

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

No anecdotal claim - no matter how sincere, no matter how deeply felt, no matter how exemplary the lives of the attesting citizens - carries much weight on so important a question. As in the older UFO cases, anecdotal accounts are subject to irreducible error.

Carl Sagan - The Demon Haunted World

Volume 10 Number 4

July-August 2018



Marking time

Front: The planet Venus about 27 minutes after sunset is quite prominent and can be easily seen by casual observers. In May, I was able to notice with the unaided eye only five minutes after sunset. Venus, once again, appears to have played a role in a Blue Book unknown case.

Left: A tripod mounted photograph of the night sky with an aircraft passing through the field of view produced this image. This is a common sight in a lot of my photographs and I can recognize it. There was a photograph, taken by an amateur astronomer, with the same effect that was promoted as a UFO. Even amateur astronomers can make mistakes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Who's blogging UFOs.....	2-3
UFO evidence under review: August 9, 1953 Moscow, Idaho.....	4
The 701 club: Case 3029 June 1, 1954 400 miles south of Minneapolis, Minnesota.....	5
My evaluation of the June 30, 1954 BOAC stratoliner case.....	6
Project Blue Book case review July-December 1954.....	7-15

Marking time is a military march, where the formation marches in place. To me, that is what UFOlogy has been doing for many decades. There are no new efforts being developed to study the phenomena being reported. Most individuals seem to be satisfied to look at reports, old and new, and highlight the cases they think cannot be explained. What has that produced? Where is the progress?

As Dr. William Hartmann once wrote, “...the mere listing of unanswerable puzzles is not equivalent to providing unanswerable arguments”. UFOlogy needs a new approach to produce those “unanswerable arguments”. I continue to point out that there are methods that could be employed to produce better evidence that might demonstrate UFOs are something that need to be seriously studied by science. Unfortunately, UFOlogists, and their organizations, seem to be uninterested in developing such systems to systematically monitor the sky and produce the evidence they so desperately desire.

Meanwhile, the To The Stars Academy (TTSA) is supposed to be the savior of UFOlogy. As we peel that onion, the more rotten the layers underneath become. A lot of what the TTSA has been promoting is old stuff. That which is new, is not that convincing. Despite the lack of good evidence, the TTSA is still managing to collect money from people, who hope they will produce evidence that will support their beliefs. The saying goes, “There is a sucker born every minute”. In my opinion, the TTSA is very good at taking advantage of gullible individuals with promises that will never be kept.

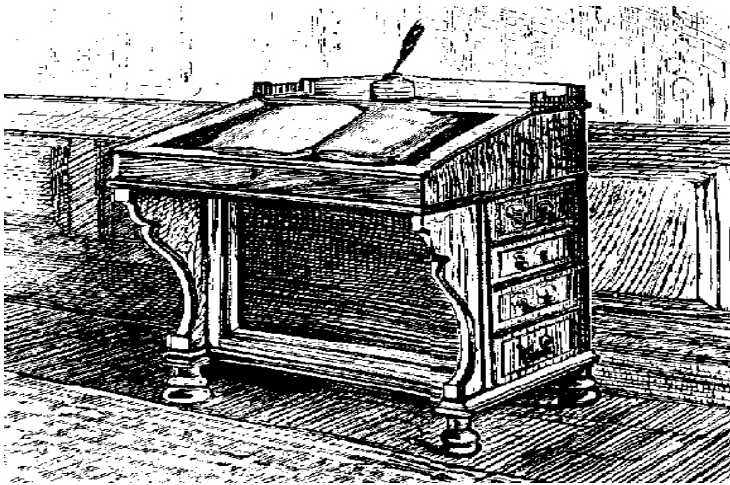
Since UFOlogy is not producing much in the way of new evidence, I have had time to devote to my other hobby now that the weather is warm. While the weather in May was not very good, I did have some good weather in June to go out to my remote site and do some astrophotography. With the use of an auto-guider, I can now spend my time performing visual and meteor observations of the night sky. This means, I can sit and just stare at the sky with a pair of 7X50 binoculars to assist me in identifying anything I might see. On some nights, there have been multiple observers at the site. Most were just performing visual observations and, like me, enjoying the night sky. As usual, my observations have included a lot of satellites and airplanes. There was nothing observed by myself, and others with me, that I/we could not explain.

On a final note:

HAPPY UFO DAY!!!!

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



David Clarke wrote that the last of the Ministry of Defense's (MOD) UFO files have finally been revealed. His article described the events that resulted in the MOD getting out of the business of studying UFOs. It is interesting that it appears to have taken a similar track as that of Blue Book. Like Blue Book, the ministry wanted to see if they could gain some sort of technological/scientific data by studying these reports. Eventually, like Blue Book, the opinion of a majority in the department appears to have been that it was a waste of time and they were never going to learn anything significant from these reports.

Despite the claims of Clarke that these are the last of the files, Nick Pope and Robert Hastings say that the MOD still has secret files that they have not revealed. Again, this reminds me of certain UFOlogists' view of the US government's system. They are adamant that there are highly classified files that exist, which reveal that UFOs are alien spaceship. IMO,

this is nothing more than a UFOlogical myth. If UFOs were truly alien spaceships, the actual evidence would have been found by all these amateur groups independent of any UFO evidence discovered by the government. After seventy years, there would be clear photographs/videos of these "craft" that would be indisputable. Other physical evidence would also be produced that could support the claims. The lack of any such evidence indicates that the UFO phenomena is, as Robert Sheaffer once wrote, a jealous phenomena.

An amateur astronomer's photograph became news for UFO proponents. After all, amateur astronomers are considered high quality witnesses and any photograph they present must be a "true UFO". However, it did not take long to explain the object in the image. It was nothing more than a flashing red collision light on an aircraft that had flown through the field of view during the exposure. I found it disturbing that an experienced amateur astronomer would present such weak evidence to a UFO site instead of trying to figure it out himself or ask for assistance from other amateur astronomers. When I first saw the image, I suspected the source was a red light on an aircraft since I had seen similar images in my photographs. All this demonstrates is that there are some amateur astronomers out there that appear more interested in creating a mystery than trying to solve one.

Since we are discussing amateur astronomer UFO reports, a UFO organization tried to imply that all amateur astronomers are imagers, who sit in an enclosed room using remote telescope technology. This is far from the truth. Most amateur astronomers don't have this kind of equipment or setup. Like the "glued to the eyepiece" myth, it is not a fair representation of what many amateur astronomers do. While, UFO groups equate amateur astronomer reports to those made by pilots, one has to wonder about the experience level of the amateur astronomer. Amateur astronomers, like everybody else, are human and can make errors. Experience level plays a role because beginners might not be familiar with the event they are seeing. If they are unfamiliar with object, they might allow their bias to leak in and affect their observations of what they saw.

Speaking of unsolvable mysteries, the TTSA decided to present an official study of the Nimitz "Tic-Tac" UFO. They apparently gave George Knapp this "official report" in order to make it sound like the government took the case very seriously. Once again, the TTSA's presentation did not appear to be what they claimed it was. The report did not look or read like it was written by the Department of Defense (DOD). There were footnotes linking to Wikipedia but no mention of official documents or reports. Witnesses were interviewed many years after the event and not within hours or days. It appeared to be something written by an outside group that was collecting the information years after the incident. It was later revealed that this report was written by Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS). However, they also claimed that a more detailed report was written by the DOD. Of course, we have no evidence of this. It is just a claim made by the TTSA. All this report did was reinforce my theory that the entire content of what the Advanced Aviation Threat Identification Program (AATIP) had consisted of reports written by BAASS.

Speaking of BAASS, Keith Basterfield described three of the investigations they conducted in 2009-2010. One of the cases involved a car that was "magnetized" by a UFO. Unfortunately, the witness did not want to part with his vehicle. I find it amazing that Bigelow could not have made an offer that could not be refused by offering much more than what the car was worth. Apparently, the evidence could not have been that good if Bigelow was reluctant to offer the person a good sum of cash. Another case involved UFOs seen over Lake Erie. I mentioned some of these sightings in SUNlite 2-3. A MUFON investigator had determined they were nothing but aircraft. The third case involved UFO sightings in Capri, Florida. While some of the sightings in March appeared puzzling, the sightings in May-June appeared to be of Venus setting in the west. I could be wrong since many of the news accounts only referred to an object that was visible in the west, which was seen on multiple nights and disappeared before 11:15 PM.

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

To be honest, the whole TTSA/BAASS/AATIP/AAWSAP story is getting a bit confusing. Luckily, Parabunk gave us an interesting article that tries to make sense of the alphabet soup. He seems to think the end result of all of this was the US tax payers gave money to Bigelow to receive a newer version of the failed National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS).

As for BAASS' "alien metals", Jason Colavito took a swipe at what one of these fragments might be. According to Dr. Hal Puthoff, this sample he has analyzed is something exotic. Jason disagrees and points out that the sample was sent to Art Bell over twenty years ago from an anonymous source, who claimed it came from a UFO crash. This means the sample has no provenance. Even more damning is that an analysis of the same sample by Nicholas A. Reiter, another UFO proponent, indicated it was very earthly and was probably nothing more than industrial debris (AKA "slag"). If this is accurate, TTSA/BAASS have been promoting a hoax and wasted taxpayer dollars.

It seems that Frank Kimbler also got involved in the AATIP with his bits and pieces he picked up in the New Mexico desert. Kimbler made claims of unearthly isotopic ratios and satellite photographs showing the track created by the Roswell UFO crash. In SUNlite 3-5 and 4-6, I demonstrated that these claims were inaccurate. Kimbler had ignored the margin for error in the analysis and, after considering that margin, the isotopic ratios became "earthly". Additionally, the feature in the Satellite photographs did not appear until July of 1998, over fifty years AFTER the Roswell event.

Jason Colavito also wrote a piece about the NY times article that promoted the AATIP back in December. Mr. Colavito's beef had to do with the writers of the article, Ralph Blumenthal and Leslie Kean. He noted that both were writing from a proponent point of view and chose to ignore information that might have portrayed the AATIP in a different light. Colavito's observations are nothing new. Back in SUNlite 10-1, I pointed out that these same authors were the ones who promoted the story about the UFO video that the skeptic's had been dreading. They implied they had a video that showed UFOs cavorting about during a Chilean air show. When skeptics conclusively demonstrated the UFOs were nothing more than bugs, both authors were reluctant to admit they had made a mistake! Therefore, it is no surprise that they chose to ignore evidence that some of these "metamaterials" are not as exotic as claimed and did not want to discuss the ties between Harry Reid and Robert Bigelow. The bottom line here is that Kean and Blumenthal cannot be trusted to do any real investigative reporting about the UFO subject. They are nothing more than UFO promoters, who are either blinded by their bias on the subject or are deliberately misleading people in order to further their own agenda.

A rather interesting story appeared out of the UK describing how a scientific radiation survey had been conducted in Rendelsham forest and high radiation levels had been detected at several locations where UFO activity had been reported in 1980. Curious, I went looking for the details. The study was conducted by Tim Acheson. I am not exactly sure what his background was but I read his on-line report and noted things that were not clear. The maximum readings he found were only two to four times the background. At these low levels, that does not say very much. However, I have to wonder exactly how he obtained these readings. Did he just wander about and measure the radiation levels until he got the maximum value possible? What were the values one to two meters away? The radiation surveys we conducted in the Navy had maps of a specific area and showed the distribution of the readings every few feet/inches (depending on the survey area). We are also not told what types of radiation were measured. Was it Alpha, Beta, or gamma? I have to assume it was probably gamma radiation but could it have been Beta and Alpha radiation from natural sources? In my opinion, his survey is incomplete without a detailed map showing the values he got in specific locations and the types of radiation measured.

Kurt Broz went to "Contact in the desert" and noticed all the problems with UFOlogy. This is nothing new for UFO "conferences", "symposia", and meetings. Most of it is mythology and wild claims. If there is anything attempting to take a scientific approach, it is eclipsed by all the nonsense that is promoted at these conferences.

Mick West wrote about "practical debunking". He takes on the term and points out that to debunk something is to expose false claims. The process to do that is to perform investigations of a claim and to communicate the results of those investigations. To date, Mick, and those at Metabunk, have been very good at performing investigations. While, they have gone down incorrect paths during those discussions, they were quick to realize that those solutions had no merit and eventually arrived at the explanation that is most likely. UFOlogists should not take the work at Metabunk lightly.

Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos had another update on his blog discussing some of his on going research. As always, it is a great read. One of his papers regarding "space test UFOs" was very interesting. Even though it was in Spanish, I was still able to get a reasonable idea of the paper's conclusions. As in most UFO cases involving known sources, the descriptions of some of the witnesses were not very accurate and people described objects much closer than they were (the actual distance was over 2000 km). If witnesses have difficulty describing known sources, what does it say for those events that are "unidentified"? Is it possible the reason they are unidentified is simply because they are not accurate reports? Things that make you go "hmmmm....".

August 9, 1953 Moscow, Idaho

The chronology states:

August 9, 1953--Moscow, Idaho. Three F-86 fighters pursued a large glowing disc reported by Ground Observer Corps. [VII]

Section VII states:

August 9, 1953; Moscow, Idaho. Mr. L.E. Towner, supervisor, and other GOC observers reported a large glowing disc. As three F-86's closed in to investigate, the UFO abruptly sped up and left the jets behind.

We are not told where this information comes from but it sounds like Mr. Towner may have been the source of information. His version of events differs from what was described in the Blue Book file.

The Blue Book file and a potential solution

Storm Leaves Burned Homes

SPOKANE (AP) — A summer thunder storm struck the Inland Empire early Saturday leaving burned houses and barns, flooded basements and downed power lines in its wake.

Lightning flashes lit up the skies for several hours and more than a quarter of an inch of rain fell in the Spokane area.

A two-story frame house north east of Spokane was destroyed when hit by lightning. The family of five lost almost all its possessions.

Fire damaged a St. Maries, Idaho, house after a lightning strike. The storm also destroyed a barn northwest of Spokane.

The Washington Water Power Co., reported storm damage over its entire Inland Empire distribution system.

Wreckers were called to pull away cars stalled at a flooded underpass east of Spokane.

And forestry officials reported the storm started widespread fires, especially in North Idaho timber. There were a dozen strikes in the Wallace area of the Coeur d'Alene national forest alone.

What is missing from the story told in "The UFO evidence" are details regarding the sighting. According to Blue Book, the time was after Sunset and it was visible for over six hours. It is true that the USAF did send interceptors to look for the object on two occasions. However, they could not locate anything and felt that what Mr. Towner and his associates were seeing were the lights from Potlatch, Idaho reflecting off of clouds. There is no indication that the UFO had accelerated away in order to evade interceptors, which means that part of the story is more myth than fact.

According to the weather report in the Blue Book file, there was a smoke/haze layer at 5000 feet. The location for the observers were north of Moscow and the light was observed to the east. Potlatch was to the northeast of the observers, which means that it probably was not the source of the lights. However, there was probably another source of the light.

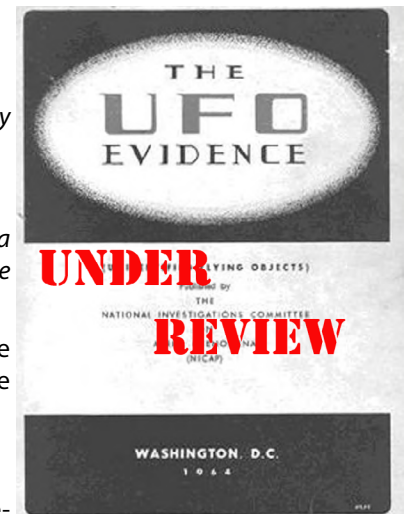
According to the message, the light was pinkish. On August 8, 1953 a thunderstorm had come through and created forest fires in the region. The smoke and haze was probably created by these forest fires. A forest fire would have created an unusual reflection/glow in the sky. It is important to note that morning nautical twilight began at 12:21Z, which is about 6.7 hours after the sighting started, which lasted for 6 hours. It seems likely the reason the UFO disappeared was because it was some form of reflection by ground lighting and the twilight glow made it fade away.

Conclusion

To me the evidence is not very convincing and does not support the claim by "The UFO evidence" that UFOs are "manifestations of extraterrestrial life". It is more than likely that what was seen was a reflection of distant forest fires off of clouds, smoke and haze. This should be removed from the "best evidence" list.

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 133.
2. *ibid*. P. 66
3. "MSG from CMDR 25th AD Det McChord AFB Washington to Director of Intelligence USAF DTG 121730Z". Fold 3 web site. Available: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6979415>
4. "Storm leaves burned homes". Union bulletin. Walla-Walla, WA. August 10, 1953 P. 13



THE 701 CLUB: CASE 3029 - JUNE 1, 1954 400 MILES SOUTH OF MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Don Berliner lists the case as follows:

Witnesses: crew of USAF B-47 jet bomber at 34,000' altitude. One object with running lights flew at 24-44,000' altitude for 1 hour.

Sparks states the following:

June 1, 1954. From 400 miles S to Minneapolis, Minn. 9 p.m. Crew of USAF B-47 jet bomber at 34,000 ft altitude saw object with running lights fly at 24,000-44,000 ft altitude, pacing the B-47 within 10,000 feet of its 34,000 foot cruising altitude as it flew 400 miles north to Minneapolis, varying its height both below and above the aircraft.

Sparks also describes this case as a possible Radar-Visual.

The Blue Book file

The BB file contains only one single message describing the incident. It states the following sequence of events:

- The sighting began at 2100 Central time (it is not specific if this is standard or daylight, this means 0200 or 0300Z - BB says 0300Z/CST) about 400 miles south of Minneapolis Minnesota.
- The B-47 flight was enroute from Barksdale, LA to Minneapolis, where it made a turn around 2205 Central time (0305 or 0405Z). At this point the object disappeared from view.
- The aircraft was at 34,000 feet and the UFO was estimated to be between 44,000 and 24,000 feet.
- A B-47 trailing the aircraft was asked to turn off its running lights to make sure it was not the same object. The UFO did not disappear.
- The trailing B-47 observed no object near the lead B-47 and did not report any object following him.
- There was no radar contact. This refutes Sparks' claim that it was a radar-visual.
- The flight path was essentially true north.

We are not told which direction the UFO was located but Sparks' implies it was "pacing" the aircraft. The message states it was "following" the aircraft. Exactly, what does this mean? Was it behind or to the port/starboard of the aircraft? This would be important to evaluate the cause of the sighting.



Potential Solution

The fact that the lagging B-47 could not see anything ahead of it means the object probably was to visible to port or starboard of the lead aircraft. If it was to the port of the B-47, then there is a probable explanation for this sighting. It is interesting that the planet Venus, at magnitude -3.95, was setting in the west (azimuth 296-306) between 0300-0400Z. About the time the UFO "disappeared" (0405Z), Venus was very low and would be fading as it set at 0415Z.

The only problem with this explanation is there is not enough information in the message to ascertain the direction the object was located. Therefore, we the best we can classify this case as "insufficient information" with the possibility of it being Venus.

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook unknowns". NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. Sparks, Brad. Comprehensive Catalog of 1,700 Project Blue Book UFO Unknowns: Database Catalog Not a Best Evidence List -NEW: List of Projects & Blue Book Chiefs Work in Progress Version 1.26. Jan. 31, 2016. P. 189.
3. "MSG from HQ USAF to COMDR ATIC DTG 020730Z". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/8713380>



My evaluation of the June 30, 1954 BOAC Stratoliner case

I received an E-mail questioning my reevaluation of the Blue Book (BB) case involving the BOAC stratoliner on June 30, 1954. In my BB case review, I had rejected BB's explanation of Mars but then decided to classify it as "possibly Venus". At the time I reclassified it, I simply did not recognize it for the case that had been previously examined by Martin Shough and was considered a UFO classic. Because of this, I felt it might be necessary to explain why I classified it as "possibly Venus".

First of all, one must remember I classified it as "possibly". This is a classification that I use for a case where something was a possible source for the sighting. In this case, Venus was visible for the time given and the direction the pilot was looking. Therefore, one has to consider it "possible" that Venus might have been the source.



The plane was flying northeast, when the pilot noticed an object that appeared on his port side. It appeared as one large object and several smaller ones. If the plane was flying northeast, it was on a general track of 45 degrees true azimuth. If one looks directly left (270 degrees relative to the nose of the aircraft), it would be looking towards azimuth 315 degrees. However, if the pilot were looking towards the wing tip, he would be looking a further 15-30 degrees to the rear. This means the pilot was looking at 285-300 degrees azimuth. For the location given, at 0123Z Venus was at an azimuth of 287 and elevation of roughly 10 degrees. Venus was in the right location and could have been the source. The sun had already set and Venus, at magnitude -4, would have been bright enough to see. To test this, I checked to see how bright Venus was shortly after sunset in May. I was able to visually locate Venus easily without any optical aid within five minutes of sunset. Its brightness was -3.95.

minutes of sunset. Its brightness was -3.95.

It is possible that the window the pilot was looking through may have distorted Venus or Venus was seen through some atmospheric haze/distant Cirrus clouds. There may have been ice crystals formed on the window as well (this was over Canada and at a high altitude). The end result would be that Venus could appear not as a point of light but as a large object with smaller objects attached. Considering this a possible solution, I then chose to move on to the next case in my evaluation list.

When I received the e-mail questioning the classification and pointing me towards Shough's analysis, I decided to review his analysis again.¹ I had read this some time ago and mentioned in the "Who's blogging" section of SUNlite 2-2. In retrospect, I should have been more thorough and looked at Shough's analysis when I examined the case and simply referenced it in the review of the June 1954 cases. I found it interesting that Shough did not mention Venus but, instead, made a case for this being a mirage. Shough also provided some additional information not found in the BB file. The sketches by the pilot were interesting and show that I was correct that he was looking towards the port wing and not directly to port. However, the sketches shows the object being dark. If it were dark, that probably would eliminate Venus as the source and put greater weight towards Shough's mirage hypothesis. While I think the Venus explanation had some merit, these sketches make me consider that Shough's hypothesis is more likely.

Notes and references

Shough, Martin. Study of an Unusual Phenomenon Observed by BOAC Aircrew over Labrador, Newfoundland June 29, 1954. Available WWW: <http://www.martinshough.com/aerialphenomena/BOAC%20aircrew%20sighting.pdf>

Project Blue Book case review: July-December 1954

This is the fourth edition of the Project Blue Book case review covering the second half of 1954. Like the previous evaluations, I tried to examine each case to see if the explanation had merit. I added comments to help clarify the explanation or if the explanation was not correct or adequate.

July 1954

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	North Arlington, VA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
2	Stockton, CA	Meteor	Agreed
2	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Agreed
3	Bermuda	Ships	Agreed
3	Fairchild AFB, WA	Balloon	Agreed
3	Concord Center, MA	Searchlight	Agreed
5	West Berlin, Germany	Insufficient data	Agreed
5	White Wood, SD	Beacon	Agreed
6	Fullerton, NE	Aircraft	Agreed
7	Cleveland heights, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
8	Lock, NV	Balloon	Agreed
8	Texas	Meteor	Agreed
8	Long Beach, CA	Meteor	Agreed
9	Manston, England	Insufficient data	Agreed
9	Denver, CO	Aircraft	Objects observed at high altitude in vicinity of B-36 conducting radar jamming exercise. Objects moved in direction of upper level winds. Possible radar chaff
9	Lowry AFB, CO	Insufficient data	Same as Denver, CO case.
9	Hebron, Newfoundland	Star (Spica)	Agreed
10	Garden City, NJ	Meteor	Agreed
10	Somerset, PA	Contrail	Agreed
12	Hamilton AFB, CA	Meteor	Agreed
13	Newburg, NY	Aircraft	Agreed
14	St. Louis, MO	Debris in wind	Agreed
14	Phoenix, AZ	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Unknown	Insufficient data	Agreed
15-1 Aug	Groveland, FL	Venus	Agreed
15	Winter and Obijwa, WI	Balloon	Agreed. Possible balloon launched from Sault St. Marie.
15	Bath, MI	Meteor	Agreed
16	Wilmington, DE	Venus	Agreed
18	Neustadt, Germany	Insufficient data	Agreed
18	Duluth, MN	Balloon	Agreed. Possible balloon launched from Sault St. Marie.
18	Normandy, MO	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
18	St. Louis, IL	Aircraft	Agreed
18	Rivera, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
19	Fr. Eq., Africa	Insufficient data	Agreed
19	Brooklyn, NY	Insufficient data	Agreed
19	Dallas, TX	Insufficient data	Agreed

21	Ft. Walton Beach, FL	Mars	Agreed
21	Hope, AR	Insufficient data	Agreed
21	San Antonio, TX	Meteor	Agreed
22	Coronado, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
23	Narsarssuak AB, Greenland	Flak	Agreed
23	Milford, OH	Insufficient data	Agreed
23	South Lakewood, NJ	Insufficient data	Agreed
25	Wright Patterson AFB, OH	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
25	Lake Erie	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Pepperell AFB, Newfoundland	Aircraft	Agreed
27	Ocean city, MD	Smoke Pot	Agreed
28	Miami, FL	Sundog	Agreed
28	Washington DC	Aircraft	Agreed
28	Miami, FL	Meteor	Agreed
28-9	Camp Cook Rapid City, SD	Meteor	Agreed
29	Korea	Meteor	Insufficient information. Record card only item in file.
29	Atlantic City, NJ	Balloon	Agreed
29	Diedesfeld, Germany	Insufficient data	Agreed
30	Los Angeles, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
30	Sampson AFB, NY	Insufficient data	Agreed
30	Bethesda, MD	Mars	Agreed
30	Mountain view, MO	Hoax	Agreed
31	Hampton, VA	Balloon	Agreed

August 1954

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
Aug	Lafayette, IN	Chromium	Agreed
Aug	Europe	Insufficient data	Agreed
Aug-Sep	Inglis, FL	Mars	Agreed
2	Korea	Meteor shower	Agreed
2	Westlake, OH	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
4	Washington DC	Mars	Agreed
4	Neustadt, Germany	Mars	Agreed
4	Netherlands	Insufficient data	Agreed
5	West Germany	Meteor	Agreed
5	Homerville, GA	Balloon	Capella
6	San Antonio, TX	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
7	Kaiserslauten, Germany	Aircraft	Possibly Altair
8	San Antonio, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
8	San Antonio, TX	Insufficient data	Agreed
8	St. Cloud, MN	Balloon	Possibly Capella
9	Atlantic Ocean	Aircraft	Agreed
11	Maxwell AFB, AL	Mars	Venus

11	Pacific Ocean	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
12	Columbus, GA	Mars	Venus
13	Stavern, Norway	Insufficient data	Agreed
13	Greenbelt, MD	Aircraft	Agreed
15	San Marco, TX	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
17	Langley AFB/Newport News, VA	Meteor	Agreed
17	Harlowtown, MT	Mars	Agreed
19	Austria	Insufficient data	Agreed
19	Moundsville, WV	Unreliable report	Possible meteor. Listed as unreliable due to age of witness (16 yrs old)
21	Patrick AFB, FL	Venus	Agreed
22	NYC, NY	Balloon	Agreed
22	Philadelphia, PA	Balloon	Agreed
22	Savannah Beach, GA	Aircraft	Agreed
23	West Germany	Insufficient data	Agreed
23	San Antonio, TX	Meteors	Agreed
24	Lagarfjort river, Iceland	UNIDENTIFIED	Insufficient information (See SUNlite 7-5)
24-5	Bismark, ND	Meteor Shower	Agreed
26	Danville, VA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Point Pleasant, NJ	Meteor	Agreed
27	Dorchester, MA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Lambert Field, MO	Balloon	Agreed
28	Daventry, Becon Hill, England	Meteor	Agreed
29	Prince Christian, Greenland	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
30	Paris, France	Insufficient data	Agreed
30	Minneapolis, MN	Insufficient data	Agreed
31	Korea	Balloon	Agreed

September 1954

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Pasco, WA	Balloon	Agreed
2	Machiato, Okinawa	Balloon	Agreed
2	Mineral Wells, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
4	Butler, MO	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
5	Butler, MO	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
5	Hillcrest Heights, MD	Insufficient data	Possible balloon (balloon launch in vicinity at time of sighting and object traveled in direction of wind)
5	Palm Springs, CA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor. Two aircraft, 50 miles apart, reported blue light moving south. Both saw object towards the east.
6	Washington DC	Meteor	Agreed
7	France	Insufficient data	Agreed
7	France	Insufficient data	Agreed
7	Las Vegas, NV	Meteor	Agreed
9	Seoul, Korea	Balloon	Agreed

9	Kinston, NC	Meteor	Agreed
12	Cape May, NJ	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Finland	Meteorite	Agreed (actually a meteor, not meteorite)
14	Italy	Insufficient data	Agreed
17	Hamlet, IN	Hoax	Agreed
17	N. Rome Ciampino, Italy	Balloon	Agreed
17	Clarksdale, AZ	Insufficient data	Agreed
18	Kimpo AB, Korea	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
18	New Baden, IL	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
18	OK	Meteor	Agreed
19	Montgomery, AL	Balloon	Agreed
19	Beaumont, TX	Balloon	Agreed
19	Atlanta, GA	Star/Planet	Agreed
20	Ionia, MI	Insufficient data	Agreed
20	Philadelphia, PA	Capella	Agreed
20	Neah Bay, WA	Star/Planet	Agreed
21	Barstow, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
21	Winslow, AZ	Insufficient data	Possible Meteor
21	Santa Maria Airport, Azores	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
21	Houston, TX	1. Insufficient data 2. Helicopter	1. Possible meteor 2. Possibly Venus setting
21	Venice, CA	Venus	Agreed
22	Marshfield, MO	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
23	Gatlinburg, TN	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
23	Baltimore, MD	Mars	Venus. Mars did not set for four hours. Venus setting at azimuth 245 degrees approx. 35 minutes after sighting began (object described as being visible 40 min to one hour). Sighting described as azimuth 230 to 260 degrees.
23	West Riverside, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
24	Neosho, MO	Insufficient data	Agreed. Report made months after sighting.
25	Biloxi, MS	Aircraft	Agreed
26	Butler, MO	Birds	Agreed
26	Beaumont, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
26	Altoona, PA	Insufficient data	Agreed. Second hand report. Controller reporting what Pilot had stated.
27	Londonville, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
27	Lafayette, LA	Meteor	Agreed
27	Philadelphia, PA	Insufficient data	Agreed
27	Kensington, MD	Mars	Agreed
30	Temple Hills, MD	Insufficient data	Possible searchlight. Local investigation identified searchlight activity in area. BB concluded there was not enough information to draw this conclusion.

October 1954

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
Oct	Mojave Desert	Chaff	Agreed
Oct	Belgrade, Yugoslavia	Insufficient data	Agreed

1	Zerrbst, Germany	Munitions test	Agreed
1	Atlanta, GA	Aircraft	Agreed
1-20 Nov	Killeen, TX	Stars/planets	Probably Venus and/or Mars. No times given but direction of disappearance was always to Southwest on clear nights. Both planets were setting in SW.
2	Scott AFB, IL	Aircraft	Possible meteor
3	Warrenberg, MO	Balloon	Agreed
4	North Arlington, VA	Aircraft	Agreed
4	Philadelphia, PA	Mars	Agreed
5	Houston, TX	1. Refraction from ground lights 2. Ground return	Agreed
5	Houston, TX	Stars/planets	Agreed. Possibly Deneb or Vega.
7	Oahu, HI	Aircraft	Agreed
8	Crane, IN	Meteor	Agreed
8	Imperial, IL	Meteor	Agreed
10	Houston, TX	Stars/planets	If azimuth/elevation is correct. Probably the star Rigel.
11	Marlboro, MD	Balloon	Agreed
11	Alexandria, VA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
13	Kew Gardens, NY	Mars	Third hand report Insufficient data. Possibly Vega or research balloon.
13	San Antonio, TX	Aircraft	Possible meteor
13	Nouasseur, Morocco	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
13	Albuquerque, NM	Reflection of sun off aircraft	Agreed
13	Guadalupe Pass, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
13	Houston, TX	Meteor	Agreed
13	Festus, MO	Debris/Reflection	Agreed
13	Pacific Ocean	Insufficient data	Case file missing but description on card is indicative of possible meteor.
14	Agwam, MA	Meteor	Agreed
14	Roseville, CA	Spider Gossamer	Agreed
15	Enid, OK	Bird	Agreed
15-17	Kingfisher, OK	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
19	Okinawa	Meteor	Agreed
19	Walnut Ridge, AR	Contrails	Agreed
20	Cyprus	Aircraft	Insufficient data
21	Heyford, England	Meteor	Agreed
22	Union City, IN	Chaff	Agreed
22	Marysville and Jerome, OH	Spider Gossamer	Agreed
23	Miamisburg, Ada, OH	Meteor	Agreed
23	Olmstead AFB, PA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
23	Tinker AFB, OK	Beacon	Agreed
26	Long Beach, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
28	Karachi, Pakistan	Meteor	Agreed
28	Miho AB, Japan	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
28	Tulsa, OK	Insufficient data	Agreed

28	Merced, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
28	Oceana, VA	Meteor	Agreed
29	Phillipine Islands	Meteor	NO CASE ON FILE
29	Olmstead AFB, PA	Balloon	Agreed
29	Azores	UNIDENTIFIED	Agreed
31	Calcutta, India	Meteor	Agreed
31	Monbridge, SC	Meteor	Agreed
31	Nebraska, Missouri	Meteor	Agreed

November 1954

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
3	Burlison, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
3	St. Louis, MO	Insufficient data	Agreed
4	Labrador	Meteor	Agreed
4	Elmdorf AFB, AK	Balloon	Agreed
4	St. Lawrence, AK	Insufficient data	Agreed
5	San Juan, PR	Meteor	Agreed
6	Memphis, TN	Aircraft	Agreed
6	LaFollette, TN	Balloon	Agreed
6	Brandenberg, KY	Balloon	Agreed
6	Nashville, TN	Meteor	Agreed
6	New Castle AFB, DE	Aircraft	Unidentified. Two witnesses in a moving car described two objects. Statements contained information but investigation was inadequate and there was no follow-up to clarify the statements. One of the three sightings may have been a meteor.
7	Okinawa	Balloon	Case file missing. Insufficient data.
7	Oneida, TN	Balloon	Agreed
7	Baltimore, MD	Originally classified as Balloon. Later classified as aircraft.	Aircraft is more probable based on description of object and path taken.
7	Brunswick, GA	Meteor	Agreed
7	Atlantic Ocean	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
7	Newark Valley, NY	Flares	Agreed
8	Hampton Corner, VA	Insufficient data	Agreed
8	Knoxville, TN	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Salem, MA	Balloon	Agreed
10	Townsend, MA	Meteor	Agreed
11	West Virginia	Aircraft	Agreed
12	Louisville, KY	Balloon	Agreed
12	Massachussetts, New Jersey	Meteor	Agreed
12	Barberton, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Killeen, TX	Balloon	Agreed
14	Fredrick, MD	Insufficient data	Agreed
15	Walker AFB, NM	Aircraft	Insufficient data. Case file missing.
15	Augusta, ME	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED

16	New Orleans, LA	1.Stars/Planets 2.Radar:Insufficient data	Agreed
17	Alexandria, LA	Stars	Agreed
17	Alexandria, LA	Insufficient data	Agreed
18	Gulf Of Mexico	Insufficient data	Agreed
18	Ogden, UT	Meteor	Agreed
19	Corvallis, OR	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
19	Beaumont, TX	Insufficient data	Possible balloons
19	New Orleans, LA	Stars/Planets	Agreed
21	Canterbury, New Zealand	Balloon	Agreed
22	Edwards AFB, CA	Refueling aircraft	Agreed
23	Topia, NM	Meteor	Agreed
23	Los Alamos, NM	Insufficient data	Possible balloon. Silver object traveling in direction of wind.
25	San Antonio, TX	Helicopter	Agreed
26	Milville, NJ	Insufficient data	Agreed
28	Cincinnati, OH	Birds	Agreed
28	Manilla, Phillipines	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
29	Charleston, SC	Meteor	Agreed
30	Sylacauga, AL (also GA, MS, FL, SC)	Meteor	Agreed

December 1954

	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
Dec	Porto Alegre, Brazil	Insufficient data	Agreed
1	Hamilton, AL	Eccentric	Agreed
1	Long Beach, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
2	Spanish Morocco	Balloon	Agreed
3	Gulfport, MS	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
5	North East, PA	Probable Mirage/ reflection	Agreed. Source listed as possible ship on Lake Erie or nearby ob- servatory dome reflection. I suspect that the moon could have been another source for the reflection. Moon set approximately 30 minutes after sighting.
5	Palm Beach, FL	Meteor	Agreed
6	Madison, VA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor. The description indicates a very brief observa- tion of rapidly moving objects. Time listed as 6 minutes. If this was in error, objects had characteristics of meteor.
7	Cape Province, South Africa	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
7	Edenton, NC	Balloon	Agreed
8	Banning, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Palm Beach, FL	Aircraft	Agreed
12	Alaska	Stars/Planets	Possibly Venus
12	Dallas, TX	Meteor	Agreed
13	Pyongtaek, Korea	Meteor	Agreed
13	Salt Lake City, UT	Meteor	Agreed
17	Frenchmans Bajou, AR	Spontaneous com- bustion	Agreed

17,19,20	Burlison, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
18	Foster AFB, TX	Balloon	Agreed
19	University City, MO	Meteor	Agreed
20	Long Beach, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
21	La Habre, CA	Balloon	Agreed
22	Dairy, OR	Insufficient data	Agreed
24	Nogales, AZ	1. Stars/Planets 2. Temperature inversion	Agreed. Probably the star Canopus, which was low on the horizon in the direction the jet was flying.
27	Baltimore, MD	Regulus	Agreed
27	Long Beach, CA	Balloon	Insufficient data
28	Wichita, KS	Aircraft	Agreed
29	Lexington, Wachusset, MA	Balloon	Agreed
29	Houston, TX	Meteor	Agreed

Reclassification

There were 275 cases in the Blue Book files from July through December of 1954, that I evaluated. In my opinion, of these 34 were improperly classified (about 12%). This table describes these cases and how I felt they should have been reclassified. Some of the sightings really did not have enough information for evaluation and other cases that had been listed as "insufficient information" had potential explanations.

Date	Location	Reclassification	Reason
July 1	North Arlington, VA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
July 9	Denver, CO	Aircraft	Objects observed at high altitude in vicinity of B-36 conducting radar jamming exercise. Objects moved in direction of upper level winds. Possible radar chaff
July 9	Lowry AFB, CO	Insufficient data	Same as Denver, CO case.
July 25	Wright Patterson AFB, OH	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
July 29	Korea	Meteor	Insufficient information. Record card only item in file.
Aug 7	Kaiserslauten, Germany	Aircraft	Possibly Altair
Aug 8	St. Cloud, MN	Balloon	Possibly Capella
Aug 11	Maxwell AFB, AL	Mars	Venus
Aug 12	Columbus, GA	Mars	Venus
Aug 19	Moundsville, WV	Unreliable report	Possible meteor. Listed as unreliable due to age of witness (16 yrs old)
Aug 24	Lagarfjort river, Iceland	UNIDENTIFIED	Insufficient information (See SUNlite 7-5)
Sep 5	Hillcrest Heights, MD	Insufficient data	Possible balloon (balloon launch in vicinity at time of sighting and object traveled in direction of wind)
Sep 5	Palm Springs, CA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor. Two aircraft, 50 miles apart, reported blue light moving south. Both saw object towards the east.
Sep 18	New Baden, IL	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
Sep 21	Winslow, AZ	Insufficient data	Possible Meteor
Sep 21	Houston, TX	1. Insufficient data 2. Helicopter	1. Possible meteor 2. Possibly Venus setting
Sep 23	Baltimore, MD	Mars	Venus. Mars did not set for four hours. Venus setting at azimuth 245 degrees approx. 35 minutes after sighting began (object described as being visible 40 min to one hour). Sighting described as azimuth 230 to 260 degrees.

Sep 30	Temple Hills, MD	Insufficient data	Possible searchlight. Local investigation identified searchlight activity in area. BB concluded there was not enough information to draw this conclusion.
Oct 2	Scott AFB, IL	Aircraft	Possible meteor
Oct 11	Alexandria, VA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
Oct 13	Kew Gardens, NY	Mars	Third hand report Insufficient data. Possibly Vega or research balloon.
Oct 13	San Antonio, TX	Aircraft	Possible meteor
Oct 13	Pacific Ocean	Insufficient data	Case file missing but description on card is indicative of possible meteor.
Oct 20	Cyprus	Aircraft	Insufficient data
Oct 23	Olmstead AFB, PA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
Nov 6	New Castle AFB, DE	Aircraft	Unidentified. Two witnesses in a moving car described two objects. Statements contained information but investigation was inadequate and there was no follow-up to clarify the statements. One of the three sightings may have been a meteor.
Nov 7	Okinawa	Balloon	Case file missing. Insufficient data.
Nov 7	Atlantic Ocean	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
Nov 15	Walker AFB, NM	Aircraft	Insufficient data. Case file missing.
Nov 19	Beaumont, TX	Insufficient data	Possible balloons
Nov 23	Los Alamos, NM	Insufficient data	Possible balloon. Silver object traveling in direction of wind.
Dec 6	Madison, VA	Insufficient data	Possible meteor. The description indicates a very brief observation of rapidly moving objects. Time listed as 6 minutes. If this was in error, objects had characteristics of meteor.
Dec 27	Long Beach, CA	Balloon	Insufficient data

Summary

The 12% incorrect evaluation value was an improvement over the values from 1953 and early 1954. In some cases, the 4602nd Air intelligence squadron was involved and, in others, the local investigations were better. It seems that the involvement of more investigators makes it more likely that a good explanation would be reached.

There were a lot of bad explanations using the planet Mars. In June of 1954, Mars was at opposition and was quite prominent. It seems that investigators tried to pin Mars on anything visible in the evening sky between June and August. Sometimes they were right but there were cases that did not apply. In three cases, Venus, also visible in the evening sky, was a more likely source.

Next issue we will move on to early 1955. Will the number of incorrect evaluations drop or will they go up? Based on what we saw in the latter part of 1954, I expect a continued decrease in incorrect explanations.

References

1. "Project Blue Book investigations." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/title/461/project-blue-book-ufo-investigations>
2. Project Blue Book archive. Available WWW:<http://bluebookarchive.org/>
3. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA/ESRL Radiosonde Database. Available WWW: <https://ruc.noaa.gov/raobs/>
4. "Stratospheric balloons: Chronological lists of launches worldwide since 1947" StratoCat. Available WWW: <http://stratocat.com.ar/globos/indexe.html>
5. "Space History Chronology". Astronautix. Available WWW: <http://www.astronautix.com/s/spacehistorychronology.html>
6. Condon, E. U., et al., eds. Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects. New York: Bantam 1968.