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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Project 1947 - UFO Mystery Man Surfaces

From: Jan Aldrich <jan@CYBERZONE.NET>  
Date: Mon, 30 Jun 1997 11:57:39 -0700  
Fwd Date: Sun, 13 Jul 1997 03:29:34 -0400  
Subject: Project 1947 - UFO Mystery Man Surfaces

Greetings List Members,

Ed Stewart forwarded this post from the Skeptic's List.

Best regards,

Jan

Subject: UFO Mystery Man Surfaces  
Date: Mon, 30 Jun 1997 03:29:16 -0400  
From: tad@ssc.com  
Reply-To: skeptic@listproc.hcf.jhu.edu  
To: skeptic@listproc.hcf.jhu.edu (Skeptic Discussion Group)

Floridian may be UFO believers' nefarious redhead

ORLANDO, Fla (Reuter) - Joe Kittinger retired to Florida, took up hobbies and until a year ago never suspected he was a key figure in a far-reaching conspiracy theory.

Then a U.S. Air Force captain called and asked Kittinger if he had ever dropped crash-test dummies from high-altitude balloons near Roswell, New Mexico.

"About 50 times," Kittinger said.

With that, the Air Force was one step closer to closing its books on reports of flying saucers, alien autopsies and government coverups at Roswell.

The 68-year-old Kittinger, when he was stationed there, sported a thick head of red hair, wore captain's bars on his uniform and recovered lifeless, anthropomorphic figures from the desert.

That made him a good fit for the mysterious Red-Headed Captain, a nefarious figure in the annals of UFOlogy, the man who believers allege spirited away the alien victims of a downed flying saucer in 1947.

If you search the many Internet sites devoted to Roswell, you'll find dozens of references to the Red-Headed Captain. He also figures

prominently in many books and film and television reenactments. It was he, according to believers, who first drew a curtain of secrecy on those alien bodies that has not been parted in 50 years.

"It's all a crock," Kittinger said. "We needed the data (from the dummies) and we went to a lot of trouble to recover them. If that meant searching a wheat field in the middle of the night, that's what happened."

Roswell this week celebrates the 50th anniversary of an event the Air Force insists never happened. By naming Kittinger in its own recently published investigation -- "The Roswell Report: Case Closed" -- the Air Force hopes to drive the point home.

Although Kittinger fits the description of the Red-Headed Captain -- his telephone answering machine now greets callers with the words "Hello, you've reached the home of the UFO mystery man" -- he was nowhere near Roswell when the events of 1947 did or did not take place.

But he was there in the 1950s, an expert in high-altitude balloons and parachuting, conducting experiments on whether astronauts could one day survive parachute drops from the edge of space.

He supports the Air Force conclusions that when UFO phenomena re-emerged as a popular subject in the 1970s, the residents of Roswell confused memories of events separated by years and tied them all to a 1947 newspaper headline about a "flying disk" recovered in the desert.

The Air Force, which originally said it had captured a flying saucer, quickly reversed itself to say the disk was actually a high-altitude balloon.

After exhaustive research, that is still what it says. UFO enthusiasts accuse the Air Force of a massive coverup.

"People are going to believe what they want to," Kittinger said. "Too many people have made too much money spinning Roswell conspiracy theories to simply accept the Air Force's conclusions."

But Kittinger keeps a sense of humor about his alleged role in history.

Besides the answering machine, he has a doormat that says, "Welcome UFOs and crews."

And he accepts that he may one day be remembered more for something he did not do than for the many things he did.

In 1960, for example, he parachuted from an altitude of 19 miles, becoming the first person to break the sound barrier without an aircraft. It is a parachuting record that still stands.

Later he flew three tours of duty in Vietnam, spending the last year of the conflict in a prisoner-of-war camp.

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