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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: The Philadelphia Experiment lives on

From: William White <bwhite@frognet.net>
Date: Sun, 25 Jan 1998 01:23:19 -0500 (EST)
Fwd Date: Sun, 25 Jan 1998 11:49:50 -0500
Subject: Re: The Philadelphia Experiment lives on

> From: georgina@easynet.co.uk [Georgina Brunil]
> Date: Fri, 23 Jan 1998 21:31:49 +0000
> To: updates@globalserve.net
> Subject: The Philadelphia Experiment lives on

> In 1947 his memory was magnetically scrambled to prevent recall,

Well, I may not know very much about UFOs, but I do know something about the brain. You cannot "magnetically scramble" memory.

The term "memory" actually includes several different subtypes which operate differently. However, for the purpose of this discussion we can limit it to declarative memory operating in three time domains: immediate or short-term memory (STM), intermediate-term memory (ITM), and long-term memory (LTM) [note: some authors use STM to refer to intermediate term memory; for this discussion I'll use STM, ITM, and LTM].

STM is thought to operate as a primarily as a "signal" phenomenon with the information encoded in the various signals flowing through the cortex and limbic areas. It can hold roughly 7 (+/-2) independent "things" at once, and operates on a short time scale (up to a few minutes). Due to its electrical nature it is of course highly susceptible to electrical interference and, presumably, strong magnetic fields which would induce electrical eddy currents.

The mechanism of ITM is less well known but probably includes long-term potentiation (LTP) and long-term depression of neurons in the hippocampus, mediated by NMDA receptors (which act as a neural "coincidence detector" of sorts). ITM is theoretically susceptible to electrical (and thus magnetic) interference, as LTP can be reversed in some neurons with the correct pulse train. However, as the effects of ECT demonstrate, the reaction of an entire network of neurons is unlike the reaction of an individual neuron. Furthermore, ITM is not the permanent location of memories and the time for integration from ITM to permanent memory is highly variable, ranging from a few minutes to, potentially, years.

LTM is permanent and probably involves changes in genetic expression that affect synaptic function, presumably throughout the cortex. The process of integration of memory from ITM to LTM may include sleep (both REM and NREM) but some suggest it occurs during waking as well.

Cases of hippocampal damage or removal have demonstrated that

while anterograde amnesia (affecting new declarative memories) is total, retrograde amnesia (affecting things already learned) is not, and there is no way of knowing how much of a person's past they will forget. Some people lose only a few days; others lose years of their life.

So at the very worst, all you could get with a magnetic (or electrical) effect would be an unreliable removal of memories, at least a few days and at most a few years. And that's even assuming you could somehow magically induce all the neurons in the hippocampus (and probably other regions) to "reset". Given that neither repeated ECT nor lightning strikes have reliably demonstrated even *this* effect, I would conclude that "magnetic" erasing of memory is impossible except for those memories encoded within a very short and highly unpredictable time frame.

Please remember, the brain is biochemical first and electrical second.

> and in 1952 he was reborn as "Andy" a kind of "walk-in" with a
> suppressed DNA memory.

And I'm not even going to *start* with "DNA memory".

William White

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