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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### FUFOR: Washington, D. C., 1952 Documents

From: [jan@cyberzone.net](mailto:jan@cyberzone.net) (Jan Aldrich)  
Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 18:06:51 -0700  
Fwd Date: Thu, 11 Sep 1997 01:36:30 -0400  
Subject: FUFOR: Washington, D. C., 1952 Documents

"Spaceships or Mirages over Washington National Airport, 1952?"

The Fund for UFO Research's (FUFOR) latest offering gives Ufologists access to two important historical documents about the events over Washington, D. C. during the 1952 UFO wave.

"Minutes of the Press Conference Held by Major General John A. Samford, Director of US Air Force Intelligence 27 July 1952" has generally not been available. Along with MG Samford, the USAF Director of Intelligence, participating in the press conference were Major General Roger M. Ramey, Director of Operations, USAF, COL Donald L. Bower, Technical Analysis Div., ATIC, CPT Roy L. James, Electronic Branch, ATIC, CPT Edward J. Ruppelt, Aerial Phenomena Branch, ATIC, and Mr. Burgoyne L. Griffing, Electronics Branch, ATIC.

Statements by Stamford and the others shows that they did not have the complete story at their fingertips. The questions from the press were pointed and inquiring. Stamford uttered his famous line about "creditable people reporting incredible things." Attendance at this press conference was the highest since World War II.

During the rather long press conference, MG Samford, in many answers, made carefully qualified remarks. His comments distilled down by the press in large headlines reported the conference as a debunking session. While there is not question that the Air Force wanted to regain control of the situation, the conference was not the complete debunking session that was later reported.

CPT Ruppelt, in his private papers, would later record Samford's disappointment with the press and especially Keyhoe. Ruppelt speculated that the latter was the cause of later withholding of UFO information.

It will be obvious from the text that Samford, Ramey, and the others were not well prepared to handle specific questions about the Washington, D. C. sightings. It is my impression that the temperature inversion explanation was just being floated as a trail balloon to give the Air Force a respite from constant press inquiries. Later, the explanation would be carved in stone.

The second paper prepared by the USAF Environmental Technical Application Center (ETAC) in April 1969 examined the inversion explanation in detail. UFO proponents will be shocked at the paper's conclusion. "Report #6112, Qualitative Aspects of Mirages" by 1LT Frederick V. Menkello consulted a long list of publications on optics and UFOs. The Foreign

Technology Division at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, requested this report from ETAC. ETAC placed the following disclaimer on the report which almost invited further studies: "This report addresses a specific problem and is not intended to have application beyond that problem. We recommend that any questions on this or related problems be referred to USAF ETAC for further study."

Unfortunately this recommendation was not followed.

ETAC's conclusion included: "[Dr. James E.] McDonald was right...."

"Spaceships or Mirages?" is available from the Fund for UFO Research, P. O. Box 277, Mount Rainier, MD 20712 for \$15 plus \$2.50 for postage and handling.

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