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**Location:** [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Jun](#) -> **TIME: 'Did Aliens Really Land?'**

## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### TIME: 'Did Aliens Really Land?'

From: [XianneKei@aol.com](mailto:XianneKei@aol.com)  
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SOCIETY

DID ALIENS REALLY LAND?  
AN EXAMINATION OF EVENTS IN 1947 SHOWS SOMETHING DID HAPPEN. BUT THE  
RESULTING STORIES GOT OUT OF HAND AND OUT OF THIS WORLD  
BY LEON JAROFF

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A mysterious crash, dead extraterrestrials littering the landscape, a government cover-up. Today the incident near Roswell, N.M., is an elaborate tale, growing ever more so with time and mythic imagination. But when it happened, it was almost imperceptible.

The wreckage was strewn over a 200-yd. swath and consisted largely of rubber strips, tinfoil, wood sticks, Scotch tape, other tape with a floral design and what rancher W.W. ("Mac") Brazel described as a rather tough paper. On the day Brazel chanced upon the strange debris, June 14, 1947, he was making his rounds at the J.B. Foster sheep ranch, 85 miles northwest of Roswell. As he later recalled, he was in a hurry and didn't pay much attention to the scattered assortment.

Ten days after Brazel's chance discovery, pilot Kenneth Arnold was flying near Washington State's Cascade Mountains when he spotted what he described as nine disklike objects flying in formation at about 1,200 m.p.h. Arnold's report, yet unexplained, immediately gave rise to other sightings, and by July 4, newspapers were heralding literally hundreds of reports of "flying saucers" in skies across the nation.

But Brazel had no radio in his ranch shack and was unaware of the sightings until July 5, when he drove to the nearby town of Corona, heard about the saucers and may have learned of a rumored reward for anyone who recovered one. By then, Brazel later told the Roswell Daily Record, he had already returned to the littered field with his wife and two children, gathered the debris and taken it home. On July 7, while in Roswell to sell wool, Brazel dropped by the office of Sheriff George Wilcox, where, he recalled, he "whispered kinda confidential-like" that he might have found a flying disk. Sheriff Wilcox immediately phoned nearby Roswell Army Air Field, home of the 509th Bomb Group, and notified Major Jesse Marcel, the group intelligence officer.

Barely able to control his excitement, Marcel sped into town with counterintelligence corps officer Sheridan Cavitt, picked up Brazel and headed out to the ranch. After collecting the debris--which Brazel later reported weighed no more than 5 lbs.--they stowed it in the trunk of Marcel's Buick. On his way back to Roswell, Marcel stopped at his home

to show off the booty. Marcel's son Jesse Jr., now 60 and a doctor in Helena, Mont., remembers being awakened by his father and shown tinfoil, plastic, "beams or struts" that seemed metallic, and some strange markings that he thought resembled "hieroglyphics." The younger Marcel was only 10 at the time, but, he told TIME last week, he recalls that his father "was pretty excited, and I kind of think he said 'flying saucers.'"

That is most likely the description Major Marcel used when he returned to the airfield. As Walter Haut, who was then the 509th's press officer, tells it, he was ordered by Colonel William Blanchard, the group commander, to issue a press release. Haut, now 75 (he and his wife have license plates that read MR UFO and MRS UFO), remembers Blanchard's saying, "We have in our possession a flying saucer. This thing crashed north of Roswell, and we've shipped it all to General Ramey, 8th Air Force at Fort Worth."

Haut's press release caused a sensation. RAAF CAPTURES FLYING SAUCER ON RANCH IN ROSWELL REGION, proclaimed the Roswell Daily Record on July 8. Word of the "capture" quickly spread, and the phone lines in the offices of Sheriff Wilcox and First Lieut. Haut were jammed for hours with press inquiries from around the world.

The furor was short-lived. At 8th Air Force headquarters the same night, Brigadier General Roger Ramey, after consultations with his weather forecaster, Warrant Officer Irving Newton, called in the local press and announced that the debris was the remnants not of a saucer but of a high-altitude weather balloon. The sticks and tinfoil, he explained, were from a reflector used to track the balloon by radar. The next day, under the headline GENERAL RAMEY EMPTIES ROSWELL SAUCER, the Daily Record reported his retraction and explanation. In the same edition, the paper quoted rancher Brazel, overwhelmed by the uproar and embarrassed: "If I find anything else besides a bomb they are going to have a hard time getting me to say anything about it." Tranquillity returned to Roswell, and three decades would pass before any more excitement was stirred.

Enter Stanton Friedman, a former itinerant nuclear physicist now living in New Brunswick, Canada, who has long been, in his words, "a clear-cut, unambiguous UFOlogist." In 1978, while waiting in a Baton Rouge, La., television station for an interview, Friedman was told that Jesse Marcel, long retired from the Air Force and living nearby, had once handled the wreckage of a UFO. After quizzing Marcel, who still believed the debris he retrieved was extraterrestrial, Friedman reviewed the old stories about Roswell, painstakingly sought out and interviewed other witnesses, and came to a dramatic conclusion: there had been a cover-up of "cosmic Watergate" proportions. His research and conclusions became the basis of the 1980 book *The Roswell Incident*, co-written by Charles Berlitz (author of *The Bermuda Triangle*) and UFO investigator William Moore. Its publication put Roswell back on the map.

Mentioned briefly in the book was a yarn, told secondhand to Friedman by a couple who attended one of his lectures in 1972. They claimed that a friend named Grady ("Barney") Barnett, now dead, had told them about coming upon a crashed saucer on the Plains of San Agustin, N.M., about 150 miles west of the Foster ranch, in 1947. Before being shooed away by military police, he claimed, he had spotted several little bodies strewn nearby. Since the story had no apparent connection to Roswell and was given scant credence by Friedman and the authors, it was generally ignored. Yet it was the UFO era's first mention of alien casualties.

But not the last. In 1988, responding to the continuing speculation about Roswell, the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) in Chicago sponsored a team to seek out the crash site, recover any remaining debris and interview surviving "witnesses." Three years later the key members of that team, science-fiction author Kevin Randle and CUFOS investigator Don Schmitt, published their conclusions in the book *UFO Crash at Roswell*. In addition to recovering a UFO at Roswell, they charged, the government had found and spirited away the remnants of its crew, several little alien bodies.

Randle and Schmitt bolstered their tale with accounts by Roswell witnesses, some of whom had earlier been ferreted out and interviewed by Friedman. The most notable of their sources was Glenn Dennis, who in 1947 was 22 and working as a mortician. Dennis told of receiving inquiries from the air base that July about the availability of child-size coffins and procedures for embalming bodies that had been exposed to the weather for days.

Even more intriguing, he claimed that he had seen strange activity at the base hospital early in July and had been ordered to leave after

encountering a hysterical Army nurse, who later told him she had aided doctors performing autopsies on strange-looking, small bodies. The nurse, he added, had sworn him to secrecy and had been transferred to England, and flown out of the base shortly after they spoke. Later, he said, he heard that she had been killed in a plane crash.

Dennis, who still lives near Roswell, claims that until 1990, the only person he ever told about the strange goings-on was his father. Why? "I didn't want to get mixed up in this mess."

Friedman, meanwhile, was pursuing a new lead. His preoccupation with UFOs had landed him a stint as adviser for a 1989 episode of the TV show *Unsolved Mysteries* that dealt with Roswell and other purported UFO crashes, including the one that ostensibly occurred in 1947 on the Plains of San Agustin. One viewer of that show, Gerald Anderson, responded quickly to an 800 number flashed on the screen, protesting that the re-enactment of the event was inaccurate. For one thing, he told the operator, the shape of the crashed spacecraft was wrong. And how did he know? Anderson, now a resident of Springfield, Mo., explained that he moved to New Mexico with his family in 1947, when he was five, and that on a rock-hunting outing on the Plains of San Agustin, the group had come across the wrecked craft.

Friedman was ecstatic. This seemed to be solid confirmation of the story casually mentioned in *The Roswell Incident*. He arranged to have John Carpenter, a Springfield therapist, interview Anderson. Carpenter, who also directed investigations for the local chapter of MUFON, the Mutual UFO Network, conducted several sessions with Anderson, often using hypnosis, presumably to help him "recover" buried memories of the event. Anderson later told the *Springfield News-Leader*: "We all went up ...to it [a large silver disk]. There were three creatures, three bodies, lying on the ground underneath this thing in the shade. Two weren't moving, and the third one obviously was having trouble breathing, like when you have broken ribs. There was a fourth one [that]...apparently had been giving first aid to the others." Soon after, Anderson claimed, the military arrived, warned everyone to forget what they had seen and "unceremoniously ushered" the civilians away from the site. And why hadn't Anderson ever told his story before? As he grew into manhood, he explains, he "tucked" away the memory. "I learned you just don't go up to the average person on the street and say, 'Damn, know what I saw?'"

Armed with his new evidence, Friedman and UFO researcher Don Berliner co-authored their own book, *Crash at Corona*, in 1992. Their conclusion: the government recovered not one but two saucers in July 1947, along with seven dead extraterrestrials and one that was still alive. The first craft, they claimed, crashed near Corona after some kind of midair accident that showered debris on the Foster ranch. And the second, they wrote, was surely the one Anderson saw.

In their 1994 sequel, *The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell*, Randle and Schmitt introduced still more people they called witnesses. One was Roswell resident Frank Kaufman (called Steve MacKenzie in the book because he initially preferred anonymity). He maintained that he was part of a military contingent that had searched for a crashed saucer and, 40 miles south of the Foster sheep ranch, had discovered a craft shaped like a plane fuselage, its nose buried in a sandy hill. Through a cracked section, he insisted, he saw several little bodies.

Another tale was told by a Carlsbad, N.M., resident, Jim Ragsdale, who said he and a woman friend, camping out in an area north of Roswell during the Fourth of July weekend in 1947, were amorously involved one night when they saw an object flash overhead and crash not far away. Seeking out the wreck, he said, they discovered a crashed saucer and, using a flashlight, spotted several little corpses. They returned in the morning to get a better look but beat a hasty retreat when they saw a military convoy approaching.

Roswell researchers agree that something happened out there, but they are a rancorous bunch, given to ferocious infighting. Collaborators become enemies, one calls another a "pathological liar," another attempts to block publication of a rival's book, and they relish discrediting each other's witnesses. The bete noire of the Roswell community is a former *Aviation Week* senior editor named Philip Klass, who now publishes the *Skeptics' UFO Newsletter*, a bimonthly that regularly exposes duplicity and deflates UFO claims. Roswell believers are hard pressed, for example, to counter Klass's point that while they argue about whether the crash date was July 2 or July 4, Brazel reported unequivocally that he discovered the debris on June 14. Klass has constantly quoted secret documents, recently released under the Freedom of Information Act, showing that well after the Roswell incident, the nation's top security officials were still seeking physical

evidence--any evidence--that UFOs are real.

Minutes of an Air Force Scientific Advisory Board meeting convened on March 17, 1948, for example, quote Colonel Howard McCoy, then chief of intelligence at what is now the Wright Patterson Air Force Base (where the bodies and debris were supposedly shipped): "We are running down every [UFO] report. I can't even tell you how much we would give to have one of these crash in an area

Still, as the Roswell controversy becomes more heated, Washington has been under increasing pressure to resolve it. At the urging of New Mexico Representative Steven Schiff, who complained about a government "cover-up" of Roswell and the "runaround" he was getting from the Pentagon, the General Accounting Office announced in January 1994 that it would launch a hunt for any documents related to the "incident." That announcement was noted in the Washington Post under the headline "GAO Turns to Alien Turf in Probe: Bodies of space voyagers said to have disappeared in 1947."

Stung by the publicity, the Air Force reacted defensively. It promptly began a six-month investigation of its own, and released its report the following July. The Air Force investigators, under Colonel Richard Weaver, interviewed the surviving firsthand witnesses to the debris recovery, searched records and followed leads that brought them to Charles Moore, a scientist who in 1947 was working on the then top-secret Project Mogul.

Mogul, Moore explained, involved launching trains of balloons that carried acoustical equipment designed to monitor Soviet nuclear tests. So that the balloons could be tracked by radar, they were equipped with corner reflectors. Records showed that one such balloon train was launched on June 4 and was tracked to within 20 miles of the Foster ranch before it disappeared from the radar scopes in mid-June. Even more telling, Moore reported, the corner reflectors were put together with beams made of balsa wood and coated with "Elmer's-type" glue (to strengthen them). Also, he noted, the New York toy company that manufactured the reflectors had reinforced the seams with leftover tape that Moore recalled had "pinkish-purple abstract flower-like designs"--markings that Major Marcel could have interpreted as hieroglyphics.

Finally, the Air Force report stated, "there was no indication in official records from the [1947] period that there was heightened military operational or security activity which should have been generated if this was, in fact, the first recovery of materials and/or persons from another world." The GAO probe, released in 1995, reported much the same conclusion.

Perhaps even more disturbing to Roswell buffs was "Roswell in Perspective," an article in the publication of the Fund for UFO Research. That report was the product of a two-year investigation by Karl Pflock, who, after a career that included stints in the CIA and the Pentagon, resigned to become a full-time UFO investigator and writer.

Pflock, who still believes that some UFOs are extraterrestrial, nonetheless diligently pursued leads and helped uncover the Charles Moore revelations. Pflock also found gaping holes in the testimony of such "witnesses" as Frank Kaufman and Jim Ragsdale. Pflock's conclusion: "It is all but certain that at least the great majority, if not all, of what was found at the debris field on the Foster ranch" was the wreckage of a Project Mogul balloon.

Still another recent defector from the ranks of the hopeful is Kent Jeffrey, a Delta Air Lines pilot and UFO buff best known for his "Roswell Declaration," a petition urging the Federal Government to promptly release all documents pertaining to Roswell.

Because his father had known Colonel Blanchard of the 509th Bomb Command, Jeffrey was able to wangle an invitation to the 1996 reunion of the 509th. There he met pilots stationed at Roswell in 1947, most of whom, he found, had "heard nothing about the supposed crashed-saucer incident until years later, after all the publicity started." After chasing down other sources suggested by 509th pilots, Jeffrey was convinced. "In essence," he says, "the 1947 Roswell case has turned out to be a red herring, diverting time and resources away from research into the real UFO phenomenon."

Later this month, the Air Force will release the results of its second study, launched after UFOlogists complained that its 1994 report did not address the issue of alien bodies. ("It seemed rational to us," explains the Air Force's Weaver, "that since we proved there were no UFOs, it automatically meant no aliens.")

For a few years after 1947, the report will explain, the Air Force conducted experiments that involved dropping dummies from high-altitude balloons to study the results of the impact. Witnesses' descriptions of the "aliens," the Air Force notes, closely match the characteristics of the dummies: 3 1/2 ft. to 4 ft. tall, bluish skin coloration and no ears, hair, eyebrows or eyelashes.

"What quite likely happened," says Weaver, "is that people who saw these dummies mistook them for aliens." And, he notes, because no mention of aliens was made until 1978, those "who were interviewed were trying to recall events that took place 30 years earlier." Weaver blames UFOlogists for "linking" these sightings, which occurred after 1947, to the original Roswell incident.

Despite the Air Force reports, despite Pflock and Jeffrey, Roswell believers remain unshaken. "If you can't attack the data," Friedman says, "attack the people by saying they are nuts, kooks, quacks ... The evidence is overwhelming," he insists, "that planet Earth is being visited by extraterrestrial life."

The millions of Americans who believe that U.S. officials are withholding the truth about Roswell specifically and UFOs in general are not about to be swayed by the facts. Echoing The X-Files, they insist the truth is still out there. Says Weaver: "What I hadn't realized [before we issued our first report] was the vehemence of the pro-UFO people. Telling them there was no saucer at Roswell was like telling a kid there is no Santa Claus." With the urge to believe so strong, the legend of Roswell will doubtless go on and on.

--Reported by James Willwerth/Roswell, Elaine Rivera/New York and Chandrani Ghosh/Washington

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