



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](#) -> [1999](#) -> [May](#) -> Here

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

From: David Rudiak <DRudiak@aol.com>
Date: Sun, 30 May 1999 21:17:52 EDT
Fwd Date: Mon, 31 May 1999 12:32:52 -0400
Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

>From: James Easton <pulsar@compuserve.com>
>Date: Thu, 27 May 1999 20:29:09 -0400
>Fwd Date: Fri, 28 May 1999 13:58:22 -0400
>Subject: Voyager Newsletter - Issue No. 5

The Eastonian Times-Picayune is back, starting off with the usual bird-brained theories about the original Kenneth Arnold sighting. Bruce Maccabee, myself, and others argued ourselves blue in the face with all sorts of mathematical and other arguments why birds couldn't possibly work (can birds outfly a plane?). A lot of good it did. Don't get me started.

But this post is about Easton's discussion of the alleged parchment parachutes on Mogul Flight #4, the current debunking explanation for the Roswell incident.

>In a recent discussion on the 'Project-1947' mailing list,
>Roswell case researcher Karl Pflock, mentioned:

>"More to the parchment point: (1) the early "Mogul" arrays-->among them, Flight 4, the Foster Ranch "saucer"--included 3 large>reinforced PARCHMENT parachutes. (2) Marcel mentioned seeing>"other stuff there that looked very much like parchment" in his>Dec. 9, '79 interview with Bob Pratt (see my "Roswell in>Perspective," p. 123). (3) In describing what he found to>reporters on July 8, 1947 (Roswell Daily Record, July 9), Mac>Brazel mentioned "tinfoil, [and] a rather tough paper." Note that>the tinfoil and paper are mentioned as separate items, and that>"rather tough paper" is a good description of parchment".

OK. Privately, however, Brazel told neighbor, Floyd Proctor, before Brazel ever went to Roswell and tangled with the US military, that it wasn't paper of any kind because he couldn't burn it or cut it with a knife. So this was really, really tough "paper."

>An aspect of the case which I had never personally seen set in>context was from the interview with Major Marcel, as published in>'The Roswell Incident', by Berlitz and Moore. Marcel reportedly>stated, "One thing that impressed me about the [Roswell] debris>was that a look of it looked like parchment".

For more complete quotes from Marcel, see below. Marcel had a bit more to say about the material other than it looked like parchment. According to Marcel, it was extremely tough, wouldn't burn or smoke, he couldn't break it, it was covered with strange writing, and there were large quantities of it. These statements were corroborated in part by Floyd Proctor and Brazel's sister.

>I pointed out to Karl that a 1997 commentary from David Rudiak

>spoke of the "ridiculous fictional 'parchment parachutes' of
>Mogul and claimed "they used small silk parachutes for the
>payload - its marked on the diagrams".

>If there were in fact parchment parachutes, that would offer an
>explanation - had it been confirmed that Flight 4 did use
>parchment and not silk parachutes?

>Karl replied:

>"Yes. Prof. Moore has confirmed this, as have others who
>participated in the project.

Since there are no known surviving records of Flight 4 detailing its configuration (other than it having a sonobuoy payload), how exactly have the parchment parachutes on this flight been confirmed? Seemingly all we have is the memory/guesswork of Moore and unspecified "others." In a moment, you will see strong contradictory evidence.

>Moore recalls early New Mexico launches, including Flt 4, were
>configured like Flt 2, which had been launched on the East Coast.
>Flt 2 employed 3 parchment 'chutes.

This is the only instance of where Pflock and Moore are on part way solid ground. According to the engineering schematic of Flight 2, reproduced in the 1995 USAF Roswell Report, it had 4 parachutes, one at the top and three at the bottom for the payload. In my notes, Flt. 2 was on May 22, 1947 in Bethlehem, Penn. The schematic does not say specifically what type of parachutes were used. It says simply "Reinforced." Since reinforced silk makes no sense, I assume "reinforced" refers to some type of paper 'chutes rather than silk ones. (Paper parachutes were standard meteorological equipment used with conventional radiosonde weather balloons.)

So in essence what we have is documentation of Flt. 2 using paper 'chutes, and then the apparent assumption by Moore that early New Mexico flights of June/July 1947 must have as well. But is there any evidence at all that these early N.M. flights actually used so-called parchment parachutes?

In reality, only ONE of these flights has any documentation as using a parachute, and that was incontrovertibly a silk one.

But before we get into detail on that, first an interlude on the subject of parachute color.

> Prof. Moore told me they were
>dyed either red or orange-red, and the coloring faded VERY
>rapidly upon exposure to sunlight.

Of course presumably leaving absolutely no trace of their original bright colors, so that Marcel would refer to the color merely as brown. How convenient.

Notice just how vague the term "VERY rapidly" is. Would there really be no trace of color a month later?

The meteorological paper 'shutes were made a little bit like those tiny toy paper parasols they sometimes stick into alcoholic drinks to be cute. The paper was pleated to fold flat and to a point on top where it was attached and lifted by the balloon. When the balloon burst and the payload began to fall, air resistance would unfold it. The edges of the paper were attached to twine shroud lines, which were further attached to a metal ring about 1-1/2 feet across down below.

What's my point here? When everything finally hit the ground, the parachutes would again collapse, some parts exposed to the sun, but other parts underneath shaded from the sun. If they were also composed of something like Brazel's "rather tough paper" to the point where they would resemble something like parchment, one would also expect only minor or maybe moderate shredding. The parachutes should remain relatively intact with uneven fading of color. Furthermore, somewhere in the mix of debris, there should also have been evidence of the twine lines and the structural metal rings.

But nobody describes anything like that -- no metal rings, no twine, just lots of pieces of something parchment-like scattered

about, described only as "brown" by Marcel and covered with purplish writing.

It seems like the assumption here by Mogul advocates is that the alleged parchment parachutes somehow became completely shredded, and other components of the parachutes (twine, metal rings), went completely unnoticed (or evaporated in the sunlight).

So everything else magically vanishes (along with hundreds of feet of other Mogul twine which should have been scattered about), and we have these pieces of shredded paper parachutes scattered here and there (and, of course, shredded balloons and radar reflectors). This gives all the pieces equal exposure to sunlight so that they can all fade equally fast from red/red-orange to brown (why would it fade to brown?). All the pieces also conveniently flip over now and then so that both tops and bottoms get their proper dosage of color-fading sunlight.

Interesting combination of circumstances. I've noticed over the years that the manner in which Mogul components supposedly deteriorated strangely depends on how exactly Mogul proponents need for them to deteriorate to explain debris descriptions, sort of how Warp 9 in Star Trek can be used to cross light years in minutes or days depending on the plot line of the week.

E.g., the milky, pliable neoprene balloons deteriorate in sunlight to brittle, black, ash-like flakes within 2 to 3 weeks according to Moore. (I even saw a TV demonstration of this by Moore a year and a half ago, complete with cellophane-like crinkling sound of the tattered, decomposed, now non-elastic rubber.) That supposedly explains the darkened balloon material in the Fort Worth photos and Mac Brazel's "smoky gray" rubber debris. But wait a second. That balloon at Gen. Ramey's feet still looks relatively intact and pliable after supposedly lying in the sun for a month. Oops! And Brazel speaks of rolling up his rubber strips into a bundle. Again, how does one do that with brittle, ashlike material? Double oops! When this is pointed out, all of a sudden it now supposedly takes months for the neoprene balloons to reach a fully deteriorated state, despite Moore's own demonstrations to the contrary.

>In re silk parachutes, these were used on some later "Mogul" flights and on Skyhook and other high-altitude balloon research projects.

I've got to laugh here. Again notice the imprecision. What exactly does "later" mean?

This is what it really means. Pflock reproduced the engineering schematic for Flt. 5 in his book (see "Roswell In Perspective). Flt. 5, also according to Moore, was very similarly configured to Flt. 4, launched only ONE DAY BEFORE. These were the first New Mexico flights, on June 4 and June 5, 1947.

So does the Flt. 5 schematic show "parchment" chutes? No way! It is very clearly labeled with a single "SILK PARACHUTE." Maybe Pflock should read his own book.

What about the rest of the early Moguls? Schematics for Flts. 7, 10, and 11, 12, and 16 are also reproduced in the AF Roswell report (along with 2 and 5). Flts. 7, 10, & 11 were all early July 1947 New Mexico flights -- no parachutes here. Flight 12 was in August 1947 back in Lakehurst, N.J. -- still no 'chutes. Flight 16 back in New Mexico is depicted with a single parachute attached to a banner. The type of 'chute isn't specified. It might be paper-- or maybe not.

But there is NO evidence at all that Flight #4 carried any parachutes or had any need for them. Most flights don't seem to have used them. And the balloon definitely closest to Flt. 4 in time and likely configuration is CLEARLY labeled as using a single, SILK parachute (and, incidentally, no radar reflectors, as did Flt. 2). Obviously the configuration of Flt. 2 back in Pennsylvania can not be used as a precise predictor of the configuration of the first New Mexico flights.

>Even some Skyhook flights seem to have used parchment 'chutes at times (I've seen photos in which the 'chutes appear to be parchment). Apparently these came from old stock--like Charlie Moore's radar targets with "alien" symbols. In those days, it

>would seem there was still some concern about the taxpayers'
>money was used. In general, the NYU and other
>researchers/experiments used whatever was available, doing quite
>a bit of scrounging and creative cobbling".

More merriment. Let's see if I have this straight. Between June 4 and June 5, they became very concerned about the taxpayer's money and scrounged and creatively cobbled together a silk parachute to replace those multiple expensive parchment ones that supposedly explain that large quantity of parchment-like material mentioned by Marcel.

No, wait a second. I guess I have that backwards. It's the silk parachutes that are expensive. So on June 5, they became all worried about the taxpayer's money and went back in time to June 4 to outfit Flight 4 with parchment parachutes to save the poor taxpayer's money. It's all so confusing.

As for all that Mogul angst over the taxpayer's money, we have the following interesting quote. "Money was no object. We seemed to have an unlimited budget." That was from Col. Albert Trakowski, Mogul Project Officer, quoted in the NY Times, Sept. 14, 1994, in their front page article on Roswell on the just-released USAF report. That was to emphasize the high-priority attached to Mogul as part of a long-range Soviet A-bomb detection system.

So again the skeptical inconsistently. Sometimes Mogul was really, really important, as supposedly evidenced by throwing lots of money at it (N.Y. Times). Why else would they have to cover up some decomposing, shredded, nonremarkable, unclassified, off-the-shelf meteorological balloon debris found by some sheep rancher?

But then in next week's episode of Mogul Trek, we find Eastonian/Pflockian revisionism. These guys were begging for money, practically scrounging around in dumpsters for their equipment, forced to use good Republican paper parachutes instead of those fat-cat silk ones.

>Thanks Karl, unless there's sustainable evidence to the contrary,
>that ties up one of the few remaining 'loose ends'.

Like I said, maybe Karl should read his own monograph and look at the engineering schematic of Flight 5 -- Silk parachute, not parchment, only one day after Flight 4. Three of the next six Moguls from June/July can also be conclusively documented from surviving engineering schematics as carrying NO parachutes. Does that constitute "sustainable evidence to the contrary?" Seems to me that this loose end is going to stay loose unless detailed documentation for Flt. 4 magically appears.

Here are some more points. Flight 5 was carefully tracked, documented, and eventually recovered. But Moore has emphasized over and over again that Flight 4 was a throwaway test flight, and there was never any effort expended to recover it. This is supposed to explain the complete absence of records on this flight.

So answer me this. Why bother to put parachutes on a balloon when you have no intention whatsoever of recovering the payload? Is this saving the taxpayers' money?

In fact, most of these Mogul flights did not seem to use parachutes, either silk or paper. According to Moore himself, they purposely recovered payloads only if they wanted to determine whether some piece of equipment was working properly. Parachutes would be superfluous for everything else. They obviously didn't care about the other payloads, even the sensitive listening devices (the only piece of Mogul equipment that was actually classified). They were left to rot in the desert. Recyclers they weren't. As Col. Trakowski said, money was no object for Project Mogul.

As for quantity of debris, those off-the shelf meteorological paper parachutes were not that big. I have a very nice picture of one from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, July 10, 1947. This was a Navy radiosonde weather balloon demonstration (one of several military demonstrations immediately following Roswell with the intention of debunking the nationwide saucer reports). The parachute was designed to lower the small radiosonde

transmitter once the balloon burst. The parachute appears to measure maybe 2-1/2 to 3 feet across, or maybe 5-7 square feet of paper material, hardly a large quantity even if multiplied by three parachutes.

So what have we got? Maybe 20 square feet of "parchment" parachutes on Flight #4. That's not a whole lot. This is assuming, of course, that Flt. 4 actually was configured with such parachutes, for which there is conjecture based on an earlier flight elsewhere, but NO solid evidence. But to read Pflock, he tries to make it sound like the issue has been 100% settled.

Let's now look at more complete testimony from Marcel and others with regards to such material, since another Eastonian/Pflockian tactic is to carefully edit the remarks to leave out all contrary evidence. Do these sound like the descriptions of "parchment" (thick paper) parachutes?

JESSE MARCEL

(Berlitz & Moore)

"There was a great deal of an unusual parchment-like substance which was brown in color and extremely strong... One thing that impressed me about the debris was the fact that a lot of it looked like parchment. It had little numbers with symbols that we had to call hieroglyphics because I could not understand them. They could not be read, they were just like symbols, something that meant something, and they were not all the same, but the same general pattern, I would say. They were pink and purple. They looked like they were painted on. These little numbers could not be broken, could not be burned. I even took my cigarette lighter and tried to burn the material we found that resembled parchment and balsa, but it would not burn -- wouldn't even smoke."

(Friedman & Berliner)

"One thing that impressed me about the debris that we were referring to is the fact that a lot of it looked like parchment. ... the parchment we had [would not burn] [like the beams just previously mentioned which also would not burn]."

(FUFOR television interview; also in Hesemann & Mantle)

"Then there was a kind of parchment, brown and very tough..."

And here was some corroboration for Marcel's statements:

FLOYD PROCTOR

(Husband of Loretta Proctor, neighbor of Mac Brazel. Brazel came to the Proctor house before going to the authorities in Roswell with his discovery.)

(Berlitz & Moore interviewed June 1979, around the same time as the first Marcel interviews)

"[Brazel described it as] the strangest stuff he had ever seen. ... He described the stuff as being very odd. He said whatever the junk was, it had designs on it that reminded him of Chinese and Japanese designs. It wasn't paper because he couldn't cut it with his knife, and the metal was different from anything he had ever seen. He said the designs looked like the kind of stuff you would find on firecracker wrappers ... some sort of figures all done up in pastels, but not writing like we would do it. ... He was in a talkative mood, which was rare for him, and just wouldn't shut up about it. ... he really tried to get us to go down there and look at it."

LORRAINE FERGUSON

(Lorraine Ferguson was Mac Brazel's older sister)

Berlitz & Moore, interviewed June 1979)

"Whatever he found it was all in pieces and some of it had some kind of unusual writing on it -- Mac said it was like the kind of stuff you find all over Japanese and Chinese firecrackers; not really writing, just wiggles and such. Of course, he couldn't read it and neither could anybody else as far as I heard ... Everybody up there by the ranch knew about it, but as far as I know, nobody ever identified what it was or what its purpose might have been. At first they called it a weather balloon, but of course it wasn't that ..."

In summary, whatever this stuff was, it was covered with

squiggly writing of some sort (2 or 3 sources). Marcel's testimony suggests large quantities of it. Marcel said it was brown in color. Marcel referred to it being extremely tough and unbreakable (implying stiffness beyond what one would expect from paper parachute material). Similarly Brazel (through Proctor) claimed it couldn't be cut with a knife. According to Marcel and also Brazel (again through Proctor), the material would not burn.

What sort of superpaper did they make these "parchment" parachutes from such that they couldn't be cut with a knife or made to burn? Why cover them with strange writing? Why would the brightly colored parachutes completely fade in the sun but not the reported writing? How could three small paper parachutes account for the large quantities of parchment-like material Marcel referred to?

And oh yes, could the skeptics please point me to all that parchment parachute debris in the photos taken at Fort Worth? Isn't that supposed to be everything brought back by Marcel from Brazel's place according to you guys?

And if there were parachutes recovered, shouldn't there also be the associated `_payload_` very close by? Why have parachutes without a payload? The payload for Flight 4 was a sonobuoy (and beneath that was the ballast control equipment). One would think Marcel and Cavitt would have found it mixed in with those alleged parchment parachute pieces (and other structural components of the parachutes). But did either say anything about it? No. So where are those other expected parts in the Fort Worth photos? That is the "real" Roswell debris, isn't it?

David Rudiak

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

UFO UpDates - Toronto - 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
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

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