the woods."

The fireball was seen by airplane pilots and residents of Canada, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania.

## FIRES NEAR CLEVELAND

The object apparently landed in woods near Kecksburg. Other early reports indicated it touched off a series of small grass fires in woods 20 miles south of Cleveland and deposited two "small stacks of shredded foil" in a swamp near Lapceer, Mich.

Coast Guard officials reported from Windsor, Ont., that a flying object "exploded" over the Windsor-Detroit area. Pilots in the area saw a flash and felt shock waves on the fuselage of their planes.

In Washington, the Pentagon announced that whatever it was, it was not a military aircraft. It could have been a meteorite, the Pentagon said.

In Pennsylvania, State Police

# Army, Police Seal Off Woods In UFO Probe

PITTSBURGH (UPI)—U.S. Army officials and the Pennsylvania State Police last night sealed off an area in southwestern Pennsylvania explaining there "is an unidentified flying object in the woods."

A spokesman for a team of radar experts from the Army's 662 Radar Squadron here said, "We don't know what we have yet."

After sealing off a wooded, isolated area at Kecksburg, Pa., about 20 miles south of here, officers said Army Engineers were being called to the scene.

The object was found after a flash of orange fire streaking across the sky was reported by airplane pilots and residents in seven states.

Pentagon sources indicated the flash could have been a meteorite.

State Police went to the Kecksburg, Pa., area after a woman reported seeing a "round, smoldering object crash to the earth."

Earlier reports said the flash could have been a high altitude test rocket fired over Lake Erie but National Guard and Air Force officials denied any rockets had been fired.

Eric Johnson, a reporter for an Erie, Pa., television station said, "It flashed across the lake, north northwest of the Erie Airport leaving a kind of cloud of smoke behind it."

Raymond Wallings, a private airplane pilot from Painesville, Ohio, said he was flying over the lake when he saw the "fireball" and kept his eye on it until it plummeted into the lake.

Boston Record American  
12-10-45

Cover  
Stories

ARMY ROPES OFF AREA—

# 'Unidentified Flying Object' Falls Near Kecksburg

An "unidentified flying object"—possibly the same one reported seen streaking across seven northeastern states and Canada late Thursday afternoon—apparently fell to the earth in a secluded wooded area near Kecksburg in Westmoreland County.

The area where the object landed was immediately sealed off on the order of U.S. Army and State Police officials, reportedly in anticipation of a "close inspection" of whatever may have fallen.

A spokesman for a team of radar experts from the Army's

662 radar squadron in Pittsburgh said, "We don't know what we have yet."

Tribune-Review Staff Writer Robert Gatty reported from the scene that "no one is being allowed near the object." State Police officials there, he said, ordered the area roped off to await the expected arrival of both U.S. Army engineers and, possibly, civilian scientists.

The Army engineers, he said, were scheduled to arrive late Thursday night or early Friday morning. Scientists were expected to be brought in some time today.

Unable to talk to anyone who

had actually seen the object Gatty reported that the consistent explanation of the security measures is that the object—whatever it is—may be contaminated with radioactivity.

## Shape Mystery

The "unidentified flying object" (UFO) was sighted falling to the earth by Mrs. Arnold Kato of Acme RD 1 and her two children. Mrs. Kato, Gatty reported, was not available to talk Thursday night, apparently because of the throng of newsmen and spectators, who began arriving in the Kecksburg area shortly after word of the sight-

ing was reported.

Although no one has indicated the size or shape of the object, Gatty said he talked to one farmer in the area—Dale Howard, who lives about a mile from the scene of the reported landing. Howard reported "feeling a vibration" and "a thump" about the time the object reportedly fell.

The near-exact location of the object, Gatty determined, is 500 feet off Legislative Route 64214 in Mt. Pleasant Township, about one-half mile east of Kecksburg.

Excitement caused by the apparent landing, the Tribune-Review

reporter said, produced a massive traffic jam on the small roads winding around the small community of Kecksburg. Many of the just-curious spectators, he said, left the scene when informed by police that they could not get near the object.

## Newsmen Wait

Newsmen, however, were holding tight for the most part, to await some official word from either the U.S. Army or the State Police officials in charge.

The obvious excitement aroused by the apparent landing stems, in part, from dozens of

"sightings" all over parts of the northeastern part of the United States and Canada.

Pentagon sources in Washington, D.C., according to a United Press International dispatch, indicated the flash could have been a meteor.

Earlier reports, the UPI dispatch said, indicated the flash could have been a high altitude test rocket fired over Lake Erie. But National Guard and Air Force officials told UPI reporters that no rockets had been fired.

The UPI dispatch went on: "Eric Johnson, a reporter for an Erie, Pa., television station,

said, 'It flashed across the lake, north northwest of the Erie airport leaving a kind of cloud of smoke behind it.'"

"Raymond Walling, a private airplane pilot from Painesville, Ohio said he was flying over the lake when he saw the 'fireball' and kept his eye on it until it plummeted into the lake.

"U.S. Coast Guard officials reported a flying object exploded over the Detroit-Windsor area. Four vessels were dispatched onto Lake St. Clair but were unable to find any trace of the object.

December 10, 1965  
Greensburg, Pa.  
Tribune-Review  
Front Page Story

# U. S. Probes Mystery 'Fireball'

PITTSBURGH, Dec. 10 (UPI) — An orange ball of fire, sighted last night, in seven states and Canada, provided scientists,

military personnel and police with a mystery today.

There was speculation the fiery-looking object was a meteorite. The search for debris which reportedly crashed to the earth began at dawn in Pennsylvania and Michigan.

The orange ball was seen by pilots, weather observers, Coast Guard personnel at Windsor, Ontario, and residents of Idaho, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and New York.

## AREA SEARCHED

Air Force officers, state police and scientists combed a 75-acre mountainous wooded area of Mt. Pleasant Township, Pa., about 30 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, for an object which one woman reported crashed to earth "smoldering."

"There's definitely something down there," said a state trooper, who also saw the light. He descended the hillside but when he got about half way down, those standing above said the light disappeared.

Near Lapeer, Mich., 40 miles north of Detroit, police organized a search of a swamp where a sheriff's deputy, Lenny Toly, found shredded foil.

"It looks like it may have come from the fireball," said Mr. Toly. He said the foil was made of lead and shredded in strips one-sixteenth of an inch wide.

## NO TRACE

The U.S. Coast Guard reported a flying object exploded over the Detroit-Windsor area. Vessels dispatched into Lake St. Clair

were unable to find any trace of the object.

Pilots for Air Canada flights coming into Windsor reported they saw a flash and felt shock waves on their planes' fuselages.

A North American Air Defense Command spokesman at Colorado Springs, Colo., said its tracking stations did not track the flash of light. NORAD said if it were a meteorite it should have shown up on radar scopes.

# 2 men break silence on '65 UFO sighting

## Pair believe craft landed and was removed

By Mark Belko  
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

For almost 25 years, William Bulebush and James R. Romansky Sr. have kept silent about their Steven Spielberg-like close encounter near Kecksburg in Westmoreland County.

Not any longer.

Activated by the renewed interest in the sighting of a mysterious object in the skies over Westmoreland County in 1965, both men have come forward with tales of their discovery of the UFO.

Romansky is turning his en-

counter into an appearance on the NBC television show, "Unsolved Mysteries," which will air a segment based on the incident this fall.

And while Bulebush is not reaching for that kind of stardom, he is talking publicly for the first time about what he saw.

Romansky concedes that the television spotlight brought his story out in the open, but not because of dreams of stardom. "I figured that if I went public, more people would come forward and start telling what they saw."

And when Bulebush heard that Romansky was about to break his silence on national television, he figured that there was no need to keep his secret buried any longer.

"I just didn't want to say anything to anybody. Nobody else said anything. Why should I be the first to say anything? When I heard about the interview, I figured I would come in and say my part," he said.

Had they gone public immediately after the Dec. 9, 1965, encounter, both men feared, they would have been branded crazy by a skeptical public.

"At that time, if I said I saw this or that, they were ready to call the funny farm," Romansky said. "Now people are inquisitive. They're not naive enough to believe that we're all alone."

SEE SAUCER, PAGE 4

# 2 men break silence on '65 UFO sighting

SAUCER FROM PAGE 1

Before going public, the only person outside their families who had heard their story was Stan Gordon, director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, a Greensburg-based organization that investigates UFO sightings.

Different paths led the two men to the discovery of an acorn-shaped object they said was eight feet in diameter and 12 feet long with markings "like ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics."

While working on his car in his driveway that evening, Bulebush caught a glimpse of "a fireball going across the sky. It made a turn and came back a little bit. I crawled into the Corvair and took off [after it]."

His journey led him to a hillside outside Kecksburg where he spotted the object in the woods as it emitted a bluish glow, "like a welding arc," and went after it. Bulebush, then 40 years of age, found it nestled in a ravine.

In the aftermath of the incident, the official explanation was that the object was a meteorite. But Bulebush said the object he saw was no meteorite.

"When a meteor comes down, it makes a big hole. This didn't. It

was like a smooth landing. I mean, I've seen too many pictures on television of meteorites falling. No way could this have been. It would have torn everything up. The only thing this tore up was the treetops. They weren't burnt or anything," he said.

The object "had no seams. It was a solid piece. It was crackling, like something cooling off," he said. It also "had funny writing on the back. It was none of our kind of writing."

Before falling into the woods, the object "made an S in the air ... just like it knew where it wanted to go."

So what was it?

"I thought it was something from outer space. I never saw anything like that around here or on television or anything," said Bulebush, who left the area before search crews arrived.

Romansky, then an 18-year-old volunteer firefighter called to duty because of fears that an airplane had crashed, was a member of one of the search crews.

What he and others found "was a big surprise. It was no airplane. There were no wings, no motors, no propellers, no fuselage."

"There were no windows, no doors, no cracks, no seams. It was just one giant piece of metal. It

was a gold and bronze color. It was weird. I've spent 25 years as a machinist and I never saw anything like that."

Like Bulebush, Romansky has no doubts about what he saw.

"My personal feeling is that it was an alien spacecraft trying to make a friendly approach, and something just went haywire," he said.

Shortly after finding the object, search crews were ordered out of the area by two men in trench coats, and the Kecksburg Fire Hall was converted into a military command post, complete with armed guards, Romansky said.

Later in the evening, a flatbed truck left the area with a covered cargo, he said. Romansky, 44, believes it was the UFO.

By coming forward with his own tale, the Derry man hopes to entice others into telling what they saw that night.

"There's a lot more [witnesses] than me. You're talking 20 to 30 people — witnesses who saw it hit, who saw the military going in, who saw the military taking it out. Everyone had a piece of it."

Gordon said the object, first sighted over Ontario, Canada, was traveling too slowly to be a meteorite, appeared to make controlled turns and did not fit the pattern of a rocket or missile.

He said he believed the military had been hiding the truth about the incident and about her UFO sightings elsewhere



**-1965 INCIDENT**

# Kecksburg's UFO Mystery Unsolved

By DAVE LESTER  
Of The Tribune-Review

It was shortly before sundown Dec. 9, 1965 that a fiery bright orange object streaked across the sky over Michigan, the tip of Ontario and western Lake Erie. Described by one observer near the lake as a fireball, the brilliant object continued across the northeastern corner of Ohio (Lorain County) and western Pennsylvania and was seen in at least six states and Canada before it plummeted to earth in Westmoreland County.

What landed that evening in a densely wooded area near Kecksburg remains a point of contention. The Air Force maintains it was a meteorite while others insist it was a man-made object — a fallen satellite, a spy plane or a test vehicle. Still others suggest it could have been an alien spacecraft.

Despite reports from eyewitnesses that the military retrieved a large object from the woods, concealed it under a tarpaulin and hauled it away under cover of darkness the Air Force has never confirmed that anything was found.

If searchers did find something they aren't telling. Twenty years later the identity of what the military termed an unidentified flying object remains a mystery shrouded in official secrecy.

Amateur investigators say the search for documents that might offer a clue to what landed near the small rural community has led to puzzling revelations of the disappearance of entire sets of records belonging to a military unit that participated in the search.

What is known is that the object was of great interest to the military and the excitement it generated was not unlike an epic science fiction drama, says Greensburg's Stan Gordon who has spent the intervening years attempting to unravel the mystery of what landed in the woods.

"It was just like War of the Worlds happening right in our backyard," says Gordon, who serves as director of the Pennsylvania Center for the Study of the Unexplained, a research group that serves as a clearinghouse for reports of unusual phenomena.

Curiosity seekers jammed the narrow roads leading to the village as government officials, the military and media converged on the scene. Pittsburgh's Allegheny Observatory was deluged with phone calls from people who reported seeing the object hurtling across the sky. At various points along the path of the object in Michigan and Pennsylvania came reports that metallic material fell from the sky.

**Seen By Thousands**

The Elyria (Ohio) Chronicle reported that thousands of observers saw chunks slam into the earth from Lake Erie to Eaton Township, a municipality about 15 miles south of the shoreline. One Elyria fireman blamed falling fragments for starting 10 small grass fires in a 1,000-foot area along the east bank of the Black River. In Lorain, a group of children playing near a school reported another chunk dropped into the school yard. The newspaper reported, however, that nowhere in the county or state were fragments found.

In Michigan, 40 miles north of Detroit, a deputy sheriff reported finding a scrap of shredded leaded foil which may have come from the fireball. Similar fragments were recovered in Midland, Beaver County.

Gordon, who has interviewed civilians who were close to the scene, says it appears the military established a direct line with NORAD, then known as the North American Air Defense Command. Records indicate that among the agencies requesting information was NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, which in the days prior to lunar landings was studying meteors.

Among government and military units summoned to Kecksburg were members of the 642nd Radar Squadron, a unit located 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.

The search was concentrated in the area of a steep ravine on a

# UFO Landed 20 Years Ago

farm about 1 1/2 miles north of the village. Search teams included state police troopers from Greensburg and volunteer firemen from Kecksburg. Observers also reported seeing large lead-lined containers apparently brought in by the military. Geger counters were in use and one reporter mentioned that the consistent explanation offered for the light security was the possible danger of radioactive contamination.

Shortly before the search was reported to have broken off about 3 a.m., several persons reported seeing a bright, blue light in the woods about 150 feet from where they were standing on a hillside. The light suddenly disappeared.

Gordon questions whether the search ended with nothing found.

Robert L. Bitner, who was then chief of Kecksburg's fire department, recalls seeing a heavy military truck leave the scene but he said a tarp covered the back, concealing what cargo, if any, it carried. "It was covered completely," says Bitner. "You couldn't tell if there was anything inside."

Bitner estimates the truck departed the scene about 10 or 10:30 p.m. Other military or government personnel remained on the scene, keeping the ravine off limits.

The first indication the military may have retrieved an object appears in a declassified Air Force memo that states a call was made to the Oakdale radar unit.

"A three-man team has been dispatched to Acme, Pa. to investigate and pick up an object that started a fire," the memo reads.

As near as Gordon can tell there was no fire although one observer reported seeing a trail of blue smoke in the area.

Others reported feeling a vibration and hearing a sonic boom but firemen reported no fire in the vicinity at the time.

The Air Force's official explanation that the object was a meteor was supported by Dr. Paul Annear, then director of the Baldwin-Wallace (College) Observatory in Ohio who theorized that it was actually a shower of meteors which were expected five days later.

Dr. Nicholas Wagman of the Allegheny Observatory in Pittsburgh said it could have been a meteor from the constellation Gemina.

But several UFO researchers discount such explanations.

One investigator went so far as to attempt to calculate the speed of the object to demonstrate that it could not have been a meteor.

In an article published a year after the incident, the late Ivan Sanderson demonstrated that the aerial object made an abrupt turn, a change in course not possible for a meteor or bolide.

Relying on sightings by commercial and private pilots and observers along the path of the object, Sanderson pinpointed the direction of travel on a map, demonstrating that the object or objects traveled in a straight line from east of Flint, Mich. over Lake St. Clair to Oberlin and Elyria near Cleveland in a southeast-by-southerly direction before making a 25-degree turn to the east. From that point, Sanderson writes, the line of travel was straight through Midland to Kecksburg.

Based on the exact times the object was observed at points along its path, Sanderson was able to calculate the speed of the so-called meteor at 1,062 1/2 miles per hour, fast for any man-made object but comparatively slow for a meteor, the maximum speed of which has been clocked at 27,000 miles per hour.

Gordon doubts that in 1965 the U.S. possessed a spacecraft or nose cone with the capability of executing a 25-degree turn in flight.

Like Sanderson, Gordon and Leonard H. Stringfield, a UFO investigator who lives in Cincinnati, doubt the Pentagon's explanation of a meteor because of the secrecy displayed by the military and other government agencies in the mysterious fireball.

"What is so secret about a meteorite? It has not been the responsibility of the military to pick up meteorites," says Stringfield.

The researcher says he is certain the military retrieved an object and suggests it could have been a U.S. military device, an instrument of some sort falling from an aerial object.

Gordon is of the same opinion. "I've always felt this was a manmade device from a country unknown that went out of control," he says.

One group, Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, which has used FOI requests to obtain thousands of declassified documents, has come to realize that the government treats UFO sightings very seriously.

According to Ray Boeche, a member of the CAUS advisory board, the Air Force has insisted that UFOs have never posed a threat to national security. But when CAUS went to court in 1980 seeking the release of hundreds of UFO-related documents from the National Security Agency, the court dismissed the case on the grounds of national security.

Project Blue Book, the Air Force's 21-year investigation into UFOs was concluded in 1969 but Boeche says the Air Force remains very interested in reports of UFO sightings.

Boeche says rumors of the existence of Air Force units that do nothing but investigate UFOs could be pure speculation but a memo dated Oct. 20, 1969 from Air Force Brig. Gen. Carroll H. Bolender hints that UFOs would continue to be investigated through existing intelligence channels. The memo, according to Boeche, also suggests there were reported UFO cases investigated by outfits other than Project Blue Book.

Air Force Lt. Col. Chuck Wood, director of public affairs at NORAD headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo. says the Air Force's investigation into UFOs ended with Project Blue Book. Reports of UFO sightings are referred to other agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration, according to Wood.

But Stringfield insists there is a special unit of the Blue Berets, an Air Force outfit which operates covertly in the U.S., investigating reports of UFO crashes.

"They are involved behind the scenes," says Stringfield. "They have their orders and they know what to do if they encounter a UFO."

Wood says many documents have been declassified and made available under FOI requests but Boeche says the Air Force has come to regret the release of some of these documents because they have given researchers the phony sensitive subjects. Things have apparently slipped through, says Boeche, who attributes the disclosures to oversight.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Kecksburg case concerns documents Gordon and Boeche have failed to obtain concerning the 642nd Radar Squadron.

The 642nd which was under NORAD in 1965, was deactivated Dec. 31, 1969. According to Gordon, neither the Army nor Air Force can locate records of the group.

What strikes Gordon as curious is that the group that headed Project Blue Book and the 642nd Squadron were both deactivated during the same month — December 1969.

Is it possible that the radar squadron's real mission was to retrieve UFOs?

"We're wondering what the mystery is concerning a radar unit attached to an Army support facility in Oakdale. They can tell us the date the unit was deactivated but they have no records," says Gordon.

"I find it hard to believe the records just vanished; they have to be somewhere," says Boeche.

# Information Sought

The Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, an all-volunteer, non-profit research group which investigates strange and unusual occurrences, is seeking information concerning the incident at Kecksburg and other UFO sightings.

PASU Director Stan Gordon is particularly interested in contacting anyone who served or has knowledge of the deactivated 642nd Radar Squadron, a unit that was attached to a U.S. Army support facility in Oakdale and was involved in the search of an object believed to have crashed near Kecksburg Dec. 9, 1965.

PASU, which serves as a statewide clearinghouse for reports of UFOs and other strange occurrences, works closely with the Mutual UFO Network of Seguin, Texas, the largest international UFO research organization. Gordon is director of the Pennsylvania MUFON chapter.

"People can report sightings and other occurrences to us confidentially without fear of ridicule or publicity," says Gordon.

All reports are kept confidential. The Pennsylvania UFO hotline is 838-7768. The address is PASU, 4 Oakhill Ave., Greensburg, Pa. 15601.

*5-11-88*  
*H. Scott*  
*I will send you copy of CRASH article when it appears.*  
*5/11/88*  
*PS. If you need updates call me after 10 pm*

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Front Page Story

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# Kecksburg starring in UFO drama

By Sharon Santus  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

There it was, just off Kecksburg's main road: a large, unidentified, acorn-shaped object that had fallen from the winter sky into a creek on the Bill Howard farm.

Anyway, that's how it will appear on an upcoming episode of NBC's "Unsolved Mysteries" when a segment now being filmed in Kecksburg airs this fall.

A full production team including actors and technicians descended on the tiny Westmoreland County community Wednesday to begin three days of filming.

"Unsolved Mysteries" is recreating the 1965 UFO case which continues to baffle scientists and paranormal investigators to this day.

Shortly before sundown on Dec.

9, 1965, witnesses reported seeing a fiery, bright orange object streak across the sky over Michigan, the tip of Ontario and western Lake Erie. The object continued its descent and finally glided to earth in a densely wooded area near Kecksburg.

Only a few people made it to the landing site before state police and later the military closed the area.

Those who saw the object describe it as a gold, acorn-shaped metal craft that did not crash, but glided to earth in what appeared to be a self-propelled, controlled landing.

The Air Force maintains the object was a meteor, but that claim has been disputed by witnesses. They say electricity arcing from the object, and its sharp, mid-air turns and controlled descent belie the meteor theory.

Shannon McGinn, segment producer, said witnesses were interviewed at the Kecksburg Fire Hall several days ago and additional interviews were conducted earlier this week at Mountain View Inn, east of Greensburg.

Director Michael Mathis said Wednesday night's shooting schedule included Kecksburg Fire Department President Jim Mayes' account of seeing a blue light pulsating from the ravine where the object landed.

"We were told an object had fallen from the sky," Mayes said. "I met a state trooper at the fire hall and drove him toward the area where the thing came down. When we were on top on the hill, we looked down into the ravine and we saw the blue light flashing. The trooper said, 'This is as far as you go.'"

Mayes said military personnel

converged at the scene and set up a command post at the fire hall.

Firemen reported seeing a canvas-covered military transport truck head toward the landing area and then leave later that night. The next day, the object was gone. Researchers theorize the military loaded the object onto the truck and drove it to an unknown destination.

Stan Gordon, director of the Greensburg-based Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, has been researching the case from the onset.

He said witnesses who had never publicly commented on the case agreed to be interviewed by "Unsolved Mysteries."

"People who have never met each other are giving identical accounts," Gordon said. "We don't know what the object was, but we know what it wasn't. It definitely was not a meteor."

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# 1965 Kecksburg UFO case will resurface on TV show

By Sharon Santus

By Sharon Santus  
Tribune-Review

A film crew from the NBC program "Unsolved Mysteries" will arrive in Westmoreland County today to explore the baffling 25-year-old Kecksburg UFO case.

Shannon McGinn, segment producer, said the story will be featured in one of the show's early broadcasts this fall.

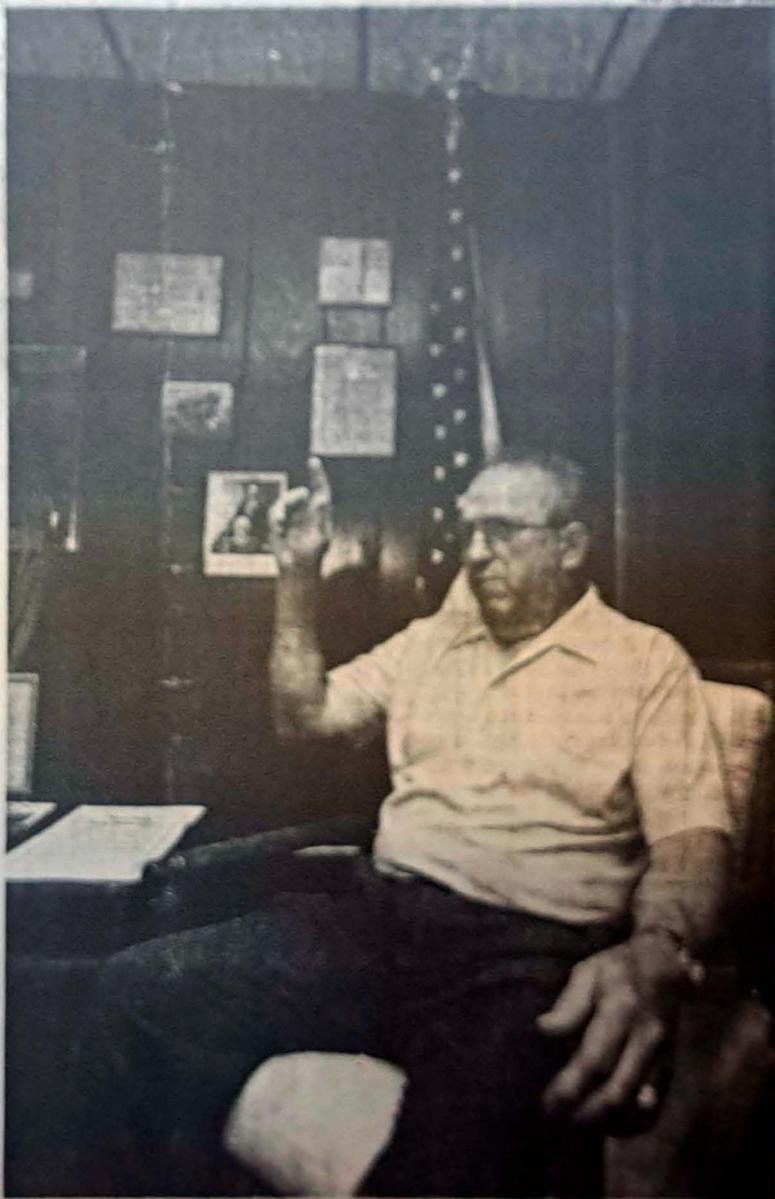
"We're very excited about this particular segment," McGinn said. "Usually, our film crews are on location for three to five days, but we're going to be in Westmoreland County for a full six days. This is a big story for us."

McGinn said her crew will conduct interviews at Mountain View Inn east of Greensburg over two days with various witnesses and with researchers and experts. She said the crew will go to Kecksburg Sunday to film the outdoor footage with a full cast of actors and extras over four days.

Shortly before sundown Dec. 9, 1965, witnesses reported seeing a fiery, bright orange object streak across the sky over Michigan, the tip of Ontario and western Lake Michigan. The fire ball continued its descent and finally glided to earth in a densely wooded area near Kecksburg.

Emergency personnel and the curious streamed to the scene, but only a few made it to the landing site before U.S. Army personnel arrived and closed the area.

Those who did see the object describe it as a gold, acorn-shaped metal craft that did not crash but glided to the ground at a speed similar to a Piper Cub making a slow, controlled landing.



Kecksburg's Robert Silver tells of 25-year-old mystery

## Tribune-Review

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# me-R

THURSDAY, JULY 26, 1990

Tribune-Review, Greensburg, Pa.

PLEASE SEE UFO/A5

# 1965 Kecksburg UFO case will resurface on TV show

## UFO FROM/A1

Witnesses reported seeing sparks, blue smoke and electricity arching from the object.

Robert Bitner, who was then president of the Kecksburg Fire Department, said firemen were dispatched after a caller reported "something had fallen out of the sky." He said when he arrived, state police and later Army officers prevented him from going to the scene.

"I don't know what rank these Army guys were, but it was clear they were big brass, not privates and sergeants," Bitner said. "We were all prepared to go down to the scene with them, but they stopped us."

**'The whole back of the truck was covered, so if they (military) did take something away, you couldn't see it. I'm convinced they did.'**

— Robert Bitner

Bitner said a military troop-transport truck was driven directly to the landing site and later that night was driven away.

"The whole back of the truck was covered, so if they did take something away, you couldn't see it," Bitner said. "I'm convinced they did."

When the area was examined the next day, nothing was found.

The Air Force maintains the object was a meteorite and has de-

clined to comment further.

Stan Gordon, director of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, said new evidence has surfaced to prove the object was not a meteor.

"People are coming forward now who have never talked about this before," said Gordon, who will be featured extensively on the program. "We've learned the object attempted to gain altitude and made several corrective turns

before it landed. It seemed to be self-propelled."

Gordon said witnesses have described symbols on the side of the object that may indicate it belonged to a foreign government.

John Brandenburg, Ph.D., a Washington, D.C.,-based theoretical physicist who works in the defense industry, has studied the Kecksburg case extensively. He said he is convinced the object was extraterrestrial.

"If a man-made spacecraft had fallen out of the sky, it would not have come down slowly," Brandenburg said. "It would have impacted at such a high speed that it never would have remained intact. This object was intact."

Brandenburg, who said the object's slow descent and sharp turns also rule out a meteor, said witness accounts clearly indicate the object was not earthly.

"It's the most believable explanation we have," he said. "It's the only one that makes any sense."

NATION

# UFO Landed 20 Years Ago

(Continued From Page One)

farm about 1½ miles north of the village. Search teams included state police troopers from Greensburg and volunteer firemen from Kecksburg. Observers also reported seeing large lead-lined containers apparently brought in by the military. Geiger counters were in use and one reporter mentioned that the consistent explanation offered for the light security was the possible danger of radioactive contamination.

Shortly before the search was reported to have broken off about 2 a.m., several persons reported seeing a bright, blue light in the woods about 150 feet from where they were standing on a hillside. The light suddenly disappeared.

Gordon questions whether the search ended with nothing found. Robert L. Bitner, who was then chief of Kecksburg's fire department, recalls seeing a heavy military truck leave the scene but he said a tarp covered the back, concealing what cargo, if any, it carried. "It was covered completely," says Bitner. "You couldn't tell if there was anything inside."

Bitner estimates the truck departed the scene about 10 or 10:30 p.m. Other military or government personnel remained on the scene, keeping the ravine off limits.

The first indication the military may have retrieved an object appears in a declassified Air Force memo that states a call was made to the Oakdale radar unit.

**A three-man team has been dispatched to Acme, Pa. to investigate and pick up an object that started a fire," the memo reads.**

As near as Gordon can tell there was no fire although one observer reported seeing a trail of blue smoke in the area.

Others reported feeling a vibration and hearing a sonic boom but firemen reported no fire in the vicinity at the time.

The Air Force's official explanation that the object was a meteor was supported by Dr. Paul Annear, then director of the Baldwin-Wallace (College) Observatory in Ohio who theorized that it was actually a shower of meteors which were expected five days later.

Dr. Nicholas Wagman of the Allegheny Observatory in Pittsburgh said it could have been a meteor from the constellation Gemini.

But several UFO researchers discount such explanations.

One investigator went so far as to attempt to calculate the speed of the object to demonstrate that it could not have been a meteor.

In an article published a year after the incident, the late Ivan Sanderson demonstrated that the aerial object made an abrupt turn, a change in course not possible for a meteor or bolide.

Relying on sightings by commercial and private pilots and observers along the path of the object, Sanderson pinpointed the direction of travel on a map, demonstrating that the object or objects traveled in a straight line from east of Flint, Mich. over Lake St. Clair to Oberlin and Elyria near Cleveland in a southeast-by-southerly direction before making a 25-degree turn to the east. From that point, Sanderson writes, the line of travel was straight through Midland to Kecksburg.

Based on the exact times the object was observed at points along its path, Sanderson was able to calculate the speed of the so-called meteor at 1,062.5 miles per hour, fast for any man-made object but comparatively slow for a meteor, the minimum speed of which has been clocked at 27,000 miles per hour.

Gordon doubts that in 1965 the U.S. possessed a spacecraft or nose cone with the capability of executing a 25-degree turn in flight.

Like Sanderson, Gordon and Leonard H. Stringfield, a UFO investigator who lives in Cincinnati, doubt the Pentagon's explanation of a meteor because of the secrecy displayed by the military and other government agencies in the mysterious fireball.

"What is so secret about a meteorite? It has not been the responsibility of the military to pick up meteorites," says Stringfield.

The researcher says he is certain the military retrieved an object and suggests it could have been a U.S. military device, an instrument of some sort falling from an aerial object.

Gordon is of the same opinion. "I've always felt this was a manmade device from a country unknown that went out of control," he says.

One group, Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, which has used FOI requests to obtain thousands of declassified documents, has come to realize that the government treats UFO sightings very seriously.

According to Ray Boeche, a member of the CAUS advisory board, the Air Force has insisted that UFOs have never posed a threat to national security. But when CAUS went to court in 1980 seeking the release of hundreds of UFO-related documents from the National Security Agency, the court dismissed the case on the grounds of national security.

Project Blue Book, the Air Force's 21-year investigation into UFOs was concluded in 1969 but Boeche says the Air Force remains very interested in reports of UFO sightings.

Boeche says rumors of the existence of Air Force units that do nothing but investigate UFOs could be pure speculation but a memo dated Oct. 20, 1969 from Air Force Brig. Gen. Carroll H. Bolender hints that UFOs would continue to be investigated through existing intelligence channels. The memo, according to Boeche, also suggests there were reported UFO cases investigated by outfits other than Project Blue Book.

Air Force Lt. Col. Chuck Wood, director of public affairs at NORAD headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo. says the Air Force's investigation into UFOs ended with Project Blue Book. Reports of UFO sightings are referred to other agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration, according to Wood.

But Stringfield insists there is a special unit of the Blue Berets, an Air Force outfit which operates covertly in the U.S., investigating reports of UFO crashes.

"They are involved behind the scenes," says Stringfield. "They have their orders and they know what to do if they encounter a UFO."

Wood says many documents have been declassified and made available under FOI requests but Boeche says the Air Force has come to regret the release of some of those documents because they have given researchers insight into sensitive subjects. "Things have apparently slipped through," says Boeche, who attributes the disclosures to oversight.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Kecksburg case concerns documents Gordon and Boeche have failed to obtain concerning the 662nd Radar Squadron.

The 662nd, which was under NORAD in 1965, was deactivated Dec. 31, 1969. According to Gordon, neither the Army nor Air Force can locate records of the group.

What strikes Gordon as curious is that the group that headed Project Blue Book and the 662nd Squadron were both deactivated during the same month — December 1969.

Is it possible that the radar squadron's real mission was to retrieve UFO's?

"We're wondering what the mystery is concerning a radar unit attached to an Army support facility in Oakdale. They can tell us the date the unit was deactivated but they have no records," says Gordon.

"I find it hard to believe the records just vanished, they have to be somewhere," says Boeche.

## Information Sought

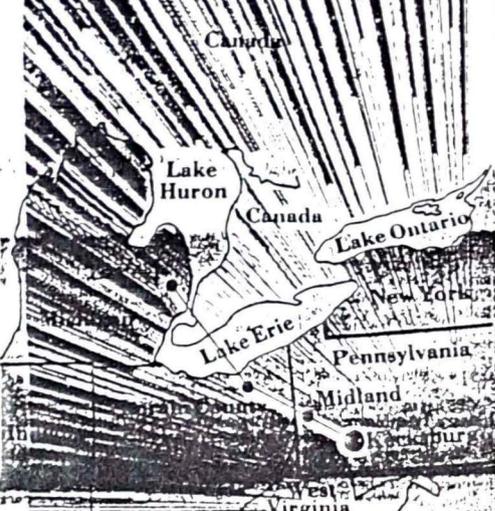
The Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, an all-volunteer, non-profit research group which investigates strange and unusual occurrences, is seeking information concerning the incident at Kecksburg and other UFO sightings.

PASU Director Stan Gordon is particularly interested in contacting anyone who served or has knowledge of the deactivated 662nd Radar Squadron, a unit that was attached to a U.S. Army support facility in Oakdale and was involved in the search of an object believed to have crashed near Kecksburg Dec. 9, 1965.

PASU, which serves as a statewide clearinghouse for reports of UFOs and other strange occurrences, works closely with the Mutual UFO Network of Seguin, Texas (the largest international UFO research organization). Gordon is director of the Pennsylvania MUFO chapter.

"People can report sightings and other occurrences to us confidentially without fear of ridicule or publicity," says Gordon.

All reports are kept confidential. The Pennsylvania UFO hotline is 838-7768. The address is PASU, 6 Oakhill Ave., Greensburg, Pa. 15601.



### 1965 INCIDENT

# Kecksburg's UFO Mystery Unsolved

By DAVE LESTER  
Of The Tribune-Review

It was shortly before sundown Dec. 9, 1965 that a fiery bright orange object streaked across the sky over Michigan, the tip of Ontario and western Lake Erie. Described by one observer near the lake as a fireball, the brilliant object continued across the northeastern corner of Ohio (Lorain County) and western Pennsylvania and was seen in at least six states and Canada before it plummeted to earth in Westmoreland County.

What landed that evening in a densely wooded area near Kecksburg remains a point of contention. The Air Force maintains it was a meteorite while others insist it was a man-made object — a fallen satellite, a spy plane or a test vehicle. Still others suggest it could have been an alien spacecraft.

Despite reports from eyewitnesses that the military retrieved a large object from the woods, concealed it under a tarpaulin and hauled it away under cover of darkness the Air Force has never confirmed that anything was found.

If searchers did find something they aren't telling. Twenty years later the identity of what the military termed an unidentified flying object remains a mystery shrouded in official secrecy.

Amateur investigators say the search for documents that might offer a clue to what landed near the small rural community has led to puzzling revelations of the disappearance of entire sets of records belonging to a military unit that participated in the search.

What is known is that the object was of great interest to the military and the excitement it generated was not unlike an epic science fiction drama, says Greensburg's Stan Gordon who has spent the intervening years attempting to unravel the mystery of what landed in the woods.

"It was just like War of the Worlds happening right in our backyard," says Gordon, who serves as director of the Pennsylvania Center for the Study of the Unexplained, a research group that serves as a clearinghouse for reports of unusual phenomena.

Curiosity seekers jammed the narrow roads leading to the village as government officials, the military and media converged on the scene. Pittsburgh's Allegheny Observatory was deluged with phone calls from people who reported seeing the object hurtling across the sky. At various points along the path of the object in Michigan and Pennsylvania came reports that metallic material fell from the sky.

### Seen By Thousands

The Elyria (Ohio) Chronicle reported that thousands of observers saw chunks slam into the earth from Lake Erie to Eaton Township, a municipality about 15 miles south of the shoreline. One Elyria fireman blamed falling fragments for starting 10 small grass fires in a 1,000-foot area along the east bank of the Black River. In Lorain, a group of children playing near a school reported another chunk dropped into the school yard. The newspaper reported, however, that nowhere in the county or state were fragments found.

In Michigan, 40 miles north of Detroit, a deputy sheriff reported finding a scrap of shredded leaded foil which may have come from the fireball. Similar fragments were recovered in Midland, Beaver County.

Gordon, who has interviewed civilians who were close to the scene, says it appears the military established a direct line with NORAD, then known as the North American Air Defense Command. Records indicate that among the agencies requesting information was NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, which in the days prior to lunar landings was studying meteors.

Among government and military units summoned to Kecksburg were members of the 662nd Radar Squadron, a unit located 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.

The search was concentrated in the area of a steep ravine on a

(Continued On Page A 10)

# 'Unidentified Flying Object' Falls Near

An "unidentified flying object"—possibly the same one reported seen streaking across seven northeastern states and Canada late Thursday afternoon — apparently fell to the earth in a secluded wooded area near Kecksburg in Westmoreland County.

The area where the object landed was immediately sealed off on the order of U.S. Army and State Police officials, reportedly in anticipation of a "close inspection" of whatever may have fallen.

A spokesman for a team of radar experts from the Army's

662 radar squadron in Pittsburgh said, "We don't know what we have yet."

Tribune-Review Staff Writer Robert Gatty reported from the scene that "no one is being allowed near the object." State Police officials there, he said, ordered the area roped off to await the expected arrival of both U.S. Army engineers and, possibly, civilian scientists.

The Army engineers, he said, were scheduled to arrive late Thursday night or early Friday morning. Scientists were expected to be brought in some time today.

Unable to talk to anyone who

had actually seen the object Gatty reported that the consistent explanation of the security measures is that the object—whatever it is—may be contaminated with radioactivity.

## Shape Mystery

The "unidentified flying object" (UFO) was sighted falling to the earth by Mrs. Arnold Kalp of Acme RD 1 and her two children. Mrs. Kalp, Gatty reported, was not available to talk Thursday night, apparently because of the throng of newsmen and spectators, who began arriving in the Kecksburg area shortly after word of the sight-

ing was reported.

Although no one has indicated the size or shape of the object, Gatty said he talked to one farmer in the area—Dale Howard, who lives about a mile from the scene of the reported landing. Howard reported "feeling a vibration" and "a thump" about the time the object reportedly fell.

The near-exact location of the object, Gatty determined, is 500 feet off Legislative Route 64214 in Mt. Pleasant Township, about one-half mile east of Kecksburg.

Excitement caused by the apparent landing, the Tribune-Re-

view reporter said, produced a massive traffic jam on the small roads winding around the small community of Kecksburg. Many of the just-curious spectators, he said, left the scene when informed by police that they could not get near the object.

## Newsmen Wait

Newsmen, however, were holding tight, for the most part, to await some official word from either the U.S. Army or the State Police officials in charge.

The obvious excitement aroused by the apparent landing stems, in part, from dozens of

## near Kecksburg

"sightings" all over parts of the northeastern part of the United States and Canada.

Pentagon sources in Washington, D.C., according to a United Press International dispatch, indicated the flash could have been a meteor.

Earlier reports, the UPI dispatch said, indicated the flash could have been a high altitude test rocket fired over Lake Erie. But National Guard and Air Force officials told UPI reporters that no rockets had been fired.

The UPI dispatch went on:

"Eric Johnson, a reporter for an Erie, Pa., television station,

said, "It flashed across the lake, north northwest of the Erie airport leaving a kind of cloud of smoke behind it."

"Raymond Wallings, a private airplane pilot from Painesville, Ohio, said he was flying over the lake when he saw the "fireball" and kept his eye on it until it plummeted into the lake.

"U.S. Coast Guard officials reported a flying object exploded over the Detroit - Windsor area. Four vessels were dispatched onto Lake St. Clair but were unable to find any trace of the object.

December 10, 1965  
Greensburg, Pa.  
Tribune-Review  
Front Page Story

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Celebration to mark 50th year of Kecksburg fire department

By John Wislocki

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Most Kecksburg residents will be putting the eeriness of the Meteor Road mystery 24 years ago behind them when the Community Day Parade occurs Aug. 13.

Months of preparation have been under way to make the music-filled occasion a success.

"After all," said Kecksburg Fire Chief Ron Struble, "it isn't every day you celebrate your 50-year anniversary."

Kecksburg, on that special day in August, intends to honor the half-century service of its volunteer fire department.

While other departments have been in the business of dousing flames longer, Kecksburg grew up small and remains comfortable in its surroundings.

Founding father John Martin Keck settled in the valley in the 1860s. Later he created the soft drink business that is now worth millions and in 1906 helped start the telephone company.

All that once glittered in Kecksburg will be remembered Aug. 13, and some of those memories will be carried home in the form of belt buckles with a photograph of the department's 1948 Mack fire truck or baseball-style caps emblazoned with anniversary messages.

Thousands are expected to attend the community's street fair the last week of July to dine on hometown cooking while strolling past exhibits.

Those who will dine on slaws and slivers of meat will drink from the town's fountain of cola, which flows from the headwaters of the nearby Pepsi-Cola bottling plant.

More of the same is anticipated on Community Day.

Officials from the soft drink king and the town's telephone company are expected to be in the parade, said Struble.

"You wouldn't believe how much work goes into this," he said, walking from the social hall to the fire station.

He envisions floats and glad tidings.

Noteworthy events from the department's past have been com-

## Mystery of Meteor Road still unsolved

By The Tribune-Review

There's no telling who'll show up in Kecksburg Aug. 13 when the Community Day Parade trumpets the 50th anniversary of the Kecksburg Volunteer Fire Department.

A chance exists that someone will boldly go beyond inspiring tales of firefighting heroics into another world to debate whether a UFO or meteor landed in a wooded area off Meteor Road — that's right, METEOR ROAD — 24 years ago.

Talk threatens to climb beyond the stratosphere ever since a Japanese television crew visited the area in Mt. Pleasant Township earlier in the year. The footage shot — no one seems to know what will be highlighted — will form part of a two-hour special scheduled to air in that country later in the year, possibly September.

Lore about what happened on Dec. 9, 1965, encroaches on the Zone of Beyondo Bizzaro.

The Office of Special Investigations at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, won't comment on whether its personnel were running around Meteor Road that day.

The township supervisors thought enough of what occurred then to christen the byway as Meteor Road. As expected, the road signs disappear as fast as a shooting star, said township Secretary Ray Zimmerman.

"They're a big item," he says. Kecksburg Fire Department President Jim Mayes was on the road that day, looking down into a field as military personnel, state police and a swarm of authorities converged to do something mysterious and keep area residents from seeing it.

"I remember it like it was yesterday," said Mayes. "We had the four-wheel-drive truck and we took the military on down. They kept people there all night. There was a tractor-trailer and a couple other vehicles, and I still say they took something out of there. The big thing about it was the blue blinding lights — like a timing light."

The field of Jerome and Valeria Miller was tramped through by Boy Scouts a day later, searching for the magnet that would later draw college students from the University of Colorado and the film crew from Japan.

Valeria Miller was not at home at the time of the most famous drop-in since John Martin Keck started the village of Kecksburg in the 1860s.

Stan Gordon, who heads the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained, hasn't completely ruled out that space debris — and not a UFO — went down in the area.

But the easier to swallow suggestion has choked one eyewitness who disputed that theory in talking with Gordon.

The eyewitness, identified only as Pete by Gordon, said the object resembled a giant metal acorn and contained writing that "looked like hieroglyphics" on part of its raised surface. The object was supposedly loaded onto a flatbed trailer, covered with a tarp and hauled to an unknown location.

Gordon is in search of more witnesses who might want to come forward on what made the noise heard around the world, and whether, just by chance, anyone might have seen anything leave that area before authorities arrived.

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KECKSBURG  
GORDON  
1995

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## KECKSBURG INCIDENT STILL A MYSTERY AFTER 30 YEARS

### Witnesses Say Military Found Structured Object, Not Meteorite

[The Kecksburg Incident of 1965 numbers among a handful of alleged UFO crash recoveries for which there is substantial eyewitness testimony and documentary evidence. Stan Gordon is the foremost civilian investigator of this incident and is calling for further eyewitness assistance to finally resolve what really happened. CNI News thanks Stan for permission to reprint the following story, which ran in a number of Pennsylvania newspapers in early December, 1995.]

By Stan Gordon

It was late afternoon on December 9, 1965, when a large fireball was reported in the sky from Canada as well as sections of Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The bright aerial object caused much excitement as it passed over the Pittsburg and Greensburg area. At about 4:47pm, according to a number of observers, the object dropped slowly into a wooded ravine near the rural community of Kecksburg in Westmoreland County [Pennsylvania]. Many observers thought that an aircraft was on fire. It was later determined by local authorities that no airplanes were missing. It is reported that after the object had fallen, various types of activity began to occur around this village during the next few hours.

Volunteer firemen began to search a large wooded area for a possible downed aircraft. Many witnesses describe military personnel and equipment arriving in the area. Pittsburg area radio and TV discussed reports about the sightings, and hundreds of curious people descended on the area to try to

The late John Murphy, who at the time was the news director for WHJB radio in Greensburg, reported that he was on the scene when the state police, fire marshall and other investigators arrived. They went down into the area with a geiger counter. Later after returning, they were approached by Murphy; and when the fire marshall was asked about what was found, among his comments were, "You better get your information from the Army."

Firemen drove military officers on a fire vehicle down through the fields toward the wooded impact site, but these firemen were not permitted to go near the object. Various observers claim that the military utilized a small farm house near the impact site, as well as the Keckburg Fire Department truck station as a command center during the evening of the event.

A narrow country road overlooking the wooded area which was the target of the search was jammed with the curious. Among the crowd were reporters and cameramen from area TV, radio and newspaper sources. During the evening, the firemen helped state police block off roads around the alleged crash site. As the night wore on, the crowd slowly began to disperse, since it was too far away to see anything from that location in the dark.

That evening people reported seeing a military flatbed trailer truck moving in the direction of the reported impact location. The trailer went in empty, but returned later with a military jeep escort, loaded with a large object shaped like a bell and covered with a tarpaulin.

Word spread around to those in the area that night that what was found was a meteorite. Independent eyewitnesses who were able to get into the woods before the military arrived claimed that they came across an object which was consturcted and was not a meteorite. They described a large solid metallic object large enough for a man to stand inside of. The object was shaped like an acorn, was of an odd gold bronze-copper color and was one solid metal structure. Just above the bottom of the object was a bumper-like area, which had upon it unusual markings described as looking similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics.

The next day the state police reported that nothing was found, and the report from the Pentagon was that what was seen was likely a meteor passing through the sky.

In recent years, information has come forth that the object was transported that night to Lockborne Air Force Base in Columbus, Ohio, for a short stayover. The object then was transported to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. It is at that location that informants tell us the object was sealed up under special conditions inside of a building. Where the object is today is not known.

I have spent years searching for the truth about what happened at Kecksburg, and I have attempted to identify what it was that reportedly fell from the sky that day. We do have confirmation that a Soviet satellite, actually a Venus probe called KOSMOS 96, did re-enter the Earth's atmosphere at 3:18 a.m. in Canada on that same date. KOSMOS 96 can't be ruled out as a source of this mystery. Some of those who saw the object, however, are not convinced of a man-made explanation and believe that the object could have been of extraterrestrial origin. Regardless of what this object was, one fo the biggest mysteries about the event is our government's position on this occurrence.

I have in my possession a copy of the Air Force Project Blue Book report concerning the Kecksburg (aka Acme) incident. The contents show a great deal of interest in the sighting from various government agencies. More importantly, it verifies that three men from the 862nd Radar Squadron, which was then based in Pittsburg, were involved in the search for the object. The report states: "A three man team has been dispatched to Acme to investigate an obj started " ates that the

earch continued until about 2 a.m. and that nothing was found.

I have obtained the records for December of 1965 of the 662nd Radar Squadron. Interestingly, even though the Air Force report and newspaper accounts verify that personnel from that unit were involved at Kecksburg, there is no mention of this activity in their records. This appears to indicate that this mission was classified.

The personnel from that unit would have been Air Force. Many observers at Kecksburg describe seeing Army equipment and soldiers as well. My search for military and government documents that would verify this incident continues. There have been numerous attempts for years to obtain such material. Informants have told me that such documents did exist on the Kecksburg recovery. In 1994 another attempt was made to find out about any special recovery or search activity in the area near Kecksburg.

Among the information received were the facts that a search by combined intelligence center officials of the U.S. Space Command/NORAD intelligence data center revealed no unusual re-entry phenomena which would have triggered a special recovery or search activity in the designated region during the period of December 1-15, 1965. The official contacted indicated, however, that the records from 30 years ago may not be reliable.

In another correspondence from May, 1995, our government's position on the Kecksburg incident is stated as follows: "Officially the military has completely denied any involvement directly or indirectly with any events surrounding the Kecksburg area on the evening of December 9, 1965."

The military's claim of no involvement at Kecksburg conflicts with multiple eyewitness testimony, national and local news accounts, and more importantly their own Air Force records which I have on file. Something happened 30 years ago in Western Pennsylvania. The Kecksburg incident has attracted a great amount of public interest, and it continues to draw national and international attention.

Among the many eyewitnesses that night at Kecksburg were news reporters who saw and talked with military personnel. The office manager of WHJB radio in Greensburg at the time has stated that she helped to handle the large number of phone calls that the station was receiving about the sightings of the object. She says that among those calling were the military, who were asking for information about what was seen and requesting directions to the site.

On this 30th anniversary of the Kecksburg incident, I am making an appeal to the public for information on this case, as well as support in asking your Congressional representatives to conduct an investigation on this matter, where witnesses can describe what took place and documentation can be presented. I am asking any person who was at Kecksburg on that date and observed any activity associated with this event, or who saw the object, to contact me. Any information about what you saw, no matter how small, is important in solving this matter. If you were part of the military operation that night at Kecksburg, please contact me. If you have any photographs or other evidence that pertain to this event, or newsclippings from that time, I would like to hear from you. You may contact me confidentially.

[Stan Gordon can be contacted by mail at: 6 Oakhill Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601; or by phone or fax at: 412-838-7768. Confidentiality, if requested, will be guaranteed.]

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KECKSBURG

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Date: Wednesday, November 29, 1995 11:39PM

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Date: Fri, 29 Sep 1995 12:59:12 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Dean Phillip Kawipe <dpk@acpub.duke.edu>  
To: Dean Kanipe <kanip001@mc.duke.edu>,  
Dean Phillip Kanipe <dpk@acpub.duke.edu>  
Subject: Kecksburg, Pennsylvania (fwd)

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Date: Thu, 28 SEP 95 10:46:00 -0500  
From: Daveb Edwards <daveb.edwards@canrem.com>  
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Subject: Kecksburg, Pennsylvania

On 09-20-95 (12:46) MACGREG@AOL.COM wrote:  
Subj: Kecksburg, Pennsylvania

> To all,  
> This is a serious inquiry soliciting information from anyone who  
> has information to offer concerning the crash of an object near  
> Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, on December 9, 1965. If you have any  
> knowledge of this event, please send email to me (MacGreg) on  
> AOL, or to mrmac@vms.cis.pitt.edu Or you can call Stan Gordon at  
> (412) 838-7768. Stan is probably the most knowlegeable of those  
> who have investigated this event.  
>  
> The Kecksburg crash is still controversial, but the evidence, i.e.,  
the  
> facts provide evidence which indicates the extraordinary nature of  
this  
> event. Anonymity is guaranteed. And you will be making an important  
> contribution to the resolution of a mystery. In some respect, this  
affects  
> us all.

urg as it appears on my Sir

Connection BBS (705.737.3030 705.737.0728) for those who may not be familiar with it. Some Roswell files and autopsy pics in

..JPG format are also available, as well as UFO.LST- a listing of all our UFO files, from file area BROWSE. Anything in the BROWSE library is free to all.

Don't know if there is any new info in this file, but here it is:

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SIRIUS CONNECTION SYSOP NOTE:

This file consists of an electronic version of the UFO Update newsletter, a companion publication to a UFO related tv program. This program is aired on Warner Cable's public access in Cincinnati, Ohio.

[snip]

o The Kecksburg, Pennsylvania incident revisited with new witnesses

Sirius Connection can neither prove nor disprove claims or statements made in this file. Readers are advised to read and draw their own conclusions.

-----  
Date: 02-27-94 (20:55)  
To: ALL  
From: DALE FARMER  
Subj: UFO Update Newsletter

Hi Everyone

My name is Dale and I belong to a local group of UFO researchers in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. Besides going out into the field we produce a tv program. This program is aired on Warner Cable's public access in Cincinnati. Along with the tv program we have a newsletter that reflects the program but also provides information on the UFO phenomenon.

I hope this is of interest to you all.

Vol. 1, No. 1                      UFO Update                      Jan./Feb 1994

Premiere Issue

Welcome to UFO Update newsletter. This publication is not simply a companion piece for the UFO Update cable access program, but an informative and -- hopefully -- thought provoking forum on the UFO phenomenon.

[snip]

Send your correspondence to

UFO Update Newsletter  
239 East State Road  
Cleveland, Ohio, 45002-1369

[snip]

Kecksburg

In the late afternoon hours of December 9, 1965, something

fell from the sky and landed in a wooded ravine just west of Kecksburg, Pennsylvania. There was concern that it might be a small airplane, and the fire department responded to the scene. Four teams of rescuers combed the area and eventually something was found. It wasn't an airplane, it just may have been something not of this world.

Shortly after the firefighters made their find, a detail from the Air Force's 662nd Radar Squadron, based near Pittsburgh, arrived to seal off the area. More troops and a flatbed truck soon arrived and the object was removed from the ravine and spirited away. Stan Gordon, MUFON state director for Pittsburgh who has studied the case for over ten years, has gathered government documents that indicate that as many as 212 military personnel were on the scene that night.

According to eyewitnesses the object appeared bell- or acorn-shaped and measured ten feet long by eight feet wide. It was bronze colored and adorned with a collar near its rounder end. On the collar were etched strange figures that resembled no earthly language.

The original, official explanation was that the Kecksburg object was a meteorite. Clearly, the eye-witness descriptions eliminate this rationale.

A more recent identification has been offered by NASA scientist, James Oberg. Although there is no record of such an event, he contends that the object was a Russian payload. The Air Force arrived to take it away so that its heat shield could be analyzed. One would also hope they studied what made it shatterproof, too! After all, an accidental re-entry is a high velocity event, and any manmade object would either burn-up in transit or disintegrate upon impact with the earth.

Both the meteorite and Russian satellite theories are ruled out by another interesting point: the object flew no faster than a small airplane and made no fewer than four sharp course changes before touching down in Kecksburg. The descent was powered and controlled. If it had been a manned Soviet capsule, we would have been accused of somehow shooting it down to steal Russian space science secrets! Sorry, Dr. Oberg, try again.

So, what did become of the Kecksburg UFO? Most likely it was shipped to Wright-Patterson where the Foreign Technologies Division would try to take it apart. There is, in fact some testimony that might bear that out.

#### Kecksburg Connection

On September 19, 1990, NBC's UNSOLVED MYSTERIES aired a re-enactment of the Kecksburg incident. It was an evenhanded treatment that featured comments from eyewitnesses and Stan Gordon. Soon after the broadcast, Gordon was overwhelmed with calls from viewers who thought they might add some information to the case. One of the callers was an Ohio man who claimed to have seen the acorn shaped object a few days after the Kecksburg event while delivering bricks to property adjacent to Wright-Patterson.

Gordon passed this story on to a local investigator Len Stringfield. Stringfield, assisted by researcher Brian Thompson, pursued the case and interviewed the witness. At the time, the source preferred to

The following is a summary of his testimony:

Myron and his cousin, "JS", delivered a large inventory of special glazed bricks to Wright-Patterson just a few days after the Kecksburg event. Curiously, the order came through the Navy. The bricks were to be used to construct a double-thick, lead lined structure 50 x 80 feet in size, inside an already existing red brick building.

After following a jeep bearing an officer (possibly a general) and a driver to the site, they were left to unload the bricks. Myron noticed that there were several men dressed in what resembled decontamination suits scurrying about. He also recognized the Navy officer who had selected and ordered the special brick. After some time, Myron took a break from his labors. His curiosity got the best of him, so he decided to have a look at what was so important. The security officers had apparently grown used to Myron's presence and failed to check his approach soon enough.

Although his glimpse was brief before being hustled back to the brick delivery by a guard, Myron claimed to have seen plenty. There, inside the building and supported by metal scaffolding was a bell-shaped object about ten feet tall.

Although Myron describes the object as bell-shaped, it was his viewing of the UNSOLVED MYSTERIES program that caused him to contact Stan Gordan. In fact, when asked by Stringfield if "acorn-shaped" was a suitable description, Myron agreed it was.

Myron's story is supported by his cousin, JS, who was able to add his own observation.

The day before he worked with Myron, JS had made a solo run to Wright-Patterson with the first load of bricks. He recalled seeing a flatbed trailer near the red brick building. It's cargo, although covered with a tarp, was "liberty bell" shaped and stood eight to ten feet tall.

Clearly, there is a strong indication that Myron and JS witnessed the arrival and initial analysis of the Kecksburg object at Wright-Patterson. But there are some questions that must be asked:

Why were the bricks ordered through the Navy?  
If the Navy was the investigative body, why wasn't  
the object taken to a naval base?  
Was this action directed by the Joint Chief of Staff?

The implications are astounding and suggest that the Kecksburg object was considered by the U.S. military as a violator of American air space.

For an in-depth examination of the Kecksburg episode, the reader is encouraged to consult UFO CRASH/RETRIEVALS: THE INNER SANCTUM by Leonard Stringfield. THE ROSWELL INCIDENT, UFO CRASH AT ROSWELL, and CRASH AT CORONA are all still available through local bookstores.

[snip]

ED- Perhaps this will shed some additional light?

Received: from merak  
(gcameron@merak.cc.umanitoba.ca [130.179.16.10]) by  
electra.cc.umanitoba.ca (8.8.5/8.8.5) with SMTP id BAA24236  
; Fri, 11 Apr 1997 01:34:49 -0500 (CDT)  
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From: Grant Robert Cameron <gcameron@cc.UManitoba.CA>  
Organization: University of Manitoba  
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To: gcameron@cc.UManitoba.CA  
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KECKSBURG

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

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<http://www.cninews.com/Search/CNI.0290.html>

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#### KECKSBURG CRASH CONTROVERSY REMAINS UNRESOLVED

By Kim Opatka  
Bulletin Staff Writer

This article examines one of the most talked about and controversial UFO incidents, involving the apparent crash of what has been termed a meteorite by some and an alien craft by others, near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania on December 9, 1965.

The object was first seen streaking across the sky, with thousands from Michigan to New York witnessing a brilliant ball of fire which left a smoke trail, visible for about 20 minutes after it passed.

Many, including pilots who observed it, thought it was an aircraft which was on fire. Reports of debris from the object were made in many states, and an Ohio fire department was called to extinguish 10 small fires in an area where witnesses said they saw flaming fragments falling from the sky.

Shock waves were reported by pilots, and a seismograph near Detroit recorded a shock, wrote investigator Stan Gordon, of Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained (PASU) in a recent journal article. The crash has been a pet project of the Greensburg man "since the night it happened," he said, noting he is still trying to obtain information on the incident.

Although the military eventually labelled the object a meteor, as did the Associated Press account published in The Bulletin the day after the crash, Gordon says recent evidence, including the discovery of a man who saw the object, supports the idea that the object was a true UFO.

was a teenager then," said John (not his real name). "It was in the early part of December and there was a little snow and a little rain, and mud."

He was called to the scene after the 4:44 p.m. crash as a fireman from the Latrobe area, to search for the crashed object.

"I had seen a fiery object in the sky. I can't say exactly which direction but it was coming from the north. It was not too much longer and the fire whistle went off," he said. "I answered the call and was told they needed a search team because at the time they believed it was a downed aircraft. And I thought, 'My God, this is what I have just seen'."

When firemen arrived at the Kecksburg Fire Hall, maps were reviewed and groups were given sections to search.

"It was getting semi-dusk and we had flashlights. We were taken in the back of a truck and dropped off and told to go 'this way' which we did. I was not on the initial contact team. Another team found the object.

"It was definitely, unequivocally, positively, absolutely no aircraft, plane, helicopter or rocket, at least not to my knowledge. It was in an area that was part field and part woods and we went down to investigate," he said.

"We found the object had crashed at a 30 to 40 degree angle, and had broken off numerous tree branches in its impact path. My initial reaction was 'This is no airplane.' I observed no shrapnel, no breaking up of the fuselage. It was one solid piece, no doors, no windows.

"Preliminary searches found no bodies or casualties. It was shaped like an acorn, laying on its side, like the acorn nut is in its shell when it's on a tree," he explained. "I've been a machinist for 24 years and I've worked with a tremendous amount of different metals, and I have never seen any type of metal that looked even close to that."

John said the object was not broken, "not even cracked, just dented a bit. It did not give off smoke, steam or vapors, at least none that we could see."

Reports from neighbors in the area said it had given off a faint trail of blue smoke, which disappeared after the crash.

He described the portion visible as between eight and 10 feet long, six and seven feet across, and said a man of average height would probably have had little trouble standing up inside it. The crater it ploughed into the ground was "rectangular in shape."

John said the state police were there and the area was soon quarantined.

"They drove us out. It was late at night when we finally got back to the fire hall and it had been completely taken over by the military. They were carrying in large pieces of equipment, radios and such, and they had armed guards posted outside so nobody could get in or out. The firemen were thrown out. We weren't even allowed in to use the bathroom.

"The military had control of the whole operation," John recalled. "After a while we saw a flat bed truck come by with some other military equipment, a crane or something.

"It was not too much longer, an hour, an hour and a half, when the trucks came back and there was a large object on the back of the flat bed, covered by a tarp, with military escorts front and back. I got the feeling that if you had stepped on the road you were dead meat. They weren't stopping for anything."

Although the object was later said to be a meteorite, John doesn't buy that explanation.

"It had writing on it, not like your average writing, but more like ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. It had sort of a bumper on it, like a ribbon about six to 10 inches wide, and it stood out. It was elliptical the whole way around and the writing was on this bumper. It's nothing like I've ever seen, and I'm an avid reader. I read a lot of books on Egypt, the Incas, Peruvians, Russians and I've never to this day come across anything that looked like that."

John notes that later it was denied that the object was even a meteorite, and the military "denied they were even in the area. But I know there were Air Force and Army personnel involved. It was like they just came out of the woodwork."

Gordon's research has revealed that one of the military groups involved was most likely to be the 662nd Radar Squadron, based at the Oakdale Armoury, located near Greater Pittsburgh International Airport.

The squadron was found to be under the control of the Aerospace Defense Command, and attempts to get information on the Kecksburg crash, through the Freedom of Information Act, have not provided much to go on.

One response said there had been no record of the squadron being activated on that date, Gordon said, wondering how so much equipment and personnel could be activated while the monthly report showed no entry on Dec. 9.

Through his research, Gordon says he knows the Air Force was still investigating UFO cases at the public level then, and that it was apparently the Project Blue Book staff which contacted the 662nd squadron. Subsequent reports have led him to theorize that even the Project Blue Book staff was not made aware of objects which could "affect national security," and that some intelligence teams investigated crashes of "foreign space vehicles."

Another strange occurrence that night, Gordon said, was reports by some civilians that radiation was released. He explained that some children playing in the area had reportedly been told by military personnel that that was a possibility, and men in decontamination suits were allegedly seen at the site later the next day.

Although he has considered the possibility that the object could have been space debris or a test device, Gordon says documents and evidence obtained in the last few years lead more in the direction of it being a "true UFO."

John concurs. "It was definitely not of this planet. At the time I was a skeptical teen, but when you see something like that you don't forget it. When you get called out like that from the fire department you think you're going out looking for an aircraft of some sort, not a UFO.

"I'll never forget it. I still want to know what the hell it was."

Original file name: .CNI - Kecksberg.Cosmos 96?

This file was converted with TextToHTML - (c) Logic n.v.

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From: Grant Robert Cameron <gcameron@cc.UManitoba.CA>  
Organization: University of Manitoba  
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To: gcameron@cc.UManitoba.CA  
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KECKSBURG  
WRIGHT

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WITNESS SAW KECKSBURG OBJECT AT WRIGHT-PAT

The popular NBC television series "Unsolved Mysteries" ran a lengthy re-enactment of the Kecksburg incident on September 19, 1990 (it has been replayed several times since). Following the showing, Stan Gordon received calls from several people who claimed further information. Gordon enlisted the aid of well-known UFO crash investigator, the late Leonard Stringfield, in interviewing two of these witnesses. As reported by Stringfield in his "Status Report VI: The Inner Sanctum" (July 1991, p. 56-8), these two people were cousins who worked together for a large brick and tile company in Ohio. Stringfield calls them Myron and JS.

These witnesses said they delivered a special order of unusual glazed bricks to a large building adjacent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, a few days following the reported Kecksburg incident of December 9, 1965. JS made one delivery by himself and told Stringfield he saw a large bell-shaped object sitting on a flatbed trailer, covered with a tarpaulin, just outside the building. The next day, Myron and JS each drove a truckload of bricks to the same location. They were met by military personnel who escorted them to the designated unloading spot, just outside the large building. Myron says he too saw the trailer, now empty, which he described as an "Army 35 foot long tri-axel lowboy." The area was abuzz with activity. Both witnesses said that many of the military personnel were Navy.

Myron said they took quite a while to off-load the bricks by hand, and that they observed many military personnel in some kind of protective outfits coming and going from the building. At one point, he wandered over to an open door and peeked inside. He told Stringfield he saw the bell-shaped object very clearly inside. A scaffold had been erected next to it, from which several m  
...on the

Object was about ten feet tall and somewhat less than ten feet wide at the base. JS (who only saw the object shrouded in a tarp) made a similar size

estimate. Myron also said that the object showed signs of charring but was obviously metallic and mostly bronze colored.

Both Myron and JS said they observed workers with welding or cutting equipment. Myron later saw one of the welders outside the building and asked him what he was doing. The worker, Myron says, told him that they had attempted to open the object with a variety of cutting tools but had so far failed. Myron said the worker also alluded to the interior of the object being "hot," probably meaning radiation; and he mentioned the possibility of bodies inside.

Myron told Stringfield that the specialized brick was to be used to build a double-walled, lead-lined enclosure suitable for housing an object that might leak radiation.

Wright-Patterson was the headquarters of the Air Technical Intelligence Center, where any recovered aircraft-related object of possibly foreign origin would be taken for investigation. Thus it is perfectly plausible that the object found at Kecksburg, if not obviously a meteor, would be taken to Wright-Patterson. Where that object is today, however, remains unknown.

Over the years, various theories have been put forth to explain the Kecksburg object. As this story was being readied for distribution, ISCNI received a note from a "good authority" (who asked for anonymity) who said he knew for certain that the Kecksburg object was the remains of a Soviet satellite. He said the military was highly concerned because they knew the object contained a small nuclear reactor on board -- the Soviets perfected small, efficient reactors suitable for space applications well ahead of the U.S. -- but they were equally impressed that the shielding around the reactor had withstood both reentry and hard landing.

This is a plausible, though not substantiated, explanation for the Kecksburg incident. If this theory is true, however, it should now be possible to get a complete accounting from the military. Today, the U.S. and Russians are sharing nuclear technology for space applications. Thus, there is no longer any reason to withhold the truth about Kecksburg, if it was a 30 year-old Soviet satellite. On the other hand, many researchers do not believe this theory to be true and remain convinced the best explanation for Kecksburg is extraterrestrial.

Original file name: .CNI - Kecksburg UFO at Wrt Pt

This file was converted with TextToHTML - (c) Logic n.v.

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by emout02.mail.aol.com (8.7.6/8.7.3/AOL-2.0.0)  
id EAA15058 for gcameron@cc.umanitoba.ca;  
Mon, 31 Mar 1997 04:00:36 -0500 (EST)

KECKSBURG

X-UIDL: 859799044.001  
From: MacGreg@aol.com  
Date: Mon, 31 Mar 1997 04:00:36 -0500 (EST)  
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To: gcameron@cc.UManitoba.CA  
Subject: Kecksburg information  
Content-Type: text  
Status: RO  
X-Status: A

Hello Grant,

I am sending this via AOL as our systems at the University of Pittsburgh shut down Sunday night for maintenance. The following is the information you requested. I can send you hard copy if you wish, which includes a national weather map with conditions, fronts, etc. I suppose you have a copy of the article discussing the incident which appeared in the December 10, 1965 issue of the Pittsburgh Press? If not, I can send you this as well.

\_\_How many universities are there in Pittsburgh?

Technically, there are three universities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Duquesne University  
University of Pittsburgh

There are also several colleges in the immediate Pittsburgh area:

Carlow College  
Community College of Allegheny County  
Chatham College  
La Roche College  
Point Park College  
Robert Morris College  
St. Francis College

\_\_Who was the President at the University of Pittsburgh in 1965?

After Litchfield, there was an interim Chancellor at Pitt, 1965-66 ---  
Stanton C. Crawford.

\_\_Time of sunset on December 9, 1965

From the Pittsburgh Press, December 9, 1965 -- 4:53 p.m.

\_\_Weather conditions on December 9, 1965

From the Pittsburgh Press, Thursday, December 9, 1965

"For period ending 8:30 am 12/10/65 ---Mostly sunny and mild this afternoon and Friday. Partly cloudy and mild tonight. High temperature in the city this afternoon 50. Low in the suburbs tonight 35. High Friday 52. Barometer reading at 3:00 pm 30.21, falling."

Detailed forecast for Western Pennsylvania: "Considerable cloudiness this morning becoming mostly sunny this afternoon and a little warmer. High today in the 40s except low 50s in extreme southwest. Variable cloudiness tonight and a little cooler, low 25 to 33. Friday, fair and not quite so warm.

Downtown temperature readings reported by the United States Weather Bureau:

1:00 p.m.	46
2:00 p.m.	47
3:00 p.m.	48

: p.m.

>From the Pittsburgh Press, Friday, December 10, 1965  
"Mostly cloudy and turning cooler today, high 36-46. Temperatures at  
Pittsburgh 24 hours ending at 7:30 a.m. today --- Highest 52, Lowest 40.  
Downtown temperature readings reported by the United States Weather Bureau:

Midnight	46
1:00 a.m.	45
2:00 a.m.	45
3:00 a.m.	43
4:00 a.m.	44
5:00 a.m.	44

created by the big hydrogen space bomb test held later in the Pacific hundreds of miles high.<sup>61</sup>

That notation is not in the Las Vegas file, but in the Utah file. And it suggests that radars in other parts of the country from New York to California tracked the object. The flight time, according to the Las Vegas sighting report, was thirty-two minutes, much too long for a meteor. A meteor would cross the United States much faster. And it means that the object, whatever it was, was not a meteor.

With the cases separated, the air force was able to deal with them piecemeal. The Utah case could become a bolide. Robert Kadesch, a scientist not involved with the UFO project at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base or the Foreign Technology Division, made a plausible witness. His statement, reported throughout the country, sounded good, when the testimony of the other witnesses is overlooked.

It is easy to accept the Air Force explanations of the case if they are taken as separate events. It is easy to believe that the Utah sightings were the result of a meteor, although the original investigators, Crouch and Brion, said that they had no explanation for the sightings.

This also reveals that the air force was not interested in investigation or solving riddles. They were interested in clearing cases, slapping a label on them and letting it go at that. We know it because they interviewed the Utah witnesses such as Bob Robinson and Floyd Evans. They interviewed a dozen witnesses, some of whom described the object and who said it was close to the ground.<sup>62</sup> They knew that power had been knocked out in Nephi but reported only that the light was so bright it affected the photoelectric cells in Eureka. They ignored the information that didn't fit with the bolide theory.

Something extremely extraordinary happened on the night of April 18, 1962. The air force offered a series of explanations ignoring the facts. But the witnesses who were there know the truth. They saw something from outer space, and it was not a meteor. It was a craft from another world.

*Kevin D. Rendle 1995  
Avon Books*



## DECEMBER 9, 1965: KECKSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

The events that took place at Kecksburg might be considered unique because of the circumstances that surrounded them. There is no question that something happened, and there is no question that the air force alerted the highly classified Project Moon Dust, and there is no question that controversy surrounds it all. Like much of the UFO crash/retrieval phenomenon, there are many questions and few answers.

It was late in the day, just before 5 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, on December 9, 1965, when a fireball flashed through the evening sky. It was seen first over Canada, then by thousands in Michigan and Ohio.<sup>1</sup> Over the northern edge of Ohio, near Cleveland, it might have made a slight turn, and then it headed southeast, toward Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

At 4:47 P.M., the object struck the ground southeast of Pittsburgh, near the small town of Kecksburg.<sup>3</sup> In its wake it had left thousands of stunned witnesses, and debris reported to have fallen from it started fires near Elyria, Ohio. Near Lapeer, Michigan, bits of metal rained down. Phone lines to sheriff's offices, police departments, and the news media were jammed as callers reported the sighting.<sup>4</sup>

Sometime after 6:30 P.M. Frances Kalp called radio station WHJB in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, where she talked to John Murphy, the news director.<sup>5</sup> Murphy was in the middle of a nightly news digest, but he interviewed her for the breaking story of the object.<sup>6</sup> She told him that the object or fireball had crashed into the woods near her home. Her children had

wanted to walk down to where her son said he'd seen "a star on fire." At first she gave permission, but then decided against it, following the children and calling them back.

Kalp caught the children about half a mile from the crash site. There was smoke climbing out of the trees, and there was a bright object off to one side. Kalp said that it was like "a four pointed star."<sup>7</sup>

Murphy thanked her for the information and then called Troop A of the Pennsylvania State Police, giving them the information. Within minutes, the state police tried to call Kalp, but her phone was busy. The operator broke in and advised Kalp that she had an emergency phone call from the state police.<sup>8</sup>

Kalp agreed to meet the police in nearby Kecksburg and lead them to the crash site.<sup>9</sup> While she was driving into Kecksburg, the County Emergency Center was activated, and about that time the volunteer fire fighters were searching the nearby woods.<sup>10</sup>

But Kalp wasn't the only person to see the object in the air. Bob Blystone Jr., who was fifteen in 1965, saw what he describes as an orange jet trail at low altitude.<sup>11</sup> Mary Keto, another local witness, saw a hovering fireball just above the treeline with blue smoke coming up.<sup>12</sup> Blystone said he saw the round object glide slowly toward the treetops in what he thought of as a controlled landing into the trees.

John Murphy, sensing a good story, drove down to the Kecksburg area. He was there when two state police cars and Kalp arrived. He also saw the state police fire marshal, in the company of a state investigator, walk into the woods carrying a yellow Geiger counter and flashlights. Murphy then interviewed Kalp and her sons in person.<sup>13</sup>

The two men who went into the woods, Carl Metz and Paul Shipco, returned about fifteen minutes later. Murphy sent one of the photographers with him to question the fire marshal. Metz told the photographer, "You'll have to talk to my lawyer."<sup>14</sup> Metz and Shipco then continued walking toward their car.

Murphy ran toward them and asked Metz, "Did you find anything down there?"

Metz, according to Murphy, looked puzzled and then said, "I'm not sure."

"Well," said Murphy, "let me ask my question a different way. After you make your report to the captain [Joseph Dussia of the Pennsylvania State Police], do you think that you or the captain may have something to tell me?"

"You'd better get your information from the army," responded Metz.<sup>15</sup>

Murphy, during a later radio broadcast, said, "Now this was the first time the name Army was brought into the conversation. This was the first time anyone had made any mention of the military. Now to me the significance of this was that the State Police fire marshal [Metz] examining the fire or the possibility of a fire, almost out of the clear blue sky is turning me over to the Army. This is very unusual."<sup>16</sup>

Now Murphy was confused. He didn't know if there was anything going on in the woods, if it was all some kind of mistake, or if there was a reason to pursue the story. He had about convinced himself to wrap it all up but then decided to call the state police in Greensburg. He spoke to Captain Dussia and asked if he should pack it in or stay on the scene a little while longer.

According to Murphy, "He advised me that maybe I'd be interested in coming into the barracks. By the time I get to the barracks perhaps he and the United States Army would have a joint statement to make. I questioned him about the Army and he said that he understood that members of the 662d Radar Squadron would be there [It must be noted that the radar squadron is an air force unit]."<sup>17</sup>

Murphy then drove to the state police Troop A barracks in nearby Greensburg. Murphy reported that when he arrived, there were "not only members of the United States Army here but I also saw two men in Air Force uniforms, one of them wearing lieutenant's bars."<sup>18</sup> The lieutenant, who was on the phone, told Murphy that he didn't know much. He was only a first lieutenant.

The significance here is that we have already identified more than three military people in the Greensburg area. Murphy reported that there were members—plural—of the army here, and two air force people. Skeptics would later claim

that only three military people arrived, but Murphy's statement seems to confirm that early on, more than three military personnel were on hand.

Before he talked to the military, Murphy found Captain Dussia and asked if Dussia could tell him anything "off the record."

Dussia replied, "Well, I'll give you something for the record. I have something official to tell you."

Murphy asked, "What's that?"

Dussia said, "The Pennsylvania State Police have made a thorough search of the woods. We are convinced there is nothing whatsoever in the woods."<sup>19</sup>

Murphy thanked him and went in search of a telephone to report the statement when he heard Metz and several others talk about going back out into the woods. While Murphy was telling the radio station how he wanted the story handled, Metz came back into the office and said that he was going back out with members of the military. When Murphy hung up, he asked if he could go with them, and Metz said, "Sure, if it's all right with the captain."

Murphy said, "I looked promptly to the captain and asked, 'Is it okay if I go with these people?'"

Dussia said, "Of course."<sup>20</sup>

As Murphy was leaving, he ran into a state police trooper who had just come from the woods. Although Murphy had been told, officially just minutes earlier that there was nothing out there, the state police trooper told him of a pulsating blue light seen in the woods. According to Murphy, "[T]he military wanted to see this pulsating light . . ."<sup>21</sup>

Back out near the reported crash site, Murphy walked over to the car driven by Metz and again asked, "Are you going down into the woods?"

When Metz nodded, Murphy said, "Me too."

Metz said, "No."

"I'm going too," repeated Murphy.

"No, I'm sorry," said Metz.

Murphy said, "Please. You have to let me go."

Metz was now "very firm. Very definite." He said, "No."

"But the understanding before we left the barracks was that

I was going to come out, that I was going into the woods. What do you mean I can't go into the woods?"

Again, according to Murphy, Metz looked very firm and said, very slowly but very definitely, "I'm sorry. No."

"That," according to Murphy, "was the last time I saw the military. This was the last time, to my knowledge, that any civilian had with the search. I was told not to go into the woods."<sup>22</sup>

What this means is that somewhere along the road between Greensburg and Kecksburg Metz received new instructions. They could have come over the radio from Dussia or they could have been issued by the military men in the car with Metz. Whatever the source, the result was the same. Murphy, on orders from the state police fire marshal, was denied access to the woods.

With the radio and television reporting that something had landed in the woods, the few dirt roads leading toward the crash site were soon choked with cars. A few managed to drive close to the impact area and saw that the state police had cordoned off a section of the woods. News media, both radio and television, were broadcasting from close to the site. A number of them were talking about an unidentified flying object crash in Westmoreland County. Like Murphy, none of the other reporters was allowed to enter the woods.

There were, however, other civilians who did. Stan Gordon, of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained (PASU), said that he'd interviewed a volunteer fire fighter, Jim Romansky, who had gotten deep into the woods before the military sealed off the area. In fact, according to Gordon, Romansky got down to the streambed where the object, not a meteorite according to his source, had first touched down. It cut a furrow in the streambed and came to rest in a hollow where it was partially concealed. From the roads leading into the area, it would be impossible to see.

Romansky approached it and saw that it was acorn-shaped, speculated that it was nine to twelve feet in diameter, and had a gold band around the bottom of it with writing on it. "There were no wings, motors, or a fuselage, as we know them," according to Romansky. The writing was described as like "ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics." But then, more importantly, he

had been in the woods began to leave. Word circulated that the suspected plane crash was nothing more than a meteorite. The object that came down was extraterrestrial, but of natural origin.

The next day the newspapers were filled with the story of the fireball that had caused so much trouble in the eastern United States.<sup>33</sup> There were pictures of two teenaged boys displaying rocks they had recovered. The newspaper identified the rocks as part of the meteorite.<sup>34</sup>

From Michigan came pictures of police officers holding up bits of metal that looked like thin, short strips of aluminum foil.<sup>35</sup> Air force spokesmen wrote that off as chaff from air force planes participating in one of the many training exercises they conducted.<sup>36</sup>

Lanny Tolly, a deputy in the Lapeer (Michigan) County sheriff's department, said that he found several handfuls of a foillike substance in the woods where witnesses had reported something had come down.<sup>37</sup> Analysis revealed that it was a common variety of household aluminum foil.<sup>38</sup>

Project Blue Book records show that someone called the air force to report the material. Rather than being silver, that report claims the material was gold in color, about one inch long and a sixteenth of an inch wide.<sup>39</sup>

On December 28, 1965, Eric T. Jonckhiere, the air force deputy for technology and subsystems at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, wrote to Lapeer sheriff Kenneth A. Parks, telling him that the material submitted was nothing more than radar chaff. According to the letter, "This material is dropped by aircraft to confuse radar complexes when participating in interdiction exercises. 'Chaff' can travel for many miles, depending on wind currents and wind velocities."<sup>40</sup>

The air force officers also made it clear they believed that it was a coincidence that the chaff began raining on Lapeer County about the time the fireball passed overhead. That seems to be a reasonable explanation. There certainly is no observed data to suggest that the chaff was related to the fireball other than that the two events happened at about the same time on the same day.

Near Elyria, twenty miles west of Cleveland, Ohio, fire fighters were called to extinguish fires started as debris of

some sort, possibly from the fireball, hit the ground. Mrs. Ralph Richards said she saw a fiery object about the size of a volleyball fall among some trees just before the small fires started.<sup>41</sup>

Fire fighters who responded to her calls said they had no trouble with the ten or twelve small grass fires that were burning. They reported finding nothing that could have caused the fires.

Near Livonia, Michigan, two boys discovered what they believed were "chunks of the meteor." Larry Jones and Brian Parent, both eleven, saw the object. "I looked up and saw a streak of red shoot through the air," said Parent.

Parent thought the object landed in a vacant field. Searching with Jones, he found a slightly smoking rock embedded in the ground. Parent was wearing leather gloves and was able to pick up several of the stones.

Both boys were photographed by the newspaper holding a stone on a piece of paper. They were quoted as saying, "If anyone asks us for them for testing, they can have them."<sup>42</sup> Apparently neither the air force nor any other governmental agency believed that any other tests were necessary because no one asked for samples of the stones.

Project Blue Book files also show that a picture of the object had been taken. In one of the "memos for the record," it is claimed that a photographer from Royal Oak, Michigan, "was able to take a picture . . . He also told the Dr. [?] that a search was made in [an] attempt to recover the object."<sup>43</sup> The Blue Book file does not explain what happened to the photograph or if it was ever submitted to Blue Book for analysis.

The photograph referred to, however, seems to be one taken by Richard P. Champine and published only a couple of months later (February 1966) in *Sky & Telescope*. It confirms the eyewitness accounts of the passing of the object or fireball.<sup>44</sup> Because there was a "train" associated with the fireball, that is, "ionized air" caused by the passing of the object, it is believed that this could account for the descriptions of the object that say it was hovering or landing. The evidence shown in the photograph and the eyewitness testimony is not inconsistent with a fireball.

Coast Guard officials in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, reported that a flying object had exploded over Detroit. Pilots in the area reported the flash and shock waves, which could be consistent with a bolide, a very bright meteor that is sometimes associated with a roaring sound or multiple detonations.<sup>45</sup>

The *Boston Record American* reported: ARMY, POLICE SEAL OFF WOODS IN UFO PROBE. A spokesman said that a "team of radar experts from the 662 Radar Squadron here said, 'We don't know what we have yet.'"

Other newspapers carried nothing other than the reports of the fireball seen by thousands. Dr. William P. Bidelman, an astronomer at the University of Michigan, was quoted in dozens of newspapers. "It was undoubtedly a fireball," he said.<sup>46</sup>

Bidelman, who didn't see it, was joined by other astronomers who didn't see it. In New York, Dr. Fred C. Hess, associate astronomer at the Hayden Planetarium, said that it was undoubtedly a large meteor that blew up, scattering fragments.<sup>47</sup>

Dr. Nicholas Wagman, an astronomer at the Allegheny Observatory, said that the object was not part of the Geminid meteor shower visible at that time of year because the Geminid meteors are not very bright.<sup>48</sup> That didn't mean it wasn't a meteor, just not one associated with a specific shower.

And the air force said that it was not an aircraft or a missile and that all space debris was accounted for.<sup>49</sup> To the air force, it meant that whatever it was, it had to be a meteorite. No other explanation seemed to fit.

Other witnesses to the event began to come forward. Some of them described the flight of the object, others described the scene in Kecksburg. Both groups added to the data being circulated about the events.

One witness said that the object, as it came down, was engulfed in flames. Although there was very little smoke, the flames were bright orange, yellow, and white.<sup>50</sup> A few heard a rumbling sound that the astronomers explained was a common occurrence with a large, bright meteor.

Ivan T. Sanderson, a naturalist interested in UFOs, in a report to the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) that he marked confidential (though he

submitted it for publication elsewhere), said that he had spoken to a number of officers on various police desks and tried to get additional information from the UPI and the Associated Press. According to Sanderson, he calculated the speed of the object at a little over a thousand miles an hour, much too slow for even the slowest of meteors. And even if Sanderson's calculations were off by a factor of ten, the object would still be flying at only ten thousand miles an hour, slower than the slowest speed ever recorded for a meteor.<sup>51</sup> All this is if Sanderson's calculations of the speed are accurate, and there is some evidence that his calculations were based on faulty assumptions.<sup>52</sup>

The military, however, had found an answer that worked and continued to push it. The official explanation in the Project Blue Book files was "Astro (meteor)."<sup>53</sup> In a dozen or so memos for the record, the Blue Book staff repeated that the state police had searched the area but found nothing during their search.<sup>54</sup>

Part of the state police failure to locate anything was confirmed by Dr. Robert Murray and a couple of his students interested in UFOs. When they heard the reports on the radio, they left their eastern Ohio college about 10 P.M., driving into the Kecksburg area. According to them, when they arrived, about four in the morning, there was nothing to see. No military around the Kecksburg volunteer fire department, no sightseers along the roads, and no evidence of a crash of anything anywhere. They finally gave up about seven or eight A.M. and returned to their college.<sup>55</sup>

But there were hints of something going on behind the scenes. Even if the eyewitness accounts of a military presence were discounted and the report of a flatbed truck under escort leaving at high speed was ignored, some kind of an event could still be documented.

The original teletype message of the news services proves that. The search, according to the documents, got under way after seven Kecksburg residents reported the smoldering object crashed to earth.<sup>56</sup>

"There's definitely something down there," said a state trooper who, according to the documentation, saw a light partially hidden by the trees.<sup>57</sup>

The most interesting report came from Lieutenant Steven Paquette, who said that he had been ordered to participate in the search even though he was stationed in New Hampton, Massachusetts. Paquette said, "From what I've heard, the Air Force Department in Washington is supposed to release something in the morning."<sup>58</sup>

There is no evidence that Paquette ever traveled to Pennsylvania, and it seems unlikely that an officer in Massachusetts would be ordered in, unless he was part of a special unit or had some sort of special training or expertise. That seems to be the case here.

There were others who reported armed military men. Stan Gordon interviewed a family who said their home was invaded by air force officers who were armed and who were wearing rubber gloves.<sup>59</sup> The family reported they had seen a large truck close to the crash site and that something was loaded on it. That, of course, confirmed the stories told by the sightseers who had rushed into the area.<sup>60</sup>

Project Blue Book files do confirm that military men were in the area. According to a handwritten log, Major Livers, Detroit Air Defense Sector, received reports from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Livers called "Major Hector Quintanilla [Project Blue Book commander] for his advice and assistance. He came to the base and called Major Livers. A further call was made to the Oakdale Radar Site in Pennsylvania. A *three man team* [emphasis added] has been dispatched to Acme [Kecksburg] to investigate and picked up an object that started a fire."<sup>61</sup>

Other records from Blue Book say that "Lieutenant Cashman said that the search ended about 0200. They searched with the State Police. They could not find anything. They do not plan on going out again. The news media, etc. stopped calling about 1 o'clock."<sup>62</sup>

All this meant that the people who claimed to have seen military men at the site were correct. Although Blue Book talks about a three-man team being dispatched, which was assumed by others to have come from the Oakdale Radar Site, there were apparently others from other areas involved. Lieutenant Paquette, for example, was in Massachusetts when he was alerted.

That three-man team, however, is the one of the most interesting aspects of this report. In the mid-1960s, and into the 1980s, the U.S. government operated a secret project known as Moon Dust. This, according to documents recovered through the Freedom of Information Act by Clifford Stone, a researcher in Roswell, New Mexico, and Robert Todd, a researcher in Pennsylvania, was an official government project that was "used in cases involving the examination of non-US space objects or objects of unknown origin."<sup>63</sup>

According to the official Department of the Air Force document, dated November 3, 1961, Moon Dust "teams are comprised of three men each, to include a linguist, a tech man, and an ops man. All are airborne qualified . . ."<sup>64</sup>

The document also says:

Peacetime employment of AFCIN intelligence team capability is provided for in UFO investigation (AFR 200-2) and in support of Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) Foreign Technology Division (FTD) Projects Moon Dust and Blue Fly. These three peacetime projects all involve a potential for employment of qualified field intelligence personnel on a quick reaction basis to recover or perform field exploitation of unidentified flying objects, or known Soviet/Bloc aerospace vehicles, weapons systems, and/or residual components of such equipment . . .<sup>65</sup>

The document, although four years old by the time of the Kecksburg event, said:

Manning of the intelligence teams from those sources has now reached the point of diminishing returns. Only 21 qualified intelligence team personnel are now assigned, and of those approximately half are scheduled for PCS [permanent change of station] departure from the organization during the next 12 months. There is no forecast input of previously qualified personnel.<sup>66</sup>

What this means is that there were only seven qualified teams through the air force. They could all have been de-

ployed to bases inside the United States, or they could have been split among the bases inside the United States to other air force bases around the world. Either way there were not many of them, which might explain why Paquette was alerted in Massachusetts. He could have been a member of a Moon Dust team and been the closest one available to Kecksburg.

The obvious conclusion is that Moon Dust was activated for the Kecksburg event. It means that the military, with its sophisticated radar and sky surveillance, believed that something was down in the Kecksburg area. And, because there were no sightings south of that area, it is reasonable to believe that the object, whatever it was, ended its journey there.

Although, the documents recovered by Todd under the Freedom of Information Act suggest that Moon Dust and Blue Fly no longer exist, it is only because the names were changed once they were compromised. According to an air force letter received by Todd, "The nickname 'Project Moon Dust' no longer exists officially. It *has been replaced by another name which is not releasable* [emphasis added]."<sup>67</sup>

Controversy about the Kecksburg event wasn't limited to the military role or what had fallen into the woods. The town, it seems, was split by those who believed that the whole story of an object in the woods was a hoax and those who had seen something they considered mysterious. Robert Young, a researcher living in the area, has spent years studying the events and believes the official statements: that the object seen in the sky was a bolide, and that no object was found on the ground. He has said, repeatedly, that the Kecksburg event—that is, a flying saucer crash—"appears never to have happened."<sup>68</sup> In a 1991 paper, he wrote that "the sole witnesses to the saucer crash apparently were two eight-year-old children who were among the thousands in nine states and Canada to witness a bolide (exploding) meteor."<sup>69</sup>

The controversy heated when "Unsolved Mysteries" decided to air a segment about Kecksburg. The trouble began in 1990 when the TV crews descended on the tiny community to begin filming. According to an article by David Templeton in the *Pittsburgh Press*, called "The Uninvited," "The show, which accurately detailed eyewitness accounts, turned quiet opinions into political philosophies, pitting true believers

against certified skeptics. Feuds broke out between relatives, neighbors and community leaders."<sup>70</sup>

Robert Bitner, who witnessed some of the military activity, is convinced, according to the article, that something happened. His brother-in-law, Carl Porch, hasn't spoken to him since the film crews arrived and was one of those who tried to block the "Unsolved Mysteries" broadcast with a petition. Porch insists that it's all a hoax.<sup>71</sup>

Porch is joined by Charles Hilland, who lives near the crash site. Hilland said that nothing happened.<sup>72</sup> Hilland was another of those who tried to stop the broadcast.

In fact, the petition was signed by forty-five residents of the area who either owned land near the crash site or had been out along Meteor Road on December 9, 1965. While it has been suggested that the people were upset by the fact the Kecksburg crash was going to be portrayed on television, the petition actually concerns

much harassment and endangered the health and welfare of our residents. The curiosity seekers wanting to see the landing site, are leaving empty cans, bottles and other debris, also using private buildings as restrooms. If this show goes nationwide many more people will want to see this so called landing site and cause more confusion.<sup>73</sup>

In the last section of the petition, they write:

Many people saw something in the sky, but no one has evidence of it landing. We beg of you to please talk to our property owners in the questioned landing site, who have no knowledge of any type of object landing. We feel that the story has been blown out of reasonable explanation. The authorities of 1965 insisted that they found nothing and we concur.<sup>74</sup>

The main thrust of the petition seems to be to keep people out of the area. They are concerned about damage to their property, and rightly so. A secondary consideration, though one that can't be overlooked, is their belief that nothing was

recovered. The authorities said that nothing was recovered, and they hadn't seen anything recovered.

It should be made clear that many of those who signed the petition have no firsthand knowledge of the events. They talked to friends or family but were not physically present when anything happened. Don Scott, for example, said that he wasn't in Kecksburg and had heard about it from his mother. He signed the petition because he was concerned about outsiders trespassing on private property.<sup>75</sup>

One man said that he knew many of the fire fighters but on the night of the crash, he wasn't in Kecksburg. Two days later he arrived at the firehouse, but the events were over. He did acknowledge that military officials had been present the Thursday before. But he also said that the story was nothing more than "bullshit."<sup>76</sup>

To counter that point is other eyewitness testimony that tells of something found and taken out on a flatbed truck, covered with a tarp.<sup>77</sup> It is eyewitness testimony that the skeptics are quick to reject simply because it does not fit into their view of the events of December 9, 1965.

Young, in his reports, writes that the official and scientific explanation is a meteor. He reports that astronomers from Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, the American Meteor Society, and the National Research Council of Canada have concluded the object was a bright meteor.

The late astronomer Von Del Chamberlin, then of the Abrams Planetarium, East Lansing, Michigan, concluded after analyzing more than one hundred written reports that the fireball occurred about 4:44 P.M., lasted for about four seconds and appeared brighter (about visual magnitude -15) than the full moon.<sup>78</sup>

G. W. Wetherill, a geophysics and geology professor at UCLA in Los Angeles:

reported that he had personally located and interviewed many witnesses and studied twenty-three reports received by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) from pilots, many of

whom thought an airliner was down. He concluded from witnesses on the south shore of Lake Erie who saw the object to the north that no impact occurred south of the lake, and that the object burst apart and disappeared some miles over the western end of the lake. He decided that the steep trajectory reported by the witnesses indicated that the fireball had an extraterrestrial (meaning meteoric) origin and was not a returning orbital spacecraft.<sup>79</sup>

There had been discussions that the object that fell at Kecksburg was, in fact, the returning Russian Kosmos 96, a malfunctioning Soviet Venus probe. The Foreign Technology Division of the air force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base denied that there was a record of such a retrieval. The Soviet Embassy, according to Templeton, said that the crash was not part of the Kosmos 96. And Stan Gordon said that the U. S. Space Command showed that Kosmos 96 reentered about thirteen hours before the events at Kecksburg.<sup>80</sup> While it is true that Moon Dust would be activated to retrieve the craft if it was of Soviet design and manufacture, there is no evidence that whatever fell was the Soviet spacecraft. The evidence available suggests that Kosmos 96 crashed in Canada at 3:18 A.M.<sup>81</sup>

James Oberg, writing in *Omni*, reevaluated the Kosmos 96 explanation. According to Oberg, "By going on a hunch and tapping my own expertise in space operation and satellite sleuthing," he changed his mind. Oberg said that what had reentered earlier was not the Kosmos 96 itself, but could have been a jettisoned rocket stage or a large piece of space junk. The probe itself," according to Oberg, "could have been headed off toward Kecksburg."<sup>82</sup>

Other reports suggest that a misfire of a missile launched on that day from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California might have been responsible, but again, no evidence of this has ever been found. The trajectory of the object suggests something else.

That returned the area of speculation to a bolide. Frank Drake, an astronomer, said that eyewitness reports of bolides are typically inaccurate. He pointed out that, in his experi-

ence, the percentage of witnesses who are wrong about something is one-half after a day, three-quarters after two days, and about ninety percent after four days. Beyond that, Drake believed that the reports were more fantasy than fact. According to Drake, witnesses often grossly underestimate the distance of fireballs, which may be dozens of miles high. When the meteors disappear over the horizon, witnesses sometimes believe that the event was nearby.<sup>83</sup>

Robert Kadesch, an astronomer in Utah, pointed out that people looking up into the sky often had no points of reference. Because of that, it was difficult for them properly to judge height and distance.<sup>84</sup> That was for an object high in the sky and at a great distance. For those who saw it closer to the ground, with points of reference, their ability to judge the size and distance improved markedly.

Young, in his analysis of the case, reported that there were published accounts that the object, whatever it was, had crashed or landed in seventeen widely scattered areas. He writes:

Over Lake Erie a pilot reported watching as it "plummeted" into the lake. At Midland, PA, west of Pittsburgh, falling debris were reported but police found nothing. Nearby, other "falls" were reported in Patterson and Chippewa Townships, near Beaver Falls, PA. In one, a boy saw a "big ball of fire fall into the woods and the woods are smoking"; in the other, two boys thought the object landed and was smoking in a field. Nothing was reported found except some broken tree limbs, one of which appeared to have been cut with a saw.<sup>85</sup>

Young continues:

At Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio, a woman reported a "volley ball" sized fireball fell into a wooded lot. Firemen reported ten small grass fires . . . at Elyria, boys found slag-like fragments but there was nothing to link them to the meteor . . . near Cleveland, a boy reported a flaming object fell out of the sky into some woods . . . Two 11-year-old boys at Livonia, Michigan, reported picking up a piece of light-weight, grayish, fused metal the size of a baseball which they said had

fallen into a field . . . At Lapeer, Michigan, 40 miles north of Detroit, Sheriff's officers investigating the report of "a fireball crashing" found only pieces of foil . . . he said he did not know whether the foil had any connection to the fireball . . .<sup>86</sup>

The suggestion being made is that all these other cases are based on the false impressions of the various witnesses. If such is the case, then isn't it reasonable to assume that those near Kecksburg made similar mistakes when they claimed that the fireball had landed in the woods near Kecksburg?

But more importantly, it was at Kecksburg that the only recovery operation was mounted. The state police, the state police fire marshal, unidentified civilian officials, and military officers appeared, apparently interested in something in the woods.<sup>87</sup> At all those other locations, there was no real response by the government. That, in and of itself, is significant and underscores the difference between what happened at those other locations and what was happening at Kecksburg. Those other reports are irrelevant.

Young also writes about the photograph taken by Champine published in *Sky & Telescope*:

This quarter century-old published photograph provides dramatic and *irrefutable* [emphasis added] support for the accounts of the eyewitnesses. It also provides a clear-cut, prosaic explanation for the "hovering" and "landing" now alleged to be reported by "new" unnamed [in fairness it must be pointed out that Young's statement was written before the names of many of these witnesses had been revealed] witnesses . . . [It] is necessary to explain this photograph and the eyewitness accounts that support it—including the Kecksburg witnesses.<sup>88</sup>

And, although Young might not like it, there is an alternative explanation for the bolide. Northrop Aircraft began experimenting in the mid-1960s with electrostatic shock. They wanted to charge the air around an aircraft with a positive charge, and the airplane itself with a negative charge. Their experimentation suggested that this could reduce or eliminate

the sonic boom. It would also, according to the experimental data, make the craft flying through the air "look like a comet."<sup>89</sup> In other words, a fiery craft with a long, ionized trail strung out behind it.

While it is true that Young raises a number of fair questions and proposes a number of good points in his counterarguments, he also falls into the same trap as many believers. He is so enthusiastic for his own position that he ignores, in some cases, the evidence that doesn't support him, or draws conclusions not warranted by the established facts.

In an article published in the *Skeptical Inquirer*, Young claims:

According to all original published accounts, the sole witnesses to the saucer crash apparently were two eight-year-old children who were among the thousands in nine states and Canada to view a bolide . . . Add to this a gullible local flying-saucer buff who has finally found "his own" thrilling flying-saucer crash to investigate . . .<sup>90</sup>

But the truth, as developed through the documentation, is that Young hasn't reviewed all the evidence. Murphy's radio broadcast reveals that there was more than just the story of two eight-year-old boys. Testimony recorded by Murphy showed that others were talking of something tangible in the woods within hours of the reports of the crash.<sup>91</sup> The UFO buff—probably Stan Gordon—had little to do with the story. It was the testimony of those involved and the contradictory statements by the state police, military, and other officials that kept the story alive. To suggest otherwise is not a fair statement.

Gordon, in his research, managed to obtain the records for the 662 Radar Squadron through the Freedom of Information Act. For the crucial December 9 date there was no entry. Gordon asked, "How could so much equipment and personnel be activated, yet the log showed that they were not involved in any activity on the date of the incident?"<sup>92</sup>

Captain Dussia in his statements said that nothing was

found, and "Reports of something carried from the area only referred to equipment used in the search."<sup>93</sup>

So Gordon is right that equipment was involved in the search. He is right that military personnel were activated, based on official records, and he is right that the area of the woods had been searched.

Young, however, disagrees that there is anything significant about the lack of a record for the 662 Radar Squadron on the night of December 9. He writes, "It is unlikely that Air Force units have listed each and every wild goose chase due to a mistaken UFO report in their unit histories."<sup>94</sup>

But Young is wrong. It wasn't a unit history, but the command post log. And this is precisely the sort of event that would be listed in the log simply because it is out of the ordinary. That is the purpose of the logs.<sup>95</sup> Other unit logs available through the National Archives show that the events of December 9 were noted.<sup>96</sup> Young's assumption about the logs is without merit.

What we are left with is an enigma. It seems there is very good evidence to suggest that the object observed was a bolide. The characteristics it exhibited are consistent with that belief. Suggestions by Ivan Sanderson, for example, that the object made a slight turn, seem to be the result of the false assumption that the debris picked up in various locations came from the object. There is no evidence connecting the flight of the object (or the fall of the object) with the debris from Lapeer, Michigan, or from the area near Livonia, Michigan. The path of the object, as best described by the eyewitnesses, is a straight line, consistent with a meteor.

The problem arises when the Kecksburg end is plugged into the equation. Young dismisses the testimony of the eyewitnesses to an object on the ground in the woods by citing them as "the 24-year old recollections of local citizens, and the recent materialization of 'new' witnesses."<sup>97</sup>

Young accepts the testimony of those calling it a hoax, and rejects that of those who say that something was recovered from the woods, suggesting in his 1991 report, "Some residents have blamed two local men whose story of a copper-colored, 12 by 7 foot 'acorn-shaped' object with 'hieroglyphic' markings surfaced only a couple of months be-

fore [the 'Unsolved Mysteries' program], almost a quarter of a century after the original publicity."<sup>98</sup>

The truth is, Gordon had presented the testimony of one man in the fourth quarter 1987 issue of *Pursuit*. While having it printed in a magazine does nothing to validate the testimony, it shows that the data were circulating years before the "Unsolved Mysteries" filming and broadcast and not only for the months as claimed by Young.

To be fair to Young, it is also necessary to point out that the testimony of Jim Romansky is, in fact, highly questionable. According to the July 28, 1966 *Kecksburg Tribune-Review* "James R. Romansky, the 20-year-old Latrobe man convicted of robbing Latrobe's Mellon National Bank . . . earlier this year, was sentenced . . . to serve from four to six years in prison."

That certainly hurt Romansky's credibility. However, his troubles with the law weren't over. The March 1, 1994 *Tribune-Review* reported that "following yesterday's preliminary hearing, [Derry area district justice Mark] Bilik ruled there was sufficient evidence to hold [James R.] Romansky for trial on charges of rape, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault and terrorist threats." While none of this proves that Romansky lied about his involvement in the Kecksburg crash/retrieval, it ruins his credibility, and his testimony must be considered in the light of these revelations.

There is good evidence that the discussion of an object in the woods had been going on since December 1965. Murphy, in the radio program he aired just days after the events, reported that there were those who had seen an object in the woods. He found that some people were afraid to talk about it in 1965.<sup>99</sup>

Young, on the other hand, showed that some people, in their support of the Kecksburg crash, have misinterpreted the information as well. During the TV program "Sightings," Romansky said: "The Freedom of Information Act states there was 212 military personnel here that night."<sup>100</sup> Young points out that information would be released through the act, but the act itself governs the procedures for release of governmental data and does not reflect what is contained in those data. And, although the records recovered show that the 662

Radar Squadron had 212 people assigned on December 9, it is doubtful that all of them would have been deployed to the Kecksburg area even if the unit had been activated.

There is evidence that three military people, assigned as part of Project Moon Dust, were activated for the retrieval.<sup>101</sup> We could say that the military is not in the habit of activating highly trained intelligence personnel to recover what might be the remains of a meteorite, but that would be speculation. The activation suggests, only suggests, that something was known to be down and a team was sent to recover it. This doesn't mean that only three military people were there, just that there is documentation for those three. (Murphy's statements on the radio just days after the event confirm more than three military people, from both the army and air force, were in the Kecksburg area.) Even if no other orders went out, there would be support people—pilots, for example—who would accompany them.

Oberg's theory of the reentry of the Kosmos 96 is also at odds with Young's report. Young has suggested repeatedly that nothing fell in the woods. Oberg claims that it was Kosmos 96, not a spacecraft from another world but a spacecraft nonetheless.<sup>102</sup> Oberg believes that something did fall at Kecksburg, and Kosmos 96 would have required the activation of Project Moon Dust.

Young also disputes the claim that there were armed military personnel in the Kecksburg area. He writes: "None of the many articles published in 1965 described armed troops at Kecksburg. Proponents of the 'Unsolved Mysteries' version of events must show that Army or Navy National Guard military police were present."<sup>103</sup>

Although he is correct that none of the newspaper articles mention armed military personnel, it could be that the various reporters didn't bother with the detail simply because it seemed to be redundant. There are no mentions of armed state troopers, but those men were armed.

Documentation available through the Freedom of Information Act removes this complaint of no armed men from the realm of speculation. One of the documents uncovered in the search for Moon Dust and Blue Fly material addresses the problem of armed soldiers. Discovered on Micro Film

#31,641 from the U. S. Air Force Historical Research Center (USAFHRC) at Maxwell Air Force Base was a report that discussed "Financing the Operation." According to it, "In the Cuban crisis no effort was spared in supplying the BLUE FLY team with normal supply items (e.g. B-4 bags and .45 calibre automatics)."<sup>104</sup> In other words, a historic precedence for armed teams for Moon Dust/Blue Fly had been established. It means that similarly armed teams might have been sent into Kecksburg.

What we know is that both the skeptic and the believer have resorted to overstating the case. There are questions that both sides must answer before a final and definite conclusion can be drawn.

Here is what is known. Something entered the atmosphere about 4:44 P.M. on December 9. Some eyewitness testimony, and a photograph, suggest the object was nothing more complicated than a bolide. Since bolides are a rare phenomenon, and because it was early evening, thousands saw it but were unable to identify it correctly.

Meteors enter the atmosphere on a daily basis. Few of them are large enough to light up the sky, and fewer still reach the ground before they burn up. Air Force spokesmen often claim that meteors don't show up on radar though the ionized trail they leave behind can. With recently-developed radars that can be set to discriminate between natural and manufactured objects, that can be set to detect rain showers, thunderstorms, or the turbulence in them, or to see and track objects in orbit, it is likely that NORAD in Colorado Springs, as well as the operators in Oakdale knew what they were tracking. They would never have seen a meteor.

Within two hours of the impact, according to some witnesses, the military had arrived in sufficient force to take over the fire department. They had brought in radios, telephones, and other equipment. And they were making preparations to enter the woods, though the state police claimed there was nothing to be seen, and Dussia made statements the next day that nothing had been found.

Within eight hours, around one o'clock, according to some of the witnesses, a flatbed truck with a tarp covering its cargo

was seen leaving the area at high speed. Ten-year-old Hays, among others, claimed to have witnessed this.

Within eleven hours of the impact, the military presence was no longer easily visible and, in fact, almost all activity had ended. By the time Murray and his students arrived, the town was quiet and everyone had gone home. Although they drove some of the back roads, searching for anything out of the ordinary, they saw no sightseers, no military or state police.

Within twenty-four hours almost all military presence was gone but their orders were still being obeyed. Kalp and her children were under bombardment by the news media for interviews, but military officers had already talked to her. Although the military was telling most people that a meteorite had hit the ground, one man—possibly military—supposedly told Kalp it was one of our Gemini spacecraft that had somehow "been expelled in the area."<sup>105</sup>

John Murphy, news director of WHJB radio and one of the first civilians on the scene, put together a news special containing interviews with a number of witnesses, including Kalp. Just before the program was to be aired, some the witnesses called and told Murphy they didn't want their names or their voices broadcast. They told him that they feared reprisals from either the military or the state police. Murphy was forced to air a watered-down version of the broadcast. Without the authentication of his report the interviews would have provided, the program was less believable. Murphy hinted that someone had put pressure on the witnesses not to talk about what they'd seen or done.

Newspaper reporter Templeton took it further in his 1991 article, reporting that "whole sections were edited out after eyewitnesses withdrew their stories in fear of police or military retaliation." Murphy did report that people saw flashing lights, and the military placed an object into a "cement-lined drum."<sup>106</sup>

Bonnie Millslagle, Murphy's wife in 1965 (Murphy was killed years later in an unrelated automobile accident), said that he was convinced that the object that fell was not a meteor and was not something from Earth. In fact, she said that he had gotten down into the crash area before anyone else

with a camera.<sup>107</sup> After photographing the object and making taped notes, he climbed out of the impact site, where he was met by military officers. The military officers or the state police confiscated the film in his camera and the tape in his recorder.<sup>108</sup> It was clear to her that Murphy had seen something in the crater and had taken pictures of it.

In the weeks that followed, she said that his attitude changed. At first he had been convinced that this was a big story that the government was attempting to suppress. Later, he talked about it less frequently. She thought that someone had said something to him in the days after the event. She was sure that it was the military, though Murphy said nothing to her about that.<sup>109</sup>

Adam Lynch, working for KDKA-TV in 1965, on the other hand, saw nothing, except the military and the people. He returned to the station after the announcement that it was nothing more than a meteorite.

Within a week, the incident had been forgotten outside of the Kecksburg area. Hundreds of newspapers had carried the air force explanation for the event.

Like so many of the UFO crash reports, nothing concrete can be said. It seems reasonable to accept the military and official answer that the sighting was the result of a bolide, but to do that, too much eyewitness testimony has to be discarded. If it weren't for the number of people who claim to have seen something on the ground, who witnessed part of the retrieval; if not for the use of Moon Dust, it could be said that this was a case of mistaken identity. However, a part of the case can't be thrown out because it is hard to explain. Until all the facts are known, the case must remain open.



## THE MAJESTIC-TWELVE HOAX

**A** belief began with the first flying saucer sighting in 1947 that the United States government, specifically the air force, was secretly investigating UFOs. There were those who thought that the government knew much more than it was telling, and that if civilian ufologists could find the right information; they could prove that they were right. The Majestic-Twelve, or MJ-12, document seemed to be the smoking gun for which researchers had been praying.

According to the document, released in 1987 by UFO researcher William L. Moore and his friend Jaime Shandera, a secret project began on July 7, 1947, to recover and exploit the find of an alien spacecraft discovered in central New Mexico.<sup>1</sup> The instant the document surfaced, the fight began, with everyone lining up with an opinion.

The controversy, for the most part, has centered around the documents rather than the information contained in them. Skeptics, for example, have pointed out that the dating format inside the text, zero, day, month, comma, year (07 July, 1947), is not exactly the format used by the military in that time frame.<sup>2</sup> Neither the comma nor the zero are part of that normal format.

Stan Friedman, a proponent of the MJ-12, claims to have found dozens of other documents in various archives that contain the unnecessary comma.<sup>3</sup> He presents these, as if they somehow validate the MJ-12 document.

But Friedman, and Moore, refuse to understand the subtlety of the situation. This was a report prepared, according to the document itself, by one military officer for a president-