

UFO POTPOURRI

no. 327

CIVIL WAR UFO

The following letter was found in a booklet compiled by the Historical Society of Pearisburg, Virginia - letters written by soldiers during the Civil War.....

Camp Fort Spring
Greenbrier Co., Va.
September 18, 1863

Dear Uncle and Aunt (Snidow)

I this evening seat myself to write you a letter for the first one since I have been in service but you must excuse me this time and I will try an write oftener. I am well at present and hope this may find you in good health. There was something mysterious seen near Lewisburg and at different places in County. I will give you the particulars. On Tuesday the 1st of this month Mr. Dwyer a gentlemen residing near the Kanawha turnpike happened to be at a neighbors (Mr. Piercy's) sitting on the porch with Mr. Piercy's family when one of them called his attention to a body of mysterious rectangular objects moving vertically through the air just above the trees in an adjacent Sugar Orchard. These objects wre apparently aboaut eight feet long, two and a half in width and one inch thick. They were white tinged a little with green. They moved directly North in a column of about fifty yards wide with the order and regularity of soldiers. The rear was nearer the ground than the front and consequently had to pass through the orchard. In emerging from the trees they resumed their original order and so remained until out of sight.

Immediately following but a little further west was seen a vast army of men dressed in white and moving in quick time and in as good order as soldiers on dress parade. After passing any obstacle they would resume their places in ranks. Thus passed the entire column occupying more than an hour and presenting a scene of awful granduer and sublimity to those who beheld it. Whether this be a dream or optical delusion or means used by Ammiepotence to forshadow events and to strengthen his suffering people I will not endeavor to determine. I will state however that those who know the parties will give them credit for candor, intelligence and veracity. I will now bring my letter to a close. Aunt I am much obliged to you and Lewis for the cheese and sugar so nothing more but remain with respect your obedient Nephew.

James P. Peck

PS give my respects to all my relations and Friends

James P. P...

(James Polk Peck was born Nov. 3, 1845 and died June 3, 1864 at the Battle of Gaines Mills)

Credit: M. Beach (Genealogist)

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MUFON is ready for any visitors from outer space

By MAX RIZLEY JR.
The Daily News

CLEAR LAKE CITY — It's been awhile — almost seven years, in fact — since the last rash of unidentified flying object sightings around Galveston. That was in October 1981, when the big orange light seen hovering over the isle made news nationwide.

But if the UFOs do come back, John Schuessler and his MUFON volunteers will be ready.

MUFON is short for Mutual UFO Network, a non-profit organization that investigates claims of UFO sightings. Their members include engineers, pilots and astronomers; their methods are scientific and methodical. These are not people you'll find sitting on mountaintops in aluminum-foil hats, talking to Martians.

As a matter of fact, you'll more than likely find Schuessler, MUFON's deputy director for administration, sitting in the office that takes up much of his home's second floor, "talking" to a personal computer.

He and about 50 people cover the Galveston-Houston area, interviewing witnesses of sightings, taking down descriptions of what they see, and calling area airports, military bases and the Goodyear blimp base to make sure they aren't flying anything unusual.

Schuessler and his MUFON colleagues pore over the data, looking for the high-value stuff — multiple-witness sightings, sightings involving animal reactions or interference with electrical equipment, things beyond a vague "light in the sky."

"We try to eliminate the knowns," such as aircraft and astronomical phenomena, "and get it down to the category of the truly unknown," he said.

Some 90 percent of UFO sightings turn out to be identifiable, Schuessler said. "It's generally re-entry debris (the burning remains of old satellites falling back to Earth) or aircraft in unusual positions," he said. "That's pretty easy to track down — it just takes time."

It's that 10 percent of sightings that remain unidentified that keep this sober, silver-haired space operations engineer fascinated with his hobby.

"My personal interest is in cases that are more than just a light in the sky," he said. "I like the cases where there are a number of witnesses, and — I hate to say it — where people are injured. People won't do that to themselves.

Injuries? Oh, yes, Schuessler said. Some people who have been close to a UFO suffer burn injuries, severity varying with proximity. The injuries usually appear to be radiation burns — not the kind one would get from exposure to a radioactive substance, he explained, but rather the sort of injury a high-energy source might cause.

"Something has to cause an injury," he said, explaining the value of such incidents. "If you can get enough data, you can model a range of things that might have caused it. It begins to tell you a little bit about the nature of the object."

Other valuable sightings are those seen by several independent witnesses — such as Galveston's 1981 visitation, which was seen by several policemen as well as civilians, and is thus especially valuable.

"A policeman is a very good reporter," Schuessler explained. "He puts it in distinct, police-report terms — just the facts, as they say."

The UFO scene, at least in Galveston County, is quiet now, although Schuessler says there has been a worldwide upswing in sightings last year. In fact, there was one tumbling light in the sky over Red Bluff Road in Pasadena April 22, watched by a San Jacinto Junior College student and several policemen.

One reason Galveston has been so quiet, Schuessler said, may have more to do with its isolation rather than disinterest on the UFOs' part.

"Galveston's so separated," he said. "Galveston's news stays in Galveston — you have to get it by word of mouth. If you don't get it that way, you don't get it." And, he said, most incidents anywhere go unreported, since the witnesses tend to assume someone else also saw it and will report it.

Schuessler would like to get some volunteers in Galveston County to improve his coverage here. Anyone interested can write him at P.O. Box 58485, Houston, 77258-8485.

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John Schuessler, MUFON deputy director