



Aliens On Earth.com

Resources for those who are stranded here



Our Bookstore is **OPEN**

Over 5000 new & used titles, competitively priced!

Topics: [UFOs](#) - [Paranormal](#) - [Area 51](#) - [Ghosts](#) - [Fortean](#) - [Conspiracy](#) - [History](#) - [Biography](#) - [Psychology](#) - [Religion](#) - [Crime](#) - [Health](#) - [Geography](#) - [Maps](#) - [Science](#) - [Money](#) - [Language](#) - [Recreation](#) - [Technology](#) - [Fiction](#) - [Other](#) - [New](#)

Search... for keyword(s)

in Page Titles

Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Jan](#) -> Wilbert Smith and MJ-12 - Article

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Wilbert Smith and MJ-12 - Article

From: legion@werple.net.au
Date: Sun, 26 Jan 1997 13:02:26 +1100 (EST)
Fwd Date: Mon, 27 Jan 1997 09:47:04 -0500
Subject: Wilbert Smith and MJ-12 - Article

>From [_UFO BRIGANTIA_](#), July 1990

WILBERT SMITH and MJ-12

by

Christopher D. Allan

The older generation of UFO buffs may remember some articles in FLYING SAUCER REVIEW during the period 1958-1962 written by the Canadian ufologist Wilbert B. Smith.

Wilbert Smith was a Canadian civil servant and engineer, specializing in radio and telecommunications, who worked in the Department of Transport. He had a strong interest in UFOs from the outset of the UFO era and was impressed by the first two books to be published: FLYING SAUCERS ARE REAL by Donald Keyhoe and BEHIND THE FLYING SAUCERS by Frank Scully, particularly the latter for reasons we shall see. By 1950 he had become dedicated to the ETH. Some years later Smith became the founder and director of the Ottawa Flying Saucer Club. He died of cancer in 1962.

Today Smith's name would be long forgotten were it not for the release of some documents by the Canadian authorities in 1978. Arthur Bray, a Canadian researcher, had applied for the release of the papers relating to two projects: Magnet and Second Storey, which had been classified since the early 1950s. Included among these was a top secret memorandum, written by Smith; this revived interest in Smith's work and, together with the Roswell affair, contributed to the big renewal of interest in crashed UFOs and cover-ups in the 1980s.

Smith's Memorandum

The memo was written on November 21, 1950 and is entitled GEOMAGNETICS. It is chiefly to do with the study of magnetic phenomena but some 25% relates to flying saucers. The fact that it was classified 'Top Secret' for nearly 20 years has caused ETH supporters to attach great importance to it; in reality its value to ufology is practically zero, as we shall see.

Smith had addressed his memo to the 'Controller of Telecommunications' requesting that a project be set up to investigate harnessing the earth's magnetic field and its possible use in the

design and construction of a flying disc. This project was duly authorized on December 2, 1950 and became known as Project Magnet. There is no official return memo authorizing the project; only a simple handwritten note on Smith's memo, from C.P. Edwards, Deputy Minister of Transport (Air Services) saying "LOOK, go ahead with it and keep me posted from time to time". For a supposed official top secret project, it is surely most irregular for it to be authorised in this disinterested, almost brush-off like manner.

Whilst the project did have official backing, it was only a spare time exercise. However, Smith was allowed to use the facilities at the Defence Research Board for his work. The head of the DRB at the time was Dr. O.M. Solandt, who is mentioned in Smith's memo. Solandt had a passing interest in UFOs, of which more later.

The Smith memo contains four short paragraphs which refer to the U.S. government's interest in Flying Saucers. One paragraph says that the matter is more highly classified even than the H-bomb (this was in 1950), while another says that a small group headed by Dr. Vannevar Bush is making a "concentrated effort" to discover the modus operandi of the flying discs. It is these two remarks that form the real hard core of the memo for dedicated ETHers, but their true significance has been grossly overestimated, as I intend to show.

We do not know how many people saw the memo in 1950, or how they reacted. What we do know is that it launched Project Magnet. We also know that it was kept hidden for nearly two decades, which may seem an inordinately long time but is less than most of the early U.S. documents released under the FOIA, some of which stayed under wraps for 30 years or more.

After the publication of the Condon Report in January 1969 (which contains a brief section on official UFO study in Canada), Dr. Peter M. Millman of the National Research Council of Canada, who served on Second Storey, recommended that the Magnet and Second Storey files be declassified. Following this, a Canadian government memo of Sept. 15, 1969 down-classified the files to the 'confidential' level, adding that they would be made available to persons in a bona-fide organisation, but that "at no time should it be made available to the public". It also said that the file "should not be destroyed until such time as this subject has cooled off". In other words, the Canadian authorities wanted to allow a period for interested parties to view the files before disposing of them; hardly the action of an authority intent on covering up important UFO data.

Whether anyone took advantage of this opportunity to view the Magnet & Second Storey files we do not know, but the files were obviously not destroyed. A copy was eventually obtained by Arthur Bray in 1978 as stated. If Smith's memo was seen by anyone in the period 1969-78 nobody thought it important enough to mention it or to request a copy

Stanton Friedman obtained the memo in 1979 and gave Bill Moore a copy. Portions of it appeared in the ROSWELL INCIDENT, published in 1980. In due course others got hold of it and paraded it as strong evidence of crashed saucers and official cover-up.

PROJECTS Magnet and Second Storey

Magnet was essentially a part-time effort headed by Smith to understand the principles of UFO propulsion and, if possible, to build a working model. Smith seemed to invest it with an aura of high secrecy and, with the Canadian government understandably not wanting the publicity over a project they regarded as akin to borderline science, little or no news of it appeared. The Shirley's Bay observatory, set up in 1953 as a UFO 'detecting station', seems to have come to an early demise. The names of the other scientists involved appear in ref 1. Magnet gradually petered out in 1953-54 without ever achieving much. Certainly no working flying disc was ever built.

Second Storey was under the chairmanship of Dr. Peter Millman. This ran concurrently with Magnet for about two years and Smith served on its committee. It was essentially a UFO investigation project but it too seems to have become dormant and came to an end in about 1954. The only public report we know of is one written by Smith, containing the analysis of 25 sightings in 1952, all in Canada. The majority of these relate to night lights. Smith's final report on Project Magnet, which included the results of the second Storey investigations, was not accepted by the Dept. of Transport and must have been a big

disappointment for him. There is no mention of Vannevar Bush, no mention of a secret U.S. project of any kind in Smith's report; nor is there any indication in the report itself that it was ever classified, although it was held in a classified file until 1969 and released, as said earlier, in 1978.

The Sarbacher Connection

In his 1950 memo Smith makes the startling statement that UFOs are classified "higher than the H-Bomb". He learned this, he says, through "discreet enquiries he made at the Canadian Embassy in Washington." What happened was that Smith was Canada's representative at a radio & broadcasting conference in Washington D.C. in September 1950. During this period he had visited the embassy and raised the subject of UFOs. Scully's book had just been published, with its stories of crashed discs, little green men, and revelations about UFOs being powered by unusual magnetic forces. This caused quite a stir and the book was undoubtedly the talk of the town. An official at the embassy (Lt. Col. Bremner) knew Dr. Robert I. Sarbacher, a prominent U.S. scientist who was a consultant in guided missiles and who participated in the joint U.S./Canada project known as DEW Line (Distant Early Warning).

Bremner knew that Sarbacher was also keenly interested in UFOs and may have read Scully's book. Bremner therefore arranged an interview whereby Smith could put several questions to Sarbacher, via Bremner. It was during the course of this that Sarbacher made the statement: "Yes, it is classified two points higher than the H-bomb. In fact it is the most highly classified subject in the U.S. government at the present time." Sarbacher declined to say more, and revealed absolutely no names. Smith made some handwritten notes of this interview.

Smith did not meet Sarbacher direct, so his notes are second-hand, but these notes, which were finally obtained from Smith's son by Bray in 1979, and appear in ref.2, started crashed disc buffs off in a hunt for Dr. Sarbacher in the early 1980s. One researcher, William Steinman, who pestered Sarbacher many times with letters and phone calls during 1983, eventually had a reply dated Nov. 29, 1983. This has also become known as the "Sarbacher letter", later widely published and also shown in ref.2. It gives the impression of providing further proof that the U.S. authorities had crashed discs in their possession. Steinman had suggested the names of about ten scientists who he thought had been involved in crashed UFOs and wanted Sarbacher to confirm these names. Sarbacher said that Vannevar Bush & John von Neumann were "definitely involved". The first point to note is that Sarbacher did not volunteer these names; they were suggested, repeatedly, by Steinman first. The second point is that some 12 months earlier, in summer 1982, both Bill Moore and Stanton Friedman had also tracked down Sarbacher; both had long 'phone conversations with him and Friedman had met him in person in early 1983. In view of Moore & Friedman's very strong pro-ETH bias there is no telling how much Sarbacher had been indoctrinated with crash saucerology before Steinman contacted him.

In 1985 other ufologists, including Jerry Clark and Bruce Maccabee, also met with Sarbacher; but some of the facts he told them do not tally with what he wrote to Steinman, and do not in any way support the Roswell story, still less MJ-12's existence. For example: in his 1983 letter he says he had "no connection with any people involved in the recovery", yet he told Clark in 1985 that Bush and von Neumann were involved and that they told him about the recoveries (see FATE, March 1988). Concerning an alleged recovery of a UFO: Sarbacher, both in his letter and in his 1985 talk with Maccabee, refers to the aliens as "like insects". None of the crash/retrieval stories (Roswell, Aztec, etc) mentions insects, and it seems clear that Sarbacher is merely recalling office discussions of long ago on Gerald Heard's Is Another World Watching, published soon after Scully's book (ref.3).

Even Sarbacher's 1950 "higher than the H-bomb" statement can be interpreted as a reference to the Air Force Project (which was certainly highly classified) plus data picked up from the Keyhoe & Scully books, boosted by a few office rumours. There is no mention whatever in Smith's 1950 Sarbacher notes of any project remotely resembling MJ-12, no mention of crashed discs or alien bodies, and no mention of Bush or anyone else. Neither is there the slightest chance that Sarbacher, had he known of a genuine recovery of a UFO that was classified Top Secret, would have passed on any indication of this fact to Smith, a Canadian citizen with no "need to know".

In summary, everything in Sarbacher's 1950 answers to Smith can be accounted for by his obvious enthusiasm over the early UFO literature, conversation among work colleagues, plus a good dose of the Washington rumour machine. As I have said, Scully's book was the talk of the town. His 1985 statements are based on shaky 30-year old memories, together with repeated 'name planting', suggestibility and undue pressure from eager crashed disc addicts in the early 1980s. Sarbacher died in 1986.

The Bush Connection

One unresolved question is: from whom did Smith learn about Dr. Bush leading a team to discover the modus operandi of the saucers? No one will ever know for certain, but it was almost certainly someone he met on his Sept. 1950 Washington visit, either an embassy contact, or maybe Donald Keyhoe. Keyhoe had met with Smith several times during this visit; they discussed UFOs at length and even prepared a joint article which they hoped to publish in TRUE magazine (ref.4). The article was based on Smith's current ideas on the propulsion of UFOs. Smith hoped his work, soon to be launched as Project Magnet, would give him access to similar work he was led to believe was being done by Bush in the U.S. More important, if Bush could be persuaded to give some seal of approval to Smith's work, obviously Smith would gain considerable recognition as a scientist/engineer. Remember that Smith was at this time hoping to construct a working flying disc based on the principles outlined in his joint paper with Keyhoe.

Further official papers, released with Smith's memo, reveal that Keyhoe had been entrusted by the Canadian embassy to take the joint Smith/Keyhoe paper to Dr. Bush for his views, but there is nothing to indicate this was done. Bush never saw it, the paper did not get beyond the draft stage and was never published. Smith later told Keyhoe that his work was now classified and he could discuss it no longer. Keyhoe, in ref.4, wisely omits all mention of his connection with Bush.

There is no doubt in my mind how Dr. Bush came to be linked with UFOs in 1950. He was a top engineer specialising in electricity and magnetism, who had a high security clearance and served on numerous committees. Both presidents Roosevelt and Truman thought very highly of him. He had shown a definite interest in UFOs and had even made an early public statement about them; he may have well considered their mode of propulsion. His name also appears in Scully's book. Had there been any small group, official or private, engaged in the design of a flying disc propelled by electromagnetic means, Bush was an obvious person to lead it.

Someone had clearly dropped Bush's name to Smith, who then assumed, wrongly, that Bush was engaged on something very similar in the U.S. and would co-operate with, and give encouragement to, Smith over Project Magnet,

Bush's name only came to be involved with crashed disc retrievals long afterwards, in the early 1980s. Certain UFO buffs seized on Smith's 1950 memo, misinterpreted it, then took the Sarbacher letter at face value, and hey presto: Bush had recovered a crashed saucer and seen alien bodies. Eventually, of course, Bush became the principal scientist and organiser of MJ-12.

Smith's writings and theories

Wilbert Smith had, along with Keyhoe, been a staunch proponent of the cover-up hypothesis. This is apparent throughout his writings, but is noticeably absent from his Magnet report, for obvious reasons. He also had bizarre ideas about physics and the properties of matter. He once invented a device called a 'binding meter' to measure certain areas of 'reduced binding' that he believed existed in the atmosphere and which were the cause of some unexplained airplane crashes that Smith had studied. Smith obtained this information, he says, from various contacts he had with "people from elsewhere". Smith was in fact an early contactee, and had been engaged in such contacts from about 1953.

His ideas on UFO propulsion have already been dealt with.

Some more of Smith's strange utterances are given in ref.2. He claimed to have been allowed to examine fragments supposedly shot down from a Navy Jet over Washington D.C., but then had to return them to a

"highly classified group". He also claimed his research group had recovered one and a half tons of "unidentified metal" in Canada in 1960. (The Condon Report deals with both cases on p.90-92; the first was fictitious, the second was a chunk of ordinary foundry waste). So much for Smith's reliability and credibility. Smith further claimed that official contact with aliens had been established, and in a letter to one researcher even said that "every nation on this planet has been officially informed of the existence of space craft and their occupants from elsewhere" (ref.2). Emotive words for the late 1950s, but mild compared with the ravings of certain fringe types 30 years later.

In his terms of reference for Magnet in 1950 Smith wrote: "It is intended to classify this work in its entirety until such time as it can be assessed for its impact on our civilization."

Those who read Smith's later attacks on official UFO secrecy were not to know that it was Smith himself, not the Canadian government, that had requested Project Magnet to be kept under strictest security.

Smith contributed various philosophical and fringe science articles to FLYING SAUCER REVIEW and ROUND ROBIN (a few are reprinted in ref. 5) up to his death in 1962. It has been alleged that he died of a brain tumour and that this tumour caused the apparent mental derangement affecting his later writings; however Mr. Grant Cameron of Winnipeg assures me that Smith in fact died of stomach cancer; thus there is no reason to put any of his bizarre writings down to a tumour-caused mental disorder.

Because Smith had won a posthumous award for his services to broadcasting I asked the Canadian High Commission in London if they had any record of him in their reference material. I also asked if they had any record of Dr. Solandt. They replied saying they had no record of a Wilbert B. Smith, but they supplied a 5-inch column entry for Omond M. Solandt from the Canadian 'Who's Who'. I then wrote to Solandt, asking what he knew about Smith and Project Magnet. He replied in August 1989. Solandt had a low opinion of Smith as a scientist, saying that Smith's experiments on Magnet were later shown to be quite worthless. He also said that Smith was all along obsessed with the idea of an 'Establishment' suppression of UFOs (surprise, surprise!).

Interestingly, Solandt confirmed that he knew Dr. Bush quite well and that they often discussed UFOs. There is nothing the least remarkable in this, as plenty of senior scientists in the early post-war era were interested and curious about what was then a new phenomena (many of course still are). Solandt also said that although he was chief of the DRB, and therefore with a far higher security clearance than Smith, he had never heard of any top secret UFO project, despite his friendship with Bush. One other piece of information he told me, which I had not asked for, is most illuminating; "Incidentally, most, if not all, of Smith's work was never really classified top secret or anything else. He never had any institutional base which gave him authority to classify a document. He just put "Top Secret" on his personal papers". Solandt ended by saying that all the others associated with Project Magnet were now dead.

THE MJ-12 Connection

I think the rest of this story speaks for itself. The Smith memo was the starting point for the MJ-12 forgery. The forger decided that if any documentary evidence of crashed saucers existed, the most likely place was in the formerly classified files of Dr. Vannevar Bush. He accordingly then made a thorough search of these files in the various archives. Not finding such evidence, but nevertheless finding a great many names of top military people and civilian scientists, he then began a search of some of their papers. The Sarbacher letter then came along 'confirming' his hopes. Still the crucial evidence eluded him. He then decided to manufacture a hoax, with Vannevar Bush the obvious scientist-in-charge of a project that never existed.

Further research gave the forger what he needed, the appropriate dates, places and people. MJ-12 was thus born. The forger, of course, had to ensure all the persons he had chosen for MJ-12 were dead before the December 1984 date when the film was allegedly sent to Jamie Shandera. The rest is now public knowledge.

If any impartial, motivated person were to go through Dr. Bush's

files, I am willing to bet a lot of giveaway evidence would show up. I would also bet that the forger had never heard of the word "compartmentalised" until he saw these papers. Yet, there it is, right on page 1 of the Hillenkoetter briefing paper.

What an irony it is that a top secret fictitious project was born out of an innocent bit of name dropping by an insignificant Canadian scientist of long ago, in a document he wrote, which, we now have every reason to believe, should never have been classified 'Top Secret' in the first place. #

REFERENCES

1. 'The Truth About Flying Saucers' Aime Michel (1957) cap 3 of part 3. The other scientists involved were: Dr. James Watt, Mr. John H. Thompson, Prof. J.T. Wilson, Dr. G.D. Garland; with support from Dr. Omond H. Solandt and Mr. Dean Mackenzie. We do not know what proportion of their time was actually spent on Project Magnet or Shirley's Bay.
2. 'Above Top Secret' Timothy Good (Sidgwick & Jackson, London 1987), Chapter 8.
3. 'Is Another World Watching?' Gerald Heard (London, 1950). Heard postulated the UFOs were piloted by a race of intelligent insects.
4. 'Flying Saucers From Outer Space' Donald Keyhoe (1953) Chapter 8.
5. 'The Wilbert B. Smith Collection' Some collected papers of W.B. Smith; W.L. Moore publications (no date).

.....

E-O-F

--

```

*-----*
| ..... |
| ... legion@werple.net.au ... |
| ..... |
*-----*

```

Search for other documents to/from: [legion](#)

[[Next Message](#) | [Previous Message](#) | [This Day's Messages](#)]
[[This Month's Index](#) | [UFO UpDates Main Index](#) | [MUFON Ontario](#)]

UFO UpDates - Toronto - updates@globalserve.net
Operated by Errol Bruce-Knapp - ++ 416-696-0304

A Hand-Operated E-Mail Subscription Service for the Study of UFO Related Phenomena.
To subscribe please send your first and last name to updates@globalserve.net
Message submissions should be sent to the same address.

[[UFO Topics](#) | [People](#) | [Ufomind What's New](#) | [Ufomind Top Level](#)]

To find this message again in the future...
Link it to the appropriate [Ufologist](#) or [UFO Topic](#) page.

Software by Glenn Campbell. Technical contact: webmaster@ufomind.com

Financial support for this web server is provided by the [Research Center Catalog](#).