

SUNite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

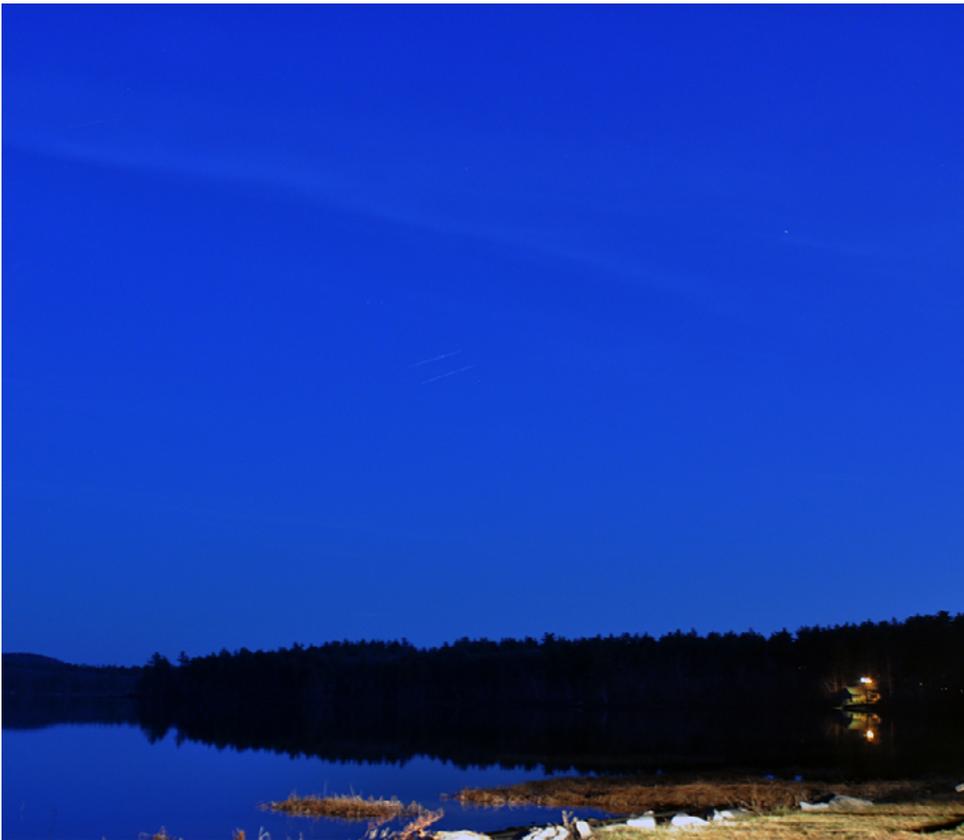


The first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the easiest person to fool.

Richard Feynman

January-February 2016

Volume 8 Number 1



Front: The Ramey memo still continues to be considered the Roswell “smoking gun”. Unlike the Roswell slides, the words on the paper elude a proper reading and there seems to be little chance of them being unambiguously deciphered in the near future. I take the time to restate my position on controversy in this issue.

Left: This photograph was taken just during strong twilight on December 5th. It shows the recent launch of the Cygnus spacecraft from Cape Canaveral. Because of its trajectory and lighting conditions, the second stage and fairings were visible from Manchester, NH as three very bright objects moving across the sky.

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Another year without convincing evidence

Like waiting for the rapture, the promise that there will be full disclosure of government UFO secrets or conclusive evidence will be revealed still remains elusive to UFOlogists. In the past years, promises of great revelations have been made but none have ever really panned out. Most of these presentations have often turned out to be fiascos. I can safely predict that this year will be more of the same. We will have to listen to more UFO stories, questionable videos/photographs, and tales of yesterday involving grand conspiracies. Using this approach, I doubt that anybody will deliver on their promises.

The best chance to produce anything meaningful seems to be the UFOdata project or Marc D’Antonio/Douglas Trumbull’s UFO-TOGII effort. The cost of both of these projects appears to be extremely high, which means it may be many years before they even become semi-operational. While I think that they may never reach the potential for which they were designed, it is something that should be attempted. If there is anything to the UFO phenomena, this would be the best chance of exposing it. That being said, if no alien spaceships are recorded, will UFOlogists be willing to accept that data as proof that the skeptics are essentially correct?

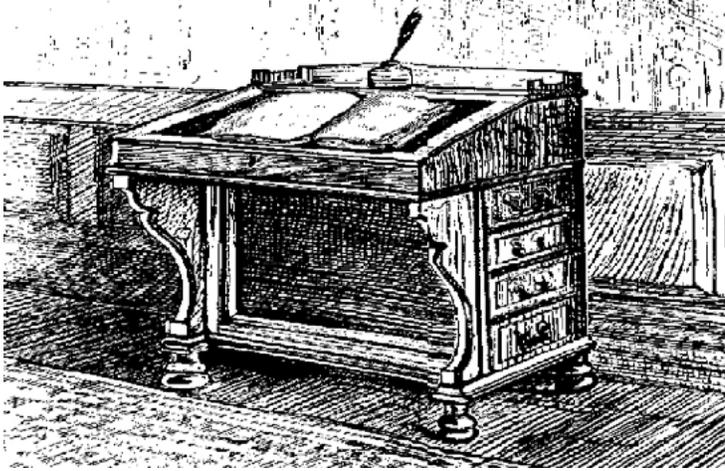
Last issue, I mentioned the release of the new “Ramey memo” scans. While David Rudiak seems to think they constitute a breakthrough of some kind, many of those I talked to seemed to think otherwise. There seems to be little, or no, improvement over the previous scans. Despite the lack of a breakthrough, I decided to set aside some space in SUNlite to voice my objections to the present interpretation of the document.

In this issue, I, once again emphasize the best explanation for the Kecksburg case. In SUNlite 3-6, I gave all the information required to understand what transpired that night. Now, thanks to Ted Molczan, I have some additional information to demonstrate what was seen that night was nothing more than a bright meteor fireball that exploded south of Detroit, Michigan.

I want to thank David Schroth for his interesting contribution in this issue. As always, I like to entertain the writings of others on the subject as long as those contributions don’t involve grand conspiracy theories or speculation disguised as facts.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Robert Sheaffer reminded everybody about the November 5, 1990 UFO event over Europe. This turned out to be a Russian booster rocket re-entry but the descriptions by many people indicated something more. My favorite were the British Tornado pilots, who believed they saw a massive craft that flew faster than their own aircraft. Another case of expert witnesses, who allowed their own preconceptions to influence their interpretation of what they saw. Like the other UFO witnesses, who made reports that night, they probably said "I know what I saw" but what they really saw was something different than what they described.

Last issue, I mentioned the UFOdata organization that is going to spend many thousands of dollars to put together a station to monitor the skies for UFOs and gather scientific data. I also felt they were over-engineering the effort and should remember to "keep it simple stupid". I then noticed that such a group apparently does exist for meteor work. They

are called Sky Sentinel and have a large group of sky cameras that record events. One can even look at their data, which is displayed for all to see. I have yet to see any of these stations claim they recorded something unknown. If they can't record UFOs, what chance does UFOdata have with their one station?

Another Trident missile launch generated UFO reports in California. The testing of trident missiles off of the California coast is not unusual. A similar event was reported in SUNlite 6-6 but it was early in the morning and not widely observed. This event happened in "prime time" and, like all submarine launched missile tests, was unannounced. The event was widely reported and recorded, which means any major UFO event should have similar evidence. Because such evidence does not exist makes one wonder about those UFO reports involving space ships that are enormous in size

The star that exhibited strange light variations was checked out by SETI and they found nothing. I guess we will have to look elsewhere for evidence of an alien civilization.

Gilles Fernandez wrote a piece about how military flare drops commonly produce UFO reports. This is no surprise for skeptics but UFO proponents can have mistaken such activity in the past that something unknown to science was seen.

Ted Molczan explained the recovery of spheres in Spain as being parts of a centaur booster rocket that re-entered the Earth's atmosphere on 3 November. Because the rocket was involved in the launch of a military intelligence gathering satellite, it was not on the list of potential satellite re-entries. Ted's detective work shows that there are some events that are hard to explain but, with a lot more information and research, one can solve the case.

Ted would follow up with an article about an old "meteor" report that was actually a satellite in a retrograde orbit that had re-entered the earth's atmosphere over Alberta, Canada. As he states, it is unusual for satellites to have an orbit that goes from east to west but not impossible. As always, Molczan's work helps us understand the different kinds of phenomena that can generate UFO reports.

Jason Colavito explains where another one of those hoaxed UFO documents came from. This involved a "top secret" document where Oppenheimer and Einstein discuss ET and international law. It is no surprise the date for this hoaxed document is June 1947. It appears the source is Tim Cooper. UFO bloggers/promoters, eager to accept just about anything to support their conspiracy theories, published the document on various web sites as evidence of a UFO cover-up.

Robert Hastings continues to give sermons to the faithful. His target, as usual, were evil debunkers, who appeared on the program, "UFOs: Declassified". I was singled out as one of those villains. Hastings' reliance on decades old testimonies that are subject to error, exaggerations, and fabrication are the cornerstone of everything he preaches about. He ignores the problems with this kind of testimony. While an individual says something happened, there is no way to establish, as a fact, that what they report actually happened that way. SUNlite has published refutations to some of his claims in the past. I addressed most of his weak arguments about Rendlesham in SUNlites 4-5 and 7-4 so I am not going to waste my time with another article. As it stands now, Hastings' ravings are a case of preaching to the choir and not presenting information that can be proven to be true.

Hastings would then write another article about the series as a whole. He implied that the program was part of a concentrated effort by the CIA to debunk UFOs! I found his suggestion laughable and makes me wonder why people take him seriously. The program included people like Richard Dolan, Leslie Kean, and Nick Pope. It also included many of the key witnesses to these UFO events. Yes, people like Seth Shostak, Michael Shermer, and myself also appeared. Speaking from my personal experience, the

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

person conducting my interview tried very hard not to get too much into the "debunking" of the Rendlesham case. He did not even want to discuss the details of the witness statements where two of the three airmen stated they were fooled by the lighthouse! If that is an indication of a CIA debunking campaign, they are incompetent in doing so. The apparent truth is Robert Hastings does not want people to hear information that contradicts his version of events. Name calling and hurling accusations are the refuge of a man who is afraid that people might find the opposing arguments more convincing than his. Hastings reminds me of the portrayal of Matthew Brady in the 1960 movie "Inherit the wind". His closed minded attitude results in a fanaticism often seen in religion and politics.

Cheryl Costa gave us a rather interesting breakdown of all the UFO reports in NY state for the past fifteen years. She used a "formula" for assigning how many cases are truly "unexplained". Her final number was 20%! I wonder where this magic "formula" comes from and how she arrived at the value of 20%. I discussed this high ratio of "unidentifieds" before. The truth is that most databases indicate the value is 10% or less. Even MUFON and CUFOS admit this on their web sites (See SUNlite 4-3 p. 40). This brings into question the "formula" she used to produce her statistics.

John Ventre and Owen Eichler released a report that supposedly explains the Kecksburg UFO crash. According to their report, the actual source was a GE Mark 2 re-entry vehicle launched in the Pacific on December 7, 1965. I was skeptical from the beginning because it made some assumptions that just did not agree with the actual facts that were recorded in 1965-66 for that evening's events. There are no records of a man-made object re-entering the Earth's atmosphere that night. Blue Book checked into this the same night the fireball happened. They received a negative response. Since then, plenty of researchers have looked into this possibility and confirmed that nothing man-made fell to earth that night. Ted Molczan provided a report debunking this new explanation to Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, who published it on his blog. Like the Cosmos 96 explanation, which was proposed in the 1990s by some skeptics and later rejected, it is just not possible. The explanation for this event is a bright fireball, which was visible over the northern central US and confused locals in Kecksburg into thinking something had fallen into the woods. The rest of the story about military personnel descending onto Kecksburg en masse is nothing more than a myth. Readers should review SUNlite 3-6 before blindly accepting the stories told by Gordon and other Kecksburg promoters. I also have some additional information to supplement that explanation on page 16.

Robert Sheaffer presented us with some new information concerning the Betty and Barney Hill story. The information he provides for everyone is very important history no matter what side you favor. I still have to wonder why the Mount Washington weather observers did not see the UFO even though it should have been visible from their location.

Robert's posting was followed by a rebuttal by Kathleen Marden. Marden, who's major claim to fame is that she was Betty Hill's niece, co-wrote a book with Stanton Friedman about the case. She is also part of MUFON's group of abduction experts. Marden states that the letters from Dr. Simon to Klass and Sheaffer are forgeries by "somebody" she will not name. According to her, there is a copy of the letter from Dr. Simon in the Betty Hill files. Betty apparently wrote "Forged letter" and Kathleen states that she can prove it because she had the document examined by "individuals", who were supposedly close to Simon. They said it was not Simon's style of writing. I get the impression that Mrs. Marden is implying that Sheaffer and Klass forged the letters somehow. If she really is interested in determining if the letters are forged, she would have real independent experts examine them. Not a couple of "friends of friends" or MUFON associates. Until Kathleen Marden does that, she looks like a woman desperate to preserve her legacy.

Dr. Richard O'Connor, of Roswell slides fame, has presented two UFO photographs he can not explain. O'Connor has some images he obtained from the motion cameras he attached to his house. O'Connor posted the five photographs that show two UFOs. Only one, at time 12:00:21, seems to show the two UFOs clearly. The others either show nothing or dots. To me, they look like water droplets but it is odd that they only appear in one of the images. Whatever they are, they appear translucent since the side away from the sun is bright indicating the sunlight is passing through them.

Michael William Lebron (AKA Lionel) chose to pontificate about UFOs and why the "mainstream media" does not examine the subject properly. He is some sort of radio personality, who has a following of some kind. It appears that Lionel's source of information was the Internet, Stanton Friedman and John Podesta. Not once does he mention talking to any actual scientists or skeptics regarding the subject. That makes most of his commentary biased towards one point of view. I found his article missed some key points. Perhaps the reason the mainstream media does not "acknowledge" UFOs has more to do with how the subject lacks any real evidence. No matter what his sources tell him, the amount of evidence that UFOs are "extraterrestrial spaceships" (his words) is the same as the evidence for ghosts, Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, ESP, and other such paranormal claims. He fails to mention this, which means he is just another UFO promoter with a myopic point of view.

The Roswell Corner

Slide news

Following the October presentation, Jaimie Maussan's experts chose to post their analysis on the web. That web page lasted less than a week before it was made inaccessible to the general public. One can not say why but it could be that they had received negative feedback regarding their analysis.

As always, they continue to ignore the rules of perspective and insist the body in the Ray's photograph is 120 cm long. This is based on the measurements they made on the woman in the background, who is behind the body a significant distance. There is no doubt that she is much further away because she is not in focus, which means she is outside the depth of field. I discussed this in SUNlite 7-4. So far, the Maussan experts have failed to address this problem.

Either Maussan's experts are hoping nobody will notice their errors or they are being paid to say these things. Failure to address obvious mistakes in their analysis indicates they are not interested in science and are part of a hoax. Their failure is embarrassing for them professionally. Maybe they hope that nobody will notice.

Deathbed confessions

Kevin Randle recently wrote about "deathbed confessions" that appear in many of Carey and Schmitt's writings. It is amazing that some of the stuff they write is blindly accepted by other crashologists. Personally, I think just about anything Carey and Schmitt write should not be trusted without being verified. The recent Roswell slides debacle demonstrated how unreliable both of these men are.

Of course, the "deathbed confession" is not just reserved for people like Schmitt and Carey. There have been other ridiculous attempts at promoting "deathbed confessions" as truth. Here are a two recent examples that were less than compelling.



RAMEY DOCUMENT UPDATE

Last issue, I mentioned that David Rudiak, Kevin Randle, and Martin Dreyer had produced new scans of the infamous “Ramey Memo” photograph taken in Fort Worth. Lance Moody shared these scans with several members of the Roswell Slides Research Group, which decided to see if they could make heads or tails out of it. Despite employing various versions of software and other methodologies, nobody really could agree on much about what the text states. Even though nobody in our group could clearly read it, I decided to share some of my observations regarding the “memo” with readers of SUNlite.

The Roswell scenario

What we are told by Roswell crashologists is that this is a top secret message sent by General Ramey to higher headquarters describing the recovery operations underway at Roswell and efforts to deceive the press. The most detailed analysis comes from David Rudiak, who has spent over a decade examining and attempting to read the text. He has provided us with his interpretation and asserts that it is correct.¹

According to Rudiak, this is a highly classified message from General Ramey to General Vandenberg. His interpretation of the memo describes a recovery operation, the delivery of “victims” from some sort of craft to some unknown location, and the deception campaign launched to fool the press. This is Rudiak’s claim based on years of looking at the images but is his reading accurate?

Was General Ramey a “drooling idiot”?

The argument that this is a top secret message that was so highly classified that very few people were ever aware of its contents makes some serious assumptions about General Ramey and Colonel Dubose. Both men were not young first Lieutenants and were knowledgeable about securing classified information. Despite this experience, we are told that they managed to ignore security regulations when the photographs were taken. Were they, to quote a prominent crashologist, “drooling idiots”? If one is going to categorically state that balloon and radar reflector materials could NEVER be misidentified by a Colonel and a Major (even though there is evidence that such misidentifications were being made in 1947) then one has to assume that it is just as, if not more, unlikely for a General to wave a highly classified document in front of a camera. I am not stating it is impossible for Ramey to expose classified material to the press. I am just stating that, based on the assumed contents of the message, it is extremely unlikely that he would be so careless.

Who sent what?

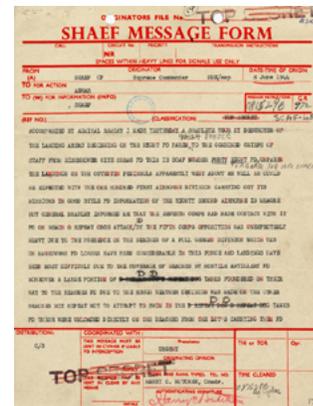
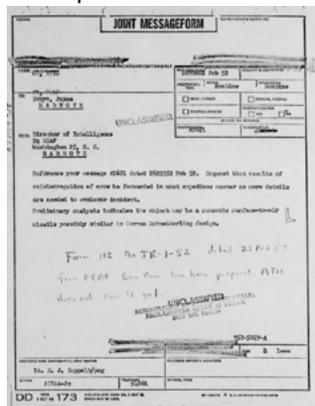
The claim made by Rudiak, and the other crashologist, that this is a message from General Ramey to higher headquarters to be critically examined. In Rudiak’s case, the message is specifically to General Vandenberg, the head of the USAAF. However, his interpretation makes no sense if that was the case.

Rudiak states that Ramey tells Vandenberg that he (Vandenberg) “forwarded” the “victims of the wreck”. How could Vandenberg, who is in Washington D.C., forward the debris from Roswell? This interpretation indicates that Vandenberg already knew about the event and had Roswell send the debris to Fort Worth. However, this is not what happened according to all of the witnesses associated with the case. General Dubose told researchers that he called Roswell and told them to send the wreckage to Fort Worth. Others have suggested that Blanchard decided on his own to send the debris to Fort Worth.

Another problem with the message being from Ramey is that, if this is accurate, there would be no reason for Ramey to be holding it. If he were reviewing a message to be transmitted, he would not have been holding the final printout. Instead, he would have held a form/draft that was typed so he could review it. These are two examples of these kinds of forms:



Figure 31. Message prepared on joint message form (NME Form 173).



The one on the left is from a field manual on signal communications from 1950². The middle document shows the form in use. Several of these can be found in the Blue Book files³. The one on the right is a draft message following the D-Day landings in 1944⁴. Both demonstrate there was a form that would be used to create a message prior to its transmittal. Had Ramey being reviewing a message prior to transmittal, he would have had that form in his hand. Once the message was transmitted, there would have been no need for him to see a printed copy of the message right away.

A more likely scenario is that he held in his hand a message that was sent to him, 8th Air Force, or to multiple commands. In that instance, he would have been given the message so he could be aware of recent information that he needed to know for his press conference.

Different interpretations

Most skeptics have felt there is no way to clearly read the document and most of the solutions are little more than a “best guess” where one’s bias can affect what one reads. A few years ago, Barry Greenwood, in UHR #13⁵, interpreted one line to read “... WARREN HAUGHT, PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER AT ROSWELL, SAID.” That was something very different and, according to Greenwood, this meant that it was a news teletype. Several people pointed out that many of the words that everyone agrees upon never appear in any news paper reports, which eliminates this as a news telex. This is true but Greenwood’s reading of the line needs a lot more consideration than a simply dismissal based on these grounds. The words do appear to match what can be seen in the photograph. I can’t say if this is an accurate analysis or not but it seems like a better reading than some of the other interpretations. My tentative agreement with Greenwood on the words may be influenced by my bias that this probably was some sort of document with a report recounting some of the information that was already circulating in the media.

Does this look like a 1947 message?

The one thing that has me extremely skeptical of Rudiak’s interpretation is his message format. It does not appear to match anything that can be found in messages from the era. On the following page, I have five messages^{6,7,8,9,10} from the era showing how they appeared in various types of reports (two of which were highly classified at the time). All followed similar formats, which are unlike the interpretations of the header format suggested by Rudiak, where General Vandenberg was identified as the recipient. To top it off, the wording found in the various interpretations look nothing like what is seen in these messages.

The only problem with this comparison is that they are not messages transmitted by the 8th Air Force in 1947. One has to compare apples to apples. That being said, there is no reason to believe that the Fort Worth message traffic was any different than what we see in these examples.

One other item I noticed in the “Ramey document” is the unusual header at the top¹¹:



I have yet to see any “header” like this in any military document. Identifying this logo might hold the key to identifying what type of document the “Ramey memo” actually is.

Studies and outside agencies

Over a decade ago, Kevin Randle and James Houran published a study about the Ramey memo where they concluded that people would not be able to read the word “victims” unless they were prompted to do so¹². David Rudiak felt the subjects, who were allowed to view the image, were not given enough context or information about the memo, to give it a proper reading/interpretation¹³. He felt the wording was clear enough to him and to his fellow crashologists. To prove this, he came up with what he calls “consensus” readings¹⁴. However, this “consensus” readings were among many pro-UFO crash authors who have been publishing and sharing their readings with each other for years. They are not independent and most are influenced by a shared belief in a crashed spaceship. It is not a surprise that they are going to agree on certain key phrases and the document’s meaning.

One of the items that was mentioned in the Houran/Randle study was that they wanted to have the memo read by several independent agencies to see if they came up with the same results. Houran was able to convince the Fund for UFO Research to finance such an effort. The results of this study were not widely disseminated but Kevin Randle mentioned it in his e-book, Roswell Revisited:

COPY

THE DEPARTMENT
CLASSIFIED MESSAGE CENTER
INCOMING CLEAR MESSAGE

UNCLASSIFIED

From: COMBENHARTFOR Fort Ben Houston Texas from AC of S G-2
To: Chief of Staff US Army Washington DC
Info: CG AGY Fort Carson Va for Director of Intelligence
Re: AKADE 10-1313 10 October 1947

Reference previous unverified report of aerial object landing in Mexico opposite town of Pabasa Tex, reports received this date from CG AGI and GSC and Branch Intelligence Officer Ft Bliss Tex to the effect Mexican Garrison of Juarez still searching suspected area of impact. No results reported. No verification of report. Investigation continuing.

End

ACTION: ID

INFO: AF, ACP Lt Col, TO, TD, TID

AC IN 55875 (10 Oct 47) DTG 151814Z

WJ36

FA236

WOW/UFUJ WRI WD

FROM CG HAWY ROSWELL NEW MEXICO

091902Z

TO CG ARMY AIR FORCE WASHINGTON D C

C R M G

CG-149- PD REGARDING TUX AFDOJ ONE FIVE ZERO DATED SEVEN JULY
COLONEL WILLIAM M BLANCHARD AND MR OLIVER LAFARGE HAVE

APPOINTMENT WITH GOVERNOR MARY FOR NINE JULY TO REQUEST
HIS PROCLAIMING OF AIR FORCE DAY PD END

1317Z

0607 0 7

K

~~TOP SECRET~~

Mr Clifford

FROM COMUS HAWAY
TO CGAD THRU ARA
MSG NR 01W 11

TOPSEC BYRONOBY CHAMBERLIN

GEN CLAY REQUESTS IMMEDIATE DELIVERY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FOLLOWING CIM
QUOTE BRADLEY FROM CLAY TO LATEST REPORT CIA STILL UNCOMPIGED CIA IN-
DICATES THERE WERE TWO AMERICANS AMONG THOSE KILLED ON BRITISH PLANE PD
ROBERTSON IS ENDEAVORING TO LOCATE SCHOLOVSKY TO PROTEST PERSONALLY PD
I HAVE PLACED MYSELF AT HIS DISPOSAL IF IN HIS JUDGMENT HE BELIEVES A JOINT
PROTEST MORE DESIRABLE PD HOWEVER CIA HIS PRESENT VIEW IS THAT HIS INITIAL
PROTEST SHOULD BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY BY HIMSELF PD FOLLOWING HIS PROTEST
TODAY CIA AND IN EVENT OF HIS FAILURE TO SECURE SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION
CIA I SHALL SUBMIT A SEPARATE PROTEST TOMORROW

SANTHE
AS CM IN HQ 4811



DTG 061749Z

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, Sec. 105 and 106 in (U)
DND Date: April 12, 2014
BY: [redacted] RAKS Date: [redacted]

Copy #1

~~TOP SECRET~~

#1

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF MESSAGE CENTER
OUTGOING CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

~~TOP SECRET~~
EMERGENCY

PARAPHRASE NOT REQUIRED

Joint Chiefs of Staff

TO: CINCPAC(COMMAND) TOKYO JAPAN

INFO: CINMAL PT RICHARDSON ALASKA, CINMAKID CHERRY HEIGHTS
CA, CINCEUR HEIDELBERG GERMANY, COMUSMACV (RUSA)
SAIGON AUSTRIA, CINCPAC, CINCLANT, CINCEMIL
LONDON ENGLAND, COMUSMACV OFFUTT AFB OMAHA NEBR

NR: JCS 84681

29 JUN 50

From JCS.

29/2259 Z i.e. 6:59 pm [initials]

1. This directive consolidates, broadens and supplements existing instructions governing your actions with regard to situation in South Korea and Formosa.
2. In support of resolutions of United Nations, approved on 25 June (transmitted as WOL 29651, 28 June 50) and 27 June (transmitted as WOL 30453):

A. You will employ naval and air forces available to the Far East Command to provide fullest possible support to South Korean forces by attack on military targets so as to permit those forces to clear South Korea of North Korean forces.

B. Employment of army forces will be limited to essential communications and other essential service units, except that you are authorized to employ such army combat and service forces as to insure the retention of a port and air base in the general area Pusan-Chinhae.

C. By naval and air action you will defend Formosa against invasion or attack by Chinese Communists and will insure that Formosa will not be used as a base of operations against the Chinese mainland by Chinese Nationalists.

3. Seventh Fleet is assigned to your operational control. CINCPAC and CINCPACFLT will support and reinforce you as necessary and practicable.

OM OUT 84681

(JUN 50)
~~TOP SECRET~~

COPY NO. 15

THE MAKING OF AN EXACT COPY OF THIS MESSAGE IS FORBIDDEN

51 1354

RECEIVED	
CLASSIFIED	
EXEMPT	
EXEMPT	
EXEMPT	
EXEMPT	

TELETYPE MESSAGE
AIR SERVICE COMMAND TELETYPE NETWORK

FROM: SAC

DATE: 14 October 1947

S. S. CLINGER
Colonel, Air Corps
Chief, Analytical Section
Intelligence (7-8)

TO: Commanding Officer
Albuquerque Army Air Field
Albuquerque, New Mexico
CLASS: [redacted] Col Paul F. Baldwin

1042-10-1 REQUEST ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING UNIDENTIFIED
FLIGHTS REPORTED TO DATE CHANGED INTO THE REGULATED SERVICE OF SERVICE
BY APPROXIMATELY 0:30 PM ON 12 OCTOBER 1947 TO THE OFFICE OF CHIEF OF STAFF
THIS MESSAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED AND CONTROLLED ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE

Houran details the methods used to review the memo by the laboratories and then offers the conclusions of that analysis. Surprisingly, those results mirror those obtained by the Air Force during their study in the 1990s. In other words, the experts consulted by Houran, after running their various tests, scans, and analysis, concluded that nothing could be read with any degree of certainty in the Ramey Memo. Houran wrote to me, "The labs felt that no words could be read with any accuracy...However, they did say that improved methodologies might yield some legible words."

So, like the Air Force before them, these labs didn't want to make a judgment call on what they considered a stimuli too vague to define. They suggested that there was a lower limit to how much resolution there could be because the "noise" from the grains of silver in the emulsion could never be completely eliminated and that even the best labs might never be able to improve the quality of the signal. No, they didn't rule that out completely, but the fact remains that the object of the photograph was not the paper in Ramey's hand, and that the paper was turned and twisted and those distortions just might be too much of overcome.

What it seems to boil down to is that there is no real consensus on what the message says no matter how much argument there is about it. And while it can be argued that the message held by Ramey might be about the Roswell case, there really is no way to know that for certain because the stimuli is too vague to be read with any degree of certainty.¹⁵

Thanks to Kevin Randle, I was able to obtain a full copy of the report and the comments by the various analysts mirror much of what has been stated about reading the text all along:

The problem from an image processing point of view is VERY challenging and interesting since the images you gave us are both blurred and corrupted with film grain noise.¹⁶

The most important difficulty which explains that we do not obtain better results is the presence of an important noise, essentially the noise of the photographic film. The spatial frequencies of this noise are of the same order as those of the letters, so that it is very difficult to extract a pertinent information.¹⁷

The letters in the image are probably too near to the resolution limit of the camera setting and too much information has been lost.¹⁸

The most interesting comment in the report came from Dr. Bruce Maccabee:

The fact that the image size of even the largest letters is not great compared to the grain size of the film is the reason that I have stayed out of this. I suspect that a sizable part of the "restored information" we have read about in the past (based on claims about being able to read the document to get that information) is in the eye of the beholder. In other words, there is so much noise what one claims to see is like seeing "something" in a Rorschach ink blot test. The individual letters are broken up, sometimes severely broken, by the absence of film grains. This makes any attempt at a restoration very difficult or perhaps even impossible, in my humble opinion.¹⁹

All these comments mirror what the USAF stated in the 1994 report on Roswell. They stated that they had digitized an original print obtained from the University of Texas-Arlington hoping to discover additional information about the Roswell event:

In an attempt to read this text to determine if it could shed any further light on locating documents relating to this matter, the photo was sent to a national-level organization for digitizing and subsequent photo interpretation and analysis. This organization was also asked to scrutinize the digitized photos for any indication of the flowered tape (or "hieroglyphics," depending on the point of view) that were reputed to be visible to some of the persons who observed the wreckage prior to its getting to Fort Worth. This organization reported on July 20, 1994, that even after digitizing, the photos were of insufficient quality to visualize either of the details sought for analysis.²⁰

David Rudiak, among others, has implied that the USAF either lied about the analysis or were incompetent in performing it. Over a decade later, independent agencies, who probably had better equipment/software than those available in 1994, were agreeing with the USAF's conclusions. The implication that something sinister transpired during the analysis appears to be debunked based on this information.

Possible readings

I have tried a number of programs in order to make the text more clear. I tried NEAT image, Photoshop, Registax (which has a wavelet feature that I thought might help), and Smart deblur. All were unsuccessful in any improvement in reading the letters in the memo.

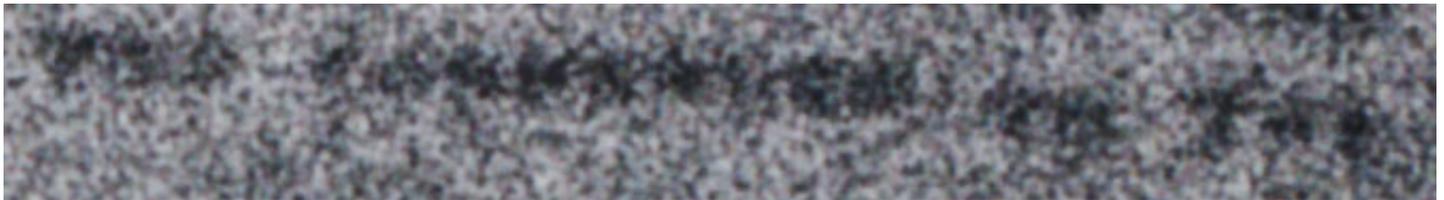
My attempts to read the lines in the image did not produce anything I am overly confident in publishing but I think there are some possibilities that are not found in the popular readings. As stated previously, I think that it is possible that Greenwood's reading of the one line has some merit. Other lines can also have different interpretations.

The most important line for the Crashologists is the line "Victims of the wreck". However, one could also read this as "Finding", "Viewing", or "Remains" among other possibilities. While the word "victims" is a possible match, the word "wreck" seems to be less convincing. It does look like five letters but there is a space between the second and third letters indicating that part of the letter or a complete letter is missing.²¹



Of course, we do not even know if the word is even spelled correctly. For instance, the word might be OBJECT but misspelled OBJET. It also might be military jargon or a designation like RAWIN, ML307, or 509TH! We don't know for sure. These possibilities need to be considered and not dismissed in favor of the "consensus" of a group already convinced the message involves discussion of a crashed alien spaceship.

After the words "Victims of the wreck" is the subsequent phrase "you forwarded". To me, the word appears to be "you commanded" or "was commanded".²²



This makes more sense if this is a message sent to Ramey and not from him. This might read, "The remains of the wreck you commanded to the.....at Fort Worth, Tex."

Another part of the message that has me wondering is the section that is read, "Meaning of story". I see it differently. The "M" in meaning could be an "H". This means the word might be "hearing", which changes the whole context of the sentence. For instance, if one was "hearing of story", then it is was indicative of a second hand report and not some conspiratorial note that there was a "meaning" of the story. Of course, I also wonder if the "of story" interpretation is even correct. The space between the "of" group and "story" group appears blurred or smudged to the point that a letter could be there and obscured by damage to the negative (see arrow).²³ If this is accurate then, instead of two words, it might be one complete word. This would change the entire interpretation.



I don't consider any of my observations very accurate because I feel my personal bias is involved. That is the problem with the Ramey document. The reader is going to see what they want to see and there appears to be no way to work around it.

Test image

In an effort to replicate the Ramey memo, I took several photographs using a wide angle lens from distances ranging from six to twelve feet using an 18 mega-pixel Canon digital SLR. This was not an effort to duplicate the resolution of the 4X5 negative but an effort to find at what distance the camera's resolution appeared to match that seen in the "Ramey Memo". I discovered that the words become clear enough to read around ten feet. At 11 and a half feet, the resolution was similar to what we see in the Fort Worth photographs.

I typed the document using a teletype font and phrases from various documents involving Roswell and other events that transpired with a few years of the Roswell crash. I also created a section based on the Roswell UFO crash story. To introduce even further ambiguity, I used a printer with a low toner cartridge. It introduced fading to some of the letters (although they could clearly be read when held by hand).

The image on the following page is that document. It is comparable to the resolution of the Ramey document. While I could not read all of the words, I could read several phrases based on what I knew about what was in the document. Beyond the key phrases, the rest of the document is difficult to be read.. In some cases, the letters appeared to blur together. This indicated to me that it was

almost impossible to accurately read any document when the words are this small and lost in the noise of the image.

The Gordian knot

There really can be no conclusions at this point unless somebody can resolve the letters with certainty. Where some see a secret message from Ramey to higher headquarters, others are going to see something that appears more mundane. The new scans do not appear to clarify the issue and I have yet to see anybody produce improved text resolution from them. Until that can be done, the "Ramey Memo" will remain an enigma, which nobody will be able to solve.

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QUESTIONS ABOUT A "FLYING SAUCER" STORY FROM 1948

by David Schroth

The following thoughts are prompted by the recent death of Walt Andrus, the founder of MUFON and advocate for half a century of the idea that Flying Saucers and UFOs represent alien beings visiting the Earth.

One day in August 1948, Walt Andrus stood on a street in downtown Phoenix, Arizona, and watched four flying saucers move across the sky. Or he said he did. My question is twofold: (1) Did that happen?, and (2) Why should we believe it?

I knew Walt Andrus when he and Coral Lorenzen were still on speaking terms. I met him in the summer of 1967 at WIL Radio studios in the Centennial Building in downtown St. Louis at a time when I had developed an interest in astronomy and the Flying Saucer controversy. From 1967-'70, he and I exchanged letters and cards. I have Christmas cards I received from Walt Andrus in 1968 and 1969.

In November 1967, Dr. J. Allen Hynek spoke on the UFO topic at Washington University in St. Louis. Walt Andrus was in the audience that night. So was I. I have a snapshot of Walt Andrus pointing to a diagram of the four flying saucers he claimed to have seen that day in Phoenix, as he spoke to a group of UFO enthusiasts at John Schuessler's home one day in August 1968. I was one of them.

I heard Walt Andrus speak at the first two MUFON conferences in 1970-'71. On a Saturday morning in February 1973, I had breakfast with Walt Andrus, Ted Phillips, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, and several other UFO researchers in the restaurant of the Marriott Hotel across from Lambert St. Louis Airport.

Because I was young and green in those years, I assumed that Walt Andrus knew what he was talking about. Years later, I learned better. With each passing year in the 1970s, what Walt Andrus was writing and saying seemed more and more hollow to me. Walt Andrus was well-educated, intelligent, articulate, and congenial. He also wrote and spoke absolute nonsense.

Looking back now over half a century, it seems to me that Walt Andrus was primarily a salesman. He sold stock in the church he created and called "MUFON" and adorned in the trappings and vocabulary of science.

In the 1830s-'40s, Millerites in New England allowed themselves to believe that the end of the world was imminent and that signs in the heavens (principally meteors, a comet, and solar halos) supported that belief. Some of them put on white robes and climbed trees to await being lifted up to heaven. But they waited in vain. (See Clara Endicott Sears, Days of Delusions: A Strange Bit of History, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924)

In the 1960s-'90s, members of MUFON allowed themselves to believe that signs in the heavens (flying saucers and UFOs) indicated the presence of alien beings from other worlds cruising the skies at random, pausing now and then to kidnap some unsuspecting man or woman. For more than half a century, Saucer enthusiasts have said the Aliens are going to land and reveal themselves any day now, but they are still waiting in vain.

Although there is no more evidence to support the beliefs of MUFONites than there was to support the beliefs of Millerites, I imagine that Walt Andrus and his followers were probably just as sincere as William Miller and his followers. But sincerity is no guarantee that people can see straight and think straight.

I have been a UFO skeptic for more than 35 years and have not kept current with the UFO topic. I write these words in the hope that some UFO skeptic living in or near Phoenix might have the chance and the inclination to check the Phoenix newspaper archives to see what if anything can be learned about the incident that Walt Andrus said took place there on that day in 1948.

"Usually, it is not as important what you are told in a brief UFO account as what you aren't told." -- Allan Hendry, in a discussion of press coverage of UFO reports, in The UFO Handbook, Doubleday, 1979, p. 215

The most notable thing about the Phoenix Flying Saucer incident is not what Walt Andrus told us but what he didn't tell us. His account appeared in the May 1, 1966, issue of the Motorola Company publication Voice of Motorola ("I Saw Four Flying Saucers: Andrus", p. 2). It is also mentioned briefly in the June 1992 issue of Texas Monthly (online here: <http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/alien-contact/>).

No mention of a flying saucer sighting in downtown Phoenix in August 1948 can be found in NICAP's 1964 document The UFO Evidence. Nor, although it allegedly occurred not far from his home in Tucson, did Dr. James E. McDonald cite that alleged 1948 incident among the UFO sightings he said were especially impressive and that he detailed in a paper he presented to the House Committee on Science and Astronautics Symposium on Unidentified Flying Objects in July 1968.

NICAP's 1948 UFO Chronology online has a brief listing for the incident described by Andrus. It cites one book by George Eberhart and another by Ronald Story. Neither is a primary source. Both merely repeat the story told by Andrus.

The question is: Did that incident happen? Did it happen the way Walt Andrus **said** it happened? Or did he omit or distort or misrepresent certain details that may have pointed toward an identification of those four objects in the sky as man-made objects or illusions?

Where are the newspaper stories from that day or the days after that would confirm the story told by Andrus? To which agency or department of government did he report that incident and what was their response and how did they investigate it and what did they determine? How did their evaluation compare with the story told by Andrus? Where can these things be found and read? Where are the archives for that incident? Where is the documentation? Where are the primary sources for that alleged incident?

No one is more dedicated to preserving newspaper clippings for posterity than Flying Saucer buffs and UFO believers. Yet in all the thousands of such newspaper stories published and republished over the past half century, why are there none that back up Walt Andrus's colorful story about that incident in downtown Phoenix on that day in 1948?

We know that 1948 was a banner year for "flying saucer" stories. The three "classic" saucer sightings involving Mantell, Chiles-Whitted, and Gorman took place that year. (See Edward Ruppelt, The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, Doubleday, 1956, Chapter 3, "The Classics"; and Curtis Peebles, Watch the Skies!, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994, Chapter 3, "The Classics".)

So newspapers in 1948 were filled with stories about flying saucers. And yet no "UFO researcher" has ever produced a single newspaper story about the event that Walt Andrus claimed happened in downtown Phoenix one day that August and that he claimed was witnessed by "numerous other people" walking along the streets. And how come neither Andrus nor any of those numerous other people took any pictures of those four "flying saucers" while they remained in plain sight in broad daylight for 15-20 minutes?

"I assumed these were experimental crafts the Air Force was developing," said Andrus. (Texas Monthly article)

But why assume? Why not contact the Air Force and ask them? Project Sign was in the news that summer because the Eastern Air Lines "cigar-shaped flying saucer" sighting over Alabama made headlines only three weeks earlier. Yet Andrus never gave the slightest indication that he made any attempt to contact the Air Force or report his flying saucer sighting to any authority.

And if in 1948 he "assumed" those four objects were American aircraft but later began telling people he had seen flying saucers piloted by extraterrestrial aliens, then when did he change his mind and why?

From the absence of any reference to documentation, I venture the guess that Walt Andrus did not contact any agency of government or airport or military base after he claimed to have seen those four "flying saucers"; **if he had done so, then surely he would have reported that fact in his recitation of that story in later years, because it would add substance to his story, especially if any of those people had told him that they had investigated that incident but were unable to identify those four objects.**

In her book American Betrayal (St. Martin's Press, 2013), Diana West argues that there is a "culture of omission, blanks and gaps" in the official history of World War II and the Cold War years afterward. By that, she means that certain information is **routinely omitted**, ignored, or buried in the official history of those years. I think she is right.

I contend also that a similar "culture of omission, blanks and gaps" exists in the corpus of anecdotes that is called the "Flying Saucer

Mystery” or the “UFO Mystery”. Knowing that that subculture exists within the larger culture of Saucer enthusiasts is a key to understanding the truth about those alleged mysteries.

What commercial airline flights were in the vicinity of Phoenix at that time?

What private aircraft were in that vicinity at that time?

Were any civil defense exercises taking place in or around Phoenix that day?

Were any civic or promotional events taking place that involved balloons or advertising aircraft?

Were any weather or meteorological research balloons in that vicinity that day?

Were any exercises taking place that day from nearby military bases?

Were any kite or balloon aficionados holding any events that day?

Were any groups of citizens holding festivals or picnics nearby?

Which airports or military bases in and around Phoenix tracked those four flying saucers on radar?

As far as Walt Andrus was concerned, the answer to all those questions was: Blank out.

Evidently UFO researchers and “investigators” had the same lack of curiosity about that incident.

Andrus said that the four “flying saucers” he saw seemed to disappear for a few minutes and then came back into view. The possibility of common atmospheric-optical illusions that make ordinary objects like airplanes or balloons seem to “disappear” momentarily and then reappear apparently did not occur to Andrus. Instead of that common-sense consideration, he preferred fantastic speculation:

“Did those balloon-shaped objects ‘dematerialize’ or change into another dimension right before our eyes and then return a few minutes later into our three dimensional world?”, he asked in an essay he contributed to *The Encyclopedia of UFOs* (Ronald Story, ed., Dolphin Books, 1980, pp. 17-18).

In other words, Walt Andrus would have his readers believe that we are dealing not only with interplanetary spaceships but also with other dimensions. UFO “science” at its best: The mysteries multiply while Occam’s Razor gets thrown into the trash.

How did he know that what he had seen could not be accounted for by common illusions or changing angles of sight?

Did he investigate that possibility? No.

Did anyone else investigate that possibility? No.

From his failure to have contacted any official investigating agency or airport or military base, it is therefore reasonable to surmise that Andrus thought himself to be omniscient.

How did he know that he had seen four “flying saucers” piloted by Alien Beings if he never asked any official agency to investigate that incident? The answer: He “just knew”. There was no need for investigation because Andrus “just knew”.

That is how True Believers think. If they tell you they have seen extraordinary things in the sky and you ask them **how** they know those things are extraordinary, they will dance around your question or stand it on its head to evade the hard responsibility of answering it. Instead, they will assure you that they “just know”.

A few years ago I spoke with a man in St. Louis who said he saw a light or object in the sky that puzzled him late one night in the summer of 1960, when he was about 15-16 years old. To whom did he report that observation and what did they conclude?, I asked. No one. How did he know that what he saw was something truly mysterious or inexplicable?, I asked. His reply: “I know what I saw.”

I gave up. From that and other examples like it, I concluded that it is no more possible to have a rational conversation with such people than it would have been to show Millerites that meteors and comets do not portend the end of the world.

And that is what gives the game away. It is what identifies belief in “Flying Saucers” or “UFOs” as the ersatz religion that it is. The truth is that no one “just knows” anything.

People who say they “just know” are indulging in mysticism. “Mysticism” means anti-knowledge and anti-reason. And reason is man’s only means for acquiring knowledge, knowing anything, and understanding anything—not “mysticism”, not “faith”, not “revealed wisdom”, not magical thinking, not “meta-logic”, and not “just knowing”.

It is a measure of the credulity or the will-to-believe of modern Americans who study the UFO “mystery” that they are willing to adopt any or all of those forms of mysticism and throw reason out the window in what they claim is their desire to solve that mystery. I have known such people. Most were thoroughly decent and intelligent people. Walt Andrus was one of them.

I believe that Walt Andrus was probably sincere in claiming to believe the things he said and wrote. People like Walt Andrus or William Miller can be found in any nation at any time in history, but they flourish among people who are especially credulous in one way or another. And no people in American history were ever more credulous than Americans proved themselves to be in the years after World War II when their apparent victory in that war enabled them to assume a kind of arrogance about themselves. Belief in

Flying Saucers was just one expression of their credulity, which today is orders of magnitude greater than it was in the 1950s-'60s and extends to matters much more important.

"They are definitely not from our planet," Walt Andrus said about "flying saucers" in a 1966 article in a midwestern college magazine. [Culver-Stockton College Concept, Winter 1966-1967, p. 14] *"But they are not dangerous. They are here for surveillance only. They've been here for thousands of years....."* [Walt Andrus, quoted in Tulsa (Oklahoma) Tribune, July 25, 1969]

He didn't explain **how** he knew those things. Apparently he "just knew" them, perhaps the same way that William Miller knew the world would come to an end in October 1844.

And let's don't overlook the irony here:

Walt Andrus, a "UFO expert" and founder of a widely-respected group of UFO researchers, dispensed advice on how to **investigate** UFO stories in MUFON's official "field investigator's manual" but **failed to investigate** or report to any official agency the very flying saucer sighting that he claimed to have made in 1948. Is that rich or what?

By comparison with the incident that Andrus said took place that day in Phoenix in 1948, consider the three "classic" Saucer cases from 1948 discussed at length by Ruppelt and Peebles and known to all UFO researchers: What significance would they have if those incidents had not been reported and investigated immediately afterward by Project Sign personnel? What significance does the alleged incident in Phoenix have when neither Andrus nor anyone else ever reported it or investigated it? What significance does an unreported, undocumented, and uninvestigated "flying saucer" sighting have?

A measure of Walt Andrus's determination to solve mysteries can be gleaned from his handling of the November 1966 Ozark Air Lines Nocturnal Light UFO case from Missouri. The pilot who saw the light and kept it in view for more than half an hour never claimed it was anything other than a light. Andrus learned of the incident when he was still working as a volunteer investigator for Jim and Coral Lorenzen's APRO (Aerial Phenomena Research Organization). When he spoke with the pilot, Andrus tried to make the light into a "craft" piloted by alien beings. The pilot never claimed or suggested any such thing. That was pure invention by Walt Andrus. Neither he nor any other UFO "investigator" investigated that incident or told the pilot what he had seen. There was no "craft" and there were no Aliens.

All that Andrus had to do was look at a star chart for the night of the incident and see that the bright star Vega occupied exactly the same place in the sky as the Nocturnal Light reported by the Ozark Air Lines pilot. But Andrus did not do that. Why? If he **knew** that such a solution was readily available and did not pursue it and report it, then he was disingenuous as a "UFO investigator". If he **didn't know** it or made no attempt to learn it, then he was inept as a "UFO investigator". [The Ozark Air Lines case was reported in the Nov.-Dec. 1966 issue of The A.P.R.O. Bulletin, p. 7.]

*"Ignorance is said to be voluntary, when it regards that which one can and ought to know...And ignorance of this kind happens, either when one does not actually consider what one can and ought to consider; this is called "ignorance of evil choice," and arises from some passion or habit: or **when one does not take the trouble to acquire the knowledge which one ought to have.**"*

– St. Thomas Aquinas [Emphasis mine – DS]

What shall we conclude about the anecdote told by Walt Andrus when it appears that **he did not take the trouble to acquire the information** that he ought to have acquired, or did not ask experienced investigators to develop the information that we **must have** in order to evaluate that anecdote?

I had no further contact with Walt Andrus after the mid-1970s. I became a UFO skeptic, while he continued selling Saucer stories to his receptive customers.

Walt Andrus and I shared an interest in the topic, but for very different reasons: For him, he said it was his desire to learn more about the alien beings whom he believed or said he believed operated the Flying Saucers; but for me, it was because I concluded that Saucer stories offer splendid examples of mythmaking, propaganda, fairy tales, logical fallacies, and men's limitless capacity for error and self-deception.

KECKSBURG UPDATE

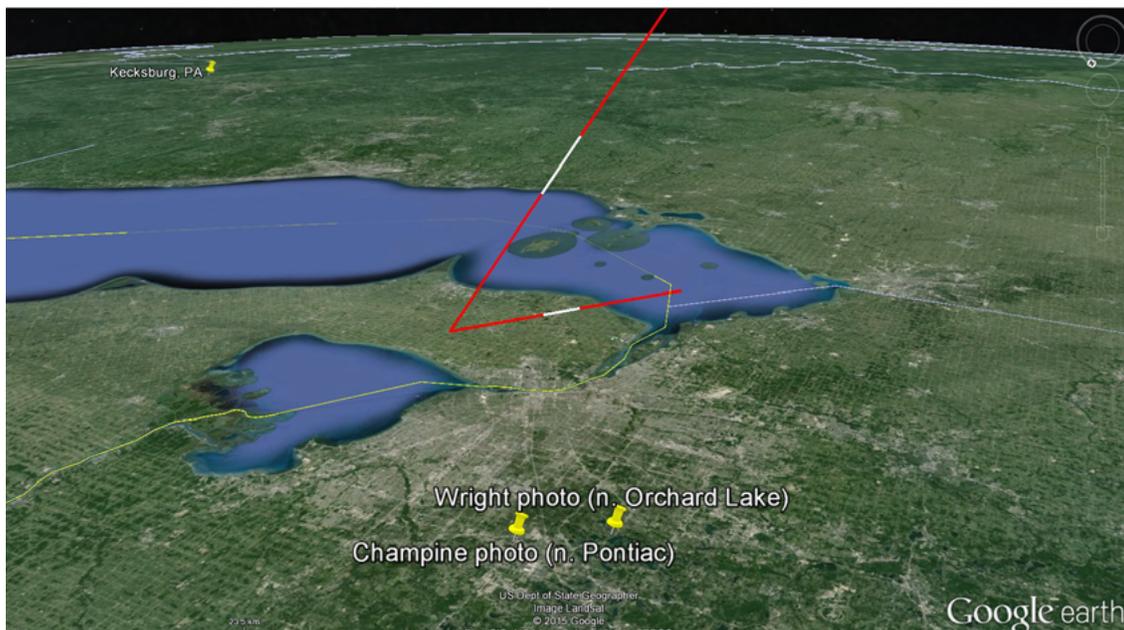
The recent effort to explain the Kecksburg case rekindled interest in the subject. My opinion about the Mk2 re-entry vehicle explanation was that it was a wasted effort. There is a perfectly good explanation that has existed since 1965. The fireball, which had been seen in Ohio, Michigan, Ontario, and Pennsylvania, had fooled the local population into thinking that something fell into the woods that evening. Nothing was ever found and there are no records to suggest otherwise. The rest of the story that Stan Gordon has been peddling is nothing more than a myth. The only "facts" that support this myth are the decades old testimonies of individuals, who have suspect motives.

Ted Molczan debunking

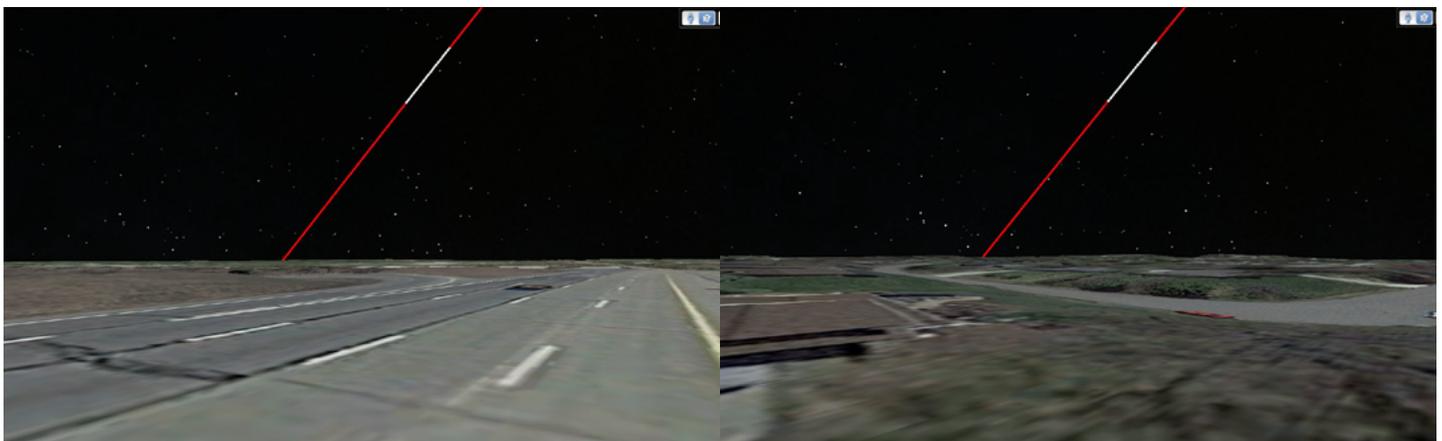
Ted Molczan pretty much debunked the new explanation with a lot of useful information. There is no reason to recount his rebuttal here since it is already public knowledge at Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos' blog¹.

Ted also chose to look at the fireball explanation as well as arguments against it. Using Google Earth, he created 2D and 3D trajectories based on the Krause/Chamberlain calculations. His results were reasonably close to what appeared in the photographs.

Mr. Molczan decided to start the meteor's visible path at a height of 60 km (the normal altitude for slow meteors), which is where the red line begins. The white segment is the altitudes for the begin and end point of the debris trail. The subsequent red segment after this is the path any surviving meteorites might have taken to the earth. Ted has since informed me that atmospheric drag would have resulted in a more vertical fall of any surviving meteorites. For the purpose of this article, I am using his diagrams that do not incorporate that drag for the post train line segment. This diagram shows the 3D trajectory and the 2D ground track:



Ted notes that there are some minor variations in regards to the slope of the path between the photographs and the Google Earth files. He thinks it probably had to do the cameras not being perfectly level with the horizon but it might be due to some distortion introduced by Google Earth. Molczan commented that he felt the variations were not that significant. The Pontiac track is on the left and the Orchard Park track is on the right:



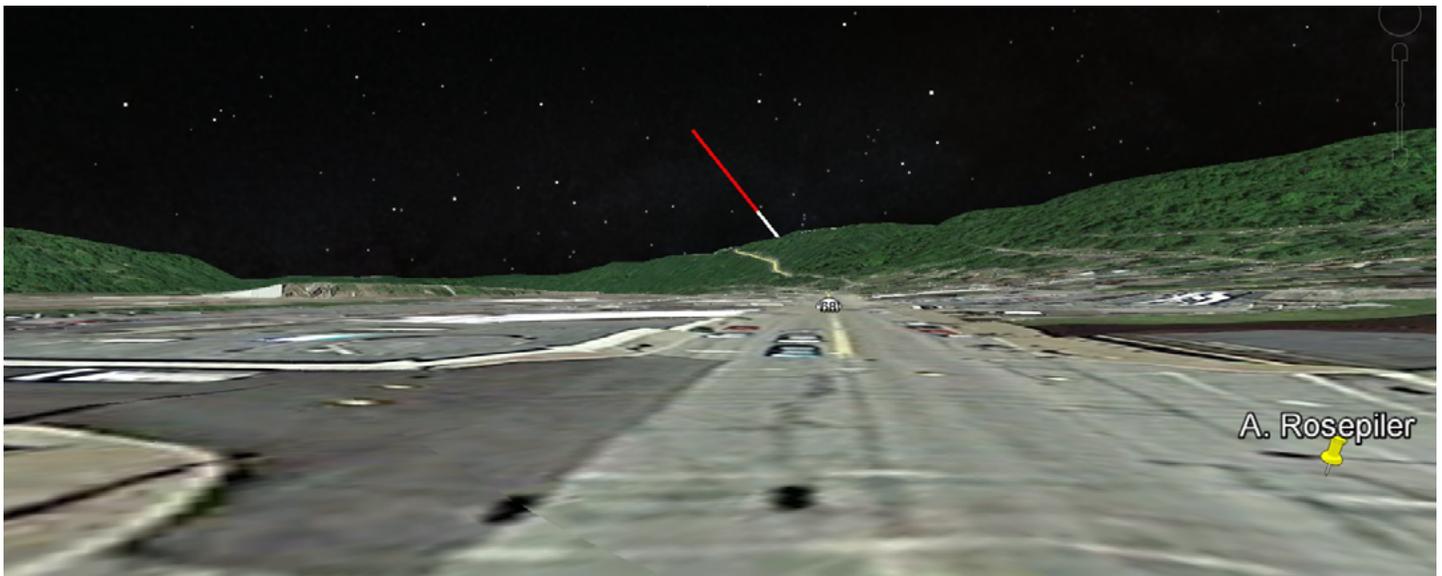
Mr. Molczan also commented about the possibility that an error was made by Krause and Chamberlain in the path computation:

I find it difficult to imagine any likely error in the analysis of the smoke trail photos, that if corrected, would result in impact near Kecksburg. It is important to bear in mind that not only the azimuths must intersect, but the elevations of A and B also constrain the solution².

Ted then pointed me towards an article that appeared in the Beaver County Times on December 10, 1965. It describes the observations of one witness, Andrew Rosepiler, who gave a reasonable precise location for his vehicle. From that position, he gave a fairly accurate description of the meteor's trajectory:

Rosepiler was westbound on Midland Avenue at Seventh Street, when he saw the "fireball" fall at a "very steep and slightly arched" angle. HE JUDGED the object about the size of a football with a 10 to 25 foot flaming tail streaking behind it. He said it appeared that it would hit a hillside just outside Midland behind the Petrosol Service Station along Route 68 (scientists say this is a common illusion when observing flying objects). Rosepiler said he watched the object because he thought it would explode when it hit. He thinks it hit about two thirds the way up the hill. He said he drove to higher ground for a better view of the hill side, expecting a fire to have started, but said he saw no fire or smoke.³

When Molczan used Rosepiler's position and his Google Earth trajectory, he got the following result:

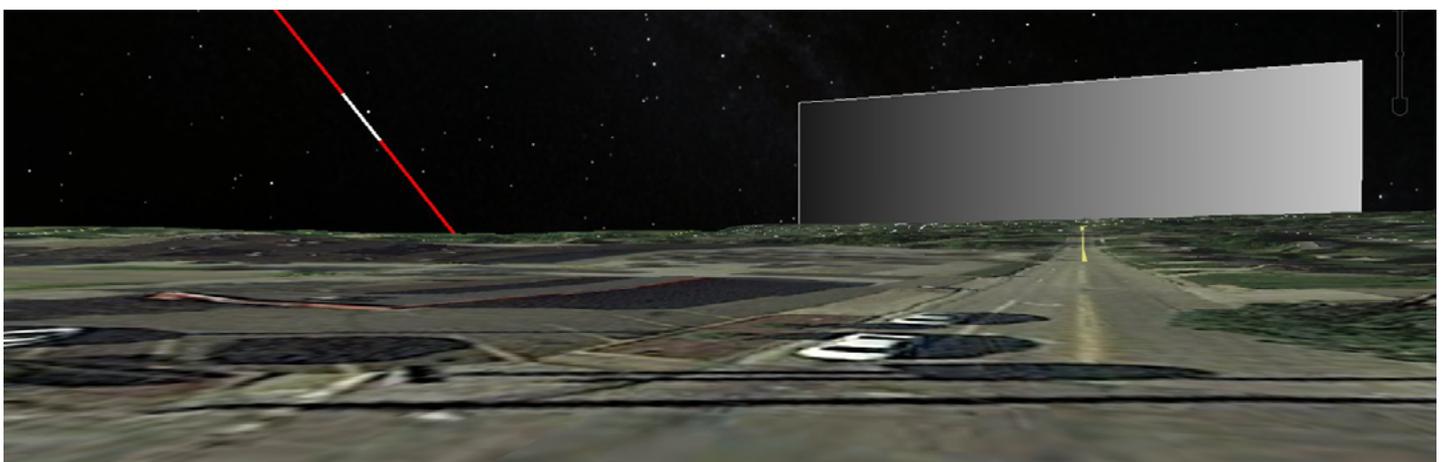


This is a good reproduction of his observation. It also indicates that the meteor did not pass over his position towards Kecksburg.

There are a few other 1965 reports that can be found in the news media, where the witnesses gave locations and directions of observation. I found an article in the Massillon, Ohio newspaper, where several reports were listed. The most precise location came from a driver at an intersection:

Paul McCormick...was waiting for the green light at Amherst rd and Lake ave. NE when he saw the ball of fire in the sky trailing smoke. He said it was so plain, you might have thought it was falling near Traphagen Rd NW.⁴

Ted put this location into his model and got this view:



Trepahagan road was a road that ran roughly west to east about 2 miles north of the observer, who was facing in that direction. Once again, this is a close match to the actual trajectory of the fireball in Ted's model.

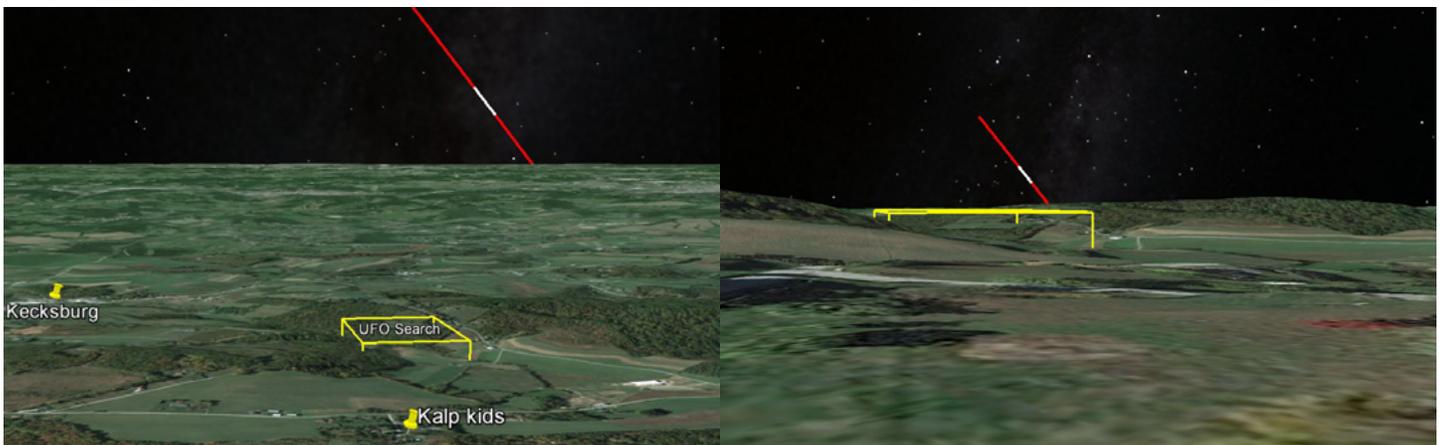
Ted's fireball track mirrors the actual scientific evaluation of the meteor's track back in 1965-66 by Chamberlain, Krause and Douglas (of the Canadian National Research Council Associate Committee on Meteorites) . Dr. Douglas stated in his report:

On-the-spot interviews of some seventy observers (now close to 100) were made by Mr. Henry Lee, President of the Windsor Centre of the RASC, and the writer during part of January. Reduction of this sighting data confirmed the general ground position of the end-point as was determined from the photographs by Mr. Chamberlain. Contacts with eyewitnesses were obtained through requests in a daily and four weekly newspapers, radio station CJSP, Leamington, and through area high schools.⁵

As I stated in SUNlite 3-6, the data gathering in 1965-66 confirmed the trajectory of the fireball. I have yet to see anybody demonstrate that these calculations were incorrect or provide accurate descriptions from 1965 that indicates a different track. Therefore, there is no reason to revise it based on the claims made decades later by people interested in perpetuating their participation in the Kecksburg myth.

The Kalp observations

After pointing Ted towards SUNlite 3-6, he chose to plot the appearance of the fireball and resulting debris trail as viewed by the Kalp children that evening. Using the positions of the children provided by Bob Young and the computed trajectory from the photographs, Ted provided us with the view the children had looking at the fireball. As can be seen in Ted's recreation, one can understand why they thought something had landed in the woods. The debris trail hovering over the trees made it appear that there was smoke emanating from the woods. The conclusion drawn by Mrs. Kalp was that the object had apparently fallen into the woods and she called the authorities. What transpired next is history.



The fireball explanation still stands

Hopefully, this information will supplement what I already published in SUNlite 3-6. Mr. Molczan's work, which I greatly appreciate, confirms the fireball explanation for Kecksburg. While the proponents of the case can make all the claims they want, the actual science done in 1965 indicates it was a case of a misperceived fireball that evolved into a myth.

Notes and references

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SEPTEMBER 18 1962 AND DECEMBER 5 2015

In SUNlite 4-5, I spent some time explaining ten cases that were found in NICAP's "The UFO evidence". One of the cases I discussed was the September 18, 1962 UFO sightings of policemen in Ohio. I had explained this as the launch of a TIROS 6 satellite. At the time, I compared the sighting to my observations of the SPOT 5 satellite launch from French Guiana in May 2002. On December 5, 2015, I experienced another observation that reminded me of the TIROS 6 event.

The September 18, 1962 UFO sighting

The September 18, 1962 UFO sighting was a bit perplexing for those who did not bother to look beyond the sightings themselves. NICAP lists six different Ohio police officers in five different locations, who saw the UFO. The area of the sighting encompassed an area of Ohio about 50 miles in diameter.¹

Blue Book did not have these particular sightings in their files but they did have observations from Fort Bragg² and numerous aircraft in the Midwest.³ All pointed in the direction of the east or northeast with the UFO moving in Northeast direction. Because the event encompassed such a large area, the only possible answer was an object that was at an extremely high altitude and a great distance from the observers.

Most of the observers reported one or two lights and some of the pilots mentioned seeing a funnel shaped cloud. Both Blue Book and NICAP dropped the ball in their examination of the event. Blue Book thought the airliner crews saw a meteor, which is not a bad assumption but there were details that indicated that it was not a meteor. The Fort Bragg observations was classified as illumination flares, which seemed to be a guess more than an investigation. NICAP's "investigation" appears to have been simply collecting these reports and then publishing them as "best evidence".

As I said in SUNlite 4-5, the best explanation is the launch of a TIROS satellite, which occurred at 0853 UTC from Cape Canaveral. Normally, satellites are launched towards the east but the TIROS satellite had a unique orbit and required it to be launched in a trajectory that took it along the east coast of the United States. Even more interesting was the fact that the rocket had a very high orbit of about 400 miles. This meant that the rocket had to use three stages to reach orbit and the booster rockets would also be put into a very high trajectory before coming back towards earth.

According to the flight report the rocket was close to its orbital altitude about 11 minutes after launch around 0904 UTC (5:04 EDT)⁴:

Event	Time	Longitude	Latitude	Altitude
Second stage ignition	T + 165.1S	79.57 W *	29.36 N *	69.7 NM
Second stage engine cutoff	T + 273.8S	76.34W	32.72N	198.6 NM
Third stage ignition	T + 652.2S	62.27W	45.08N	374.6 NM
Third stage engine cutoff	T + 694.1S	60.09W	46.48N	376.1 NM

* Location is the position at BECO, five second prior to Secondary stage ignition. No position was given for the second stage ignition about five seconds later.

At the altitude of 200-300 NM, the payload/third stage and the second stage would have been illuminated by the sun. The real question of the TIROS explanation is if it could have been visible from Ohio at a distance of about 850 miles.

December 5, 2015 - Cygnus resupply mission launch

On December 5, 2015, NASA launched a rocket along a similar trajectory towards the International Space Station. It was an evening launch, where the setting sun would illuminate the rocket and payload as it traveled along the eastern seaboard. The major difference between this launch and the TIROS launch was that the altitude of the payload/rocket would have been about half that of the TIROS event.

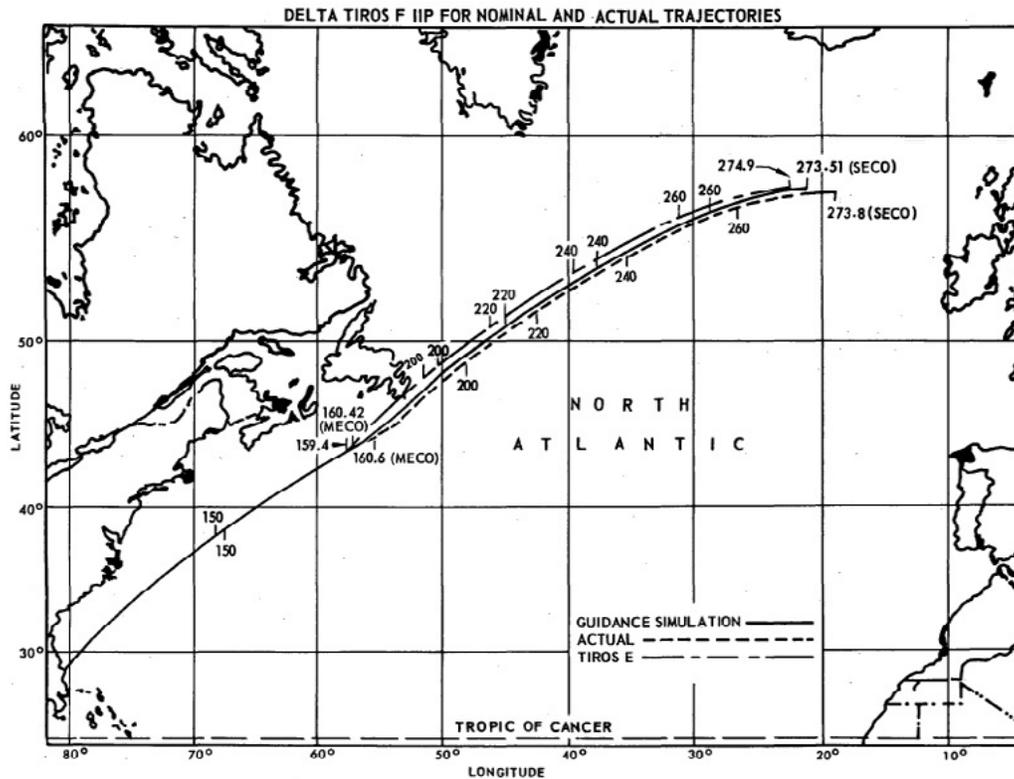
From Manchester, New Hampshire, I was able to pick up the rocket/payload and, what appeared to be the fairings, to the due



south at an elevation of about 15-20 degrees. They were bright objects about magnitude 0 to -1 and were easily visible to casual observers. The horizontal distance was about 300 miles and the altitude of the Cygnus craft was around 200 miles. The objects maintained that brilliance for the one to two minutes they were visible.

Comparison

While the two events were not identical and my observations were not from Ohio, one can see similarities. Based on the elevation of 15-20 degrees for the Cygnus event, the TIROS event was probably around 10 degrees. The brightness would have depended on the angle of the sun striking the rocket/payload but if the conditions are right, such objects can be bright enough to be seen. The most likely candidate for the source of the UFO is the second stage, which was suborbital and came down in the north Atlantic south of Iceland.⁵ It also was probably venting fuel, which produced the cloud reported by the pilots.



Was it TIROS?

I am sure that some will consider this explanation implausible because the distance would probably make the payload too faint to see. However, the second stage was a large object and the payload was attached to a third stage. With the larger surface areas, the objects were going to reflect more sunlight. Could it have been bright enough to be seen? It seems possible and it has to be more than just a coincidence that the UFO was seen in the same direction, and at the same time, as the rocket/payload's track.

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 62.
2. Project 10073 record card. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/8724151>
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5. *ibid.* P. 45.

February 2, 1950

This is how the case is listed in the chronology:

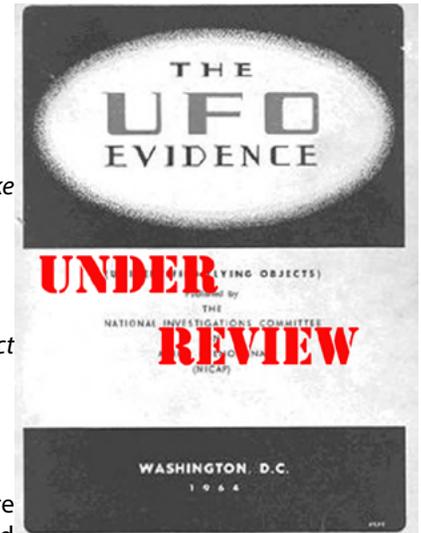
February 2, 1950- -Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. Bomber pilot chased UFO which left smoke trail. {III}'

When one reads Section III, the following information is available:

2/2/1950 Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona - Lt. Roy L. Jones B-29 pilot Chased unidentified object which was leaving smoke trail.[13]²

Note 13 states the information came from the February 2, 1950 Los Angeles Daily Mirror.³

Like so much that is found in "The UFO evidence", details are often lacking and the dates are sometimes incorrect. The actual date of the event was February 1. The media had published accounts the following day.



Searching for additional information

There are no records in the BB files for this event but it was widely mentioned in the news media. While the descriptions were similar to a meteor, the meteor explanation was ruled out by an expert:

Dr. Edwin F. Carpenter, head of the University of Arizona department of astronomy, said no one at Steward observatory saw the object because none of the staff was viewing the sky at the time. However, he was certain of one thing:

He was certain that the object was not a meteor or other natural phenomena.

Couched in the usual careful language of scientists. Dr. Carpenter said he was, "Inclined to doubt that it was a meteor because of that object's heavy discharge of smoke. A meteor rarely leaves a visible trail and, when it does, it leaves only a very light trail."⁴

Dr. Carpenter's word was considered gospel but the general description indicated the object was meteor-like:

Cannonballing through the sky some 30,000 feet aloft was a fiery object shooting westward so fast it was impossible to gain any clear impression of its shape or size.

Despite the hundreds of witnesses, there was little actual explanation on which to peg a clear picture of the event This is what most witnesses agreed they saw: A fiery object at very, high altitude streaked across the city. Behind it spread a thick streamer of smoke. Out of sight east of Tucson the smoke disintegrated and fanned outward into a broad band.⁵

The story about the pilot chasing the UFO was more a case of the pilot reporting the object moved too fast for him to catch it:

The radio operator in the Davis-Monthan air force base control tower didn't know what it was. He contacted First Lt. Roy L. Jones Jr., taking off for a cross-country flight in a B-29, and asked Jones to investigate. They feared the object might be an airplane with a smoking engine that the pilot had not seen. But Jones revved up his swift aerial tanker and still the unknown aircraft steadily pulled away toward California.⁶

The writer appears to be exaggerating what actually transpired. He implied the B-29 gave chase for some time but the object slowly pulled away. However, the other descriptions indicated something that was so quick that people barely got a chance to see it. More detailed descriptions appeared in the February 3rd issue of the Tucson Daily Citizen⁷:

Buster Durazzo - *"The object, whatever it was, ripped across the sky very quickly and disappeared suddenly about 100 feet over the Tucson mountains. It definitely didn't drop a smoke trail down and behind the mountains..."*

Grace Bautista - *"My five brothers and sisters and I didn't get very excited about it because we didn't see it. However, mother and father were confused because it moved so awfully fast—they were excited for quite a while."*

Sam Marler - *"I thought it was a jet plane, but going awfully fast, I saw it go down over the Tucson mountains - at least 700 miles an hour. It didn't leave vapor behind. It was definitely smoke."*

This indicated an object that was visible only for seconds. Even more interesting is that it was not a local event. According to another news article, the object was visible in another part of Arizona:

*A deputy had reported the object flashed across the sky at Ajo, Ariz., 120 miles to the west, then quickly vanished.*⁸

This makes me wonder about the statement attributed to Dr. Carpenter. He stated that meteors normally do not leave smoke trails. However, he is wrong. Fireballs that are visible in daylight or twilight do leave dust trails that look like contrails/smoke. The fireball of December 9, 1965, which sparked the Kecksburg story, left a smoke trail in the sky that last many minutes. The Tagish lake meteorite was produced by a fireball in the predawn sky that left an impressive dust trail. Therefore, the reason he rejected the meteor explanation is not based on accurate information. A little checking indicated that Dr. Carpenter's expertise was not in meteor astronomy but in white dwarves and supernovae.⁹ He probably had never seen or heard of fireballs leaving such trails in the sky.

Conclusion

Looking at the bulk of the news media accounts, it appears that the object was a bright fireball seen in the evening sky. There is no reason to reject this explanation and it should be listed as probable fireball meteor. It does not qualify as "best evidence".

Notes and references

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2. *ibid.* P. 20.
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9. Edwin Francis Carpenter. Wikipedia. Available WWW: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Francis_Carpenter

THE 701 CLUB: CASE #1052 FEBRUARY 11, 1952

Don Berliner describes the event as:

Feb. 11, 1952; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 3 a.m. Witnesses: Capt. G.P. Arns and Maj. R.J. Gedson flying a Beech AT-II trainer. One yellow-orange comet-shaped object pulsed flame for 1-2 seconds of a 1 minute straight and level flight.¹

Examination of the Blue Book file produced a few more details. There are several different documents describing the sighting but the following specifics can be determined :

- The plane was heading towards the NNE (azimuth 350).
- The UFO appeared at the one O'clock position, which was almost due north.
- The UFO disappeared above or behind a cloud bank at the 5 O'clock position, which was to the Southeast.
- Duration was about one minute

ATIC suggested it might have been a meteor because the *"description was similar to a meteor"*.² However, the intelligence office of Tactical air command disagreed. In a memo dated 6 May 1952, Major Gedson was quoted as stating:

*"That he has observed meteors and in this instance the course of the object appeared to be a straight line and did not have the characteristic orbit of a meteor."*³

This statement, in itself, indicates the pilot was not familiar with meteors. Meteors, for the most part, always travel in straight lines. They do not arc across the sky, which is a common misperception by observers. Even more telling is this description of the object:

*At first I thought an aircraft was on fire because of the brilliance and large size of illumination.*⁴

*The object disappeared above and beyond the cloud build-up on our right. Intensity and size of object varied only slightly throughout sighting.*⁵

These are the kinds of descriptions found in bright fireball meteor events. The only reason it might not have been a meteor is the one minute duration that was used to describe the event. However, such estimates can be inaccurate and there are examples of bright meteors reporting such long durations.

The bright fireball of January 12, 1934, which was visible from Argentina, was estimated to have lasted one minute by observers.⁶ A more accurate measurement for a recent fireball event, on March 31, 2014, indicated a duration of roughly 34 seconds on video.⁷ The March 31, 2014 fireball appears to mimic the potential fireball for February 11, 1952. It started low one horizon and ended near the opposite horizon. This is the kind of trajectory one sees in an "Earth-grazing" meteor. They enter the earth's at shallow angles resulting in them "skipping" in and out of the Earth's atmosphere. As a result they can have long durations.

Solved?

The fact that long duration meteors do exist and can be quite spectacular is something not to be ignored. Blue Book is full of pilots who, upon seeing a bright fireball, reported a UFO because it was unlike meteors they had seen before. There is also the possibility that the time estimate was in error and may have been lower. This gives me all the reason to suspect that it was a bright meteor that the pilots saw and not something "unknown to science". In my opinion, this case should be reclassified as a probable meteor.

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook unknowns". NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. "Blue Book Special Report #5". NICAP. Page 88. Available WWW: www.nicap.org/docs/pbb/nicap_pbr1-12_srch.pdf
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4. "Essential elements of unconventional aircraft sighting". P. 1. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6309494>
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