

ALSO FLIES OWN!

By RUFUS DRAKE

Editor's Note:

Rufus Drake has reported on the UFO scene to national publications for 10 years. A pilot and Air Force veteran, at ease in the Washington bureaucracy, Drake set out to follow up the reference in our first issue to Air Force flight tests of a captured flying saucer. Here, he unfolds the story behind this long-standing rumor.

Is the rumor true? Or isn't it? Much in this thought-provoking account is based on speculation and hypothesis. The views expressed are those of the writer. We encourage comment and criticism.

I was within 500 yards of the guarded warehouse at Nellis Air Force Base when a guard stopped me. He was in battle gear and his M-16 rifle was persuasive. After some discussion, the guard agreed that I had a "right" to be on the base but explained that I must have taken a wrong turn, since the Armed Forces Day open house was being held several miles away. I was in a restricted area, he said, and would have to turn around. Sadly, I peered over his shoulder at the fenced-in, unmarked, low-slung building, knowing this was as close as I would ever get to it.

When the editors of *Ideal's UFO Magazine* asked me to check into reports that the Air Force had test-flown a captured saucer, neither they nor I expected to get an actual glimpse at it. We had heard that the alien space ship had been recovered and tested almost a quarter century ago, but did not even know if it was still in existence. After months of prowling in the Pentagon and at the Nellis base adjacent to Las Vegas, I became convinced that the saucer is still being stored in that warehouse. Some day, perhaps, the Air Force will open the doors of that plain, drab building and reveal to the world one of the best-kept secrets of all time.

Until then, many of the people who contributed to the story which follows must remain unnamed. Gaps in the story must be left vacant. And the reader will have to judge for himself how much weight to put on each detail. The editors present this account with the understanding that much of it is based upon rumor and hearsay, and that none of it can be "proven" under generally accepted rules of evidence, for obvious reasons.

With those limits stated clearly "up front," here are the main conclusions I reached in several months of research, after more than 100 interviews with persons having inside knowledge:

● During the big "UFO flap" of 1952, the largest this country has seen, the Air Force captured a saucer, rebuilt it using earthly technology, and later test-flew it several times. For reasons unknown, the tests were halted and the saucer placed in storage until 1974, when the craft was again rebuilt and flown.

● To divert attention from this project, and to provide an "explanation" for a saucer winging over its test base, the Air Force ordered and built a man-made saucer aircraft, the Avro VZ-9, even though Army experts warned that the VZ-9 was a waste of money.

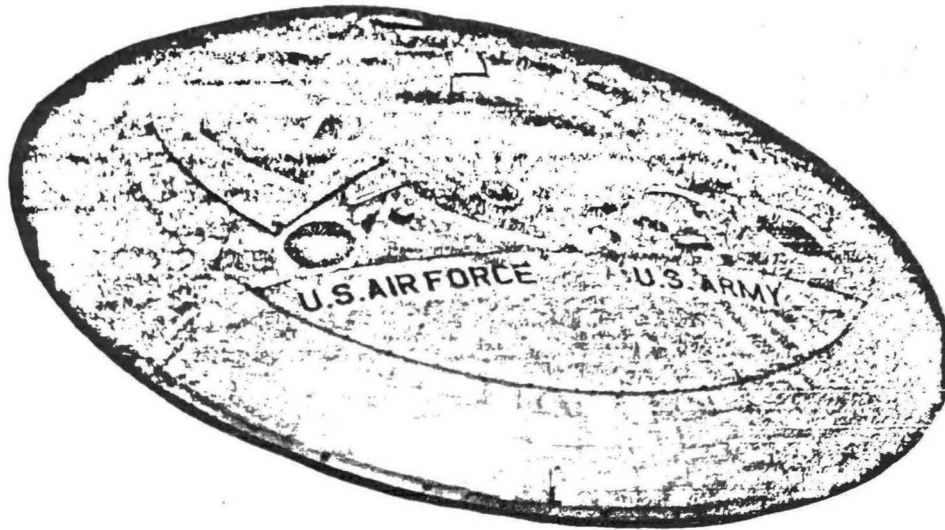
● When it publicly abandoned UFO research in 1969, the Air Force also dismantled a top-secret corps of scientists and technicians who were working frantically to contact aliens from space. This was done, but a modest, under-budgeted clandestine effort was continued, long after the Air Force had physical evidence that alien ships were operating in our skies.

It all began that summer of 1952, while radar operators at Washington National Airport tracked UFOs in waves. F-94 jets scrambled against them, and saucer sightings filled the nation's headlines. Lt. Col. William "Bull" Anderson is one of the few airmen who would permit the use of his name in this account. Now retired, Anderson was flying an F-94 from Andrews AFB, Maryland, when his ground controller diverted him with an SOS message reporting a crash in the Virginia tidewater region. One of several pilots asked to check the crash report, he arrived on the scene high above a strange wreck in a remote swamp. *background*

"I circled overhead at 1,000 feet and looked down at a saucer-shaped craft which had burrowed into a mud flat and partially disintegrated, after knocking over several trees on its way in. There were signs of activity around the wreck, impressions in the mud, and apparent scorch marks. Yet according to the radio traffic, rescue teams had not arrived yet. I was told that the area was being sealed off and that teams were en route by helicopter. Low on fuel, I was also told that they didn't need my help, after all."

A quarter century later, Anderson could not remember the exact location or the name of the nearest town. Another Air Force officer recalls a flurry of activity at Andrews AFB; messages being passed, security guards being alerted, and helicopters coming and going. Apparently, chopper crews retrieved the saucer only to find that its crew had already been pulled out, by an identical saucer seen on radar at the crash site before aircraft arrived. A source who cannot be named claims that helicopters brought the saucer to a guarded hangar at Andrews and that ground crews scoured the crash site for days afterward, recovering debris and detecting signs of radioactivity. *- Anything clarified*
- no bodies what sank

continued on page 24



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Rumors were rife, during this period, that a saucer had been captured. A secretary then assigned to the Air Force's Aeronautical Chart and Information Service, in Room 1 E 394 in the Pentagon, confirms that there was a "rush order" to develop film, which had to be filled by an employee having the highest security clearance. Published reports confirm that President Truman ordered top-secret military briefings of the two presidential candidates, Adlai Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower. At the Nellis test base in Nevada, a team of Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) personnel was hastily thrown together to receive a new piece of equipment.

Aviation writer Jerome B. Candless was covering the Washington scene then, and remembers seeing through the Air Force's cover story. "A Polish pilot, Franciszek Jarecki, had escaped and landed on the Danish island of Bornholm in a MIG-15 jet fighter. Our boys were fighting MIGs in Korea then, and the first MIG ever seen in the West was considered a 'big catch.' When a hush-hush team of 200 people was thrown together at the Nevada base, the casinos in Las Vegas were buzzing with the story that they were going to test Jarecki's plane. The only trouble was, for political reasons the Danes quietly returned the MIG to Poland, and reporters found out about it."

A member of the ATIC team at Nellis, assured of anonymity, gave me this description of what the "Polish MIG" looked like when it arrived from the East Coast in April 1953:

"It was a perfect saucer, 30.3 feet in diameter, with thickness ranging from one foot around its circumference to nine feet at its center. It had a raised cockpit similar to that of a fighter plane and an enclosed area beneath, five by five by seven feet. Its propulsion system had been totally destroyed and most of the instrumentation and wiring, although involving familiar materials, was almost incomprehensible. No one ever seriously believed this was an interstellar star ship. The feeling was, it was a small craft designed to operate from a mother ship in orbit around the Earth. Judging from its dimensions, and from the battered wreckage of acceleration couches, it was designed to carry two crew members, ap-

parently with human-like limbs but considerably smaller than human beings. It took months of work to redesign the thing so a human pilot could fit into it."

This is as good a point as any to emphasize that the Air Force denies that the space saucer ever existed. "We have no record of any such thing," says Major Thomas Biggs, an information officer at Nellis.

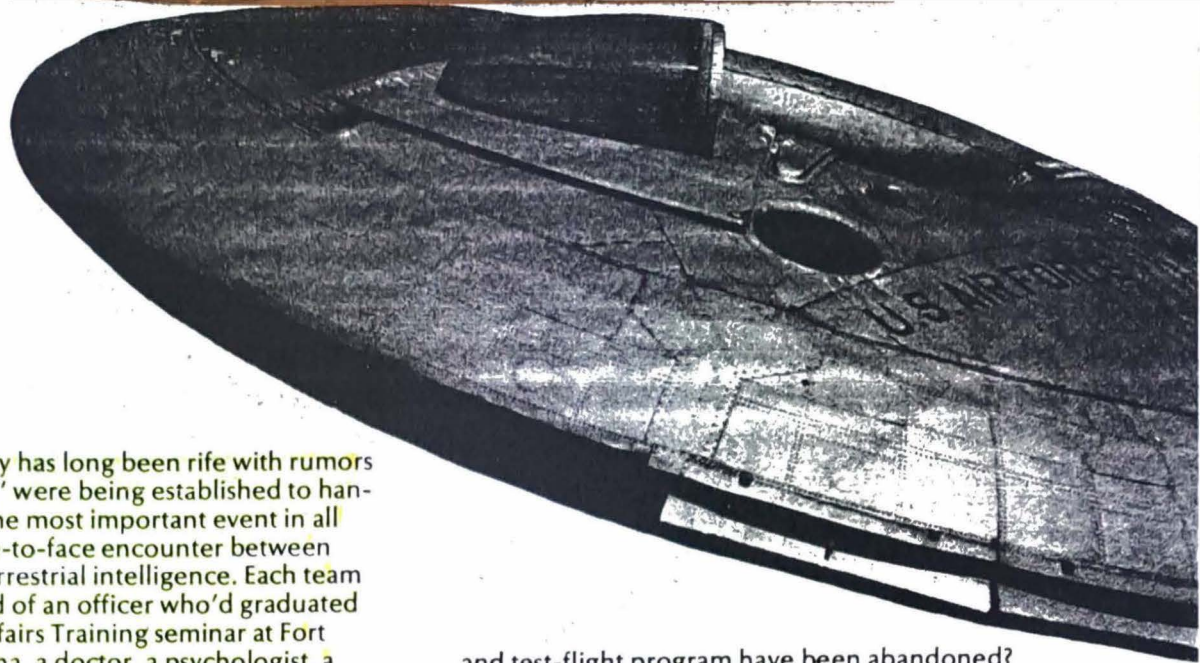
In the Pentagon, I had come across a reference to "34920 A.C.," supposedly the file number of a photo of a "UFO in flight," bearing the penciled notation "space saucer at Nellis." A friend in Dayton, Ohio—once headquarters of ATIC—had come across a Form 31F, "Record of Destruction of Classified Material," marked "Nellis Saucer, 1953-55." I was told the photo had been destroyed in a routine weeding-out of files. Biggs may be right. There may not be any records. And the evidence presented here is, of necessity, circumstantial.

But the previously-quoted ATIC man adds:

"There was exhaustive debate at Nellis over whether the thing could be flown. Metallurgy experts understood the composition of the machine, and actually identified new alloys that we had under development. But nobody could figure out what held it 'up.' Someone remembered that the only time the saucer shape had been tried on man-made aircraft, the Navy's Vought V-173 and XF 5U-1 experimental fighters of World War II, it had been a complete failure. Since there was no 'airfoil' built into the saucer shape, it was assumed that it did not operate on the principle of 'lift' but, rather, was moved solely by its propulsion source. Ironically, this is the principle used in air-cushion vehicles, which we developed many years later."

Preparations were apparently underway at this point to retrofit the space saucer with two Wright J65 jet engines and attempt to fly it, using jet thrust only. While the craft was rebuilt at Nellis, the Air Force was busy in other areas. Arrangements had to be made to cope with the aliens whose existence was now confirmed. And a "diversion" had to be created to draw attention away from the tests at Nellis.

What was the Air Force doing during this period?



The UFO community has long been rife with rumors that "contact teams" were being established to handle what might be the most important event in all history, the first face-to-face encounter between humans and extraterrestrial intelligence. Each team reportedly consisted of an officer who'd graduated from the Foreign Affairs Training seminar at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, a doctor, a psychologist, a languages specialist from the Defense Language Institute at Monterey, California, and several paramedics. According to the rumors, these teams were "alerted" for contact with landed saucers several times but never actually encountered aliens.

If the "contact teams" ever existed, all records on them must have been destroyed. Even a request filed under the Freedom of Information Act failed to yield any proof that the teams ever existed. Years later, however, I received a letter from MSGT Parks W. Finley, who recalled a flurry of activity at Thule AFB, Greenland, in January 1955:

"Guys in the radar outfit were telling me that a UFO had been sighted and had apparently landed on an ice cap 40 miles away. The base was sealed off and placed on alert. A high-ranking general arrived in an executive jet from the Pentagon and was followed by several teams aboard C-124 transports. The teams were billeted in heavily-guarded quarters and prohibited from fraternizing with the rest of the men on the base. The rumor was, this special group was going to be taken by helicopter out to the ice cap where they could contact the crew of the UFO. I later heard that they flew out there, but found nothing."

Another military source, a Pentagon insider who asks not to be named, told me in an interview:

"Throughout my career, I heard reports of a Top Secret operation aimed at handling the first meeting between humans and space travelers. On one occasion, I met a lieutenant colonel who told me that he had been in an outfit assembled and trained for this purpose, and that it was in existence from 1952 to 1969."

It's significant that 1952 is the year of the rumored saucer capture and 1969 the year the Air Force publicly stepped out of the UFO picture. If, indeed, the Air Force abandoned its interest in UFOs in 1969, what about rumors that the captured saucer was test-flown during 1953-55, stored for a long period, then test-flown again in 1974?

What, too, of rumors that a secret Air Force study of UFOs is continuing—even if the "contact teams"

and test-flight program have been abandoned?

NBC reporter Ralph Blum, co-author of *Beyond Earth: Man's Contact with UFOs* (New York: Bantam, 1974) has postulated the existence of "Room 39," the supersecret location, presumably in the Pentagon, where saucer data is processed and UFO policy is determined. Blum suggests that Brigadier General Edward Giller, a top nuclear expert with high security clearances, was unable to gain entry to "Room 39" because he could not demonstrate a "need to know" what went on inside.

Other UFO researchers have come across evidence of a secret Air Force project, reportedly continuing on a modest budget since the publicly-announced 1969 divorce from UFO affairs. In 1972, writer Otto Binder came upon evidence that the Air Force has a "warehouse" of retrieved parts and debris from saucers, although he apparently learned nothing about actual flight tests of a captured saucer.

Was Binder aware of the same building I "discovered"?

My own investigation produced numerous reports—but no firm evidence—that the captured saucer, after being fitted with man-made J65 engines, was test-flown at Nellis between 1953 and 1955. One source told me that the tests produced little of practical value. Experts apparently had not mastered the aerodynamic principles of the saucer shape and only tests of brief duration, at low altitude, could be accomplished. Most of the alien technology had been lost in the original crash.

Did the Air Force consciously embark on a "diversion" to draw public attention from these tests?

Man-made saucer aircraft had been under consideration for years, but the saucer shape had repeatedly proven impractical. Apart from the unsuccessful Vought designs of World War II, the public record confirms that wind-tunnel tests were carried out in 1952-53 at the Navy's David E. Taylor Model Basin, Potomac, Maryland. They produced disappointing results. James Williams, a technician who participated in those tests, told me that "no special utility" to the saucer shape could be found.

(continued on page 26)



He added, "Other aircraft designs looked more promising . . ."

Colonel Robert Gammon, a historical expert on Army aircraft, says he has always wondered why a "joint" Army-Air Force project was embarked upon in the mid-'50s to develop a new, man-made saucer airplane. "Neither service had a pressing need," Gammon says. "In the aftermath of the Korean War, purse-strings were tight and funds were urgently needed for more practical aircraft. The Avro VZ-9 man-made saucer was an interesting idea, but there was no clear requirement for it."

Or was there?

Was the Avro VZ-9, serial number 58-7055, also known as "Weapon System 606A" and shown in a previously unpublished photo on the cover, intended as a "smokescreen" to shift attention away from the *real* saucer—the alien space ship?

If there was any *other* purpose behind the VZ-9, it has become obscured by questions this project raised from the start. Why the "weapon system" designation, when the craft was never designed to be armed? Why, at a time when the U.S. aerospace industry led the world, did Army and Air Force purchasers go to a Canadian firm, A.V. Roe Ltd. (Avro) in Toronto? Why was the VZ-9 extensively publicized when first announced in 1955 (while the *real* saucer was allegedly being flown) and yet *not* publicized when it finally made its first test flight on December 5, 1959? Why was the test program halted after a few, unsatisfactory tests?

Did the Air Force need the VZ-9 only long enough to cover up its testing of an alien space ship, then lose interest when those tests ended in 1955?

Any reader intrigued by this man-made sidelight to the alien UFO story can see the VZ-9 at the U.S. Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, Virginia, near Norfolk. I saw it there last December. It sits on a pole, out of doors, a quirk of history now left at the mercy of the elements. Its three Continental J69 turbojet engines have long since been removed and its claimed (in 1955) top speed of 300 m.p.h. and range

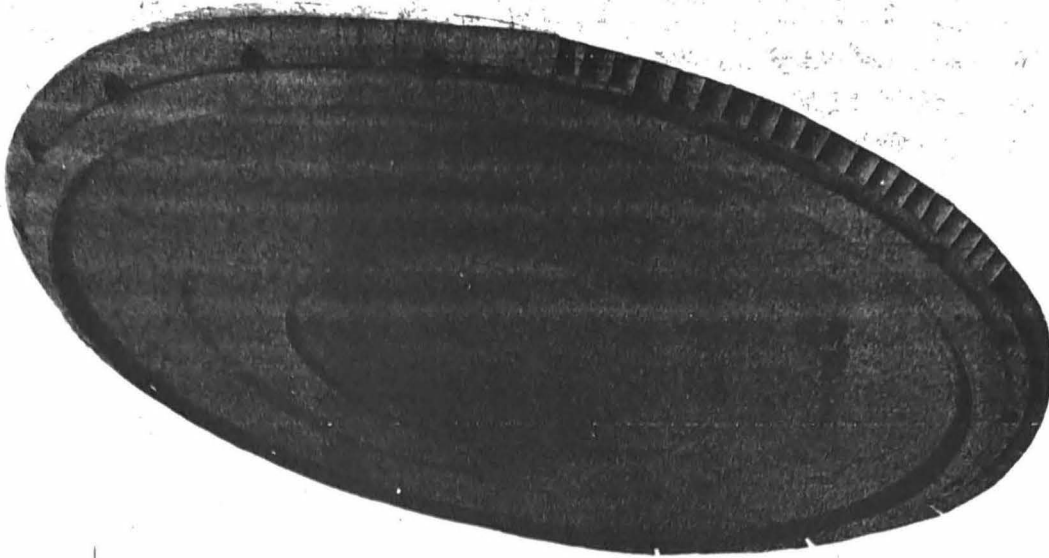
of 1,000 miles were never attained. It hardly flew at all, and, says one expert, "when it did fly it wobbled like a sideways yo-yo . . ."

It's possible, just possible, that it achieved its purpose. A fledgling aviation writer in 1955, I recall that whenever a journalist raised the subject of flying saucers with the Air Force, he was immediately told about the VZ-9.

But not about any secret UFO investigation. Not about Room 39, contact teams, or the testing of a captured alien space ship at Nellis.

Not much can be deduced about the tests of the captured saucer at Nellis during 1953-55, although it seems apparent that little was learned from them about alien technology. Again, the captured ship was apparently intended to operate only from high Earth orbit, not across the reaches of deep space. Still, some UFO researchers believe that the captured ship may have contributed to the U.S. ability to "come from behind," at the time of Sputnik I, and overtake a formidable Soviet lead in space exploration.

Who flew the captured saucer? Several well-known pilots have been suggested, among them George E. Kimball, who had earlier been the second man to fly faster than sound, Iven C. Kincheloe, a Korean War air ace, and Daniel (Chappie) James, a leading black aviator. Kincheloe and I corresponded in the 1950s, and there was an uncharacteristic six-month "gap" at one point which hardly proves anything, although he was at Nellis at the time. Recently in Greenwich, Connecticut, I inter-



viewed retired Brigadier General Kimball. Working on another subject at the time, I reminded him that we'd exchanged letters in 1955 and had met in 1969. After discussing his role in rocket research, I tagged on a question as an afterthought: Had he heard of a captured saucer and had he flown it? "That's one I don't have in my logbook," Kimball said, somewhat enigmatically.

A strong possibility exists that the pilots who flew the alien saucer were not well-known at all, and deliberately stayed out of public view. "The whole thing was very low-key," says one source.

In an article in an earlier issue of this magazine, the story was told of a reputable aviation photographer who accidentally gained entry to the Nellis test zone and took pictures of the captured saucer in 1974, only to have his film confiscated. I re-interviewed this authority, and found his story persuasive, although—again—he could provide no solid evidence. The ATIC expert quoted earlier also claimed that tests were resumed for a brief period in 1974.

Why?

"It could be just one of those arbitrary things that happens in the government. You know, somebody pushes hard to have his way and eventually succeeds. Or maybe by installing newer jet engines, they felt they could learn more about its performance."

Another possibility is that by 1974, tests could assist the advancing state of technology in air-cushion vehicles.

It could also be that the Air Force learned something new about aliens from space—still undisclosed—and decided that further tests would be worthwhile.

The 1974 tests were also reported in a tabloid newspaper which quoted a pilot, using a fictitious name, as saying that he had flown the alien craft. The tabloid apparently located several veterans with firsthand knowledge but, as in my own efforts, could find none willing to be quoted by name. An employee of that newspaper told me his staff was

convinced the story was true, and regretted not having further details.

It's the absence of those details which is so frustrating. What was learned from the tests? How many people knew of them? With evidence of an alien presence in its hands, why did the Air Force abandon public investigation of UFOs and cut back sharply on its secret efforts? What have leaders of our present-day U.S. government been told of the tests? What of presidential candidate Jimmy Carter's pledge to release "every scrap of paper in Washington" on UFOs?

Were vital records destroyed to keep the tests secret? Why?

The air of secrecy provides fuel to those UFOlogists who charge that the government has secretly been in contact with space aliens all along, and that the public isn't being told for fear of widespread panic. If that's what's happening, maybe our leaders underestimate the toughness and resiliency of the strongest asset we have—the ordinary American.

At the beginning of this report, I made clear the limitations, the gaps, the doubts which persist until and unless solid information becomes public. These disclaimers are particularly important at a time when others in the UFO field are publishing sensational stories which appear to have little basis in fact. Even after hearing that the captured saucer is in storage today at Nellis, I knew there would be no way to fill in the gaps or ease the doubts. The "case" I've made here, the case for the Air Force flight-testing a captured saucer, is probably the strongest to be published yet—but it remains weak enough that, after months of probing and prowling, I'm only 90 per cent sure I believe it myself.

It begins, and ends, the only way it could have—with a guard turning me away from a warehouse at Nellis. Was I that close, after all, to undeniable evidence that man has received visits from the stars?

The reader, as I said up front, will judge. □



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From: Nick Balaskas <nikolaos@yorku.ca>
 Date: Thu, 27 Jul 2000 20:45:56 -0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)
 To: squishy@altavista.com
 Subject: "It all began that summer of 1952"

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On 26 Jul 2000 squishy@altavista.com wrote:

<snip>

> Your reference to the 52 crash is the Steinman book?

<snip>

Yes, in Appendix 10 is an article ('Air Force Tests Captured Saucer - Also Flies Own') written by Rufus Drake which contains much information about UFOs which I was not aware of before. Rufus writes: "When it publicly abandoned UFO research in 1969, the Air Force also dismantled a top-secret coprps of scientists and technicians who were working frantically to contact aliens from space. This was done, but a modest, under-budgeted clandestine effort was continued, long after the Air Force had physical evidence that alien ships were operating in our skies. It all began that summer of 1952,..." Interesting!

Do you have any other articles written by Rufus Drake?

The only ones I could find by Rufus is 'UFO Crisis over Greenland' In Jan Aldrich's web site. Do you know where I can find more about the downed UFO near Washington, D.C. and the subsequent recovery of the occupants of this UFO by another UFO which landed nearby? Were any photos published of these two UFOs or witnesses to the downed UFO which was taken shipped and later test flown using the AVRO Car project as a cover?

Nick

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From: Nick Balaskas <nikolaos@yorku.ca>
 Date: Wed, 12 Jul 2000 20:49:44 -0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)
 To: Grant Cameron <squishy@altavista.com>
 Subject: Re: [canufo] UFO crash photos (fwd)

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Hi Grant.

Are you also subscribed to canufo. If not, I will continue to forward anything I think you would like to read that I find on canufo. Below is a reply I sent to Chris who is also on the canufo list.

You are no doubt aware of the interview C. W. Fitch of Cleveland had with W. B. Smith in November 1961 where Smith talks about a piece of a flying saucer he showed to Admiral Knowles. Smith said that this piece was part of a larger piece which had been shot from a small flying saucer two feet in diameter near Washington in July 1952.

While I was still going through Willian Steinman's book a few days ago, I noted something written by Rufus Drake on page 500 of this book. It said that during the big UFO flap of 1952 the Air Force captured a saucer, rebuilt it and later test-flew it several times. To divert attention from this activity and to provide a cover for a saucer flying over its test base, the Air Force ordered and built a mannade saucer, the AVRO VZ-9. If the real saucer's test base was in Malton, just outside Toronto, then it was being secretly flown in direct view of everyone. I wonder if this real saucer ever made any long distance trips out your way in Manitoba? From Smith's correspondence which I have read so far, he seems to know very little about what was happening at AVRO. Isn't

- check

- I believe there is a lot of history on this William Zuk

- no but Zuk fighting do being down

- I never didn't care

this unusally for
Canada's top expert on flying saucers?

Further down, this article also states that an F-94 fighter pilot sent out to intercept the UFOs flying over Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1952 was asked to check out a crash report in the Virginia tidewater area. *— check*

There the pilot saw a saucer shaped craft which had burrowed into a mud flat. Before helicopters arrived to retrieve this crashed flying saucer, another saucer was spotted on radar at the crash site which picked up the alien occupants of the crashed saucer. If this story is true, then the piece Smith showed to Knowles was not from this much larger saucer which actually crashed outside of Washington, D.C. in 1952. *— Knowles mentions 2" saucer and drawn pic*

CSETI does not even mention about this UFO crash in its 250+ list of crashes but mentions the Fitch/Smith interview instead, which if I read the interview correctly, this small flying saucer wasn't even shot at by the pilot chasing it and nothing says that it later crashed.

Maybe I will send an e-mail to CSETI and get them to record this story of a crash and the recovery of its alien occupants by another saucer. The story may not be a true one, but many stories already found at the CSETI web site are not likely true either, and this story does involve an actual crash.

Nick

----- Forwarded message -----
Date: Wed, 12 Jul 2000 19:28:36 -0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)
From: Nick Balaskas <nikolaos@YorkU.CA>
Reply-To: canufo@egroups.com
To: canufo@egroups.com
Organization: York University
Subject: Re: [canufo] UFO crash photos

On Wed, 12 Jul 2000, Chris Rutkowski wrote:

<snip>

> I agree with Mike on this one. CSETI's list of crashes can't really be
> described as a collection of "documented eyewitness accounts." In fact,
> most are rumours and hearsay, with sources taken from many other works,

> most particularly Leonard Stringfield's excellent
 Status Reports. The
 > reason there aren't any photos is likely because
 the sources are dicey
 > if not unlikely.

<sigh> I too miss Leonard Stringfield and his well
 documented and better
 researched UFO Crash/Retrievals Status Reports.

<snip>

> But even giving CSETI a rather large heaping of
 salt, even Hynek had
 > trouble with film evidence. When shown the Carman
 film of impressive *... really one*
 > NLS, he stated, on camera, "It's certainly the best
 film of nocturnal
 > lights I've ever seen." He couldn't possibly comment
 on their
 > scientific importance or their reality, because
 the film doesn't lend
 > itself to that kind of interpretation.

I understand that NRC astronomer Dr. Ian Halliday,
 an obvious expert on
 lights in the night time sky (meteors, stars, etc.)
 and close associate of
 Dr. Peter Millman, another astronomer and one time
 head of Canada's UFO
 Project Magnet, was involved in the investigation
 of the Carman UFO
 sightings too. Were Ian and Peter also in awe about
 these nocturnal
 lights as their U.S. astronomer colleague Dr. Allen
 Hynek or were their
 professional views different? I would be very interested
 to know.

<snip>

> > Much to my surprise, as well, Nick! I won't ask
 who these "fellow
 > > ufologists" are, but could you give us a clue
 as to which events they are
 > > referring? Not to cast aspersions on this potential,
 but I guess I'm just
 > > overly hard to please in this field.

>
 > I have seen such photos too, in various books and
 magazines. Even the
 > infamous "EXPO 67" "Man and His World" alien with
 the zippered suit is
 > still making the rounds. So what?

I understand that the pictures some ufologists possess
 have yet to be made
 public possibly because of the many fake or misrepresented
 photos of
 aliens that have been published in the past and the
 fear of getting a

negative response from fellow ufologists like yourself.
They do not need the attention and ridicule but I think they are wrong when they are covering up potentially valuable evidence for the reality of the extraterrestrial origins of UFOs. One such unnamed person, who visited a landed (disabled?) UFO with his wife two days in a row, still cannot convince even himself that this experience even happened (although his wife has no problems talking about their close encounter with a landed UFO).

<snip>

> > The Aztec milieu is so convoluted and confusing that I doubt if we will ever
> > get to the core of it, assuming that it even has a core. But Steinman's book
> > raises enough questions of credibility that perhaps the photos themselves
> > should be considered as a separate entity, for whatever that might be worth.
>
> Agreed. Steiman's credibility is pretty low on the ufology scale.

Although I am very interested in actively pursuing the truth behind the UFO phenomenon, I am really little more than an armchair ufologist.
Although I have never met William Steinman, from the research that he has done which I have read, I would place him the same class as someone like Leonard Stringfield who was dedicated and determined in his search for the facts. Maybe the credibility of ufologists in the eyes of the public is low but when someone like William who is not out to con anyone or make a quick buck (I regret that he had to sell the historic Sarbacher letter) and freely shares what he has learned with others, he has my full support, appreciation and trust.

What are your comments or observations on the two alien photos allegedly taken in July 7, 1948 at the site of UFO crash in Mexico which William included in his book?

Nick Balaskas

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