

Journal of UFO History

A Publication of the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives



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Richard Hall and new bride, Marty, flanked on the couch by Idabel Epperson and Dr. Leslie Kaeburn. Marilyn Epperson and Ann Druffel are in foreground. May 1967 photo during visit with Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee members. (Story page 2.)

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Journal of UFO History

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EDITORIAL

With this issue the Journal completes its first year of publication. Those of you who subscribed for one year are now due to renew. Payment can be sent by check or money order payable to Richard Hall at the above address, or by PayPal.

The previous issue was printed by a commercial press, folded (rather than stapled), and this process will be used from now on.

As usual, comments or suggestions are invited. Brief Letters to the Editor will be considered for publication. If you have questions you would like to ask any of the past interviewees, please submit them and I will seek to obtain answers. See e-mail address opposite.

Cover Photo

The Air Force UFO investigation had been criticized in newspaper editorials, Congressional hearings had been held, and the University of Colorado UFO Project had been announced when Richard Hall and Martha Triche traveled to Hawaii to get married, stopping in Los Angeles to visit LANS (Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee) members in May 1967.

Idabel Epperson, with help from her daughter Marilyn, ran LANS. Among numerous accomplishments, Idabel got Dr. Robert Nathan of Jet Propulsion Laboratory involved in using computer image enhancement techniques to analyze UFO photographs.

Dr. Kaeburn, a biophysicist who was involved in pioneering research on heart-stimulating pacemaker implants, was a scientific adviser to NICAP and member of LANS. Ann Druffel, later a prominent author on UFOs, was another active member.

Also present at the LANS reception were engineer John Gray, a primary investigator of the 1965 Santa Ana photographs, and retired Air Force Master Navigator Paul A. Duich, who had several UFO sightings while on active duty. Personnel of this caliber made major contributions to NICAP's success.

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Armstrong Circle Theater AIR FORCE CENSORSHIP OF TV BROADCAST ABOUT UFOs STIRRED CONTROVERSY IN 1958

In one of the more bizarre incidents of UFO history, a major CBS Television broadcast about UFOs, sponsored by a large corporation, was cut off the air when Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe, USMC (Ret.) departed from the script and started to ad lib.

The "Armstrong Circle Theater," sponsored by the Armstrong Cork Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was a popular program at that time. The UFO discussion, broadcast on Jan. 22, 1958, was titled *UFOs: Enigma of the Skies*. It had been carefully scripted under the strong influence of the Air Force.

Frustrated by the continued efforts of the Air Force to control what he wanted to say, Maj. Keyhoe started to announce that NICAP (the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, which he directed) had been working with a Senate committee to investigate UFO secrecy, when the sound level of the audio -- very obviously -- was abruptly cut.

When CBS-TV was deluged with phone calls, letters, and telegrams protesting what appeared to be overt censorship, CBS justified the action by stating:

"This program had been carefully cleared for security reasons....public interest was served by the action taken by CBS."

This strange explanation was given at a time when the Air Force regularly claimed that there was nothing at all to UFOs, that the Air Force had nothing to

hide, and there were no UFO-related national security implications. This being the case, what exactly did they (and CBS) fear that Major Keyhoe might say that could possibly justify their action? Why did the Air Force quite literally demand complete control over the script? Major Keyhoe's ad lib comments actually were innocuous (see following text).

JACK ANDERSON — About Television
National Herald 1/24/58

CBS Censors Flying Saucer Expert For Fear He'd Reveal U.S. Secrets

THE COLUMBIA Broadcasting System said on Thursday it had removed certain portions of flying saucer expert Donald E. Keyhoe's...
...I would suspect I was fortunate in not having met...
...While before Lord Clifton's...
...The second and cut off...
...night when Major Donald E. Keyhoe...
...is the life past of the...

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (AP) — Johnson did not dispute what...
...CBS television program had...
...night when Major Donald E. Keyhoe...
...is the life past of the...

The entire episode is very revealing about official attitudes and beliefs at that time. As the program neared the scheduled broadcast date, some of the prominent participants dropped out, including Kenneth Arnold (famous UFO sighting witness) and Edward J. Ruppelt (former chief of the Air Force UFO project), rebelling against the (from their viewpoint) emasculation of the script, and the rigid controls being placed by the Air Force and the complicit program producer on what they could say.

(Continued on next page)

Armstrong Circle Theater, Continued

On Jan. 28, 1958, Major Keyhoe sent a form letter to the NICAP membership list informing them that what he was about to say when he was cut off the air was:

In the last six months, we (NICAP) have been working with a Senate committee investigating official secrecy on Unidentified Flying Objects. If open hearings are held, I feel it will prove beyond doubt that the flying saucers are real machines under intelligent control.

One can only conclude that Major Keyhoe's credibility was such that someone feared a panic. Certainly the notion that one man's opinion would somehow violate national security or cause any sort of panic among a public eager for more information about UFOs seemed very strange at the time, and makes no more sense in retrospect.

In February, deluged by hundreds of letters and telegrams of complaint, the public relations director of Armstrong sent a form letter to inquirers, including many NICAP members. Clyde O. Hess, manager of public information, said:

It was most regrettable that a portion of Major Donald C. [sic] Keyhoe's statement had to be deleted because he departed from the prepared script. The producer and director, in observance of strict network rules, had no alternative but to order the audio cut off since they had no idea what the statement might contain. This network policy is designed to prevent any unfortunate incidents that might be embarrassing to the participants, the sponsor, the public, or the network.

Typical Reactions to the Incident

"What was so important in Major Keyhoe's speech that we were not allowed to hear? I say this is an outrage." - Letter to *Portland Oregonian* 1/24/58

"I take no stand either way on UFOs, but I *am* going to fight for my right to know whatever it was [Major Keyhoe] said." - Letter to CBS-TV 1/23/58

"What makes me boil is that the powers that be consider the American public too stupid and childish to take this thing in stride ...Just what were your last words that we weren't allowed to hear?" - Letter to Maj. Keyhoe 1/23/58

"Call it anything you like, but it appeared to be a very shocking display of censorship; and certainly offensive to the intelligence of the American public.." - Letter to CBS-TV 1/23/58

In an amusing sidelight, the producer of the program, Robert E. Costello, had written a letter to Major Keyhoe the day after the broadcast, apparently before the storm of controversy had broken. It said, in part:

The response to the show has been very good. Any inquiries on your work we have referred to your office. You may be interested to know that you have thousands of fans as evidenced by the CBS switchboard which had calls backed up for forty-five minutes following the show.

Chagrined about the uproar he had created, Major Keyhoe promptly sent a
(Continued on page 6)

CBS TELEVISION

A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.

485 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 22, NEW YORK · PLAZA 1-2345

HERBERT A. CARLBORG

Director of Editing

January 31, 1958

Mrs. I. E. Epperson
3790 So. Harvard Blvd.
Los Angeles, California

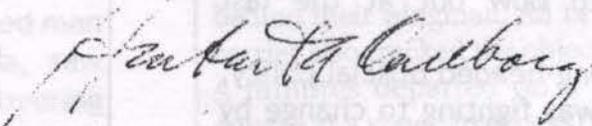
Dear Mrs. Epperson:

This refers to your letter of January 23 regarding the ARMSTRONG CIRCLE THEATRE'S "UFO" program which was aired on the CBS Television Network, January 22.

This program had been carefully cleared for security reasons. Therefore, it was the responsibility of this network to insure performance in accordance with predetermined security standards. Any indication that there would be a deviation might lead to statements that neither this network nor the individuals on the program were authorized to release. As a consequence, public interest was served by the action taken by CBS in deleting the audio in Major Keyhoe's speech at a point where he apparently was about to deviate from the script.

Attached is a copy of a signed statement by Major Keyhoe which is self-explanatory. I am sure that you are glad to know, therefore, that this matter was handled properly. Thank you for your interest in registering your opinion.

Sincerely,



HAC:mca
Att.

Armstrong Circle Theater, Continued

letter to the Armstrong Cork Company and CBS taking personal responsibility for the incident, which he blamed on a "misunderstanding." His statement said:

Due to a misunderstanding on my part about rules of approval on script changes, it was necessary for Armstrong Circle Theater and CBS to interrupt a statement I was about to make...While I mentioned it to one or two persons connected with the program, I had not discussed it with the director or producer or any representative of CBS.

Certain minor ad lib changes which I made had been allowed and on that basis I had assumed that the deleted statement would not be contrary to the program rules. Since then I have been told that CBS Continuity has to approve extreme departures from scripts. Therefore, the producer and director had no alternative but to order audio cut-off since they had no idea of what I was about to say.

I regret the misunderstanding and wish to make it plain that this was not an attempt at censorship by CBS or Armstrong Circle Theater.

Left unsaid was the fact that it was an attempt at censorship by the U.S. Air Force, whose representatives applied constant pressure on the program to prevent Major Keyhoe from stating his case in his own words. Their heavy-handed influence also caused Ruppelt and Arnold to bow out at the last minute.

A very wrong-headed official policy, which NICAP was fighting to change by exposing it to public scrutiny, sought to

totally control a public discussion of the facts and issues. Thanks to Major Keyhoe's courage and determination, the policy backfired badly in this case.

January 16, 1958, Brazilian Photo Released by President of Brazil

As a sidelight to the Armstrong Circle Theater broadcast, just a week earlier four very clear daylight photographs had been taken of a Saturn-shaped UFO from the deck of a Brazilian naval vessel near Trindade Isle. The film was developed on board and eyewitnesses on the deck confirmed that the photos showed what they had seen.

The U.S. Air Force was well aware of the photographs through the embassy in Rio de Janeiro. This significant new photographic evidence may have been a hidden factor that concerned Air Force officials in the days leading up to the CBS-TV national broadcast in which some credible participants planned to suggest that UFOs were spaceships from another planet. □

HISTORICAL RECORDINGS

"BATTLE OF LOS ANGELES"

February 23, 1942

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Ghost Rocket Over Sweden
Pres. Truman Denies Discs

CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY UFO HISTORY, SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1951

(Installments appear in each issue.)

September 1951: Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt appointed chief of Project Blue Book UFO investigation.

Sept. 10, 1951: Two Air Force pilots near Sandy Hook, New Jersey, chased a flat, round silvery UFO traveling at an estimated 900 m.p.h. (Air Force intelligence report.)

Sept. 23, 1951: F-86 jets near March AFB, California, circled beneath a UFO, unable to reach its altitude. (Air Force Intelligence report.)

Oct. 9, 1951: An aviation official in Terre Haute, Indiana, and a pilot in Paris, Illinois, successively saw a flattened sphere moving at high speed. The pilot saw it hover, then speed away to the northeast. (Air Force unexplained case.)

Oct. 10-11, 1951: General Mills balloon personnel flying near Minneapolis, Minn., had two sightings on consecutive days of sharply maneuvering UFOs surrounded by glowing halos of light.

Oct. 19, 1951: Directorate of Air Force intelligence issued R&D requirement orders for the coming fiscal years. A budget was included for "scientific examination of all files" related to evidence for the existence of UFOs and their general characteristics.

Oct. 30, 1951: An Air Force enlisted man stationed at Nellis AFB, Nevada, saw three silvery, circular objects hovering in the vicinity of the Yucca Flats atomic

test site at about 6:45 a.m. Each object was flat on bottom with a dome on top. A guard was alerted and also saw the objects, which were then joined by several additional groups of discs arranged in a row. After about 30 seconds, the objects departed upwards at an angle and disappeared in seconds. (Walter N. Webb interview report.)

Nov. 7, 1951: The captain and crew of a steamship on Lake Superior reported an orange oval in high-speed horizontal flight, with two rows of three glowing portholes visible along the side. The object sped out of sight in the direction of Ontario.

Nov. 9, 1951: Dr. Lincoln LaPaz of the Institute of Meteoritics in New Mexico commented publicly about the unusual nature and frequency of green fireballs observed over the state. There had been 7 sightings in 11 days. "They don't behave like ordinary meteorites at all." he said. (Associated Press).

Navy Pilot 1951 Radar Sighting

In a 1957 letter to NICAP, Lt. Cmdr. M.C. Davies, reported a Fall 1951 UFO sighting when he was an air crew training officer in an anti-submarine squadron on an aircraft carrier near Korea. While flying on instruments at 5,000 feet a radar target, larger than their wingman, appeared circling the fleet. The UFO then took position behind their wingman. All 14 radars on the carrier also tracked the object, which after 5 minutes departed on a straight line course at a speed in excess of 1,000 mph.

NEW ZEALAND UFO HISTORY: HAROLD H. FULTON

A prominent UFO researcher in New Zealand from the 1950s into the 1970s was Harold H. Fulton. He was a NICAP member and Adviser (as a sergeant in the Royal New Zealand Air Force), and later (like many other former NICAP members) became a representative of the Mutual UFO Network after the demise of NICAP. The following news story from a New Zealand newspaper reports the founding of a major UFO group there in 1952:

Organisation to Study Flying Saucer Reports

(P.A.) AUCKLAND, Oct. 13, 1952.

An organisation - Civilian Saucer Investigation (New Zealand) - was set up in Auckland last night to prove or disprove the existence of flying saucers. It has no affiliations with the Government, the armed forces, or any society to which its members may belong.

The organisation was born from a thirst for personal knowledge and a dissatisfaction with theories already offered to explain sightings. Most of the members have been studying flying saucer reports for at least five years. They represent all interested parties - astronomers, scientists, aviators and the man-in-the-street.

A committee elected last night is: President, Mr. H.H. Fulton (a sergeant in the R.N.Z.A.F. attached to engineering); secretary, Mr. R.J. Lavaris (A member of the Territorial Air Force); committee, Messrs. G.H. Gilmore (a former commercial aviation engineering inspector), B. Purdeu (a former R.A.F. Intelligence officer), D. Lavaris (a student studying for a science degree), and



E.J.N. Greagor (an astronomer and engineer). It is understood one of New Zealand's top atomic energy men will join in the investigations. The society hopes to receive reports which will be filed from any person claiming to have sighted a flying saucer. All names will be confidential.

When notorious American contactee George Adamski visited New Zealand on a world tour in 1959, Fulton reported to NICAP on what he observed. Adamski was claiming to have regular liaison with beings from different planets, and taking frequent rides with them through space as an honored guest. Fulton was disgusted by what he heard.

(Continued on next page)

New Zealand, continued

In a letter to Major Keyhoe at NICAP dated March 30, 1959, Fulton said:

Had the opportunity to listen to George Adamski on four occasions in Auckland during his recent visit, resulting in my now being certain in my own mind that his tales are largely if not wholly of his own fabrication. Absolutely disgusted in the whole Adamski business....He made the most idiotic and fantastically stupid statements while here.

In the collection of the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives is a thick folder of correspondence with Fulton well into the late 1970s, when he was associated with the Mutual UFO Network and heading MUFON-NZ. □

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Hermann Oberth on Spaceships

Writing to Julian Hennessey in London, England, on May 26, 1967, Prof. Dr. Hermann Oberth, the famous German spaceflight pioneer, expressed his views about UFOs (copy in Donald E. Keyhoe Archives):

I am convinced of the reality of UFOs, but I do not know what they are. Until now the only theory about them, that could not be disproved, is the assumption of Keyhoe, that they are spaceships from other celestial bodies. But the circumstance, that this theory could not yet been [sic] disproved, is of course no proof, that they are strange spaceships indeed.

Perhaps they are quite other things, and only nobody found out, what things. Against reports of "contactees" I am rather sceptic. If UFOs should be spaceships indeed, I do not think that they have originated in our Solar System. Why they are here, I do not know.

Space Travel 'Utter Bilge'

Under this headline on Jan. 3, 1956, the *London Daily Telegraph* quoted Prof. Richard van der Riet Woolley, newly appointed British Astronomer Royal, as pooh-poohing the idea that man would ever travel in space; it was simply too costly.

Woolley was promptly contradicted by Kenneth W. Gatland, a council member of the British Interplanetary Society, who said: "Space travel is inevitable The money will come."

Woolley also debunked UFOs, citing an example of receiving a call from the RAF about an object visible in the western sky. When he looked, he saw the planet Mars.

DIALOGUE WITH ➤

LOREN GROSS

"Apocalyptic" Research: Raw Data

Loren Gross is retired from the General Motors Corporation and lives in Fremont, California. He was one of the founding members of the Sign Historical Group, which focuses on the history of UFOs. Within the UFO community he is known for his series of publications on UFO history, year by year, titled *The Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse, UFOs: A History*.

Hall: You were an Air Force radar operator during the Korean War period, is that correct?

Gross: Yes, that's correct. I was a radar operator for the Air Defense Command (ADC) from 1956 to 1960. I was stationed at radar sites in Michigan, Korea, and Arizona

Hall: And I recall that you were a member of NICAP and in touch with us in the 1950s.

Gross: I didn't have very much contact with NICAP during my service years or right after when I attended college. By the way, after examining thousands of UFO reports I don't feel radar cases are the best kind. There is too much anomalous propagation, small aircraft entering and leaving the radar beam, and

electronic malfunctions. Some good witnesses seeing a UFO close up in daylight beats any radar return.

Hall: Well, some of the radar-visual cases are pretty strong. Did you personally track UFOs on the radar screen?

Gross: No. I did have two UFO-related incidents though. My first assignment when I got out of radar school was at the ADC site at Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, near Detroit. I was a very green 18-year-old A/3C [Airman Third Class]. When I mentioned the subject of UFOs my crew chief related an incident that occurred sometime before I arrived.

I think it is the one Major Keyhoe used in one of his books. It involved a jet chase of a pair of UFOs by a two-plane flight of interceptors, apparently scrambled out of Selfridge. The radar showed the UFOs disappearing and then reappearing behind the interceptors. This seemed impossible unless there were four UFOs, or there was some scope malfunction. A third possibility was

(Continued on next page)

Loren Gross interview, continued

that the UFOs “jumped” over the jets between radar sweeps.

Hall: Was there any visual sighting?

Gross: I'm not sure how much visual contact there was – an important point. The RO [radar officer] usually has his head under the hood. Most pilots seem to have problems locating lights in the sky at night. They are pretty busy; that's why they have ROs. Even though I could not get much information because I was a lowly airman, I did think the data might be useful to compare with other reports of a similar nature.

Hall: What was the second incident?

Gross: Once when I was in Korea (1957) I was walking to radar ops and passed by two civilian Bendix radar technicians talking to a sergeant. The Bendix people were checking out the site's HRI (height radar). They had a portable scope hooked up so they could monitor the returns [radar target displays] as they adjusted various controls. The three men were expressing puzzlement over a number of targets at 100,000 feet. The range put the mystery targets over the DMZ (demilitarized zone) at about the middle of the Korean Peninsula. I stopped and looked briefly at the scope.

Hall: By this time you had a year or so of experience.

Gross: At that point I had about a year and a half of experience.

Hall: About how many targets were there? Two or three? Several?



Loren Gross with Sgt. Choi, Korean AF 1957 photo.

Were they “solid” appearing?

Gross:. There were at least three radar targets on the screen and they looked to be good solid returns. They were either moving slowly or were motionless. Balloons? I sent NICAP a note about the incident and enclosed the day's winds aloft figures displayed in radar ops. If I had been an officer, I could have phoned adjacent sites and requested a radar check on the mystery targets, but I wasn't so it was never done.

Hall: What career did you pursue when you got out of the Air Force?

Gross: I studied to be a teacher; went through the whole six years and got my B.A. degree. But I didn't like the profession, so I took a
(Continued on next page)

Loren Gross interview, continued

temporary job with General Motors and ended up staying with the company.

Hall: We met in Chicago during the founding meeting of the Sign Historical Group. Are you still active in SHG?

Gross: I helped SHG reach some of the goals set at the first Chicago meeting. I obtained UFO files from Dr. Willy Smith, Robert Gribble, and Murray Bott of New Zealand. However, I failed to get any of Frank Edwards' files. I check the SHG web site often, but I spend most of my time writing my histories.

Hall: These days you are noted among serious UFO researchers for those histories. Your excellent "Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse" series.

Gross: What makes the history series something of value is its raw data. The series is for the use of serious researchers. I have to say that most of the credit goes to the many people who gathered the data, like Jan Aldrich and Barry Greenwood. They are the real heroes. I just passed it along.

Hall: You have been very generous in providing them to people like me. Why don't you publish them on a broader scale? I think they would be ideal for library collections where they would be accessible to a far larger number of users.

Gross: There are copyright problems if one wanted to go commercial. Besides, I don't need the money or

the ego trip. I am comfortably retired. Also, complete sets of them are available for public use at the Roswell UFO Museum, the Mutual UFO Network, and the Center for UFO Studies.

Hall: And at the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives.

Gross: Yes.

Hall: Now, the inevitable question for someone who has pursued the subject for nearly half a century: What is your opinion about the nature of the hardcore UFO reports?

Gross: My history series is biased toward the existence of very high tech machines of unknown origin. It's true that some reports seem like magic and their purpose puzzling, but to a great extent one should expect that if we are dealing with an advanced civilization. On the other hand, I'm well aware of the ideas of men like Vallee and Keel. I can't say that I'm ready to endorse any extreme UFO origin theory at this point.

Hall: What do you think needs to be done in order to attract serious, scientific attention to the subject.

Gross: Well, UFOlogists have tried hard for half a century. Personally, I believe it will be something the UFOs do that will finally alert the world.

Hall: I think so too. All we can do in the meantime is study the reports carefully and try to figure out what is going on. □