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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Project 1947 - PROJECT SIGN MICROFILMS [Corrected]

From: jan@cyberzone.net (Jan Aldrich)
Date: Sat, 11 Jan 1997 09:52:26 -0800
Fwd Date: Sat, 11 Jan 1997 10:47:26 -0500
Subject: Project 1947 - PROJECT SIGN MICROFILMS [Corrected]

CORRECTED COPY

(*See Item #2 below.)

I have now looked at three of the four Project Sign microfilm rolls (Numbers 1, 8, and 9,) These were produced to be sent to USAF consultants for their evaluation of UFO cases. Unlike the Project Blue Book microfilms which are more or less arranged in chronological order, the Project Sign microfilms are organized by Incident numbers. (The incident numbers are not related to Project Blue Book case numbers.) There were indeed documents on the Project Sign microfilms that were not on the Project Blue Book microfilms. I was able to locate several "missing cases." (They were not really missing, more correctly they were incomplete.) A few interesting finds:

1. The Weekly ATC Intelligence Summary carried a section on "Flying Objects." The one for 16 July 1947 does not mention Roswell. The earlier one should be 9 July 1947. I doubt very much that it mentions Roswell either due to reaction time. We should try to get a complete set of these intelligence summaries as well as intel summaries for other commands for this period.

* 2. As I was looking at the Blue Book and Sign microfilms, a thought occurred. The documents in the USAF UFO project are nearly all copies. There are few original documents. Now why would the Project Sign not have the originals? Most of the documents in later years are originals. Who received the Project Sign originals? Another project? (Some copies did come from HQ USAF. Some UFO reports had been sent only to USAF HQ, Washington. After Project Sign was created, a request was made to send these cases in the HQ USAF files to Wright Field. Cheap copiers did not exit in 1947. In the HQ USAF Intelligence UFO files, there was a staff study in about Oct 1947. The proposal was to copy all the material that Project Sign did not have and send it to them. The staff study was eventually approved. That would explain why SOME documents in Project Sign's files are copies. But not all.) (In early 1948, HQ USAF directed ATIC make copies of all ufo material and send it to ONI. This was probably for the joint study by the USAF Directorate of Intelligence and the Office of Naval Intelligence on UFOs which was completed in late 1948 and mis-characterized as "Ghost of the Estimate.")

**There are some possible explanations for what seems to be the large amounts of copies on the Project Sign/Blue Book microfilms. There are multiple copies of "Project Sign Check List - UFO." These are contained in different Project Sign files (Case files and Summary files). The Project Sign microfilms were not of professional quality. They were apparently produced by Air Force personnel. The copies of

the Project Sign microfilm I looked at are second generation. Some of these documents may appear to be copies. Ruppelt also complained, that to review some early case he had to look at poor quality microfilms. I still have some doubts about the large amount of copies in material from this era.

3. The Project Sign microfilm was not sanitized.

4. One microfilm (Roll #9) has almost a complete file of UFO case summaries on "Project Sign Check List - UFO" forms. This will fill in most of the "missing case" files on the Project Blue Book microfilms. (One other source of "missing case" material might be CUFOS. Dr. Hynek had large amounts Project Sign/Grudge/Blue Book material in his files. (Some of it might be copies from the Project Sign microfilm rolls as I can see defects on the microfilm that are similar to some of Dr. Hynek's copies.

It will be interesting to see what the recently released Project Sign/Project Grudge files from the St. Louis record center, the Project Blue Book files, and these Project Sign microfilms together tell us about the early days of Air Force early UFO investigations. The Project Sign microfilm (Rolls #1, 7, 8 and 9), Ruppelt's catchall letter file ("Max File"--two rolls of letters to the USAF) and the USAF 1952 newspaper clipping collection (30 rolls of microfilm) presented to Dr. Herbert Stentz on his visit to Project Blue Book by LTC Hector Quinatanilla are now in Barry Greenwood' UFO collection. Dr. Stentz visited Project Blue Book to collect material for his PhD dissertation concerning UFOs and the Press. LTC Quinatanilla was preparing to dispose of this microfilm when Dr. Stentz showed up. Apparently the other rolls containing the remaining Project Sign documents were destroyed. Who knows what other material LTC Quinatanilla sent to the incinerator?

Jan Aldrich

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