



# Aliens On Earth.com

Resources for those who are stranded here



[UFOs](#) | [Paranormal](#) | [Area 51](#)  
[People](#) | [Places](#) | [Random](#)  
[Top 100](#) | [What's New](#)  
[Catalog](#) | [New Books](#)

Search... for keyword(s)

in Page Titles

Our Bookstore  
is [OPEN](#)

[Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1998](#) -> [Feb](#) -> Here

## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Naval Records Shredded

From: [Ufojoel@aol.com](mailto:Ufojoel@aol.com) [Joe Murgia]  
Date: Sat, 7 Feb 1998 15:01:21 EST  
Fwd Date: Sat, 07 Feb 1998 17:29:10 -0500  
Subject: Re: Naval Records Shredded

Well, it took them long enough, but the mainstream media has finally picked up on this story. This story was first reported last year by Linda Moulton Howe on Art Bell's Dreamland.

Joe Murgia

New York Times Page One - 2/7/98

Interagency Snafu Causes Scientific Records to Be Shredded

By Malcolm W. Browne

A huge trove of scientific records from the Naval Research Laboratory has been destroyed because of snarled communications between another federal agency and the laboratory, which calls the loss a calamity.

An investigation by both agencies is to be concluded this month. But although the investigators expect to pin the responsibility for the loss of the irreplaceable documents, which spanned half a century, nothing can be done to recover them. All were shredded last year, in a mistake that attracted little public notice until a recent account of it in a Washington newsletter, Science and Government Report.

Dr. David van Keuren, the naval laboratory's historian, said in an interview that the destroyed records included some 42,000 scientific notebooks and 600 cubic feet of letters and other correspondence. All had been stored at the Federal Records Center in Suitland, Md.

Although some of the lost records were as recent as the mid-1980s, about 80 percent predated 1950. While they had little value for scientific research, they were nonetheless prized, as historical documents.

Over the course of decades, the Naval Research Laboratory, which has a staff of about 3,500 and is based in Washington, has made a number of major contributions to the nation's science and technology, in the development of American radar, astrophysics and radio astronomy, the study of underwater sound, the invention of sonar, the investigation of matter under enormous pressures like those found within giant planets, and the chemistry of carbon cage molecules, among other fields.

One major loss from the documents' destruction was that of many of the records covering the laboratory's role in launching Vanguard, one of America's earliest space satellites. Vanguard made it into orbit in March 1958, just months behind the Soviet satellite Sputnik and America's first satellite, Explorer.

Although many records of the Vanguard program were lost,

van Keuren said, some private records kept by relatives of scientists who worked on the project have been recovered. There are hopes, he said, that other private sources may be able to fill in a few of the gaps.

Van Keuren discovered the shredding last August, when he asked the laboratory's archivist to retrieve some documents about materials science from the Federal Records Center and was told that they had been destroyed.

"As you can imagine," he said, "we're very unhappy."

The National Archives and Records Administration, which runs the records center, does not question the value of the destroyed papers, said Dr. Susan Cooper, spokesman for the agency. Dr. Cooper said a "fail-safe" system for protecting valuable federal documents had evidently failed.

Under that system, she said, before documents from federal agencies are placed into storage, they are provisionally assessed as either permanent or temporary, depending on the records center's perception of their importance.

"The archives of a Cabinet secretary are always designated as permanent, for example," Dr. Cooper said, "while my correspondence would, in general, be temporary."

Then, when temporary files have been stored for a long period and are about to be consigned to the shredder, the records center must give the federal agency from which they came 90 days' notice, in case the agency wants to preserve them.

The Naval Research Laboratory contends that it never received such warning last year before its temporary records were destroyed.

But Dr. Cooper replied, "We have the evidence that the laboratory received notification but did not act on it."

Dr. John Carlin, who as archivist of the United States heads the National Archives and Records Administration, said the destroyed documents had been judged by his agency to be "informal laboratory notebooks containing technical data which is routine, fragmentary or essentially duplicated in technical reports and papers."

Moreover, said Dr. Cooper, "though the Navy responded to other notices that came with this one, it raised no objection to carrying out the scheduled disposal of the laboratory material."

Saturday February 7th, 1998  
Copyright 1998, New York Times

Search for other documents to/from: [ufojoe1](#)

---

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

**UFO UpDates - Toronto - [updates@globalserve.net](mailto: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](mailto: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.

Archived as a public service by [Area 51 Research Center](#) which is not responsible for content.  
Software by Glenn Campbell. Technical contact: [webmaster@ufomind.com](mailto:webmaster@ufomind.com)

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