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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Incident at Exeter, Pt. 1 of 2 (Hynek)

From: "Jerry Cohen" <rjcohen@li.net>  
 Date: Tue, 21 Jan 1997 22:52:52 -0500  
 Fwd Date: Wed, 22 Jan 1997 10:04:16 -0500  
 Subject: Incident at Exeter, Pt. 1 of 2 (Hynek)

Hello out there,

For those people that read the Oberg/Cooper series, I had mentioned that Dr. Hynek, the Air Force's number one civilian astronomical consultant, slowly turned from a debunker to a believer and cited some things that happened along the way to cause this.

The following case, also located in Blue Book files, had to be one of the major precipitating factors. I had recently posted a brief summary of the case in a post to John Powell. Most researchers are quite familiar with it, but for those people out there not old enough to remember, but who are reading this mail and attempting to fathom where some of the researchers today are coming from, this was just one of many items that Dr. Hynek found it impossible to reconcile in his many years dealing with UFO reports. It sounds like science fiction, but it was on the police blotter and in Blue Book files.

Remember, we only need one of these cases we are mentioning along the way to be the real thing for us to demonstrate the necessity for the varied research being performed today by various civilian groups. You may not agree with all their methods, but someone has to examine this thing seriously. The scientific establishment has simply shaken its head and said; "We don't know what it was or if it was real." This did not help the two patrolmen who "experienced" and reported the following events. God knows we need more "scientists" taking it seriously.

Excerpt below taken directly from:  
 Hynek, J. Allen . "The Hynek UFO Report" . paperback, pp 154-166 . Dell Publishing Co. 1977 : which included material therein from Blue Book files.

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The "Incident at Exeter" - September 3, 1965 \*

Dr. Hynek: "Incident" is hardly the term for this classic Close Encounter case which is known to virtually all who have followed the UFO phenomenon. This encounter at Exeter, New Hampshire gained national prominence, and caused both the original witnesses and the Air Force considerable embarrassment. Not only is this a fine example of a Close Encounter of the First Kind, but it is a showcase illustration of Blue Book negligence, put-down of witnesses, attempts to explain away the testimony of responsible witnesses with a parade of "official" explanations, and of capitulation on the part of the Pentagon which, months later, had to admit that the case should have been carried as "Unidentified." The file folders in Blue Book, however, still have the original evaluation of "Astro-Stars/Planets"

and "Aircraft for Operation Big Blast." (The astronomical evaluation is completely untenable and Operation Big Blast terminated more than an hour before the incident at Exeter began, according to official records.)

The story of this case is well documented in John Fuller's book "The Incident at Exeter," and in an excellent report by Raymond Fowler and his associates, who did a far better job investigating the case than did Blue Book. I am indebted to Mr. Fowler for the excerpts from his report that follow. Blue Book files on this case are fairly extensive in themselves although they draw heavily on the report by Mr. Fowler.

Blue Book's first mention of the incident at Exeter is dated October 15, 1965, and comes in the form of a request from the Headquarters of the 817th Air Division (SAC) at Pease AFB, New Hampshire. Written by their Director of Information for the Commander, and addressed to the Information Officer at Wright-Patterson AFB, it reads:

. . .

There have been an unusually high number of reported sightings of unidentified flying objects in the Pease AFB, New Hampshire, area which have been the subject of much discussion and numerous newspaper, radio and television reports. Many of these sightings have been reported to this base and your records will show that we have performed thorough investigations of the . . . Several members of this command have actually been called to view UFOs by sincere and sober citizens but as yet, we have always been too late or "unlucky." The most interesting sighting, in the nearby town of Exeter, aroused special interest as two policemen saw the object at very close range. . .

This office has, of course, not commented on sightings reported to the Air Force other than to say that they have been or are being investigated, that the reports will be sent to your organization, that further releases will be made from the Public Information Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, etc. The fact that we cannot comment on the investigations has led to somewhat alarming suspicion of Air Force motives and interest in this area, the most popular belief being that "...the Air Force won't release the truth because if the truth were known, everyone would be panicked." I have attempted to counter this by explaining the USAF's interest in this matter every time I speak to the press or private citizens about this matter. . . Still, however, an alarming number of people remain unconvinced {!}.

Many members of the two nearby Military Affairs committees and key citizens from surrounding towns and cities have inquired concerning the possibility of an Air Force speaker on this subject. Do you operate a speaker's bureau or would you be able to suggest where I might be able to obtain knowledge of an Air Force spokesman who could explain the Air Force UFO program and what happens to reports sent to your organization? If speakers from your organization are available, it might be possible for us to arrange transportation via Pease Base C-47, Billeting poses no problem.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

For the Commander  
A.B.B., 1st Lt. USAF  
Director of Information

Dr. Hynek: The initial report which came in from Pease AFB on September 15, 1965, was the soul of brevity.

"The following report of an unidentified object is hereby submitted in accordance with AFR-200-2.

A) Description of Object

- 1) round
- 2) baseball
- 3) bright red
- 4) five red lights in a row
- 5) lights were close together and moved as one object
- 6) none
- 7) none
- 8) none
- 9) extremely bright red

B) Description of Course of Object

- 1) visual sighting
- 2) object was at an altitude of approximately 100 feet and moved in an arc of 135 degrees
- 3) object disappeared at an altitude of approximately

- one hundred feet on a magnetic heading of approximately 160 degrees
- 4) the object was erratic in movement and would disappear behind houses and building in the area. It would then appear at a position other than where it disappeared. When in view, it would act as a floating leaf.
  - 5) object departed on a heading of 160 degrees and was observed until it disappeared in the distance
  - 6) one hour
- C) Manner of Observation
- 1) ground-visual
  - 2) none
  - 3) N/A
- D) Time and Date of Sighting
- 1) 3/9/0600 Z
  - 2) night
- E) Location of Observer
- 1) 3 nautical miles SW of Exeter in New Hampshire
- F) Identifying Information of Observer
- 1) civilian, Norman J. Muscarello, age 18.... appears to be reliable.
  - 2) civilian, Eugene F. Bertrand, Jr., age 30, Exeter Police Department, Exeter, New Hampshire, patrolman, reliable
  - 3) civilian, David R. Hunt, age 28, Exeter Police Department, Exeter, New Hampshire, patrolman, reliable
- G) Weather and Winds
- 1) weather was clear with no known weather phenomena. There was a five-degree inversion from surface to 5,000'.
  - 2) winds at Pease AFB (the winds were uniformly from the west, low velocity near the surface to quite high above 10,000')
  - 3) clear (unlimited)
  - 4) 30 nautical miles
  - 5) None
  - 6) None
- H) None
- I) None
- J) None
- K) Major David H. Griffin, Base Disaster Control Officer, Command pilot
- 1) at this time I have been unable to arrive at a probable cause of this sighting. The three observers seem to be stable, reliable persons, especially the two patrolmen. I viewed the area of the sighting and found nothing in the area that could be the probable cause. Pease AFB had five B-47 aircraft flying in the area during this period but I do not believe that they had any connection with this sighting.

Dr. Hynek: The report in Blue Book continues with the statements of the three witnesses involved. The first, from Norman Muscarello, follows:

I, Norman J. Muscarello, was hitchhiking on Rt. 150, three miles south of Exeter, New Hampshire, at 0200 hours on the 3rd of September. A group of five bright red lights appeared over a house about a hundred feet from where I was standing. The lights were in a line at about a sixty-degree angle. They were so bright, they lighted up the area. The lights then moved out over a large field and acted at times like a floating leaf. They would go down behind the trees, behind a house and then reappear. They always moved in the same sixty-degree angle. Only one light would be on at a time. They were pulsating: one, two, three, four, five, four, three, two, one. They were so bright I could not distinguish a form to the object. I watched these lights for about fifteen minutes and they finally disappeared behind some trees and seemed to go into a field. At one time while I was watching them, they seemed to come so close I jumped into a ditch to keep from being hit. After the lights went into a field, I caught a ride to the Exeter Police Station and reported what I had seen.

signed,  
Norman J. Muscarello

Dr. Hynek: The statement from the first patrolman, who after being called

to the scene also witnessed the UFO:

I, Eugene F. Bertrand, Jr., was cruising on the morning of the 3rd of September at 0100 on Rt. 108 bypass near Exeter, New Hampshire. I noticed an automobile parked on the side of the road and stopped to investigate. I found a woman in the car who stated she was too upset to drive. She stated that a light had been following her car and had stopped over her car. I stayed with her about fifteen minutes but was unable to see anything. I departed and reported back to Exeter Police Station where I found Norman Muscarello. He related his story of seeing some bright red lights in the field. After taking him back to where he stated that he had seen the lights. When we had gone about fifty feet, a group of five bright red lights came from behind a group of trees near us. They were extremely bright and flashed on one at a time. The lights started to move around over the field. At one time, they came so close I fell to the ground and started to draw my gun. The lights were so bright, I was unable to make out any form. There was no sound or vibration but the farm animals were upset in the area and were making a lot of noise. When the lights started coming near us again, Mr. Muscarello and I ran to the car. I radioed Patrolman David Hunt who arrived in a few minutes. He also observed the lights which were still over the field but not as close as before. The lights moved out across the field at an estimated altitude of one hundred feet, and finally disappeared in the distance at the same altitude. The lights were always in line at about a sixty-degree angle. When the object moved, the lower lights were always forward of the others.

signed,  
Eugene F. Bertrand, Patrolman

Dr. Hynek: From the third witness:

I, David R. Hunt, at about 0255 on the morning of the 3rd of September, received a call from Patrolman Bertrand to report to an area about three miles southwest of Exeter, New Hampshire. Upon arriving at the scene, I observed a group of bright red lights flashing in sequence. They appeared to be about one half mile over a field to the southeast. After observing the lights for a short period of time, they moved off in a southeasterly direction and disappeared in the distance. The lights appeared to remain at the same altitude which I estimate to be about one hundred feet.

signed,  
David R. Hunt, Patrolman

Dr. Hynek: Blue Book's way of dealing with these witnesses' reports was to make every effort to locate some type of aircraft operation in the area in question; none was successful.

A news clip from the Amesbury News, Massachusetts, stated that the UFO was identified as an "ad gimmick"; but Ray Fowler checked with the Skylight Aerial Advertising Company and was advised that their aircraft was not flying on the night of September 3. He was also informed that the company aircraft rarely flew into southern New Hampshire, and when it did, it was usually in the Salem and Manchester areas, miles away from Exeter. Furthermore, he learned that the "Skylight" aircraft does not carry red flashing lights; it carries a rectangular sign with white flashing lights. Yet the manager of the advertising company had stated to the Amesbury News that "perhaps some UFOs reported in the New Hampshire area could have been their aircraft." Unfortunately, the press anxiously latched on to this bit of irrelevant information to "explain" the Exeter case.

The two simultaneous investigations of this case are an interesting study in contrasts. The Air Force records are at best sketchy, and focus essentially on attempts at locating existing aircraft in the area; as usual, Blue Book started out its investigation with a negative premise. On the other hand, Raymond Fowler and his associates made an exhaustive examination of the case, keeping their minds open at all times. Their final reports were duly submitted to Blue Book.

The following is excerpted from Fowler's report, which supplements Muscarello's statement to the Air Force investigator:

. . . .

Muscarello reported the incident to Desk Officer Reginald Towland at about 1:45 A.M. EDT. Side view and angle view seen. He was hit with fear and hardly able to talk. A radio call was made to Officer Bertrand asking him to return to the station, pick up Muscarello, and investigate at the scene of the sighting which he did. Upon arriving at the Carl Dining field, the object was nowhere to be seen. After waiting and looking from the cruiser for several minutes, Bertrand radioed headquarters that there was nothing there and that the boy must have been imagining things. It was then suggested that he examine the field before returning, so Bertrand and Muscarello advanced into the field. As the police officer played his flashlight beam back and forth over the field, Muscarello sighted the object rising slowly from behind some nearby trees and shouted. Bertrand swung around and saw a large dark object carrying a straight row of four extraordinarily bright, red, pulsating lights coming into the field at treetop level. It swung around toward them and just clearing a sixty-to seventy-foot tree and seemingly only one hundred feet away from them. Instinctively, Officer Bertrand drew his service revolver (he stated that Muscarello shouted, "Shoot it!"), but thinking this unwise, replaced it and yelled to Muscarello to take cover in the cruiser. He told me (Fowler) that he was afraid that they both would be burnt by the blinding lights closing in on them. They ran to the cruiser where Bertrand immediately put in a radio call to headquarters for assistance. Officer Hunt arrived within minutes, and the trio observed the object move away over and below the tree line.

Dr. Hynek: Now let us return to the Blue Book coverage for a look at an interesting exchange of letters between the then Major Quintanilla and the police officers involved. Quintanilla states:

Our investigations and evaluation of the sighting indicates a possible association with the Air Force operation "Big Blast." In addition to aircraft from this operation, there were five (5) B-47 aircraft flying in the area during this period. Before final evaluation of your sighting can be made, it is essential for us to know if either of you witnessed any aircraft in the area during this time period, either independently or in connection with the observed object. Since there were many aircraft in the area, at the time, and there were no reports of unidentified objects from personnel engaged in this air operation, we might then assume that the objects observed between midnight and two A.M. might be associated with this military air operation. If, however, these aircraft were noted by either of you, this would tend to eliminate this air operation as a possible explanation for the objects observed.

Signed,  
Hector Quintanilla, Jr.  
Major, USAF, Chief,  
Project Blue Book

Exeter sightings: continued in part two

\* Fuller, John G. "Incident at Exeter" . A Berkley Medallion Book .  
Pub. G.P. Putnam's Sons Distributed by Berkley Publishing Corporation .  
1/67

Respectfully,  
Jerry Cohen

E-mail: rjcohen@li.net

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