

Journal of UFO History

A Publication of the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives



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Strategic planning session at NICAP-Connecticut Affiliate meeting in 1968, during Colorado UFO Project. Left, Thornton Page; Center, John Fuller; right, James E. McDonald. Story on page 2. (Photo courtesy of George W. Earley)

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Journal of UFO History

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Donald E. Keyhoe Archives

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Cover Photo

The NICAP Connecticut Affiliate (NICAP-CONN) was headed by George W. Earley, a United Aircraft Corporation employee and World War II Air Force operations officer of a B-26 squadron. There were four other Affiliates: in Los Angeles, Kansas City, Chicago, and New York City.

At the early 1968 NICAP-CONN meeting pictured here, John Fuller was briefing others about his forthcoming LOOK magazine article that would expose the memo by Robert J. Low of the University of Colorado Project that made the entire study seem to be a sham. Low's famous words "The trick would be..." came back to haunt him.

Seated left to right are Dr. Thornton Page, chairman of the astronomy department, Wesleyan University; David Morgan, physicist; John G. Fuller, journalist; Richard Hoagland, space sciences museum curator; and Dr. James E. McDonald, senior scientist, University of Arizona Institute of Atmospheric Physics.

EDITORIAL

The files at the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives are bulging with information about all aspects of UFO history. You, the subscriber, provide the financial lifeline that makes this publication possible.

Your comments are invited on any of the articles. Send "Letters to the editor" clearly marked as such, by e-mail or by regular mail. Please keep them brief and to the point and they will be considered for publication, especially if they add information or insight on a given story.

Longer commentaries also are invited for possible publication, up to about 400 words. All submissions are subject to editing for length and clarity. →

You can also help by suggesting the kinds of information you would like to see included in future issues.

There is nothing an editor dislikes more than being greeted by a deafening silence after each issue is published. Maybe you could start by letting me know which articles you liked most, and/or which you liked least. □

THE NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA (NICAP): EARLY HISTORY

NICAP was the primary UFO organization in the late 1950s through 1970s. Because of being based in Washington, D.C., and having access to the national news media, NICAP began to supersede the Tucson-based Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) headed by Coral and Jim Lorenzen.

APRO had been formed in the early 1950s and was the most prominent UFO organization prior to NICAP. For a number of years Coral Lorenzen had cordial relations with Major Keyhoe as indicated in their correspondence (on file in the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives). Their relations increasingly became strained as NICAP gained national attention.

When I arrived on the scene in June 1958, Major Keyhoe was fighting battles on several fronts. The most serious problem was lack of financial resources to hire staff. I worked as an occasional volunteer, but the office was run by Mrs. Rose Hackett Campbell and a female protegee of hers, Bess Clark.

Without going into the details and subtleties of the situation, I quickly learned that Mrs. Campbell had never met a "contactee" that she didn't believe, and also encourage to become a NICAP member. Noble spacemen were visiting us and imparting their wisdom to us, and in her mind NICAP existed to "spread the word."

It was a totally mystical and uncritical mindset that appalled me, and in a private meeting with Major

THE U.F.O. Investigator

FACTS ABOUT FLYING SAUCERS (UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS)

— Published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena —

VOL. 1, NO. 12

APRIL-MAY 1961

TACKER REPLACED AS SPOKESMAN

Dr. Carl L. Tacker, spokesman of the Air Force's (AF) research department following the crash of a plane reported as the official UFO spokesman and assigned to duty in Germany, thought the same was being done in the hands of others against his public UFO investigations and the program toward which he and the Air Force were working. In view of the increasing AF drive in publicizing Col. Tacker and his "official" air Force story, this seems the only logical explanation for the change in the AF spokesman for extraterrestrial visits to the United States.

Following Col. Tacker on the UFO approach, however, does not alter the conditions and progress in his record in his official assignment. NICAP has therefore asked the Secretary of the Air Force to have the entire Tacker report revised, to disallow publicity all necessary and appropriate steps, and to make them correct.

Following with the information furnished by NICAP on the record in the Air Force's (AF) report Tacker signed, 2. The AF's "Flying Saucers and the U.S. Air Force" signed by Tacker, and reported by AF to the official AF Force story. 3. The AF's "Flying Saucers and the U.S. Air Force" signed by Tacker, and reported by AF to the official AF Force story. 4. The AF's "Flying Saucers and the U.S. Air Force" signed by Tacker, and reported by AF to the official AF Force story.

Hidden Reports Revealed To NICAP

Several dramatic AF reports, hidden for years, have now been disclosed to NICAP by the AF's and others involved. The reports include:

An aerial photograph of a high-speed UFO in a 2000 footer from Black Hill AFBI simultaneous radar tracking of a strange flying object at 300000 ft by Goose Bay AFBI and the Royal Canadian Air Force; the detailed account of a Lambda AFBI T-33 jet and a radio-located UFO; a summary of operations at all the South Carolina bases; and the signing of a UFO by Sign Bureau's Air Command officers, at Cape AFBI, Saurashtra. (Details on page 43)

PROBE ASSURED

Beliefs—NICAP has just been assured of an official AFU investigation including a thorough probe of Air Force secrecy. As set planned, this will come within two to three months, but increasing pressure will probably speed its action. The official investigation will reveal:

NEW CAPITOL HILL BACKING FOR NICAP

The rapidly increasing Congressional interest over the UFO problem—despite AFU's Air Force, scientific efforts—is the most significant UFO development in the last six months. Most of this public interest is due to survivors and discredited witnesses presented to Senators and Congressmen by NICAP members and officials. The following letters are a review of the progress of NICAP's work.

Senator William Proxmire, Wis., to a NICAP member: "The very fact that so many discredited witnesses have been named is a very difficult situation. It is very difficult to get a U.S. Senator to get information on this subject which does not come from the Air Force. July 1959, it is only to see that somewhere and somewhere the government of the United States is taking full advantage of the witnesses who have been exposed by NICAP."

Congressman Lester Johnson, Wis., to a NICAP member: "I hope the organization (NICAP) will achieve their aim of open hearings in Congress so that the public will have all the facts in hand. I feel that accurate information is being withheld from the public."

Early edition of the U.F.O. Investigator, NICAP membership publication.



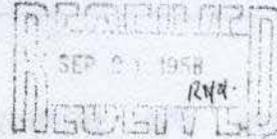
Keyhoe (as I recall some time in June) I told him emphatically what I thought.

To my relief, he was already aware of the situation and troubled by it, but Mrs. Campbell—a skilled office manager and typist who was contributing the use of her own IBM proportional-spacing typewriter (a state-of-the-art machine at that time) and other personal assets—was all he had.

When I received a job offer from Air Force Times, Major Keyhoe quickly offered me a job at half-time pay, but it was "an offer I could not refuse."

The letter on the following page from M.K. Jessup adds some insight into this period. The letter was received and opened by me (as indicated by the initials RHH). □

P.O.Box # 12, Indianapolis 6, Ind.
Tuesday sept 22, 1958



Major Donald E. Aeyhoe,
NICAP,
1536 Connecticut Ave., NW.
Washington 6, D.C.

Dear Don:

I havent time to write a decent letter. I have been hearing through various channels that NICAP is not in good shape. Frankly, I think the UFO business is a lost cause as long as our public worships the Adamskis and the Mengers and will listen to nothing but the sensational lies they put out.

I still admire your attitude and your back-breaking efforts to do something tangible with the UFO problem. Unfortunately it has not yet been possible to interest that segment of the public who would take a practical interest and do something if they could be convinced. I think we are in worse shape than ever at present because of the cultists etc. Well enough of that.

Rose Hackett wrote me a letter this week, and then phoned me. She told me of resigning. She didnt give any reason but I know enough to know that she is disgruntled because the crackpot element is barred from NICAP. I am on your side of the fence, as you know, altho perhaps not quite so bluntly opposed to possibilities of ESP nature. Even if NICAP has to go down in failure I personally would prefer to keep it clean of the contact hoodlums who have practically destroyed all hope of a sensible approach to the problem in this decade---maybe in this generation.

My main point in writing is to say that Rose is driving out to Indiana to see me AND Pelley. That's no compliment to me, as I would believe anything Pelly said on a stack of Korans. However, she is coming and is all steamed up about the reprint issue of my CASE FOR THE UFO. This may or may not be her real reason. I know that she has always wanted to get me to be active in the inner working of NICAP because she has thought that I would embrace the so-called "subjective" simply because I do not take an open stand against it. I suspect that she is going to try to get me to start another organization, or to go into NICAP with a view toward changing the policy. Nothing doing on either count. I've had a belly full of the "Subjective". It worse than stinks.

If there is anything you want to tell me before she gets here (which may be by the end of the week) please write air mail (P.O.Box # 12, Indianapolis 6, Ind) or phone me (MELrose 5-8124 at home at night, or MELrose 4-2892 at office in daytime). There is much that I would like to discuss with you but which I do not want to put on paper. There are enough hints in this letter to indicate what I mean.

I might add one more thing. When you took over NICAP I reversed my position with regard to the organization and publically asked the Ufologists to have patience and cooperate with you, after haveing been rather outspoken in a negative way. Since that time I have advised several that NICAP would immediately cease to function objectively if you lost control. Need I say more?

Best of everything to you. Hope your health is improving also that everything is well with your family. Good luck, Don---you earned it and you need it. Sorry I havent the financial means to give you more support.

Regards,

M.K.Jessup

PRIVATE PROBERS DISPUTE AF STAND

**THE DENVER POST Mon., Nov. 28, 1966 3F

Two Experts Conclude UFOs Come

By BILL MYERS
Denver Post Staff Writer

Despite Air Force attempts to debunk the existence of unidentified flying objects (UFOs), there are such things and they may be craft from outer space, two private UFO investigators said in Denver Sunday.

The investigators are Donald D. Keyhoe, a retired Marine Corps aviation major and director of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), and Richard H. Hall, assistant NICAP director.

NICAP is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and both men, who have full-time jobs with the committee, live in Washington suburbs.

They passed through Denver en route to Boulder, where they'll confer Monday and Tuesday with Dr. Edward U. Condon and members of his University of Colorado committee to study UFOs — or flying saucers.

Last month, the Air Force granted CU \$300,000 to conduct the probe independently of the Air Force's study group, "Project Blue Book."

Keyhoe says NICAP has from 11,000 to 12,000 members in all 50 states and about 30 foreign countries. The organization has some 250 top-notch professional advisers — aerospace experts, Federal Aviation Agency employees, astron-

omers and scientists from all fields that might be involved in a UFO investigation, Keyhoe and Hall said.

Keyhoe said NICAP "collects UFO reports and evaluates them. We weed out the obvious mistakes and the crackpot reports. Then we get down to the hard-core reports from veteran pilots of the Air Force and airlines, missile trackers, scientists, engineers — competent, reliable witnesses" from all responsible civilian fields of work.

When NICAP gets a UFO report that appears legitimate, Hall and Keyhoe said, it appoints a small field investigation team from its list of technical experts and sends the team to investigate the report at the scene.

If the team's report indicates the UFO is genuine, the headquarters staff of NICAP continues the investigation, calling on the opinions of the appropriate professional advisers.

"We look for a conventional explanation first," Hall said.

Keyhoe and Hall said that NICAP has received more than 10,000 UFO reports and that 1,500 to 2,000 of these have turned out to be "really substantial cases."

"Focusing on the hard-core cases," he said, "our tentative conclusion is that UFOs are something from outer space."



DONALD D. KEYHOE
"I changed my mind."

From Outer Space

As NICAP director, Keyhoe agrees officially with this conclusion. But personally, his views are much stronger.

"I was skeptical when I first got into this work," he said, "but I changed my mind when I saw the massive evidence (of the existence of UFOs)."

Keyhoe is the author of the book, "Flying Saucers From Outer Space," which definitely states his opinion on the question, as the title reflects.

And, he adds, the Air Force once reached a secret conclusion that agreed with his. When reports on the conclusion leaked out, the Air Force denied them, he said.

"There is this sheer weight of evidence," he said. "It's not possible that all these reports are wrong, and they're certainly not frauds, considering the training and responsibility of many of the people who turned them in."

Keyhoe and Hall said Air Force policy always has been to debunk UFO sightings and even ridicule persons reporting them, including Air Force pilots.

Keyhoe said he's sure that the Air Force policy was handed down by the Central Intelligence Agency, which is worried at public reaction to an announcement that the earth is being observed by spacemen.

The CU study, the investigators said, should help solve the problem.



DENVER POST PHOTOS BY DUANE MOUNT
RICHARD H. HALL
"A major mystery."

Denver Post story, Nov. 28, 1966

The headline does not accurately reflect what we said, but rather what the reporter apparently expected or wanted us to say.

We were careful to point out that the ET hypothesis was only that, and not a conclusion, although many NICAP officials felt it was the most likely answer. Instead, we emphasized that hundreds of very significant reports were being wrongly "explained" or totally ignored by the Air Force. We were advocating a badly needed and

long overdue independent scientific investigation.

But reporters on daily papers are not well equipped to handle subtleties, and tend to like things in black and white. My education about the state of journalism in relation to controversial subjects like UFOs continued through these years, and eventually soured me on the entire process. - R.H.H.

[Future issues will address the failures of all major institutions to come to grips with UFO reports.] □

IMPACT OF UFOs ON THE NATIONAL SPACE PROGRAM

James E. McDonald, Institute of Atmospheric Physics,
The University of Arizona

(Abstract of talk to regional Sections, American Institute of Aeronautics and
Astronautics, 1968-1969, AIAA visiting lecturer series.)¹

Two years of intensive study of a wide variety of UFO reports and direct interviews with several hundred witnesses in select cases, convince me that the scientific community's past casual response to the UFO problem has been a serious error, one that must be quickly rectified. Although it is true that many reports of UFOs constitute cases of misidentification, and although a small percentage may be accounted for in other quite conventional manner, an impressively large number of other cases cannot be satisfactorily explained in terms of any ordinary hypotheses. Representative examples which I have personally checked will be cited, and key points in the past 20 years' official response to the UFO question will be noted.

Cases where multiple witnesses have reported relatively close-range sightings of objects that can scarcely be described in terms other than "machine-like" or "craft-like" demand that careful attention be given to the radical hypothesis that UFOs may be devices of extraterrestrial origin. That hypothesis is actually 20 years old but has generally been scoffed at by scientists and by official investigatory bodies. My own study leads me, however, to take that hypothesis quite seriously, despite its many obvious degrees of improbability. Alternative hypotheses will be discussed and their shortcomings pointed out.

A review of past scientific critique of the extraterrestrial hypothesis will be presented. Setting aside basically irrelevant or erroneous critique, or critique framed in ignorance of the cumulative evidence on UFO sightings, I shall try to show that the hard-core objection to the extraterrestrial hypothesis is, today, the objection that we cannot yet imagine any propulsion schemes that sensibly account for interstellar exploration and surveillance. Against that strong objection, I believe one can raise only the somewhat lame (yet conceivably quite correct) counterargument that we may not yet know all there is to be known about interstellar transport.

(Continued on next page)

¹ This is a re-typed copy of McDonald's own talk summary as he produced and distributed it..

CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY UFO HISTORY, JUNE-JULY 1950

June 21, 1950: A UFO buzzed the control tower at Hamilton AFB, California, several times.

June 24, 1950: A cigar-shaped object paced a United Airlines plane for 20 minutes over the California desert. A Navy transport pilot and crew also saw the object.

June 30, 1950: A minister (former Air Force pilot) reported that a rotating, circular object hovered over the road. As he started to drive underneath it, the UFO took off with terrific acceleration.

July 1950: *Flying* magazine article titled "Flying Saucers -- Fact or Fiction?" summarized recent sightings by pilots.

July 1950: A Civil Aeronautics Agency (later FAA) flight engineer in Cincinnati, Ohio, reported seeing in early afternoon a "wingless, fuselage-shaped" object that maneuvered at high speed.

July 11, 1950: Two Navy aircraft near Osceola, Arkansas, in early evening saw a disc shaped like an inverted bowl cross their path, also detected on radar.

(To be continued)

McDonald AIAA, Continued

Our national space program was keynoted six years ago when the NAS Space Sciences Board asserted that "*the search for extraterrestrial life is, in the opinion of many, the most exciting, challenging, and profound issue, not only of this century but of the whole naturalistic movement that has characterized the history of western thought for 300 years. What is at stake is a chance to gain a new perspective on man's place in nature, a new level of discussion on the meaning and nature of life.*" After two years of close scrutiny of the UFO evidence, it seems ironical to me that hundreds of UFO sightings seem explainable in no other terms than extraterrestrial surveillance, yet this body of reports continues to go almost unexamined by competent scientific bodies. I suggest, and have been suggesting to NASA, NSF, and other science-oriented agencies, that new and open-minded scrutiny of the UFO evidence is long overdue. In my view, the UFO problem may, in the near future, have a profound and positive impact on our national space program and on science in general. I believe that the public's assessment of scientific open-mindedness and scientific attitudes towards unconventional problems are very much at stake in the UFO problem, far more so than many scientists yet realize.

A significant step towards securing more adequate scientific scrutiny of the UFO question was taken when the House Committee on Science and Astronautics held a Symposium on Unidentified Flying Objects, July 29, 1968, highlights of which will be summarized. Copies of the proceedings can be secured from the Federal Scientific Clearinghouse, Springfield, Va. AIAA members are urged to secure those proceedings and to study them. □

UFOs Around the World: Official Views & Newsnotes

The Military Attache of South Africa via the Washington, D.C., Embassy told a NICAP member (Apr. 22, 1963): "From time to time UFO reports are obtained and these are referred to Air Force headquarters where a statistical section makes an investigation and logs results. Our experience in the past has been that, with a few exceptions, all UFO sightings could be explained as having been caused by natural phenomena."

A letter dated Oct. 10, 1958, from the Embassy of Argentina was received by NICAP in response to an inquiry. The letter, signed by Assistant Air Attache Arnoldo C. Tesselhoff, informed us that Argentine Air Force officials were considering "...the creation of an agency similar to NICAP, with the same objectives...Once established, the Argentine agency would very much like to work in close scientific cooperation with your Committee."

Dr. Claude Gaudeau of the National Center of Scientific Research in France visited with Walter N. Webb, NICAP Adviser, in the Boston, Massachusetts, area on Apr. 25, 1968. He expressed an interest in starting a "comprehensive research study of UFO sightings, utilizing computers and medical examination of

certain witnesses."

A weekend conference of UFO investigation societies in Ballarat, Australia, in early 1965 led to the beginning of national organization. According to a story in the *Ballarat Courier*, Victoria, March 2, 1965, with the headline of "Aerial phenomena investigation," the conferees decided to form a Federal organization.

The new group would coordinate the activities of all local societies. Among the participants named in the story are S.J. Czynski, chairman of the Ballarat Astronomical Society; Peter Norris of Melbourne; A.P. Tomas of New South Wales; C. Jones of Western Australia; Mrs. S. Sutton of Moorabbin; and Mr. W.H. Sloane of Ballarat.

Forty years ago three scientists in Chile declared that UFOs are real. A Reuters News Agency story filed in Santiago, Chile, on Aug. 26, 1965, quoted Prof. Gabriel Alvia as saying, "There is scientific evidence that strange objects visit our planet.. It is lamentable that the governments have drawn a veil of secrecy around this."

Prof. Alvia announced that a university center would be set up in 1966 to study the phenomena.

Dr. Mitrovan Zverev at the Cerro Calan Observatory concurred that something beyond our present understanding is occurring. And Prof. Claudio Anguita summed up, "We are not alone in the universe."

The statements followed a rash of Southern Hemisphere UFO sightings, including several at Antarctic scientific stations during July. □

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DIALOGUE WITH ►**Francis L. Ridge****REFLECTIONS ON 40 YEARS OF UFO RESEARCH**

Fran Ridge established and served as chairman of one of the earliest NICAP investigation teams, or Subcommittees. This network of investigation units eventually grew into an invaluable asset for NICAP.

Since then his many contributions to UFO research rank him among the most experienced and well-informed people in the world about UFOs and related phenomena. I asked Fran to recall some of his experiences.

Hall: We have been colleagues now for something like 40 years, right? You formed the Indiana NICAP Subcommittee way back when. And of course we both have been active in other groups since then.

Ridge: Going on 44 years. After about 6 months of organization and planning the Subcommittee was authorized on November 17, 1960.

Hall: I remember that you lined up some good technical people, and scientific advisers. The Subcommittee did great work for about 10 years.

Ridge: I moved from Indiana to Illinois in 1971 and became a State Section Director for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON).

Hall: What is your employment or profession, past or present?

Ridge: I was a manager for a large department store for 11 years until 1981, then went out on my own. I spent most of that time getting investors for patented items. The last 6 years I have gone back into hardware, something I really like and did right after high school for 4 years, and now with benefits while working with an old friend.



Francis L. Ridge

Hall: Before we get into your more recent activities, tell me about some of the Subcommittee's case investigations from the 1960s.

Ridge: The most interesting cases were those involved in the southern Illinois sightings in August of 1963. The primary case can be found on the NICAP web site at www.nicap.org/austindir.htm. What made this so special was being an E-M [electromagnetic effects] case and a close encounter, and one of the first good low-level car chases.

(Continued on next page)

Ridge interview, continued

It was good enough that it prompted Air Force attention to the point that they sent a team from Wright-Patterson AFB headed by Colonel Robert Friend, and including none other than then-Captain Hector Quintanilla. The sighting was "explained away," but is still an unknown in my book.²

Hall: You established a UFO detection program called MADAR. What was that?

Ridge: Multiple Anomaly Detection and Automated Recording. With all the known listed E-M effects (102 cases listed by NICAP even then) I set up a detection station for anomalies of the type being reported. And it was no accident. Fate put me and everything else in the right place at the right time. One of my advisers gave me the idea on how to do it, and he had been working for "Project Saucer," the first Air Force code name before Project SIGN in 1947. His expertise was nuclear radiation detection and electromagnetism.

Hall: For quite a while you published a "UFO Intelligence Summary." I have copies of it in the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives. What was that and how did it come about?

Ridge: Actually, it was important to do on its own merit, from the standpoint of

² Brief summaries of August 4, 7, and 9, 1963, sightings submitted to NICAP by Fran's Subcommittee appear on page 141 of *The UFO Evidence* (1964).]

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FRANCIS RIDGE
 Director & Editor

APRIL 1994

PRESS RELEASE ON ROSWELL.
 The pull-out section in this month's issue is a press release that has been carefully constructed and planned for use in conjunction with the Roswell inquiry. It states "Immediate Release". UFOlogists need to RETURN this PR until they receive specific instructions on how, when, and where to use it. Stay tuned.
 If you have questions or suggestions, please call RIDGE: (612) 836-9643. Things are developing very quickly.

LAKE MICHIGAN SIGHTINGS, RV
 On March 6th I got a call from David Boras, of the Center for UFO Studies in Chicago. He wanted to know what I had on some sightings involving radar in Michigan. At that time I had no information at all. Later on I got "some", but little, info on these events.
 Very briefly, there have been sightings of strange lights and objects going on for about two weeks in Michigan and possibly northern Indiana. Information is sketchy at this time.

the new computer age. It was a changing, constantly updated database of UFO sightings all over the country and told all of us what was going on and if one UFO sighting was related to others in time.

Hall: I see that it was called the "UFO Intelligence Newsletter" and part of it was a page or more of computer-generated "UFO Intelligence Summary." And you were operating the UFO Filter Center.

Ridge: With the MADAR system this data was extremely important so that the UFO Filter Center could correlate UFO sightings with detections of anomalous instrumental data. It's a long story but we did correlate several incidents, and this is all documented in my book and also on the NICAP web site.

Hall: Tell us about your regional UFO report. Are copies still available?

Ridge: Only a handful of hard copies of the 500 I had printed, but I am working on getting the book on CD.

Hall: Now we come to my favorite - the NICAP web site. There is a colorful

(Continued on next page)

Ridge interview, continued

history of how that came to be. Would you please describe that?

Ridge: Really strange. I had spent so many years on the UFO subject that I wanted to do something else.

Hall: I guess we all have experienced "burn-out" at some point.

Ridge: What started me off on a new track was that I had accidentally observed, with a 4-1/2 inch f/8 telescope, some "fastwalkers," objects apparently very far out in space between here and the Moon. In the late 1970s I had bought a black and white surveillance camera and found that it worked perfectly on the scope, except that the mounting and controls were beyond my means. But in 1995 I got some investors and did it, and created the Lunascan Project, which still exists.

Hall: But it's still related to UFOs in a way.

Ridge: I swore I was out of the UFO business, except to try to catch "them" with their pants down while between here and the Moon. I created the web site and it was so successful I thought, why don't we commemorate all the great work that NICAP has done?

Hall: I remember that you -- we -- also got some motivation from a pretender who had nothing to do with NICAP at all, but put up a site to exploit

NICAP's reputation.

Ridge: Yes, we wanted to protect NICAP's good name. So I started on it once I got the okay [from the Center for UFO Studies which archives the NICAP sighting files] in 1997. It was like "eating an elephant," which I had learned to do several times before. And like the Lunascan Project, it grew and grew into the massive site it is today.

Hall: Well, the NICAP site is my absolute favorite of all UFO web sites, but then I have a somewhat selfish reason for that. It is a rich goldmine of UFO sighting information and related history that I always recommend to anyone seeking serious, factual information.

Ridge: And, instead of the old and boring civilian reports most people know about, it consists of the very best military and airline cases ever reported. And we have uncovered important new information to support already good cases such as Trindade Island [the January 1958 Brazilian photo case showing a Saturn-shaped object], and uncovered damning information on former supposedly explained cases such as Fort Monmouth [September 1951 Air Force pilots' pursuit of a silvery disc-shaped UFO].

Hall: so you were back in the UFO business despite everything.

(Continued on next page)

Ridge interview, continued

Ridge: Then when I got even more involved than I had ever planned to do this late in my life, I set up the Nuclear Connection Project and found (with the help of others, and in particular Larry Hatch) more than 200 cases of UFOs associated with nuclear weapons or sites. One case that turned out to have a major connection involved a UFO over a control tower in New Mexico. This took place over a weapons storage area and over a B-58 Hustler bomber waiting to qualify for a nuclear weapons delivery exercise.

Hall: So instead of getting away from UFOs for a change, you ended up with the NICAP web site, the Nuclear Connection Project (NCP), and the Lunascan Project.

Ridge: Yes, and I was supposed to be getting out of the UFO business! Very ironic. The more I tried to get out, the deeper in I got. The NCP is still active, but we have logged most of the good cases, such as the ones involving missile sites. The Lunascan Project is alive, but not doing any scanning here. We have people all over the world who have better equipment and better seeing conditions, so we are watching and waiting. In the meantime, we are going over a lot of NASA pictures and also getting ready for the live images from the Trailblazer this winter [TransOrbital corporation commercial lunar mission]. One of these days we will get something great, but just

getting better data from private sources is very exciting work.

Hall: What do you do when you are not working on UFOs or lunar scans? Any other hobbies or activities?

Ridge: Something I started in the summer of 2003. I made a 1950s room with a recording studio for me and my daughter who sings country music. It's a great way to relax after getting so serious with UFOs for over 40 years.

Hall: What is your ultimate thinking about UFOs?

Ridge: I'm convinced that something very big and potentially important is going on, and we are a part of it whether we like it or not. I could never just say, to heck with it, but I do things to get my mind off it at times. I am very glad I met you, Dick, and very proud to be a former member of the best UFO organization that ever existed. We have made history, and it will be even more important as the years go by.

See www.nicap.org

Francis L. Ridge
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