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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Apr](#) -> PROJECT-1947 - Arnold as a 'Boise Boys' Hoax

UFO UpDates Mailing List

PROJECT-1947 - Arnold as a 'Boise Boys' Hoax

From: **Edoardo Russo** <erusso@TORINO.ALPCOM.IT>
Date: Sun, 27 Apr 1997 21:16:37 +0001
Fwd Date: Sun, 27 Apr 1997 22:17:15 -0400
Subject: PROJECT-1947 - Arnold as a 'Boise Boys' Hoax

Hi Jan and all!

A few days ago somebody asked himself whether Arnold's report might have been a hoax.

This reminded me of an article I read more than 10 years ago, so I went and found it. Since I never found it mentioned any longer and i've since remained with the curiosity, I'm submitting you the story, wondering who else had read it in "UFO Research Australia Newsletter" (UFORAN, one of the best UFO journals down under) in 1984.

Its author was veteran Australian ufologist Bill Chalker, whom I understand is or was among this list's members, isn't he?

Well, UFORAN published a well-done summary of the 1947 UFO Wave in its vol. 5 no. 3 issue (dated May-June 1984), pages 4-16, by a John Burford, titled "Western USA - 1947: the Beginnings". Around the end of the article, Burford noted that some of the main characters in the early days of the wave were strangely connected with each other, but concluded: "As for the sightings by Arnold, Johnson and the United Airlines crew, their common connection with Boise, Idaho, is probably circumstantial an I will not allege conspiracy on such hin evidence. I do find hard to accept that sich a small group of connected people should share such spectacularly strange experiences in so short a space of time."

In the following issue (vol. 3 no. 6, July-August, 1984) Bill Chalker had a short article published in the "Forum" column (pages 6-7), titled "Flying Saucers - the Boise Boys' Legacy?", telling of his recent reading of Arthur Koestler's book "Janus - A Summing Up", where he had found the sentence "the term 'ufology' was coined by Air Marshal sir Victor Goddard in 1946". The anomaly of that 1946 took Chalker to Goddard's own book "Flight Towards Reality" (1975), where he told he had been at a naval hospital near Washington, DC, in 1946 (when Goddard was the RAF representative at the Pentagon), for a broken leg, when he met a U.S. Navy Captain from Boise, Idaho. That man told him the favoutite leisure pastime of the government "upper set" of Boise, Idaho (then a haven for VIPs): a cult of high elaborate pranking. "The idea was that locals might start a scare in the headlines of l=ECthe local press and see to what extent 'ex-Boise Boys', scattered by migration through all other States, would emulate and make the scare a national one", thus giving the originators their pay-off via the mass media diffusion of their story.

So when, no longer after he heard this, Godard saw a news item with a Boise dateline, referring to "flying saucers" over Boise, etc., he told his wife: "the Boise Bos have started something now". But when one of the pilots of fighter planes sent to investigate died in his plane crash, Goddard felt "A joke's a joke, but this has gone too far",

called his U.S. colleague General Spaatz and told him the "Boise Boys" anecdote. Spaatz rang the President Truman and the "saucer search" was called off.

A brief mention of that story was also done by Goddard in his speech at a meeting of "Contact International" in London, on May 3, 1969, as reported by Charles Bowen in his article "UFOs and Psychic Phenomena", Flying Saucer Review vol. 15 no. 4, July-August 1969, pp. 22-25, but I can't remember having ever encountered elsewhere, nor having ever read of anybody trying to verify it.

As Chalker wrote in 1984: "There surely must be researchers in the U.S. in a position to determine with certainty whether the initial wave with Arnold and others was solidly based in real observations of bona fide UFOs. Is there someone out there who can answer this?"

13 years have passed since then, but I'm afraid U.S. colleagues were never even aware of its existence. And I might add that some UK ufologist might also try and verify the British side of the story, if yet possible.

Not that I believe it to be the real trigger of the wave, but... a good investigator should never leave a clue uninvestigated, shouldn't he?

If nothing else, as us Italians say, "se non e' vero e' ben trovato" (if that's not true, it's well invented).

I remain waiting for my decade-old curiosity to be satisfied by somebody out there, beyond the Pond.

Of course, if anybody need a photocopy of the item, just ask me for it.

Best regards

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