

# UFO RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

A MONTHLY REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

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## AF ACADEMY TEXTBOOK REVISION

The Air Force (AF) Academy textbook chapter that taught its students that UFOs were probably extraterrestrial has been modified as of the Fall 1970 semester (see *UFO Research Newsletter*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 1). Chapter XXXIII of the Academy's Department of Physics textbook, *Introductory Space Science*, Volume II, is now entitled "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena" and leans more heavily toward the negative conclusions of the University of Colorado UFO Project report. However, it doesn't quite go all the way; rather, it strides the fence and even admits that many UFO reports "are not presently explainable."

"There have been thousands of reports of 'unidentified aerial phenomena' in the past quarter of a century and a number of these reports are still listed as 'unidentifiable,'" the chapter, which has been trimmed from a fairly detailed 14 pages to a sparse seven, now states. It also admitted that about 6% of the sightings gathered by the now defunct Project Blue Book, the AF's long-time official UFO organ, "are officially listed as 'unexplained.'"

In capsule form, the chapter covers the history of UFOs in the U.S., including the AF projects, the Robertson Panel report of 1953 and the Colorado Project.

### *McDonald's Hypotheses Adopted*

A set of eight hypotheses set forth by Dr. James E. McDonald, long-time UFO advocate and senior physicist of the University of Arizona's Institute of Atmospheric Physics, for explanations of UFO sightings were adopted by the textbook. They are:

1. Hoaxes, fabrications, and frauds. While admitting that some reports fit into this category, the chapter states that "confirmed hoaxes are only a small percentage of the total number of UFO reports. Most reports are by reliable witnesses and show no evidence of fabrication or fraud."

2. Hallucinations, mass hysteria, rumor phenomena. "The large number of multi-observer reports from independent observers, and reports from military personnel, airline pilots, policemen, scientists and other qualified witnesses makes it unlikely that many UFO reports are the results..." of this category, the author of the work says.

3. Advanced terrestrial technologies. Although stating that some reports can be explained by satellites, test craft, secret weapons, etc., the textbook reasons that, due to the tremendous advance in terrestrial technology and the apparent sameness of UFO technology over a 25-year period, it is unlikely that UFO reports in general can be explained as "products of an advanced terrestrial technology."

4. Lay misinterpretations of well-understood physical phenomena. Some, but not all, UFO reports fall into this category, the chapter states. However, many sightings, it adds, seem to be at variance with certain laws of physics.

5. Poorly understood physical phenomena. "Attempting to explain UFO reports by some poorly understood phenomenon is risky at best, and probably is impossible until the phenomenon is better understood," the textbook proclaims. Sightings of lenticular clouds may account for some reports, it says, but "attempts to explain UFOs in terms of mirages, ball lightning..., atmospheric inversion layers, or anomalous propagation of radar signals are much less tenable."

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CONDON SPEAKS -- AGAIN  
(An Editorial Comment)

"I think that there very well may be a possibility UFOs exist," said Dr. Edward U. Condon in a speech at the University of Missouri in St. Louis on May 18, "but only if you are talking about the most outside likelihood or remote possibility."

The director of the now-defunct two-year, AF-sponsored, half-million dollar "investigation" of the University of Colorado UFO Project said the study provided "an extraordinary introduction to the errors and eccentricities of what people thought they saw."

"Hundreds of people said they saw little men looking out of spaceship windows when all they saw was a Russian satellite entering the atmosphere," he remarked in the May 19, 1971, edition of *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Condon said that UFO reports "were mainly fanned by a popular, exaggerated press," but added that there were too many of them to deny the existence of UFOs. Now, he stated, most Americans accept the negative conclusions of the project's report, released in January, 1969.

*Colorado Report Contradictory*

No serious student of the UFO phenomenon needs to be told that the positive body of the mammoth Colorado report contradicts its negative conclusions and recommendations. The fact that about 35% of the cases cited in the report are listed as unknowns is clear indication of this. These include reports by commercial and military pilots, FAA personnel, E-M effect cases, sightings by astronauts and an "extraordinary" photograph case.

The editor of this newsletter was intimately involved with the Colorado Project and it was clear to him and others involved that Condon, his project coordinator, Robert Low, and a few other scientists with the study were negatively disposed toward the subject from the beginning. The now-famous Low memorandum, written months *before* the start of the project and suggesting that the study be conducted on a negative basis because of the non-respectability of the subject, is evidence of this. Two scientists who disagreed with this view were fired from the project for "alleged incompetence" and internal dissensions within the project soon divided it into a negative and positive camp. The negative camp won out. Also, few reporters could afford to take the time to wade through the 1,000-plus pages of the report. Condon's negative conclusions were neatly compacted within the first eight pages.

We suggest that those who may be interested do take the time to wade through the report, dry though it may be at times, before coming to a final conclusion on either the UFO subject or the report itself.

Textbook Revision (Continued from Page 1)

6. Poorly understood psychological phenomena. "Few data are available to determine how these phenomena may relate to the UFO problem, but we must at least allow for the possibility that there may be some effects," the revised chapter states.

7. Extraterrestrial visitation. "Despite numerous UFO reports concerning purported space vehicles and alien visitors," the textbook remarks, "there remains doubt as to the veracity of these reports. Such reports do, however, contain a number of strange elements that are verifiable."

8. Messengers of salvation and occult truth. While numerous cults, the chapter states, "have adopted the belief that the mission of UFOs is spiritual...", evidence to support such a belief "is clearly lacking."

"It is unlikely that any new official scientific studies will be forthcoming," the textbook concludes, "primarily because the conclusions of the Condon report have been so widely accepted."

#### SCANDINAVIAN ECLIPSE FILM EXPLAINED

A film of two discs over Scandinavia taken by a photographer during a total eclipse of the sun has apparently been explained by well-qualified witnesses as "reflections." Julian Hennessey, of London, England, uncovered the evidence.

The well-publicized sighting took place on June 30, 1954, near Lifjell, Denmark. Three planes loaded with scientists and newsmen were on an expedition to study the eclipse. At 2:17 p.m., it was reported, about 50 witnesses in the aircraft saw "two shiny discs" fly by. The expedition's chief photographer, John Bjornulf, caught them on 16mm color film.

Then the controversy began. Did Bjornulf photograph UFOs or reflections off the plane's window? The evidence strongly suggests the latter.

Another photographer, Raun Conradi, was also a witness. His job was to film the eclipse for a documentary. He stated, in the October 14, 1954, edition of the Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, "I saw [Bjornulf's] film. I maintained... *that to me [the UFOs] appeared to be reflectio s.*" [Italics original].

#### *Scientists Discount UFO Theory*

Professor Eberhart Jensen, Director of the Institute of Theoretical Astrophysics, University of Oslo, Norway, was flying in one of the other planes.

"Our plane was a Heron with open hatches through which we filmed the sun," Prof. Jensen wrote in a letter to Hennessey dated March 31, 1970. "Mr. Bjornulf took his film through a closed window in the other plane and the elliptical lights you mention are due to reflections. This was proved the next day when a team headed by Dr. J.V. Garwick and Mr. R. Brahde reproduced exactly the same light patterns in the plane on the ground by turning it in the proper direction relative to the sun."

Both Rolf Brahde, also of the astrophysics institute, and Jan V. Garwick, a philosophy professor, confirm Prof. Jensen's statement.

"Garwick, Christensen and myself had a similar plane driven out on the Fornebu air field and placed in the same direction as regards the position of the sun," Brahde told Hennessey in a letter dated April 13, 1970. "Then we saw exactly the same pattern as was shown on Bjornulf's film... If you want to get more pictures exactly like the film taken before and after the solar eclipse in 1954..., you should take a plane up and fly it in the east-west direction when the sun is about 40-50° over the horizon and photograph the horizon on the sunward side through windows of plexiglass with approximately the same curvature as in the 1954 case. I can assure you that you can obtain similar results."

Garwick, in a letter to Hennessey dated April 12, 1970, also discounts the UFO theory.

"The original of the film shows the 'elliptical lights'... as being blobs of light with two extensions going out at right angles," the professor wrote. "If the pictures were taken through a window with panes, the effect would be completely explained as a reflex [sic] from a window behind the photographer, partially blotted out by a man's shoulder. This was accepted by Mr. Bjornulf and his... attorney. The two last windows on the port side of the plane had been removed and everybody, including the photographer, were of the opinion that the

pictures had been taken through window no. 2, i.e., through a window without panes so no reflections could appear. The team took pictures out of the three last windows with the same camera which was used on the flight. These pictures were superimposed upon the pictures showing the light spots and it was found that the wing perspective fitted exactly for the picture from the third (paned) window and with no others. This, then, should prove the case."

*Film Difficult to Analyze*

The "prospects for a photogrammetric analysis" of the Bjornulf film "are not good," stated Dr. Robert M.L. Baker, Jr., senior scientist of Computer Sciences Corporation and a photographic expert, in a letter to Hennessey dated May 5, 1970.

"First, the cloud background is a hard one to rely upon for determining angular rates," Dr. Baker declared. "Second, a movie taken from a moving airplane makes the interpretation of angular motions almost impossible even if there existed a good background or foreground. Third, it would be extremely difficult to obtain sufficient photogrammetric data to confirm or refute the allegation that the photographs taken through a paned window are, in reality, sun reflections."

Dr. Baker has performed photographic analyses of other important UFO cases and was a witness before the House Committee on Science and Astronautics UFO hearing on July 29, 1968.

A WITNESS DESCRIBES HIS SIGHTING

By R. Conway Jones

*(The author is a supervisor of consumer sales for a large bank in Georgia. On November 22, 1968, he had a startling encounter with a UFO. His case, as far as we know, was the first of its kind).*

Collecting past due accounts is a thankless job. At the end of a long day one is more than ready to head for home. On Friday, November 22, 1968, I made my last call about one mile south of the intersection of Highway 253 and State Route 91. I left this house just after 8 p.m. The night was clear and stars were visible. I drove to the intersection and turned right toward Newton, Georgia, on Route 91. I proceeded toward Newton for about three miles until I crossed the Notchaway Creek bridge. As I crossed the bridge, I noticed my radio suddenly faded to complete static and the sound died away. I topped a slight rise in the road and started into a long, gradual curve to the left.

About 100 feet in front of me and 50 to 75 feet above the road, I saw an oval-shaped body of light directly over the road. It was yellowish-white and about 50 feet in diameter. There were no defined edges or appearances of a metallic surface. A beam of light was emitted from the main body of light which struck the front of my car. My first reaction was to accelerate and speed under the object. However, when I attempted to do this, I found that my car had completely ceased functioning. I then applied the brakes, quickly coming to a halt. Even though the light from the object illuminated the entire road in front of my car, I was aware that my lights had also gone out. I sat in amazement and made no attempt to do anything except look at the object in astonishment.

*E-M Effects Clear Up*

After what seemed to be two or three minutes, the beam of light was slowly retracted in a way uncommon to any light ever witnessed by me. It was slowly withdrawn with the end of the beam quite visible until it had all been retracted into the main body of light. At this time, the object changed to a bright

reddish-orange, fire-like color and very rapidly ascended. In about 20 to 30 seconds it was completely out of sight, traveling straight upward. I had leaned forward and watched this object ascend and when I sat back in my seat, I discovered that my car was again running and the transmission was still in drive. My lights were shining brightly and my radio once again resumed playing.

The only physical sensation I experienced was a "tingling" all over. This could possibly be due to over-excitement from fear.

I reported this occurrence to local law enforcement personnel and it has been investigated by the U.S. Air Force, NICAP, Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) and many others. However, to date, no one has even ventured to guess or attempted to "explain away" this sighting.

Prior to November 22, 1968, I did not really believe UFOs existed nor did I concern myself with them at all. However, now I am fully convinced that this is a very real problem and should be thoroughly studied.

### ILLINOIS-MISSOURI LIGHT BEAM REPORTS

UFOs that frightened witnesses and emitted bright beams and "blasts" of light have been stirring up the residents of the Quincy, Illinois-Taylor, Missouri, area since January, according to the April 24, 1971, edition of the Quincy *Herald-Whig*.

At 7 p.m., January 18, an unidentified Quincy woman and her son were "quite frightened" when they saw a globe-shaped UFO with 14 box-like windows. The object appeared to be only about 30 feet from the ground.

As she turned her car to park, the woman said, the object emitted a bright beam of light that lit up the brick walks at her feet. Frightened, she ran inside her mother's house. The women returned outside and saw the UFO disappear toward the west-northwest.

Exactly two months and one day later, March 19, between 5:30 and 6 p.m., Walter Davis was driving near Quincy. He saw an object "looking like a large wiener, with a shallow bowl bottom." It was dull gray and had an orange-yellow light shining from four long, narrow windows. The object banked, "revealing a shell-like appearance" and disappeared to the southwest. Davis said the object was "so big that the palm of my hand at arm's length just covered it."

Harold Barkley and his son, Alvin, were watching TV sometime after 10 p.m., April 9, in their home south of Taylor when "an almost blinding blast by three red lights" came through their window. The Barkleys rushed outside and observed a triangular-shaped UFO with three red lights. The object headed east toward Quincy and disappeared in 10 seconds.

The most recent sighting occurred between 6:50 and 7 p.m., April 23, near Quincy. Herb Rupp, a printer for the *Herald-Whig*, and his wife, Gladys, were driving on Route 24. They rounded a curve and were heading east when they saw a brilliant circle of light about one and a half times the size of the moon. A circular beam of light was suddenly emitted from the large light circle. The beam was directed downward and toward the southwest. Then it disappeared. The Rups said they saw the beam for 15-20 seconds.

### "SATELLITE" OBJECT OVER NEW JERSEY

A UFO "surrounded by a circle of... white lights" was seen over East Paterson, N.J., on the evening of May 7, according to the May 8, 1971, edition of the Paterson *News*.

At 9:15, Richard Pashman reported seeing "a square of eight or nine rows of lights... flashing in order..." The lights suddenly went out and, in their places, were two meteor-like objects which apparently separated and disappeared.

Meanwhile, Dennis Matera and "20 or 30 other people" in another section of the city were watching the same or a similar UFO with a ring of "satellite" objects or lights around it. Witnesses said the object was "larger than a low flying airplane" and the lights were spinning.

### A WORLDWIDE ROUNDUP

A worldwide roundup of UFO reports for the first two and a half months of 1971 has been sent to UFOR by George D. Fawcett, of Greeneville, Tennessee.

- January 6. Bastia, France. Residents saw an oval-shaped object with illuminated portholes flying at a low altitude, stated *La Dordogne Livre*.

- January 22. Willard, Ohio. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Williams and son. Witnesses saw a UFO 25 feet in diameter with red and white lights and a dome on top fly near their car. Movements of "persons" inside the dome were seen and "jet exhausts" were on the side of the object, stated the Norwalk, Ohio, *Reflector*.

- January 28. Just before daybreak. Topeka, Kansas. Stewart and Lyle Leppke. Farmers saw a bright object that emitted light near their tractor. They said a small figure was moving outside of the UFO, which had "small windows," according to the Peabody, Kansas, *Gazette-Herald*.

- February 4. Columbia, Kentucky. Owen Wooten. Witness said his dog "barked furiously" and "his back bristled up" at the sight of a lighted UFO, said the *Columbia Statesman*.

- February 18. Vader, Washington. Pat McCollum said he fired three shots at an orange object emitting a humming sound that flew close to his trailer house six to eight feet off the ground, stated the Centralia-Chehalis, Washington, *Daily Chronicle*.

- February 21. Koillissanomat, Finland. Six witnesses photographed a UFO near the home of Otto Bruun. It hovered for 90 minutes before moving off, according to the Seattle, Washington, *Post Intelligence*. Though no further details were given, the long period of hovering is characteristic of a planetary illusion.

- March 15. Near Galvin, Washington. 7 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. Allan Rosbach saw a round UFO with red blinking lights fly at a low altitude.

### SIGHTING CAPSULES

The following reports have also come to UFOR's attention:

- October 1, 1970. 8:18 a.m. Adelaide, Australia. Keith Basterfield, his father and sister. Witnesses saw a round object about "half the size of the moon" that "gave off an intense light... as reflection from a metallic surface..." stated the January-February, 1971, edition of *U.F.O.I.C. Newsletter*, Sydney, Australia.

- May 12, 1971. About 6 p.m. Clarion, Iowa. Deputy Sheriff Duane Skiye, Brian Kay and Jay Lewis. A brilliant, triangular-shaped, orange object was seen hovering for several hours. A telescope was trained on it. The object turned various colors, according to the May 13, 1971, edition of the Fort Dodge, Iowa, *Messenger and Chronicle*.

### A TOWN REACTS

By Gordon I.R. Lore, Jr.

Swamp gas? UFOs? The "deer man"? A ghost? Or an eccentric old man who keeps a coffin he bought in 1910 propped up against his refrigerator? The first is the most likely explanation for the weird lights that were plaguing the residents of Clare, Michigan, in April and May, and the second is a possible answer

for one or two reports. The other "explanations" are good examples of how citizens can psychologically react to something unexplainable.

It all started around the second week in April when residents saw the fast-moving, erratic lights and shrugged them off as a prank by some local students. But the sightings continued, the lights appearing on or near Herrick Road, usually between 9:30 p.m. and 4 a.m.

Kim Tyler said she saw a light on the night of May 2.

"It glowed and came over the freeway and was heading right for us, but some guy turned his headlights on and scared it off," she said.

On the previous evening, May 1, Mrs. Barbara Reid and her two sons, Richard and Robert, were witnesses. They stated the light came over a hill, swooped down upon them and followed their automobile.

"It is the most weird experience I ever had," Mrs. Reid declared.

Still another witness was Sue Smith, a restaurant cook who saw the light with four others at about 2 a.m., May 8. She said it was the size of a basketball and came toward them on Herrick Road, growing alternately dim and bright.

"I was scared to death," Sue admitted. "There were about 10 people out there altogether and everybody just froze."

The object, she said, had "a white light in front and a red one in back." The white light disappeared and the red light flew down the road and out of sight. The object was "about five feet in the air and kind of wobbled as it came toward us."

Other witnesses also reported multi-colored objects, even some that "beep and boop."

#### *A Man with a Coffin*

The reactions of the Clare citizens appeared more strange than the lights. And, ironically -- or is it a mere repeat of history? -- the most eccentric of them -- and the man whose property some Clare-ions say has been bewitched by the light -- 73-year-old Floyd Soper, has the most probable explanation: swamp gas.

"It's a swamp light...", he said. "I've been fooled too many nights by those things. I've seen stumps I thought were on fire, then stuck my hand inside them and they were cold. They just get rotten and give off gas."

Still, some residents apparently think that the light has cast some spell over old Floyd -- or vice versa. They cite his living conditions and eccentricities: he has an assortment of junk in his yard, including dozens of hung up empty milk cartons which twirl in the breeze, two windmills and some whirligigs. His menagerie of animals include seven donkeys, several goats, dogs, cats, chickens, peacocks and doves. All the animals except the fowl have bells around their necks. The bells, folks say, can be heard for "some distance." But, residents claim, "when the light is seen, the milk cartons stop, the windmills stand still, the whirligigs freeze and the bells stop clanging."

But the weirdest of Soper's eccentricities, Clare citizens obviously believe, is the fact that he keeps a coffin in his house. Some say he uses it as an eating table, others that he sleeps in it. Floyd merely says he has it propped up against the refrigerator ("I'm gettin' old and I figure I might as well have everything prepared").

And that is not all. Resurrection of the "deer man" is also a wild idea. In the mid-1950s, youths reported, "a man with horns and hooves like a deer" was seen running around a lovers' lane at speeds up to 50 m.p.h.

What all this has to do with the strange lights is a little hard to figure. And not all the wild ideas are necessarily harmless or humorous. Apparently, according to reports, men and youths were taking out guns "to shoot that thing down."

*Swamp Gas Revisited*

That "thing" is most probably swamp gas. Some Clare residents recall the marsh gas explanation more than five years before of Dr. J. Allen Hynek, former chief UFO scientific consultant to the AF, for the sightings in Dexter and Hillsdale, Michigan. Then, the explanation was regarded as ludicrous, particularly since the sightings took place in March and the conclusion did not fit with the physical characteristics of the reports. Now, it is not so ludicrous. The lights were seen around swamp areas, and the rotten vegetation that produces swamp gas, trapped by the winter freeze in the marshes, is released with the spring thaw.

The possibility that a UFO was involved must also not be completely discounted. A few of the reports do not entirely suggest marsh gas. But, considering the citizens' reactions and their imaginative meanderings concerning Floyd Soper and the "deer man," we wouldn't bet on the UFOs. This time, unlike Dexter and Hillsdale in 1966, they probably did bypass Clare and let the swamp gas reign.

(Compiled from various editions of *The Detroit News* and *The Detroit Free Press*).

DOG EXPIRES AFTER SIGHTING

A witness became ill "with something like a virus" and an Irish setter turned a grayish color and died three months after a UFO sighting in Dade City, Florida, on a September evening in 1968, according to the May 2, 1971, edition of the *Orlando, Fla., Sentinel*.

Shirley Gregersen, then a student at St. Leo's College, said she and the dog, the dormitory mascot, were walking on the college grounds when the animal "began to howl, a sort of scream, as if he was in great pain."

"I looked up... and I saw what looked like a big white ball," Miss Gregersen related. "Its light pulsed. Then it began to go up... Finally, it touched what looked like [a] star, and disappeared."

The witness said she was ill for two weeks "with something like a virus." The puppy, she stated, grew weak "like a very old dog," turned gray and died within three months.

Miss Gregersen said she and a group of students later saw another "white ball" with an inverted dome underneath.

PILOTS SEE MANEUVERING OBJECT

Two Convair pilots saw a UFO execute a fast ascension and hover during a flight from San Diego, California, to Fort Worth, Texas, in late August, 1952, stated the September, 1952, issue of *Convairity*, a publication of the Convair Division of General Dynamics.

"It looked like the landing light of a plane and was at maybe 5,000 feet, ahead of us," Pilot Loran Pilling said. "We were at 3,000 feet. It was about 9:25 p.m. when we sighted it..." Co-pilot Russ Fishback and field tower personnel at Fort Worth were the other witnesses.

The object quickly climbed to 20,000-25,000 feet and hovered.

"Don't ask me what it was," Pilling commented. "I just know I saw something."

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 Enclosed is an information sheet with a coupon for subscribing to *UFO Research Newsletter*. We ask that you pass it along to anyone who may be interested in subscribing. Thank you.  
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Vol. I, No. 4, of *UFO Research Newsletter* will be ready for mailing by July 15. Included in this issue will be: (a) two sighting reports from California and Oregon during the UFO wave of 1967; (b) a series of sightings from Tennessee in 1968; and (c) a report on a series of UFO articles by Julian Hennessey in *Horizons; the Magazine of BOAC Flight Operations*.