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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Sherman J. Larsen and Ufology

From: Jan Aldrich <jan@cyberzone.net>
Date: Thu, 17 Dec 1998 21:30:01 -0800
Fwd Date: Fri, 18 Dec 1998 15:29:55 -0500
Subject: Re: Sherman J. Larsen and Ufology

>From: Gary Alevy <galevy@pipeline.com>
>Date: Thu, 17 Dec 1998 00:32:47 -0500
>Fwd Date: Thu, 17 Dec 1998 11:04:35 -0500
>Subject: Re: Sherman J. Larsen and Ufology

>I wish to thank Jerry Clark for the bit of information
>concerning Sherm Larsen's garage where so many NICAP files were
>"preserved" for transference to CUFOS.

>I have been reliably informed that these NICAP files had been
>stripped of selected government and sensitive documents before
>the transferral was made to CUFOS.

It would be interesting to know just who this "reliable" source was. During the 1960s and 1970s, I visited NICAP a number of times. I copied material from the files and place material in the files. Pretty much I was given free rein to look at whatever I pleased. At the time a friend in Australia had a newspaper clipping services that covered Australia, New Zealand and England. He also sent material that was passed on to NICAP.

There was not a large number of government documents in the NICAP files that I ever saw. Most of the government material that did exist were letters in answer to inquiries about cases, policies, etc.

After reading this posting, I called Richard Hall, and asked him about the government material collected at NICAP. He confirmed that there was not much government material. Mostly if they got something that originated from the government, NICAP took it to the media. NICAP also published it in the UFO Investigator, UFO Evidence, or other publications. The idea was to demonstrate that the government, while debunking UFOs, was concerned enough to investigate them.

Ted Bloecher also convinced Major Keyhoe to bring his material in to the NICAP office where Bloecher made typed copies of Keyhoe's files to use in his summaries of UFO case. Most of Keyhoe's files were then made part of NICAP's files. I also think Bloecher did not think 1960s Xerox copies would last. That was probably another reason he made typed copies Surprise, Surprise, that material is there in the CUFOS files, as are other documents, the Redmond, Oregon case, Ken Purdy's and Keyhoe's notes on the Project Grudge report, some intelligence reports which sometime came in, other items like the 1953 FAA report, and lots of responses to inquires in the form of letters from various government agencies.

Hall, Timmerman, Larson, and a number of other people helped salvage NICAP's files. Not everything was salvaged, however, most of the sighting files and significant correspondence were.

>Today, thanks to Mr. Clark's good work we have a pretty good
>idea of who removed those documents.

And what documents were removed? Any ideas? If there were significant documents missing how would you know? There is an answer. Probably, from the files of James McDonald, Hall, Isabel Davis, Ted Bloecher. Hall, Bloecher and Davis carried on a long and detailed correspondence with McDonald. They brought everything they could find of significance to his attention. McDonald files are available at the University of Arizona. The next biggest collection of McDonald material is probably at the Keyhole Archives. Again, there is not a great deal of government material mentioned. NICAP did most of its work before FOIA existed. It was difficult to get access to the Project Blue Book files at Maxwell AFB, but McDonald was able to do it. He wrote about the material he found there. Also, material examined by the Condon Committee sometimes slipped out, and NICAP got copies.

>One of the reasons I post to Updates is because the discussion
>generated can sometimes reveal important information, for
>instance, the fact that Sherm Larsen is the party that turned
>over NICAP's files to CUFOS and that they had been meticulously
>cared for, by the same person who probably removed the
>government and sensitive documents referred to earlier.

So just what government files are missing from the NICAP files? There weren't many to begin with. The ones that were there, are now at CUFOS. Richard Hall told me that there was no secret cache of government documents at NICAP.

There are holes in the NICAP files at CUFOS, specifically some pre-1947 and the 1957 UFO wave material seems to be among the missing, however, some may have been left behind in the salvage operation rather than culled out by Sherm Larson. The missing material is definitely not government material.

>Once again thank you very much Mr. Clark I don't know what I'd
>do without you.

>Gary

>P.S. If the Estimate of the Situation was ever in those files,
>now we know who should be at the top of the list of suspects for
>removing it.

The "Estimate" was never in the NICAP files, nor were any other Top Secret or former Top Secret UFO documents. Again, Hall confirms this.

The CUFOS files contains Hynek's material and lots of other material from other collections. Hynek's files are most interesting as he spent 20 years working for the USAF. There are documents in his files that do not exist in the Project Blue Book files. Some of the cases listed in the Project Blue Book files as "case file missing" were contained in his files. In his last years' of USAF employment he tried to copy all the material in the Project Blue Book files. Since he received copies of most UFO reports in the later years, many of the documents in his files were carbon copies of incoming teletype messages. Hynek also conducted a rather extensive correspondence with Col Friend. They exchanged tapes, some of which still exist.

Hynek was also instrumental in saving some of the Project Sign microfilms. We had four of the nine microfilm rolls before the last discovery, or I guess you would call it "recovery". When Ed Stewart and I visited CUFOS, Ed found two more rolls that Hynek had received years ago, and apparently kept. The microfilm cans were mislabeled as movie films. I have commented before on the Project Sign microfilms and the fact that they contain material missing from Project Blue Book files.

Sherm Larson's hand can be seen in mounting and remounting of clippings and labeling each sighting according to date,

location, and Hynek classification. As for culling of documents from the files, claims are meaningless, evidence is what counts. Sherm Larson was a good organizer, a moderately good UFO investigator, and from his writings a rather naive person. Certainly, he was not a super-James Bond type.

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Jan Aldrich
Project 1947
<http://www.iufog.org/project1947/>
P. O. Box 391, Canterbury, CT 06331, USA
Telephone: (860) 546-9135

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