

SUN LITE

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON UFOLOGY AND UFOS

Tens of thousands of amateur astronomers search the heavens for comets and novae, yet it is rare indeed for these skilled observers to report an unknown. They see plenty of strange things, but their scientific background quickly leads to an identification; they don't go rushing off to the local paper at the first glimpse of a fuzzy light in the sky....

- ARTHUR C. CLARKE

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Thanks for the comments

It did not take long after my first issue was posted for me to start receiving e-mails. Many were congratulatory and I appreciate those. I just hope this newsletter can live up to the expectations some seem to have.

Others did not e-mail me directly but made some rather unpleasant comments elsewhere. To be honest, the opinions of those people mean very little to me. If they are not interested in my opinion, or the opinions of the others, who wrote here, then that is their right. They can continue to make fun of me and ridicule what I have to say but they are still going to be stuck in their UFOlogical rut when it is all said and done.

My intent in this newsletter has nothing to do with “replacing” Phil Klass or being a “Klass wannabe”. The name of the newsletter was chosen in honor of Phil, whom I enjoyed communicating with in his later years. Others share a similar opinion. So, for those who believe I want to be Phil, you are mistaken. I just want to present a forum for skeptics to comment on the latest in UFOlogy. If that was not clear in my first issue, I hope it is clear now.

Peter Brooksmith added some interesting insights about how skeptics should not only expose false claims but also examine how and why some of the false

claims come about. I don’t consider myself to be a psychologist, which one has to be in some cases. However, I think I see where Peter is coming from. Like I told Peter, it is hard to change ones approach overnight. Hopefully, we will try and work towards that goal. The “Duke of Mendoza” has given us a start with an article this month.

Moving along, I noticed that Robert Hastings found a forum to level some potshots at SUNlite. I was called many things by Robert and I just have to point towards the documented exchange on the Bad Astronomy and Universe Today (BAUT) forum to set the record straight. I will let anyone willing to look at the thread “UFOs and Nukes” to make up their minds on what transpired. I took a page in this issue to address the claims by Robert in the “Battle of Hastings”.

In addition to the various e-mails, I started to receive some e-mail news bulletins from “UFO Updates”. I suppose it meant that I was now considered “active” in UFOlogy and deserved “free” news reports. I asked whoever was sending the emails to terminate them, which they did. There is absolutely nothing that comes from Updates that is “earth shattering”. I see no reason to clutter my mailbox with news I am already aware of through other sources.

Lastly, my newsletter seems to have reached the internet-less Supreme Commander (SCDR) in Key West, Florida. I received a snail mail letter that was cordial and promised a review of SUNlite (after only one issue) in an upcoming Saucer Smear. As expected, I was referred to as a “debunker”. I feel no reason to question the opinion of somebody who enjoys such a lofty title! He also complained I spent too much time on Roswell. Standby SCDR, because this issue is full of Roswell. I apologize but there are other articles in this issue as well, which you may (or may not) enjoy.

Finally, Matt and I commented about Robert Todd and Phil Klass again. I don’t intend to keep writing about them but Matt’s article was late for last issue and I felt a need to add my “two cents”. It is time to move on after this issue so bear with us for this issue.

P.S. For those who want me to be more “open-minded”, I suggest they watch the following video clip!

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Reflections and Memories of two UFOlogical Legends

Matthew Graeber

When I was contacted by SUNLITE with a request I pen something about my friendship with the late Robert (Bob) Todd, I was enthralled at the opportunity to put some of my recollections to paper for a better understanding of this historical UFOlogical figure. Not only for the enlightenment of future readers, but, for today's UFO-buffs and paranormal enthusiasts as well.

As much disliked skeptics and 'dreaded debunkers', both Bob Todd and Phil Klass were considered to have been arch-enemies of the progressive UFO movement, simply because they dared to objectively question the blossoming doctrine of the new age saucer myth as espoused by a throng of self-appointed experts and leaders of the dwindling UFO groups - which not only believed in horrid government conspiracies and witness silencing as realities, but, embrace the notion of frequent visitation by space craft from a host of other worlds.

By 'progressive UFO movement' I am referring to flying saucer fans, bloggers, aficionados, group members and assorted experts on the many reported sightings, crashes and abduction stories. I am NOT referring to the serious study of 'Unidentified Aerial Phenomena' such as Wim Van Utrecht of Belgium painstakingly does, which is not the same thing at all, although many of the UFO subculture tend to mistakenly think it is.

Even to the point that at the time of Bob and Phil's passing, some individuals felt fully justified and compelled to write 'rebuttals' to the eulogies I had written in memory of these men. To be sure, some of the writers of these venomous rebuttals were at one time or another caught up in failed debate with Bob or Phil. But, my eulogies were based on my memories, personal experiences and opinion of these men as human beings, objective researchers and defenders of historical fact.

So, while I haven't a personal axe to grind with the many self-appointed experts of UFOlogy. I do question their motivations, lack of character and morality with their

continuing assaults on the memory of Bob Todd, Phil Klass, Donald Menzel and Karl Pflock. Therefore, I offer these recollections as an opinion piece on two wonderful individuals whom I found to be rather exceptional, candid in their quests for objectivity, accuracy, clarity and truth. Six commodities which I feel tend to be in very scarce supply within much of the contemporary saucer community and popular UFO literature.

Bob Todd died of cancer before reaching fifty-five years of age. He was a very private man (much like Martin Kottmeyer) and I came to appreciate Bob as a person of considerable intelligence and good humor. He could have easily been a very brilliant attorney.

Bob worked as a night-shift baker and once while on a smoke break, standing on the company lading dock, he witnessed an unidentifiable airborne object in the evening sky, Bob told me about his experience and wondered what it might have been (?) Bob had a great sense of humor, and I think humor was the bonding agent of our friendship. Here is an example of a couple of the spin-offs on the politically incorrect 'Dumb Blonde Jokes' one may read on the dreaded net, these were typical of our telephonic nonsense:

1. Two MUFONITES were sitting on a park bench one evening in Philadelphia, Pa. One fellow looked up at the nighttime sky as quipped "Gee, I wonder if Roswell is further away than the moon." The other fellow just rolled his eyes and snidely replied "Duhhh, ya can't see Roswell from here can ya!"

2. Two elderly female CUFOS members once attended a UFO conference and after arriving at the gathering early to insure obtaining good seats close to the auditorium's stage (to better see and hear the speakers)... Anyway, as the convention presenter's went on and on, one gal leaned to whisper in her friend's ear that the speaker presently on the stage was rather long-winded and very boring. The other woman nodded in agreement, and said with a little giggle, that her buttocks was tingling and had



Robert Todd was one of UFOlogy's most respected researchers.

obviously fallen to sleep. Her friend replied "I know...I heard it snoring!"

As one can clearly see, these jokes were rather broad-based and did not mention any individuals by name, in fact, during our phone conversations, I do not recall Bob ever lambasting anyone who was a Roswell promoter, believer or, proclaimed eyewitness to the alleged saucer crash.

Bob may have groaned slightly at the mention of Kevin Randle, Don Schmitt, Stanton Friedman and Tom Carey... Actually, the unspoken inside joke was that doing so was completely unnecessary, since the experts and witnesses had already contradicted and discredited themselves many times over. Some of our conversations were steeped in 'tidbits of trash' and "missives from the masses" nonsense which we had read in Jim Moseley's "Saucer Smear." The back-biting, shin-kicking and eye-gouging letters from UFOlogist's of all stripes were always good a chuckle.

While Bob Todd could be somewhat blunt, abrasive and intolerant with other's displays of ignorance, shoddy UFO researching, lying and unbridled rumor mongering - Phil Klass was a bit more diplomatic in his assessments on the veracity of saucer experts, their followers and assorted online defenders of abduction stories and saucer crash tales. Phil and then popular abductologist Budd Hopkins often butted heads, and some of those stories are legendary and quite humorous. Phil once told me, he felt most UFO believers were basically "Well intended folks." He did not bother to elaborate on the many self-promoters and charlatans who often assailed him.

Like I, Phil started out as a UFO believer - that was, until he looked into some details about a book he had read (Incident

at Exeter) which caused him to question the reliability of some witnesses and the UFO author as well. Being the director of a Philadelphia-based pro-UFO Report and Information Center (UFORIC) I came to consider Phil as a mentor and friend. He was in fact, UFOlogy's Rabbi - Not in the spiritual sense of the word - but, as a teacher and advisor to those who would listen. Phil was a true modern-day renaissance man and his knowledge on the history of the American Civil War was remarkable as well. Few in UFOlogy knew he designed and helped construct the electronic battlefield board which is still on display at the Gettysburg battlefield museum.

Phil was absolutely brilliant, and had a marvelous way of performing laser-like surgery on the spoken and written word of saucer experts and abductologists whom often dreaded interfacing with him. Watching Phil in action was a lesson in verbal dissection. His few pointed questions and impish twinkling eyes were delightful treat for those who knew him as "Lovable Uncle Phil." I recall his kissing a plaster bust of an alien perched upon Budd Hopkins reserved seat at a Fortean conference in London. Mr. Hopkins had failed to appear and was 'allegedly' at an art museum picking up on modern art trends in Europe. What a hoot... No, make that 'cluck-cluck!'

Phil had a wonderfully earthy side too; and once said 'If' he were not already very happily married, while spending a night with the lovely abductee Linda Cortile, he MIGHT be inclined to believe just about anything she told him... just for that night of course! Phil had also shared a taxi with R. Leo Sprinkle and Linda Cortile (Neopolitano) during a New York UFO conference. While seated in the cab, some small talk broke out and Phil told Linda she had obviously become the queen bee of abduction. Quickly realizing he may have said the wrong thing to her, Phil sheepishly awaited her reply which was "Oh Phil, thank you very much!" If I'm not mistaken Mrs. Neopolitano's e-mail address is honeybee@XXXXXX

I also recall another time when Phil offered sage advice concerning my upcoming appearance on a Philadelphia TV program (just prior to the release of the

motion picture "Fire in the sky") Phil said, and I'm paraphrasing here... "Remember not to mention Walton's brush with the law or his 'no contest' plea - as his record has been expunged and no longer exists - So, you can't bring up his past transgressions...besides, his sidekick, Rogers might poke you in the nose." Phil sent me an autographed copy of his book 'UFO Abduction, a dangerous game' he inscribed it with a simple "To Matt Graeber, May You Be Spared!" A KLASSTIC with an economy of words! There is so much more to my memories of these UFOlogical giants. I am honored to have known them and to

have had them consider me a friend.



My own personal interactions with Robert Todd and Phil Klass have more to do with exchanging e-mails with them. There was some correspondence but I never met the two men in person.

I remember Phil being nice enough to keep sending me issues of SUN even though I had not paid my subscription. I simply forgot to send in my money. After a few issues, he added a note to my newsletter asking, "Are you still interested?". I promptly sent in my subscription as well as the next years funds.

Phil was also very helpful in sending me old issues of SUN when I requested them. When I offered to pay him for them, he added a little note stating he would not accept any cash and, instead, would not mind if I sent him 10,000,0000 1-cent stamps! I assumed he was joking. From what others have written about Phil, they probably would have felt he was serious. Phil's humor could be out of touch with some people.

While Phil was probably considered UFOlogy's Satan, Robert Todd may have been compared to UFOlogy's Benedict Arnold. From what I have read of his research over the years, Todd was most instrumental in obtaining some of UFOlogy's most precious documents via FOIA. For this he should be commended. However, his efforts with regards to Roswell has pretty much placed him in the "traitor" role because he chose to turn his intellect towards exposing the "frauds and fallacies" of the Roswell case. Robert's interaction with me came early in my understanding of Roswell. I had contacted him about possibly getting copies of his Cowflop

quarterly and subscribing to it. Robert had ceased publishing this newsletter by then but he did send me an e-mail copy of the Marcel issue, which I was most interested in at the time. We exchanged e-mails over the years and I found his personality interesting. Bob was always willing to share information and opinions.

I guess people will remember Robert Todd for the intolerance he had for various personalities in UFOlogy. He was most willing to let me know what he felt in our e-mail discussions. His greatest venom was reserved for people who attacked Professor Charles Moore. To Robert, Moore's accomplishments far overshadowed anything these UFOlogists had ever done.

Did that make Bob a "bad person"? It is hard for me to pass that kind of judgement. During my years in the US Navy, I recall expressing similar opinions about officers, fellow chiefs, and junior enlisted personnel. It was often a sign of frustration in my inability to get the desired results. Perhaps I have mellowed after my retirement because I now look back and wonder if I was a bit too harsh and might have approached things a bit differently. Maybe in later years, Todd felt the same way. Then again, maybe not.

I miss both men and I honestly think that there are many in UFOlogy who miss them as well. UFOlogists seems to always need good scapegoats to shift attention away from their glorious failures. I guess Todd and Klass were doing something right to earn that honor.

- Tim Printy

Who's blogging UFOs?

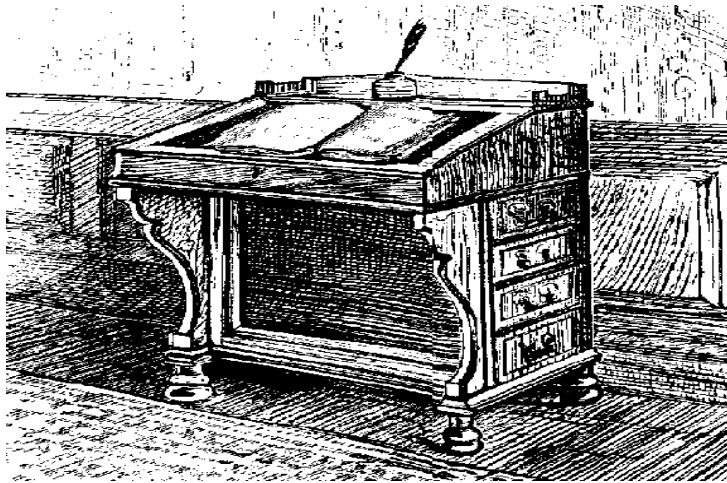
Hot topics and varied opinions

Kevin Randle's "Different Perspective" blog continues to ramble on about Roswell. As always, those comments are usually sent to the Roswell corner. Kevin's other great soliloquy focused on Science Fiction (SF) fans and UFOs. I have read many SF books over the years and it sounds like my fellow readers have similar skeptical attitudes towards UFOs. I am also aware that many of the major SF writers have very skeptical opinions about UFOs. Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov being two of the most outspoken critics of UFOs being alien spaceships. Randle talks about how he was able to get some SF fans/writers to understand there is good evidence. Sigh.....to him the evidence is good. To others, the evidence is highly subjective. It sounds like Randle had about as much effect as if he were talking to an amateur astronomy club meeting.

Frank Warren's "UFO Chronicles" decided that SUNlite is "walking" in Phil Klass' footsteps. Well, they can think whatever they desire. I gave permission to run the section he posted and that is OK with me. I just hope that people don't think I want to be Phil's replacement.

Frank also posted Hastings rebuttal to Kingston George's Big Sur article, which took him over three months to write. As I expected, it is mostly a rehash of his IUR article with some of his book excerpts thrown in to lengthen the piece. He made the same old accusations and tired arguments. Blah... Blah...Blah... ZZZZZZ. I address this in my "Battle of Hastings" article on p. 11.

Warren then decided to post a typical Stanton Friedman diatribe that is the usual mantra he repeats over and over. It is more to convince the "faithful" because he does not appear to be convincing many scientists. Ho... hum....Stan, do you have anything new to say?



In other UFO news, we discover that Dennis Balthasar has suddenly realized he had been fooled for over a decade. Balthasar went to Oklahoma to interview a Roswell witness. He was "intercepted" by some secret agents and never got to talk to his witness. Dennis was scared and worried about being harmed because he dared to question the greatest secret never kept. When I read his story long ago, I thought it was all a bit melodramatic and suspected a hoax. Since I was not there, I can't say. I am sure Dennis thought otherwise. Anyway, Balthasar discovered it was all a hoax performed by some gentlemen and his wife. I guess they did it for kicks. I am surprised they were not called "evil debunkers". However, there was no evil government involved.

The "De Void" blog continues to pander to UFO listeners. I found it amusing that he seemed to feel that the "disclosure" idea of improving the economy, health care, the environment, etc. was a bunch of nonsense. I am glad we can agree on something.

Cox was the Blog that first told everybody about Tony Braglia's great Roswell revelations. This is addressed in my Roswell article on page 7. It looks like Cox, once again, has shown that he will believe anything without doing any real

research. Isn't Cox supposed to be an "investigative reporter"?

In another item, Cox gave a link to a UFO video from the Mexico city solar eclipse. He points towards the shape-shifting effect of the UFO. Once again, Cox fails as an investigative reporter. I examined these videos long ago and most, if not all, show the planet Venus. Most of the motion, shape-shifting, and effects have to do with the effects of the camera and operator.

Magonia's blog had some rather interesting news.

Their magazine Magonia is no longer going to be published. I never subscribed to the magazine but have read many of their articles on line and the Magonia supplements. According to the

blog, they felt their work was done because it saw the demise of UFO organizations and magazines. Their efforts are to be commended. It appears their blog will continue with plenty of book reviews.

Kentaro Mori's "Forgetomori" blog mentioned "SUNlite". He asked if I wouldn't mind him putting it on "Iscribe". Now you can find SUNlite there as well as my website! Huzzah!

The Bad Astronomer, Phil Plait, wrote about Edgar Mitchell's "old news". Phil correctly notes that, just because he is an astronaut, does not make him right especially when he has no evidence to back up his claim.

Phil also commented about a recent Popular Mechanics article concerning NASA UFO videos. The article already has set of various UFO blogs with all sorts of arguments based on the STS-48 video. Phil's commentary is what you expect and I agree with his observations. Trying to turn ice particles into alien spaceships is just wishful thinking.

The UFO Examiner has quite the listing of UFO reports. He even now runs a "UFO Traffic report". I guess there are

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

so many reports that pilots need a traffic report so they can avoid those congested regions of the sky!

The Examiner mentions that many of these reports will have natural/man made solutions and he will update his blog when MUFON comes up with a solution. I am curious as to what the percentage rates for solving cases is with MUFON? By mid-June, I had seen him publish many raw reports but only seven completed investigations! The conclusions were:

1. The witness saw an "unknown aerial vehicle". This with no independent verification of the event! There is no reason to conclude it was a "vehicle". It is just "unidentified" or "unknown".
2. Lightning was another conclusion even though we have no confirmation. The observation did sound like lightning but it really is hard to pinpoint such an explanation. I don't know why anyone bothered with this report anyway. It was just a "flash of light".
3. A dirigible, which, again, had no confirmation. If the investigator could report that a dirigible was in the area of the sky at the time, I would be more willing to accept the explanation.
4. Insufficient information with the possibility of it being Apollo 10! This sighting was reported four decades after the event with a vague recollection of sometime in the spring of 1968! The idea that it could have been Apollo 10 seems highly unlikely based on the description. The investigator seems to think Apollo 10 was visible to the naked eye even when it was not in earth orbit (at least that is the impression he gives).
5. Aircraft landing lights. This seemed a reasonable conclusion but one would think that an aircraft flight number would have been obtained which could positively identify the observation.
6. A helicopter's windows! This is an

other report from decades ago. 1963 to be exact.

7. A satellite, a hoax, a possible meteor/space junk. No specific satellite is identified and no verification is made for the meteor/space junk.

If the USAF had offered any of these explanations, I am sure they would be laughed at by UFO proponents. Put a MUFON label on them and they are acceptable. It sounds a bit hypocritical to me.

The idea of listing a whole bunch of mysterious events that are suspect reports really does not say much. Maybe the Examiner should wait until the investigations are complete prior to publishing UFO reports. At the apparent rate investigations are being conducted/evaluated, he might not have much to write about!

The UFO examiner also published some "compelling" UFO video clips. One comes from Kecksburg country where the witness recorded some moving lights one morning. There was no noise from the UFO but the lights looked a lot like an airplane with an anti-collision strobe. I am glad the UFOs conform to FAA regulations so they will not collide with our aircraft and crash.

Another video clip came from a sighting on May 20, when a gentlemen in Horn Lake, Mississippi recorded some lights in the sky and posted them on Youtube. Anyone familiar with the "Phoenix lights" videos, would notice the similarity. I examined some of the details and determined the lights were possibly to the southeast of the camera assuming the traffic in the video is along Goodman road. If the road was Burlington Blvd, it was to the northeast. The Columbus 3 Military Operating Area (MOA) was 40 miles to the southeast, which could imply flares if there was activity that evening. If it was to the northeast, we could be talking about landing lights for the airport. Memphis is a Fed-Ex hub and the time described is when the normal heavy Fed-Ex traffic for the evening begins. Where are those STAR teams when you need them?

There was also an interesting sighting of

a UFO "chasing" the ISS. I address this on page 15.

Reality uncovered gave some guidelines for uncovering a hoax. I doubt UFOlogists are going to bother to read it. After all, everyone knows that hoaxes are obvious (unless you are Bill Birnes).

The Phoenix UFO examiner **seems to be confused**. For some reason he felt those that died pursuing UFOs were excluded from Memorial day celebrations. All of them were active duty members in the US military. All members of the military who died while serving are remembered on Memorial day. It does not matter if they were chasing UFOs, enemy planes, or were performing normal duties that did not involve enemy fire. My fellow submariners from Scorpion and Thresher on eternal patrol are remembered for their sacrifice even though they did not fight in any shooting war. It is interesting to note that the men who died in the Maury Island incident died because of what was probably a hoax. If it was a hoax, they died needlessly.

Several Blogs posted a cool looking UFO video from a warehouse security camera in Sarapul in Russia. The event transpired on May 22 around 3AM. It is interesting to note that about the same time, a Russian Soyuz-2.1a rocket was launched from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome. Photographs and videos of the launch as seen in Moscow and Kazan are available on the web. They look extremely similar to the video from Sarapul. The launch was at 2153 GMT, which equates to 0253 local time for Sarapul (the video was taken around 3AM). The title states (possibly created by Michael Cohen) that debunkers will hate this video. I loved it because it was another shining example of sensationalist UFOlogy not doing a simple check to see if it might be a rocket launch.

The Denver UFO examiner reports Stephen Greer is coming to town! Jeff Peckman tells everyone that Greer is talking to senior members of a G7 country so they can contact the ETs causing UFO reports. One has to wonder what size flashlights he gave them. My guess is this is another case of Greer exaggerating.

And the beat goes on.....

The Roswell corner

A double standard for skeptics?

Kevin Randle has been talking about a “double standard” when it comes to witness testimonies. According to Randle, skeptics are supposed to doubt Charles Moore as much as we are supposed to doubt any Roswell witness talking about a crashed spaceship. Randle seems to miss the point of why people question a stories validity. If somebody says they saw a witch on a broom crash into the ground at Roswell, would Randle feel that their testimony is just as valid as somebody who reported an alien spaceship crashed? I know of nobody making this claim but is an example of the standards of probability. In weighing the story of Charles Moore, we have some interesting testimony that seems to agree with what he has stated.

- The Marcel’s described purple figures on the beams. Brazel described tape with purple figures on it in 1947. Even Loretta Proctor mentioned the tape. Charles Moore, and a few others, stated they used this kind of tape on the reflectors they used. Granted these people stated this after all the stories were available but his description is plausible and the drawings of the ML-307s describe using tape.
- Brazel reported finding debris that seemed to indicate something larger than a single weather balloon and radar reflector. Moore was part of the team that was launching balloon flights not far from the Foster Ranch, which had multiple weather balloons and they had used these specific radar reflectors before.
- Marcel posed for pictures with some debris that shows the type of reflectors and balloons used by Moore and the NYU team.
- A flight/cluster of balloons was launched on the 4th of June, 1947 that was apparently never recovered. This flight was launched on

a date that would propel the balloons towards the northeast and the weather conditions on that date COULD HAVE caused the balloons to land on the Foster Ranch. Moore was part of the team that launched those balloons.

Now, let’s examine the known specifics about the Roswell crashed spaceship story.

- An alien spaceship crashed in the desert north of Roswell and Brazel found some of the debris (and maybe some bodies). No documentation in 1947 supports this claim. No photographs, pieces, contemporary documents, or anything else has ever shown these stories to be true.
- Alien bodies and debris was transported by numerous aircraft out of Roswell to various locations in the US. No documents, photographs, or anything else exists demonstrating this was true.
- A great number of people on and off base were aware of the crash and what was found. No documents, private diaries (that can be verified as authentic and written in 1947), letters of complaint written in the 1940s, private letters written in the 1940s, personal photographs, or anything else indicating that something extraordinary happened at Roswell in 1947 exists.
- Not everyone on base and in town agrees that something extraordinary happened at Roswell that summer of 1947.

When examining these issues and weighing the probabilities, one can make the following statement, “It is far more likely that Charles Moore’s cluster of balloons with possible reflectors attached caused the debris field at the Foster Ranch than an alien spaceship.” This is why the statements of Charles Moore are more likely to be accepted as factual than the statements of all the story tellers who claim they saw aliens or alien debris. Randle needs to provide evidence that supports these stories told by aging witnesses, who, after several decades of silence, suddenly remembered the events of

1947 as being something extraordinary.

New Roswell parts found?

The end of April put an interesting email in my in box linking me to a story from the Roswell Daily Record. Apparently, somebody has been foraging through all the Sci-Fi channel’s debris bags and found something they did not understand using an electron microscope. The statement said it was Aluminum silicate, which can not be naturally found at the Foster Ranch. Of course, man has been living in the area for many years. It could easily have come from man and not something alien. In one article, the group analyzing the piece claimed to have run out of money and they desire public assistance in analyzing the piece! Now that is amazing. Robert Bigelow has promised millions of dollars to MUFON to investigate this exact thing. The SCI-FI channel, who organized the dig to get the pieces out of the field, is supposedly funding this kind of research. Finally, the Fund for UFO research (FUFOR) has money for this kind of research. Now UFOlogists are pleading for money to analyze a simple piece of metal? If people are going to give them money, I would ask for receipts and promises to have the material actually tested because it sounds like a scam to me. I am not going to hold my breath for any startling revelations.

Only time will tell if this is the “smoking gun” so desired by UFO proponents. With a request for people to give them money to “study” the piece of metal, it sounds like this one is going to be a “dud” as well. What was it that P.T. Barnum said? This may be appropriate here. It will probably end up in the “Whatever happened to...” column in a few years.

Ramey memo non-update

Kevin Randle wrote about the Ramey “memo” in his blog. His entry focuses on the security aspect of the memo and how unlikely it would be that Ramey would allow such a highly classified message (assuming it is one) to be exposed to a photograph. As a military man, I agree with him but that does not mean it is impossible, just highly unlikely.

Needless to say, his commentary drew the typical excessively long-winded response

The Roswell corner (Cont'd)

from David Rudiak in the comments section. Among Rudiak's words were the accusations that Randle was taking on a "debunker" mentality. I could only watch in amazement as the comments in this blog entry grew in number and, as always, nothing was accomplished.

It has been almost seven years since the "memo" surfaced as a "smoking gun" on the Sci-Fi channel. It had already been news in the UFO field for several years before this. As I noted last issue, I have seen no further progress on determining what type of document it is or what it appears to state. I am sure David Rudiak and others feel the memo can be clearly read but they haven't convinced anybody outside their little circle. Being able to convince others with the evidence is what counts. Maybe that study proposed by Houran and Randle needs to be done. It is up to those making the claim to make it happen.

Test dummy officer talks....again

Lt. Col. (ret) Roy Madson was interviewed by Anthony Bragalia and he told roughly the same story he stated back in 1997 about the USAF report. It is not very big news but some of the comments inspired me to write the article "Who's the Dummy?" on page 16.

More incorrect "Facts"

Newsblaze writer Dale Huffman wrote that the Roswell UFO crash was real based on two simple FACTS. They were that the US military reported the crash as genuine and the other was that they changed the story one day later. Both of his FACTS are incorrect. The press release mentioned no "crash". It only mentioned the recovery of the remains of the disc which "landed" on the ranch. This story was changed only hours later and not a day. Huffman could not even get his two simple FACTS correct, which means the rest of his article is probably as poorly researched and written.

MEMORY METAL MADNESS

NOLTR 72-4

ON THE NiTi(NITINOL) MARTENSITIC TRANSITION
PART-I

Prepared by:
Frederick E. Wang

ABSTRACT: The experimental evidence obtained and the theory proposed thus far on the TiNi martensitic transition are summarized and reviewed. Fundamental principles involved in the various modes of investigation are described and the uniqueness of the transition is detailed.

January 1, 1972
U.S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory
White Oak, Maryland

This is the unclassified document that gives brief mention to the progress report that Bragalia considers to be the "smoking gun"

thorfootnotes a 1949 Battelle study which clearly pertains to the refinement of Titanium and Nickel. The citation relates to a "phase diagram" that examines states of matter and how the two metals could be successfully alloyed...we know that this "progress report" offers the first "phase diagram" ever produced to attempt to successfully alloy Titanium and Nickel.'

The article that Bragalia appears to be stating as his source is a 1972 UNCLASSIFIED technical report written by Frederick Wang, who studied Nitinol shortly after it was created. The document is Navy Ordnance Laboratory Technical Report (NOLTR) 72-4, which is titled On the NiTi (Nitinol) Martensitic Transition Part 1. It can easily be found on-line with just a little searching by anyone using google. Bragalia neglects to tell his readers that the progress report was only mentioned by Wang because he was discussing the **history** of Titanium-Nickel alloy research and it is only mentioned briefly amongst a myriad of studies conducted between 1939 and 1961! Bragalia's description about the "progress report" is incorrect. He incorrectly states that the progress report had the **FIRST** phase diagram for Nickel and Titanium. According

The latest news concerning the greatest secret never kept comes from Anthony Bragalia, who is also promoting his research associated with the re-release of Carey and Schmitt's book on Roswell. This news appeared on various UFO blogs and web sites as some of the most important Roswell news since Frank Kaufmann spoke to Kevin Randle and Don Schmitt. According to Bragalia, the Battelle institute received a piece of the crashed spaceship, analyzed it, and started studying Nickel-Titanium alloys. In order to duplicate the material, this information was "fed" to the Navy Ordnance Lab (NOL) that eventually developed a material called Nitinol, which has shape memory characteristics. Early progress reports by the Battelle institute are missing including one which has a "phase diagram" on how to alloy Nickel and Titanium. This is red meat for Roswell proponents as it implies there is a cover-up.

Bragalia's entire series of articles is a mishmash of speculation and indirect mention of various "newly discovered documents", which he does not identify and, according to him, demonstrates all this is true. In fact, there is little one can follow in his article. The only official document specifically identified is the missing progress report. It is almost as if Bragalia does not want everyone to figure out his research. Numerous times, Bragalia takes great leaps that are ignored by less than careful readers. He uses words like, "suggests", "appears", "infer", "probably", and "may" to draw his conclusions. While his article sounds like it is shocking new evidence, it is really speculation based on what he thinks these things mean.

Disconnecting the Battelle-Nitinol link

According to Bragalia's article he found a document that was earth shattering but would not reveal what the document was called or who wrote it. He hinted at it by stating:

This confirmation is given in a brief footnote found in a study by one of Nitinol's "official" inventors at the U.S. Naval Lab. In that military report on Nitinol, the au-

to Wang's technical report, there were phase diagrams for Nickel-Titanium prior to 1949 but they were not complete and had conflicting information. Dr. Wang also states the following about the phase diagram found in this progress report:

*Craighead, Fawn and Eastwood⁶ (1949) carried out **a limited study** of the Ti-Ni phase diagram **up to approximately 11.5 at.% nickel within a limited temperature range but did not define the eutectic or eutectoid temperatures.*** (my emphasis in bold)²

A quick check on the Nickel content in Nitinol reveals that it is about 55% Nickel. Now I am not a metallurgist but this seems to indicate the phase diagram in the "progress report", which only had data for up to 11.5% Nickel, did not even cover the region where Nitinol exists. If accurate, this destroys the claim made by Bragalia that this report was "fed" to the NOL so they could create Nitinol.

In an apparent attempt to make the report appear highly classified, Bragalia claims that there are only three other references to this report ever found and they are always footnotes. What does he expect to find in technical documents? If Wang is correct and it is a "limited study", it would not be referenced very often. I also think he really means that **he** could only find three other references from his on-line searches. A quick google search found two other documents that footnoted this report. I am fairly confident that if one examined **all** the documents from the late 1940s and 1950s pertaining to Titanium based alloys, they would discover more references to the progress report. The idea the document is "highly classified" seems unlikely when one discovers that Wang's technical report and the other two documents I found were all unclassified.

Bragalia seems to unrealistically assume that **ALL** research reports generated in the '40s and '50s are to be found on the Internet. If they are not, then the "obvious" conclusion he draws is that they were deliberately hidden for various nefarious reasons. He also implies that the Battelle research was prompted solely by the discovery of the Roswell "memory metal". This conveniently ignores the intense post-war interest of the Air Force

in developing strong, lightweight, heat-resistant alloys for the emerging jet airplane and engine technologies, which Titanium continues to play an important role to this day.

A search of the Internet for the contract number AF33(038)-3736 reveals many documents and all involve research associated with Titanium and/or Titanium based alloys. There is nothing about shape memory alloys, no mention of Roswell, and there isn't even a specific reference to the Titanium-Nickel alloy. Bruce Hutchinson found two reports by the Battelle institute concerning Titanium and Titanium based alloys listed in the Library of Congress on-line catalog. One is dated April 2, 1948 and the other is dated March 15, 1949. They probably cover the same information as the two "missing" progress reports. Progress report #1, which according to Bragalia, is the study of the Roswell UFO metal itself, is probably just an earlier study of Titanium based alloys. Since the contract appears to be about studying Titanium based alloys, there is no reason to suspect it was to create a shape memory alloy (SMA).

Corsoism and rewriting history

Retired Lt. Col. Phillip Corso had made the claim in his book that he had fed various companies parts from the Roswell spaceship so they could develop things like microelectronics and lasers. Most of this is complete rubbish and takes away from the hard work and great accomplishments of engineers and scientists. I refer to this as Corsoism, which I define as, "The process by which Roswell crashed spaceship proponents claim the established scientific, academic, or engineering achievement of others is not due to their own abilities but because of assistance from alien technology and/or information". Bragalia has embraced Corsoism in order to perpetuate a new Roswell myth and apparently elevate his position as a top-notch Roswell researcher. However, his version of Nitinol's history is wrong and would probably be considered ludicrous by most objective and informed observers.

While Bragalia seems to imply that the knowledge of SMAs appeared only after 1947, there are references on-line (wikipedia among others) that state this proper-

ty was being observed in several alloys in the 1930s. Most important to note is that Nitinol was **not** originally designed to be a SMA. William J. Buehler, documented the origins of Nitinol at the White Oak Laboratory alumni association (WOLAA) website. One can also read about the discovery of Nitinol in an article written by George Kaufmann and Isaac Mayo for the journal, The Chemical Educator. Bragalia mentions that the history of Nitinol as "murky" and "conflicted" and creates all sorts of exotic reasons for this. Perhaps it is murky for him but it seems that those who understand the subject have no doubts about its origins.

Buehler explains that his initial effort was to find a metal alloy that had a high enough temperature resistance so it could be used in missile nose cones re-entering the earth's atmosphere. When Nitinol was created it exhibited some unique characteristics that required further study. Dr. Wang was brought in to help with analyzing the atomic structure of the new alloy. A few years after Nitinol was manufactured by Buehler's team, a piece of wire made of Nitinol was brought to a meeting with an accordion shape. It was meant to demonstrate the ability of the metal to avoid fatigue failure. One of those at the meeting, Dr. David Muzzey, held it up to his pipe lighter and, to everyone's surprise, the metal straightened out. This was a true "Eureka" moment! If they were actually trying to reproduce the properties of the mythical Roswell memory metal, one would think they would know this would happen. Based on the histories I listed (and not documents I do not name) it appears that the development of Nitinol is an advancement based on good engineering.

Bragalia states that this history of Nitinol is false. He provides no hard facts or actual documents to demonstrate this is true. Instead, we leap into "Roswell land", where conjecture is transformed into facts. According to Bragalia, the official history about the discovery of Nitinol is false because:

1. The official discovery date is not clear.
2. Different reasons offered for its development.

3. Different descriptions of its discovery.

The first claim, that the official discovery date is unclear, has a lot to do with Bragalia misrepresenting or misunderstanding the process involved. The selection for the alloy was started in 1958 and was first created in 1959. It was not until 1962 that Dr. Wang came in and began analyzing the material on an atomic level. All these events give the impression that the discovery has numerous dates. Claims that there are numerous dates on various web sites probably has more to do with which dates were selected by the authors as the "official" discovery year.

The different reasons for its development may have something to do with the metal being used for re-entry nose cones. That nature would probably make the reason for its development classified. The Time article Bragalia refers to from 1968 gives a different reason. This possibly had to do with keeping the real reason classified at the time. It is also possible that this use was investigated at some point and mentioned to the writer, who misinterpreted what was stated. I would not consider this article's statement (which might be erroneous for various reasons) as a reason to dismiss what Buehler states was the original reason for the alloy's development. To try and bolster his claim, Bragalia mentions an unnamed "Berkley source" as stating it was developed for use in submarine hulls. This "Berkeley source" appears to be somebody named "Charlie" who claims to have worked at "Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory". They were handed pieces of an alloy and told to "figure it out" with the intention the material was to be used for submarine hull design. This is all nonsense and an anonymous source is not considered to be very reliable. How do we even know he was working on Nitinol samples? It is an unsubstantiated story being used as a fact, which means it proves absolutely nothing.

The different descriptions about the discovery of Nitinol's SMA characteristics are also consistent. Bragalia decides to make something out of nothing by stating he could find no record of Dr. David Muzzey. The implication is that no such person existed. Just because the internet only mentions Dr. Muzzey in this context

does not mean he did not exist. I doubt Bragalia bothered to check the Navy Ordinance Lab for that time period or attempted anything more than a "google" search. Bragalia also found a different version about the discovery of Nitinol. As is typical in his undocumented articles, Bragalia never tells anyone his sources. The actual source for this story is **Uri Geller**, who claimed this in a discussion with Bob Coultie in his book, Forbidden knowledge. An excerpt can be found on the web with just a little bit of searching. Uri's claim is not supported by anything and there is no evidence to suggest he was even in the Navy labs as a direct witness. The claim can not be considered reliable.

Spoon bending

Continuing this charade, Bragalia tells everyone that the government did tests to see if Nitinol could be affected through mind control by using "psychics". For once, Bragalia gives us a source. He states this comes from the document "Influence on Metal Alloy Nitinol", written by Dr. Eldon Byrd. If one does a quick check with Google, they arrive at this document but the title is not what Bragalia states. Once again, Bragalia fails to tell the reader that this was NOT an official study by the US Navy and only a paper written by Byrd about....**Uri Geller!** The actual title of the document is "Uri Geller's influence on the metal alloy Nitinol". Geller is the only "psychic" exposed to testing Nitinol, which busts the claim of Bragalia that more than one "psychic" was involved. The fact that Bragalia never mentions Geller's name may have something to do with Geller being a suspected fraud. The mention of Geller's name might suggest the research was flawed and Bragalia probably did not want that to happen.

Martin Gardner exposed much of what Byrd wrote as erroneous in his May/June 1977 Humanist article "Geller, Gulls, and Nitinol" (this can also be found on the internet). According to the paper that Bragalia cites as his source, the Geller test had occurred at "The Isis Center of the Naval Surface Weapons Center". Gardner's work demonstrated it actually was performed outside the Naval Surface Warfare Center in a new age haven called, "The Isis Center for Research and Study of the Esoteric Arts and Sciences"! Byrd has also claimed that

various analyses and studies were done by the Navy labs, which the Navy denies. Dr. Wang does not remember performing any of Byrd's tests, so Byrd makes the claim that Dr. Wang was told to deny his tests were performed. Byrd could easily have produced the documents to refute this but it appears he never did. Bragalia swallows Byrd's story hook, line, and sinker and asked Dr. Wang what he knew of Byrd's claim. According to Bragalia, Wang stated, "*Byrd says a lot of things.*"³ Bragalia ignored the implication of Wang's diplomatic response, which was that Byrd said a lot of things that were probably not true or exaggerations. Looking at Byrd's record concerning the Uri Geller incident, among other things, I can understand Dr. Wang's response.

Wright is wrong

Other items mentioned by Bragalia that he uses to confirm his suspicions are speculative jumps trying to link various individuals to the discovery and the Air Force's interest in Nitinol. General Exon, who told Kevin Randle/Don Schmitt all sorts of stories about Roswell, is quoted about the Roswell craft being constructed of an alloy of Titanium and another metal. Exon would later state that he only heard rumors and had no first hand knowledge about Roswell. Bragalia fails to mention this and seizes on this statement and tries to link it to Nitinol. Considering that Titanium alloys were being used by the aerospace industry in the 1950s and 60s (including the SR-71), this is no great surprise and proves nothing.

Bragalia then states the memo written in 1947 by General Schulgen, describes **precisely** some of the characteristics of Nitinol! In his greatest leap of logic (or maybe it is faith), Bragalia writes the following about the Shulgen memo:

In the verified version of this memo is found a section entitled "Items of Construction." Schulgen instructs his officers to be aware of flying objects and their materials of construction. He specifically notes the "unusual fabrication methods to achieve extreme lightweight" and that the material is of a "composite construction...using various combinations of metals."

Schulgen is describing **precisely** (my emphasis) some of the very characteristics of Nitinol. Just like the Roswell debris material, it is an "extreme lightweight" intermetallic alloy. As a novel "composite construction," it is created by an "unusual fabrication" method that "uses a combination of metals"- perhaps like Titanium and Nickel.⁴

Completely ignored by Bragalia is this statement in the Schulgen memo that precedes the "requirements" section of the memo:

For the purpose of analysis and evaluation of the so-called "flying saucer" phenomenon, the object sighted is being assumed to be a manned aircraft, of Russian origin, and based on the perspective thinking and actual accomplishments of the Germans.⁵

So, these methods of construction have to do with how the Soviets would construct a jet powered aircraft that might be producing the flying saucer reports. Additionally, Bragalia only delivers parts of a memo he wants everyone to read. The pertinent full sentences concerning the materials for constructing these hypothetical Soviet craft reads:

Composite or sandwich construction utilizing various combinations of metals, plastics, and perhaps balsa wood...Unusual fabrication methods to achieve extreme light weight and structural stability particularly in connection with great capacity for fuel storage.⁶

Completely missing from Bragalia's mis- sive are the words "plastics" and, of all things, "balsa wood". He also deleted the "sandwich construction" item. As for the "unusual fabrication" statement, he failed to mention it was focusing on fuel storage capacity. Bragalia is cherry picking and is grossly misrepresenting what is found in the Schulgen memo. Most important in all of this is that not one of these items is **"PRECISELY"** specifying the characteristics of Nitinol. I am not even sure if Bragalia knows what the "characteristics" of Nitinol really are. The Schulgen memo makes no mention of SMAs and I could probably suggest numerous alloys besides Nitinol that have the same characteristics as those mentioned in the memo.

Preaching to the choir

Most of what Bragalia wrote is based on guesswork without understanding the process used to develop Nitinol. Buehler's discovery was a great achievement for him and Bragalia is basically calling him a fraud. Additionally, Bragalia's interview with Dr. Wang appears to have been a fishing expedition used to get Dr. Wang to say something that could be used. Once Bragalia revealed his true intentions, Dr. Wang probably understood what was happening and did not want to discuss Roswell. Bragalia has learned from the best Roswell researchers that when you ask vague questions, you can interpret the answers any way you desire.

As for the "missing" progress reports that Bragalia claims he is trying to locate, it is my opinion that they show nothing related to Roswell. If this is the case, I predict that Bragalia will state that the reports have been altered or he will find something vague in the report that he will attempt to link to Roswell.

While the head-nodding Roswell wor- shippers are going to praise Bragalia, those that examine the claims objective- ly will probably come to the conclusion that it is another example of very sloppy research. Bragalia is being intellectually dishonest by purposefully misrepresent- ing what many of these actual documents state and not identifying them so others can see what he is describing. This is a replay of the missing Roswell nurse saga. Exotic claims are made but, when closely examined, they turn out to be poorly re- searched and false. Of course, Bragalia is working closely with Don Schmitt and Tom Carey, who are professionals at this kind of research. What do they say about birds of a feather?

Notes and References

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Special thanks to Bruce Hutchinson for his efforts in identifying some of the documents described and BAUT member "SAM5" for pointing me towards the document written by Dr. Wang.

The "SUNRISE" connection

One site I stumbled upon during my in- ternet searches was the "Sunrise" website, which is apparently run by an anonymous Australian Researcher who had contacted Carey and Schmitt in 2008 about the Ni- tinol-Battelle connection. The website is a lengthy pdf document that rambles on for hundreds of pages with the same type of speculation performed by Bragalia (ex- cept they do list sources). The author adds they choose to remain anonymous because they fear retribution from the US government and various "right wing" in- dividuals. I think this is melodramatic if you ask me. Has anyone ever been actu- ally harmed for researching Roswell?

About six months after contacting the Schmitt/Carey team, an "American re- searcher", who appears to be Bragalia, contacted the Australian researcher. Bragalia never mentioned the "Sunrise" website as any source of information in his articles about Nitinol and gave the impression he did most of the work. "Sun- rise" may not mind Bragalia's failure to mention where he started his adventure but it just doesn't look right to me. You be the judge.....

The Battle of Hastings

I always thought the battle of Hastings was fought in 1066. I guess I was wrong because Robert Hastings continues to engage skeptics in battle with tactics consisting of hurling insults and making idle threats. His latest tirade appeared on the UFO chronicles blog, where he claims that skeptics are in "deep denial". As I wrote last issue, he bases this all on the letters of Mansmann and Jacobs written decades after the event. Hastings rebuttal was really not a rebuttal. It did not address points raised by George and was essentially a rehash of his IUR article and a chance to, once again, publish excerpts from his book. However, Hastings felt I was a target as well as George and raised some issues I felt needed to be addressed in order to set the record straight.

During his BAUT discussion (look at the "UFOs and Nukes" thread), Hastings stated he would send me copies of the letters for free so I could read them (post 179). He added that anybody else would have to pay \$3 for postage. I was amazed how archaic that was and promptly told everyone to save their money because, when I received the letters, I would scan them and pass them out to anybody who desired a set. Hastings then asked me to post them on my/the BAUT website (post 205). I responded that I would not because of my concerns about my space limitations and I had no control over the BAUT website (post 216). I then stated I would send him the scans via email (which I did) and he could post them on his website. For some reason Hastings did not pay attention to what I stated or got confused. He later told everyone in the forum that they should be able to view them on my/the BAUT website (post 278). I corrected him on this issue but I am not sure if he even read it or understood me (post 283). I wonder why he did not post them on his website like I suggested in post 216? You did not see me whining on my website about him being unable to figure out how to scan the letters himself. I think it is ironic that the reason he has the scans is because I did it for him! Let Hastings cry about why I don't have the letters on my website but he is being deceptive by indicating I was trying to "hide" them from view.

Hastings also incorrectly stated that I

was going to accept anything George says. I stated on my website and in the BAUT forum that I would remove the George posting if Hastings could prove he was lying about the events of "Buzzing Bee". I also stated if better evidence surfaced about the Big Sur case showing that George was wrong, I would gladly accept it. Again, Hastings is not telling the whole story. I can only assume it is because he wants his audience to think I am an "evil skeptic" and that they won't check my website or the BAUT thread. For those who decide to examine what I have stated here, they will discover that Hastings has demonstrated that his commentary is "factually flawed".

Since Hastings really has not done any technical research on the equipment used with the BU telescope, he uses Mansmann for a positive verification that the UFO was an alien spaceship. We are not talking about any reports written in the 1960s by Mansmann or Jacobs but letters written based on memories decades old. It is interesting to note that in the very letters Hastings holds so dear, Mansmann stated he was not sure if the disc had a dome or not (5/6/87 letter to Scott Crain) and in another letter he stated his memory was sketchy but the center "seemed" to be a raised bubble (3/8/83 letter to Peter Bons). The problem is that it would be difficult to identify a "domed-disc UFO" using a magnifying glass because of the effects the IO exhibited with bright objects coupled with the resolution capabilities of the film. He could have used a microscope and it still would not improve the resolution capabilities of the setup. Eventually, all you are doing is enlarging noise. Kingston George gave all the details about the resolution capabilities of the equipment in his 2009 article. Hastings completely ignores this technical discussion and offers only the letters to rebut George.

Several of the questions I asked of Hastings was what documentation he had to support the claims of an alien spaceship. I even asked if he examined General Jewell Maxwell's (the commanding general of the western test center) records (see post 148). Perhaps an appointment book exists that could pinpoint when the film was screened. Since then, I wonder if

General Selmon Wells was the general mentioned because he was commander of the 1st aerospace division at Vandenberg. As best I can tell from Hastings response, he did not look into either General's records. For that matter, I don't think he even examined any records.

I would also think that there would be quite a bit of chatter in the high command about the loss of a dummy warhead. There were no attempts at improving warhead defense and no efforts made to improve security for future launches. There wasn't even any discussion about the craft being possibly a new soviet weapon that could make the US nuclear arsenal obsolete! Hastings could not provide one single document that indicated the warhead was destroyed/lost in flight and that the high command was the least bit concerned about this.

Finally, Hastings did not even bother to evaluate any other possibility in his research. When I mentioned various projects that could have been involved, he seemed oblivious to them. Even when I asked about the purpose of the flight he believes is the one Jacobs is talking about, he seemed clueless and did not even know the launch was called "Butterfly net". Mr. Hastings' endless name-calling and threats of legal action are just a facade used to conceal his lack of knowledge and poor research.

Hastings has taken this stand because he has appeared in numerous venues defending this case. Hastings efforts to transform Jacobs/Mansmann into UFO "saints" is nothing but a desperate attempt to prop up the case. As I stated on my web page, we don't know if these two men believed in UFOs because of their viewing of the film or because of opinions they formed in later years. We do know that there is no direct evidence to support the contention that a UFO shot down a dummy warhead. Until Hastings can demonstrate with actual evidence from 1964, that the event happened as Jacobs/Mansmann described, the most likely explanation will remain a misinterpretation of what was on the film. Based on his current "scorched earth" policy of denigration and bluffs, I don't see Hastings coming up with any new evidence in the near future.

Why don't astronomers see physical craft in the sky operating under intelligent control that defy explanation?

Ever since his book came out, Dr. Phil Plait has been criticized by UFO proponents for his statements regarding UFOs. Phil has wondered aloud why more UFO reports do not come from the amateur astronomy community. The howls and catcalls from the UFO proponents is to list various obscure observations by astronomers over the years. However, they appear to be confused at what Dr. Plait is trying to state. He is not stating that amateur astronomers do not make any UFO reports but why don't they report more events than the few isolated incidents that populate the UFO literature? UFOs by their own definition are "unidentified" and could be just about anything. It is not improbable for amateur astronomers to see something they might not be able to identify during their observations. While UFO proponents like to state that astronomers are seeing UFOs, the real question is "Do astronomers see **physical** objects that are **actual** 'craft' operating under 'intelligent control' that defy explanation?"

How do astronomers practice their profession?

Professional astronomers are mostly about data gathering through large telescopes. They don't normally stare at an eyepiece or stand underneath the stars gazing away. It is just not feasible when you have valuable time with a multi-million dollar telescope to conduct your research. Most of the data is gathered using electronic methods which can be calibrated to give precise values that can be analyzed. Unlike their counterparts a century earlier, professionals today normally do not observe the sky visually but that does not mean they do not understand the sky. Those that I have met have a distinct love of the night sky and enjoy looking through amateur telescopes. I would not be surprised that many have their own portable telescope at home just to gaze at the sky on evenings they are not working.

Still, the professionals have equipment that can detect these supposed large craft invading our air space. The telescopes being used to scan for near-earth asteroids are incredible in that they cover

significant areas of the sky every night. The Pan-STARRS instrument has a three degree field of view and takes exposures of 30-60 seconds in duration. More of these telescopes are being constructed. Meanwhile the older NEAT, LINEAR, and LONEOS wide-field telescopes continue to search wide areas of the sky for asteroids and comets. These telescopes are so good that they "discovered" the Rosetta space probe approaching earth for a gravity assist maneuver. Nobody realized it was the space probe and it was assigned a minor planet number for a few days until the mistake was realized! How are these large craft (much larger than Rosetta which is about 100 feet across) approaching the earth evading detection by astronomical telescopes?

If a few degrees field of view is considered too small, what about the Night Sky Live project? Here, all sky cameras are in operation studying the night sky. In fact, one did detect a UFO on December 17, 2004. It was published a few months later on the astronomy picture of the day (APOD) website. There was no effort to hide this from anyone and there was a call for people to try and figure out the source of the UFO. It was eventually determined to be a booster rocket fuel dump. Contrary to what UFO proponents want everyone to think, the sky is being monitored fairly closely by professional instruments on a regular basis. One would think that a large spacecraft flying over any of these telescope systems would be recorded in some way.

How do astronomers practice their hobby?

The amateur astronomy community is a large collection of knowledgeable people with varying interests. To describe each would take some time. Some participate in group sky watches for the public and others do their observing in remote dark sky locations. Some have cameras set up to monitor the night sky every night from meteors and others decide to monitor the sky for meteors visually. The varied interests have them using instruments ranging from the naked eye to mammoth telescopes with huge mirrors. All enjoy the night sky and they rarely miss anything

that occurs in the sky when they are together.



No large unidentified craft seem to appear during public viewing sessions.

What is the typical UFO?

There really is no such thing as a typical UFO but there are statistics to suggest a general description. The average duration for most UFO reports is about three to ten minutes based on data in Allan Hendry's UFO handbook. Considering that they are noticed by people randomly looking up, indicates they are probably bright objects so they catch their attention. I have no data to back this up but one would expect the lights on these "aerial vehicles" to be equal to a first magnitude star or brighter. Finally, the angular size must be big enough for people to identify features. This means the minimal size is probably about the size of the full moon or a half degree in size. Some reports, if the estimated values given are accurate, indicate sizes that would block out most of the sky but these estimates are probably erroneous and/or exaggerations. I think the upper limit on most observations of these massive craft would be about fifteen to twenty degrees across.

These "aerial vehicles" are being seen on a regular basis by witnesses. I usually can find roughly a dozen reports each month in the National UFO Reporting

Center (NUFORC) database. However, the NUFORC database is incomplete and there are often other centers that collect reports different than those reported to NUFORC. Then there are those cases where reports are not filed. If these reports are accurate, one can suggest that at least one massive “aerial vehicle” can be seen on a daily basis somewhere in the world.

UFOlogy’s myths about astronomers

Because of their limited knowledge about astronomy, amateur astronomers, and desire to perpetuate the UFO phenomena, UFOlogists have generated some myths about all amateur astronomers:

- Astronomers are too busy looking through small fields of their telescope and miss many things that happen in the night sky.
- Astronomers would not report UFOs for fear of ridicule from their fellow astronomers.
- Present day amateur astronomers use computer guided telescopes and observe from the comfort of their armchairs like their professional counterparts. They do not spend much time outside anymore.

These characterizations of astronomers are often repeated as an excuse for why so few astronomers report UFOs. How do these myths stand up under scrutiny?

Busting the small field of view myth

This is one I see the most. It misrepresents how astronomers conduct their hobby. The time spent examining an object in the eyepiece equates to about half the observing time for the amateur astronomer. This applies equally to those amateurs who manually guide their telescopes taking astrophotographs. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Let’s look at that “typical” unknown aerial vehicle I described. When I am observing, I get easily distracted by lights from airplanes, satellites, and even the red lights used by astronomers nearby. This is when I am concentrating on a guide star in my eyepiece. As a result, I am sup-

posed to ignore an object that is at least the size of the full moon and as bright as some of the brightest stars in the sky. What is more amazing is that I am supposed to ignore it for several minutes.

UFO proponents ignore the fact that most amateur astronomers observe in groups. This means that while one person is observing, another is doing something else. The more people that are present, the less likely that anyone is going to miss something of transitory nature in the sky.



Two astronomers gazing at the sky. Notice that only one is looking into an eyepiece!

A good example of how very little goes unnoticed is what happened to me last summer. While I was performing astrophotography with a fellow amateur, I happened to notice a 2nd to 3rd magnitude “star” in Aquila that should not have been there. My first thought was that it was a potential nova. As I observed it, it slowly faded and then brightened again. I then noticed that while the stars were moving due to the earth’s rotation, this “star” was not moving. It was a geosynchronous satellite.



Geosynchronous satellite seen in 2008

Others notice strange lights in the sky and report them. The infamous “Aries/Perseus Flasher” was seen by an amateur astronomer in the mid-1980s. It was described in the February 1985 issue of *Sky and Telescope* as a 1st to 3rd magnitude star-like object visible for a brief period in the constellations of Aries. Dozens, if not hundreds, of astronomers began to look for the “flasher”, hoping to get a glimpse of the phenomena. One photograph was eventually obtained (published in the July 1985 issue). It later turned out that the source of most of these reports and the photograph had to do with glints/reflections off of satellites.

Busting the “ridicule” myth

Experienced amateur astronomers tend to learn from their mistakes. They know that it is easy to misidentify an object as something it is not. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) website has a warning about potential discoverers of comets, novae, and asteroids. They state that for every real discovery, there are five that are not. The thrill of discovery can blind astronomers from being critical of their observations. Still, many continue to report strange objects they see that might be a discovery. They are not worried about being ridiculed because they know that discovery of an unknown is important. The “Aries/Perseus flasher” is a perfect example of this kind of observation.

Over the years, I have heard all sorts of stories told to me by other astronomers of various lights they saw that were strange. I can’t explain all of them because some are many years old and I was not there. They are UFOs in the sense that they can not be identified. None of these amateurs, who know in advance that I am skeptical about UFO reports, feared me “ridiculing” them for telling me their UFO stories. However, I have never heard any amateur astronomer telling me they saw an immensely large “aerial vehicles” hovering over their observing site.

Busting the “warming room” myth

A recent addition to the UFOlogy myths about amateur astronomers, is the “warming room” myth. With the wide-spread use of computerized telescopes and advanced CCD imaging,

some amateurs have stepped into observing from their desktops at home or in a warming room near the telescope. They do not even go outside. I have met and seen several do this. However, these are a minority of amateur astronomers.

Every month, during the new moon period hundreds of amateur astronomers get out to their dark sky locations in groups to observe the sky. Many clubs have their own observing sites, which may include an observatory. It is a rare to see these sites empty on clear moonless nights. At my own club's observatory, there are usually three or four present even on weekday nights. Then there are the major star parties that occur for several days each month in various parts of the country. These events have been very popular for decades and usually have groups of a hundred or more. The more astronomers that are present under a dark sky, the less likely it is for something is going to be missed. What are the odds that these massive structured craft appear everywhere but not over any major star party or astronomy club group observing session? If you doubt me, you should check out this video by William Castleman of the Texas star party. All the red lights are astronomers out enjoying the sky. If the craft were only reported occasionally, it would be unlikely. However, we are talking about reports numbering in the hundreds each year and that is only for the large "aerial vehicles".



Setting up for the night's observing session. Why are they outside? Everyone knows amateurs stay in the warming hut all night long!

Of course, the UFO proponent will now question, "What about during the full moon period, when amateurs are not at their dark sky locations?" I can't speak for other amateurs but the full moon period is my time to observe any planets or experimenting with my equipment out in the yard. I usually practice some so I don't waste time on my trips to the dark sky site. I also can image planets from my

observatory shed in my yard because the city lights do not matter when it comes to the moon and planets. I am sure many amateurs do the same. Of course, the days around the first quarter and beyond are excellent periods for public observing sessions. Everybody loves to look at the moon! Just because the moon is near full, does not mean astronomers aren't out observing the sky.

Astronomers want to see an exotic "aerial vehicle" of unknown origin!

People tend to think that astronomers do not want to see any of these massive "aerial vehicles" so often reported and will not mention it if they do. Nothing could be further from the truth. I personally would love to see such an object. I also know that if an experienced amateur astronomer did report such an object, he would provide actual data that could be analyzed and not "seat of the pants" estimates. To date, I am unaware of any such detailed report being submitted about one of these massive aerial craft. I am aware that an amateur astronomer saw the famous Arizona UFO triangle of 1997 with his telescope. He did not report seeing an alien spaceship. Instead, he reported seeing aircraft with lights in a "V" formation. Because he stated he saw something mundane, his report is ignored, ridiculed, or dismissed by UFOlogists. UFOlogists do not seem to be interested in answers. They only appear to want mysteries that they can present as evidence for unidentifiable "aerial vehicles" operating under intelligent control (AKA alien spaceships).

Astronomers and UFO reports

Some UFO proponents fail to understand that UFO means "unidentified". Yes, astronomers may report UFOs simply because they are unable to identify the object at the time. There are so many different events that happen in the sky, it is very hard for an astronomer to be familiar with all of them.

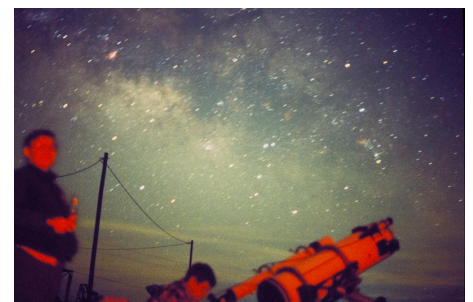
An excellent example of this is an astronomer UFO report I have often seen presented as being a good astronomer/UFO case. That event being the Canary Islands UFOs of June 22nd, 1976. Astronomers were reported to have seen the UFO. However, research by The Anomaly

Foundation determined that the cause of the report was a US ICBM test launch. The astronomers had no idea what they were looking at because they had never seen such an event before.. Therefore, it was an "unidentified".



Photographs I took of an unannounced ICBM launch by a submarine off the coast of Florida. We were out observing and were surprised by its appearance in the east (south of the Cape). I still had time to get my camera out and get these shots. The bottom photo shows the luminescent cloud left behind.

The difference between "unidentified" and "exotic aerial vehicle operating under intelligent control" is great. One is a question mark and could be just about anything. The other is something that is positively identified and indicates that something truly extraordinary is flying in the sky. When UFO proponents can produce report by astronomers that **positively** identify the event as a unknown aerial vehicle of the kind described in so many UFO reports these days, they might have something to crow about.



Where are all the unidentifiable aerial vehicles?

UFO chases space station!

I was reading the UFO examiner one day and a report caught my eye. It was actually three reports that were logged for May 29, 2009. The first was made from Mt. Pleasant, Texas and described a UFO overtaking the ISS as it passed across the sky. The object was described as fainter than the ISS and moving in the same general direction. There were no navigation lights/anti-collision strobe light and it was moving at a speed of 2.5-3X greater than the ISS. The witness also stated the object dimmed and brightened as it passed by. This by itself did not mean much until the UFO examiner posted another report given from Mounds, OK (roughly 200 miles to the north of Mt. Pleasant). This was observed by several people at the Tulsa astronomy clubs observatory. Unfortunately, the observer making the report must not have been a very experienced astronomer since his/her description was somewhat vague with no times, angular speeds, or magnitude estimates. Their observation indicated the object was smaller than the ISS indicating they probably meant it was fainter. They also mentioned that it pulsed. The witness claimed to have never seen any satellite like this before and they were experienced at watching satellites. Despite the limitations of the observations made by the "astronomer" in Oklahoma, one can couple it with the better Mt. Pleasant observations to get a general idea of the object's characteristics. The UFO examiner threw in a third observation in Texas but this observer only mentioned one light that sounded a lot like the ISS.

My first thought was the object must be an unknown in low earth orbit (LEO). As a result, I immediately went to the Satellite Observer's archives for 2009. Sure enough, there was an observation that caught my eye by Derek Breit on 28 May one day prior to this event. He stated that he saw a "screaming LEO" that night at 9:37 local time. He also described it as flashing on and off as it tumbled with peak brightness about magnitude +1. He identified it as USSpacecom catalog number 35011. A quick examination of Heaven's above for Mounds, OK revealed the following information about the ISS and 35011 for the night of May 29, 2009:

	Time	Direction
ISS	21:10-21:16	NW - SE
35011	21:14-21:18	NW - SE

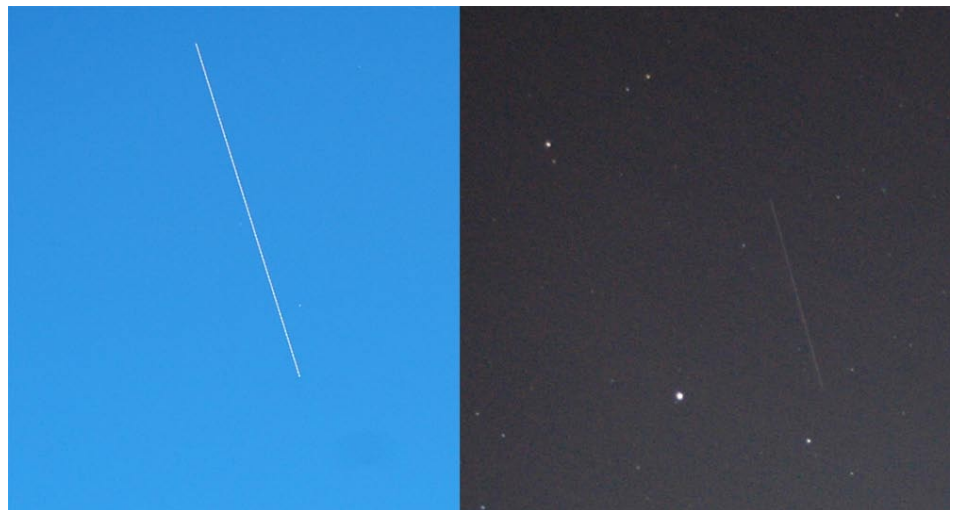
This is pretty close. The orbit for 35011, which is an SL-4 rocket body from a 27 May 2009 launch (and came to earth on 31 May 2009), was only 122X129km high. The ISS is listed as having an orbit 343 X 356 km high. From this information, one can draw the conclusion that 35011 is going to have a greater angular speed than the ISS. The times may not match up exactly but this has a lot to do with using a later epoch date for the rocket body and the ISS. It is interesting to note that this is the rocket that launched the TMA-15 capsule carrying additional astronauts/cosmonauts to the ISS. The spacecraft had docked with the space station early on the 29th. However, the booster was still in orbit and followed the same orbital inclination as the ISS.

In an effort to clarify some of the observations, I e-mailed the observatory's director, Teresa Kincannon. Teresa gave me the type of response I would expect from an amateur astronomer. That being that the club members were interested in the science of Astronomy and, in her 17 years experience, has never heard any serious discussions of UFOs. She seemed surprised by the UFO report and stated that she was unaware of anybody who thought they had seen a UFO that night.

She e-mailed several of the astronomers who were present to see if they could add to the observation. I never received any response even though I tried to contact her again. I can only assume it was because nobody noticed the object as an "unidentified" and figured it was a LEO satellite/object. It is also possible they figured it was the TMA-15 spacecraft. In either case, they saw nothing out of the ordinary.

What we have here is an example of an "astronomer" (or more correctly put "sky-watcher"), who was not familiar with a specific type of satellite they had never seen before. It is the danger of using astronomers/sky watchers as "expert observers" when it comes to UFO reports because we do not know the skill level/experience of the reporting astronomer/sky watcher. Personally, I am not sure why an amateur astronomer would go so far as to submit a UFO report without checking up on potential sources first. It just makes good sense with potential comet/nova/asteroid discoveries and this would carry forward with other "unknowns". An experienced amateur astronomer would surely do this.

Looking back at the Oklahoma report, I think the witness may have had motivation to make the report. They specifically mention reading the Mount Pleasant report before making theirs. Is this simply a case of "me too"?



Angular speed comparison of ISS (left) and Cosmos 2082 rocket (right) in 15 second exposures. The ISS is at a distance of roughly 400km while the Cosmos rocket body is at a distance of about 800km. The difference in altitude causes the angular speed to be lower. The apparition for the Cosmos pass lasted 11-12 minutes. The best ISS passes last about 5-6 minutes. An object in low earth orbit will appear to move faster than the ISS.

Who is the dummy? Roswell: Case closed revisited

Ever since the USAF released its report "Case Closed" in June of 1997, I have seen some misrepresentations of what the report has stated. Both of the USAF reports can be found at <http://contrails.iit.edu/history/roswell/> and can be read for free. It is not like the report is unavailable. The 1997 report, unlike its 1994 counterpart, is a much easier read. Its pages document some very interesting USAF history that is worth reading about even if one was not interested in the Roswell case.

Why?

One of the most popular questions asked by individuals is, "Why did the USAF bother presenting a second report?" Some proponents suggested that the USAF even "changed" the explanation from a project MOGUL balloon to test dummies because the MOGUL explanation was not accepted. This is a myth created and/or accepted by certain members of the UFO community, who chose not to read the report. The reason the USAF submitted the second report is explained in the report itself. The first reason is that the request by the General Accounting Office (GAO) asked them to look into their records. It was this request that revealed the project MOGUL records discussed in the 1994 report. In addition to the MOGUL records, other projects were discovered that could also have been misinterpreted as spaceship/body recovery operations. It was the discovery of these projects that inspired the USAF to write the second report.

In a side note, Captain James McAndrew also added that his group felt that some stories being told by witnesses were gross misinterpretations and/or lies about tragic events where USAF members were killed. The authors of the report felt that taking advantage of such tragic events for personal gain was heinous in nature and they desired to set the record straight on that matter.

Another reason for the report was that McAndrew and his team felt the activities were important enough to bring to the



Launch operations in a remote area during project High dive (1997 USAF report p. 55)

public eye because they represented important moments in USAF history. Indeed many of these events are fascinating and one has to develop a deep respect for many of the individuals involved. To me, Kittinger jumping out of a balloon from an altitude of over 100,000 feet and Lt. Col Strapp riding a rocket sled is something that is to be admired.

Dummy launch/recovery operations

The section about the "crashed test dummies" was interesting in that it was preceded by the authors describing their investigation process. UFO proponents suggest there is no way the dummies could have been misinterpreted as alien bodies. However, McAndrew describes what they were looking for after they had examined the alien body witness testimony used by the authors themselves:

- *An activity that, if viewed from a distance, would appear unusual.*
- *An activity of which the exact date is not known.*
- *An activity that took place in two rural areas of New Mexico*
- *An activity that involved a type of aerial vehicle with dolls or dummies that had four fingers, were bald, and wore one piece gray suits.*
- *An activity that required recovery by numerous military personnel and an assortment of vehicles that included*

a wrecker, a six-by-six, and a weapons carrier.¹

The operation High dive/Excelsior tests fit this scenario well. Now, I don't totally agree with the conclusions but McAndrew did explain the methodology employed. For some reason, UFO proponents ignored this section of the report and seem to think that McAndrew had arrived at his conclusion before examining any records. What is important to note is that the USAF was not describing people seeing these dummies up close but people viewing the operations from some distance away. When one examines the operations as described in the report, they do bear a resemblance to the stories told by the various witnesses to alien body and crashed spaceship recoveries.

Shortly after the report was issued in 1997, Ray Madson, a retired USAF officer who was the project officer for operation High dive/Excelsior, stepped forward and proclaimed to the media the study was false because the project was never classified. Madson obviously never read the report because it states in the report:

Countering claims of a cover-up, Air Force projects that used anthropomorphic dummies and human subjects were unclassified and widely publicized in numerous newspaper and magazine stories, books, and television reports.²

Madson also proclaimed that he knew Roswell involved alien bodies because he heard rumors while he was stationed at Wright-Patterson. Well, these rumors had



Pre-positioned Recovery vehicles located along roadsides could have given the idea that a cordon existed. (1997 USAF report p. 51)



Vehicles used in recovery operations match the types described by witnesses (1997 USAF report p. 30)



Was Eileen Fanton, Glenn's nurse? (1997 USAF report p. 82)

been around for some time and nobody can ever pinpoint where they started but my guess is their origins are from Frank Scully's book, where he stated the USAF had recovered a crashed spaceship in Aztec, New Mexico in the late 1940s. Most people would assume that the "craft" was sent to Wright-Patterson field. An event involving security and transport of materials could easily start rumors about the secretive delivery of something to the base. Once the Scully book was published, it would not take much for that "something" to turn into an alien spaceship! Despite all these rumors flying around, the heads of Project Bluebook and Sign were oblivious to them. Doctor Hynek, who worked with Bluebook and Grudge, was equally clueless. Why didn't they report these rumors floating about and pursue them? Madson's belief is based on nothing but unsubstantiated stories and hearsay.

Recently, Anthony Braglia interviewed retired Lt. Col. Roy Madson's and resurrected this old story. Of course, Madson restated much of what he said in 1997 but now he states that he did not like McAndrew and that McAndrew twisted what he stated in the report. Madson's affidavit is in the report and it states:

I served for twenty five years in the Air Force and most of those years were in the aeromedical field. I participated in the space program and the highly classified early

*stages of the U-2 program. Never during this time were "aliens" or "flying saucers" a part of any project. There were, however, countless achievements by the Air Force in aerospace medicine that were the result of dedicated scientific research. It seems likely to me that someone could have mistaken our anthropomorphic dummies for something that they were not.*³

I could not find any reference in the report where McAndrew directly stated that Madson said they could confuse the dummies for alien bodies. If Madson did not agree with the statement above, he should have made it clear in his affidavit or not bothered to sign the statement. I also find it interesting that he did not include the statement about all those "rumors" he heard over the years in the affidavit.

Madson also added that each dummy had a reward tag on it. Braglia and Kenin Randle seemed to think this was important enough to repeat. This seems to imply that this was not mentioned in the report. Again, it appears that nobody bothered to read the report because it clearly states this as well.

*Also, recovery notices promising a \$25 reward were taped to an exposed portion of a dummy.*⁴

The point of the matter is there is little that Madson has to offer other than to

fuel conspiracy-minded Roswell proponents with information that was available in the report. His personal opinions of McAndrew (as well as Randle's) are just "opinions". Opinions are like "noses". Everyone has them and they all smell.

It is important to note McAndrew drew his conclusions not on what Madson told him but from the information that all the participants gave. There are at least two anecdotal accounts of people reporting that civilians DID misperceive a dummy recovery as a real body or person. I think Madson, as well as the proponents who write these inaccurate reports, need to sit down and read what the report says and not what their mind wants them to believe.

Dennis and the nurse

The final section of the report had to do with incidents mostly described by Glenn Dennis. The work done here was very good in tracking down potential candidates for Dennis' story.

The actual people found that fit Dennis' descriptions turned out to be mix of individuals who were at the base between 1947 and 1960. When Dennis decided to create his tale, he probably drew on memories of these people he **might** have met over the years.

As for the alien bodies part of the story, McAndrew identified the most likely source of this tale. A plane crash in 1956 had killed 11 AF personnel in the resultant fire. The bodies were badly burned and mangled. Much of what transpired bears a resemblance to the story told by Dennis including the foul odors associated with the remains.

McAndrew's contention was that it was wrong for people to take advantage of an incident where brave men serving their country perished. If Dennis used this incident as a blueprint for his tall tale, it belittles the men who perished. The authors of the various books also bear some responsibility for giving Dennis a platform without even questioning his story.

You won't hear this from the proponents, who think, or want everyone to think, this report is all about crash dummies. The Glenn Dennis story was dismissed by 1996 but his story was one of the key components of the Roswell story for many years prior to that. Sloppy research and the desire to accept any story about

alien bodies prevented him from being exposed as the liar that he was. The USAF report just put the final nail in that coffin.

Myth creation

Writing about the report in 2003, Bernard D. Gildenberg wrote the following about the dummy recovery operations:

*People happening across dummy recovery or balloon launching events would have seen a good deal of unusual military activity out in the middle of nowhere, usually from a considerable distance....The argument of **Case Closed** in a nutshell is that people who saw these real operations might well have recollected them as alien spaceship recoveries 30 or 40 years later-- under the influence of popular media UFO culture, and prompted by television programs hunting for anyone who had witnessed suspicious activities.*⁵

We already know the stories told by the witnesses in the report were lies but these kinds of tall tales are usually generated based on some sort of knowledge. It is possible that one or more of the original body recovery stories were created based on seeing or hearing about these operations. Once the story about the recovery had been published, others could borrow from the story line to give their version of what they "saw" in 1947.

The proponents version exposed

Speaking of the proponents, they had personal reasons to malign the 1997 report. Stanton Friedman and Don Berliner were portrayed as conspiracy-minded UFO nuts who chose to ignore any information provided by Charles Moore and Bernard Gildenberg. Kevin Randle and Don Schmitt were embarrassed by the report as well. In the 1994 report some of their claims were exposed as false. Now we discover that the testimony of Jim Ragsdale was slightly altered in a book claiming to be the "Truth" in order to remove any mention of the word "dummies" (note: these are the excerpts from the interview and not the entire transcript):

Ragsdale: ...but it was either DUMMIES (My emphasis) or bodies or something

laying there...

Ragsdale: Yeah...and I'm sure that was bodies...either bodies or DUMMIES (My emphasis)...

Schmitt: Why do you say DUMMIES (My emphasis)?

*Ragsdale: The federal government could have been doing something because they didn't want anyone to know what this was ...THEY WAS USING DUMMIES (My emphasis) in those damned things...they could use remote control.*⁶

However, the following is the exchange published in the The truth about the UFO crash at Roswell:

*...bodies or something laying there. They looked like bodies. They weren't very long...four or five foot long at the most.*⁷

Why would Randle and Schmitt edit the testimony so the word "dummy" did not appear in the book? These are the same people who consistently accuse the USAF and debunkers of deception. He without "sin"....

Proponents also like to proclaim that in 1997, the witness testimonies used in the USAF report had already been shown to be fabricated. This is true but the work on the report had begun before 1997 and, at that time, these individuals were considered the primary witnesses to a UFO crash and alien bodies. The two major books on the subject were written with these witnesses as the stars! It wasn't until late 1995 that they became suspect. As late as October 1995, Randle was still suggesting in the MUFON journal that Ragsdale's original story had truth to it because it had been verified by others. By the time the report was finally published, most of these same witnesses were considered unreliable. Perhaps McAndrew should have kept up with the ever changing landscape of Roswell witnesses. The constant fighting between Friedman and Randle made it difficult to decide which witnesses were trustworthy and which were not. One thing is for sure, the USAF was not going to state that a specific person was blatantly lying. They gave all of them an alternate explanation as to why their stories were incorrect.

It is interesting to note that Dennis Balthasar still finds Glenn Dennis credible and Dennis was the president of the Roswell UFO museum in 1998. According to one source, Stanton Friedman still believed Gerald Anderson as late as 1998! The idea that everyone considered these witnesses unreliable in 1997 is not completely accurate.

Case closed?

The cornerstone of the Roswell "incident" was built on Marcel's story and held up by Haut and a few others. The Alien body witnesses all arrived later and were used to shore up the structure of the Roswell myth. Since then, almost all of the original first hand body witnesses have become considered unreliable. So, is the case really closed?

As each witness' credibility is destroyed, two more are found with even wilder tales based on the blueprint that had been established by the previous witnesses. This is why they are found credible by the proponents. They sound so similar, they appear to corroborate each other. Totally ignored is the possibility that the witnesses are just repeating the stories told by others with their own personal touches thrown in to the mix. As long as there are those that want to believe these unsubstantiated stories, the case will never be closed.

Notes and references

1. HQ USAF. The Roswell Report: Case Closed. Washington: D.C., US Government, 1997 p. 15
2. *ibid.* p. 26
3. *ibid.* p. 181
4. *ibid.* p. 31
5. Gildenberg, Bernard D. . "A Roswell requiem." Skeptic, Vol. 10 No. 1 2003. p. 71.
6. HQ USAF. The Roswell Report: Case Closed. Washington: D.C., US Government, 1997 p. 216-218
7. Randle, Kevin and Donald Schmitt. The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell. New York: Avon, 1994. p. 9

Obama “threatened” by Paradigm research group?

According to UFO digest, the Paradigm Research Group (PRG) run by Steve Bassett, is asking for the new president to disclose everything the government knows about UFOs, or they will bring pressure to bear on him through the press. Bassett has a three phase plan of sending a million FAX to Washington demanding disclosure and the release of alien technologies. According to him, the release of alien technologies will help solve the worlds economic, sociological, and environmental problems.

The funny thing about this whole idea is that one would think that all the previous administrations would have released these technologies to get themselves re-elected or improve the economy. Why haven't administrations that were in serious trouble at the time of re-election resorted to this kind of “disclosure”? I am fairly confident that Richard Nixon or Lyndon Johnson would have released this earth shattering information to save their presidencies from disaster. For some reason they left their presidencies under less than desirable circumstances. The recent Bush administration could easily have done the same thing. Are we really supposed to believe that Obama is going to save the world by disclosing the truth about UFOs?

Bassett has been preaching all this since the 1990s. On May 22, 2001, Burt Constable wrote in the Chicago Daily Herald (p. 13) that Bassett stated it was one minute to midnight for full disclosure. That was eight years ago and nothing has really changed. He has created this “project” not to disclose anything but to get gullible people to buy into his little publicity stunt

By mid-June, it appeared that nothing had been accomplished other than having Steve Bassett grab a few headlines. Is it all about satisfying one man's ego? Is this the same old record skipping on the same old tune? It seems this is another case of a UFO proponent trying to find a way to make a name for himself by appearing on TV. Feel free to contribute to Bassett's campaign. I have much better things to do with my money.

Another Disclosure Prediction

Michael Cohen has revealed a June time table for disclosure. Actually, it isn't a time table with dates. It is only his predictions. According to Cohen, NASA was going to reveal by mid-June that it has been researching UFOs and they have at least some evidence that they are alien spaceships. To add to this some unnamed organization was going to reveal that alien radio signals have been received! Finally, a “major European nation” was going to admit that alien spaceships (AKA UFOs) were visiting the earth.

Such earth-shattering events had me searching the web for days after he posted this. Did he have “inside information” or were they the same nonsensical claims made by UFO proponents for decades? Only time would tell.

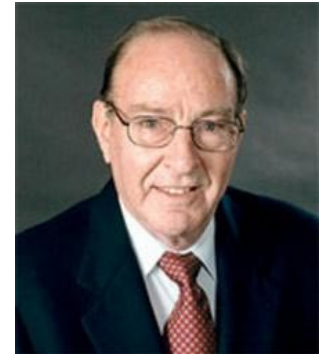
Apparently, Cohen has been hearing something about France releasing it's UFO records, which is why he made his prediction about a major European nation. The release of UFO records means very little. Despite thousands of records being “disclosed” by various nations, none have demonstrated that alien spaceships are visiting earth.

Some nations did release their UFO records. Unfortunately, Brazil and Uruguay are not a major European nation. The Uruguayan officer described in the article I saw states they have not eliminated the ET hypothesis as a source of these UFO reports. Of course, it does not mean that the ETH is the source for any of these reports.

I also notice that there are the usual cat-calls at the US for not disclosing it's records. Didn't the NSA, CIA, FBI, and USAF release all their records? I guess it only works if the files say the ET is responsible for the UFOs. Like that is going to happen....

By mid-June I realized the gulf between Cohen's predictions and reality was the same as many “disclosure” proponents. I am sure that there will be another UFO proponent out there claiming FULL disclosure will come in July....or August....or September....or maybe 2010....

Edgar Mitchell fuels more UFO rumors



Former astronaut and moon-walker, Edgar Mitchell, is at it again. Mr. Mitchell has always been an advocate of various paranormal claims. Now he is restating the same story he has been telling for some time regarding the Roswell “incident”. According to him, he has information from high places that it was the crash of an alien spaceship and bodies were recovered. This information came from an Admiral, that Mitchell refuses to name. He also adds that the Admiral would deny that he said this anyway.

Like so many of these claims, there is not one iota of evidence that what Mitchell states is true. According to him, he was given an appointment to talk to somebody in the pentagon about this. This is also unconfirmed. He does not even provide a date of this infamous meeting. Are we really supposed to blindly accept Mitchell's story simply because he is an ex-astronaut, who walked on the moon?

I agree with Dr. Plait that just because he is a former astronaut, does not make him an expert on the subject. Ed, if you are reading this and want us to believe you, you need to give us something concrete that can be verified. Until then, you are just making yourself look very silly.

Light Pillars

Matthew Graeber

Although it has been a number of years since I last wrote something about UFO experiences and unidentified aerial phenomena for my friends at FATE, I have decided to re-emerge as a messenger of rather exciting and remarkable news concerning the aerial phenomena researches of Mr. Wim Van Utrecht of Antwerp, Belgium.

Mr. Van Utrecht is a secretary working for a lawyer's office by profession, 49 years old and started field investigations of UFO incidents at the tender age of just fourteen. He co-authored a book on the famous Zwischbergen "Saas-Fee" case and extensively analyzed the circumstances in which the photo of the object spotted by a group of hikers was taken in the mountains of Switzerland during July of 1975. Wim developed an internet site where UFO researcher's from around the world could share ideas and data, and is a man who works very well with both UFO proponents and those who are inclined to be a bit skeptical. He is a multi-faceted UFO research talent with many other credits to his list of accomplishments. I wholeheartedly suggest FATE readers visit www.caelestia.be.



Moreover, rather than write another UFO case study as I have many times in the past, this time, I offer an Open Letter to Fate's readers with the hopes serious researchers and objective enthusiasts will find this remarkable information to be insightful, enlightening and uniquely educational.

As many of you know, Mother Ship and Cloud Cigar sightings have long been part of the UFO story. I'm certain FATE readers are fairly well acquainted with this colossal variety of UFO; however,

what is not generally realized is Cylindrical Craft or Mother Ships and even Cloud Cigars continue to be observed and reported throughout the world. But, now comes startling evidence that some of these Cloud and Mother Ships may actually be "Light Pillars" which are occasionally spotted in perfectly clear skies by their astonished witnesses. "Light pillars" are caused when bright unshielded lights near the ground reflect off of transparent layers of billions of ice-crystal plates (the effect can be compared to the elongated, mirrored image of a street light seen in a pool of water).

The significance of these findings is it affords the UFO researcher a reliable category / classification of some Cloud Cigar and Mother Ship observations - without simply speculating they are reflections, mirages, temperature inversions, etc; without offering clear and convincing evidence. So, while Mr. Van Utrecht's research does not resolve all Cylinder Craft or Cloud Ship sightings, it does afford one the opportunity to evaluate each report from a very well-reasoned point of view. Indeed, by employing a unique investigative methodology to the study of UFOs and atmospheric - indeed, a very important aspect of contemporary UFOlogy.

Mother ships and Cloud Cigars

Mother ships (not unlike aircraft carriers) are often said to dispense and absorb smaller UFOs of various number and description - while the Cloud Cigars are occasionally thought to be rigidly constructed and do not tend to dissipate like regular clouds seen in the sky. Some observer's describe these gigantic UFOs to be similar in appearance to that of a loaf of French bread or a fat cigar, etc, while others say the Cloud Ships take on a reddish glow which wells up within them (as if to suggest a hot poker were sheathed in some sort of white light or smoke). Moreover, the appearances of Cloud Cigars seem to date back to Biblical days as well as the works of early UFO writers like Morris K. Jessup, et al.

During the last thirty years or so, Cloud Cigars have taken a backseat to the reports of flying disks, huge dark triangles, Saucer Crash Cover ups and stories of Abduction within the UFO research community, and the flying saucer pop culture enthusiasts. However, any seasoned UFO field investigator might tell you the reports are not always very detailed and may be somewhat flawed because of weather conditions, darkness, optical acuity of some witnesses, and/or the separating power of the eye at the distance.

Therefore, when researchers have the ability to establish that these human frailties have probably NOT contaminated their research data base, it is a step forward for the serious study of these phenomena. It is NOT Skepticism or Debunkerism, it is a gift of expanded knowledge for UFOlogists, a gift which not only serves to improve our approach to the study of the enigma, but, one which permits us to clearly perceive wonders which had previously eluded our conscious perception before Mr. Van Utrecht opened our eyes and minds to them.

While some Mother Ships and Cloud Cigars MAY be a totally different phenomena in comparison to Light Pillars, Mr. Van Utrecht's efforts have shown us we MUST be thorough with the investigation and evaluation of these sighting reports. Not only for the sake of clarity, but, for the advancement of our store of knowledge on matters UFOlogical.

Mr. Wim Van Utrecht has been collecting, cataloging and evaluating Light Pillar Phenomena for the last fifteen years. He has developed and employs unique methods of determining the altitude, precise time/location and other important details of the reports. The inset on the left side of the next page shows two snapshots of Light Pillars observed under different conditions and a brief description concerning each of them.

When hundreds of Light Pillars appeared in the skies above Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on the night of November 19, 2008, I was astonished to learn a Franklin Insti-



On January 7, 2007, an equipment malfunction triggered an emergency flaring at the Dutch manufacturing company of Dow Chemical in Terneuzen. The huge flame that accompanied the excessive gas emission produced this bright reflection at 16,000 ft altitude stirring commotion in different provinces in Belgium and the Netherlands. This photo was taken by Bram DE BUCK, a member of the Philippus Lansbergen Observatory at Middelburg, the Netherlands. The flame itself was many miles away from his location and is visible here as a bright light on the horizon, right beneath the pillar).



When the light sources are close to the observer, the pillar-shaped reflections will appear to converge near the zenith. Unshielded lights created this star-shape pattern in the sky over Ath, Belgium, on November 20, 2006. The brightest pillars were caused by spotlights that illuminate the community's church building. Photo taken by amateur astronomer Joël Bavais

tute (Fels Planetarium) spokesman describe the phenomena as possibly being a Northern Lights display because Aurora Borealis ribbons of light are seldom visible at this latitude. Moreover, the display did not appear in a northerly direction -



Photo taken by David Wei of Plymouth Meeting, PA at exactly 8:36:56 p.m. on November 19, 2008. Massive light pillar displays like these are extremely rare, which explain why they sometimes create a lot of random speculation, not only from laymen but also from scientific quarters.

and one excellent witness, Mr. David Wei of Plymouth Meeting, at a location 13 miles northwest of Philadelphia took several detailed photos of the display in the southeast.

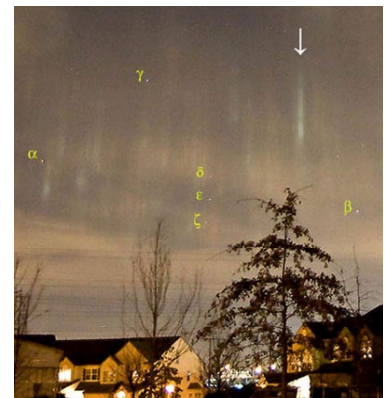
Below is an excerpt from an e-mail Mr. Van Utrecht sent to Mr. Wei with illustrations and explanatory notes. By reading between the lines of the banter, one may obtain a very good idea of how extraordinarily well the case has been investigated and evaluated.

"Dear Dave,

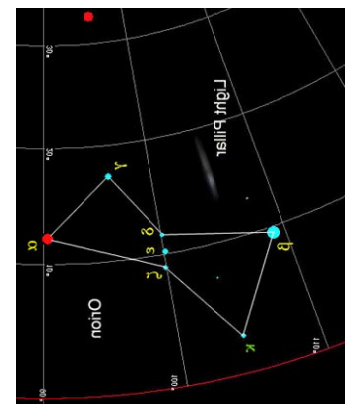
I think I managed to locate the light source of the bright pillar over the small tree. Apparently this (double) reflection was caused by two spotlights bordering the sports field of the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School, just less than 2 miles ESE from where you were standing.

A few images which illustrate this can be seen to the right and on the next page.

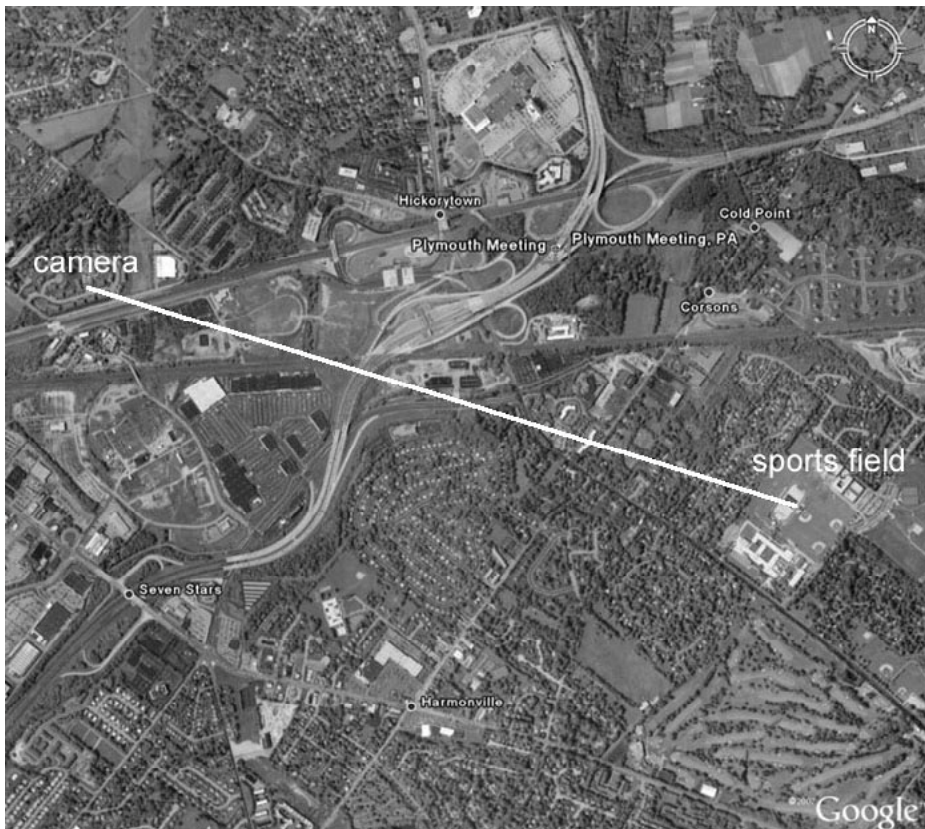
As one can clearly see, this is a definite step forward for serious UFOlogy and the study of atmospherics, especially in regard to some UFO observation reports. Light Pillars are now a part of my UFO study method thanks to a very bright and inquisitive man from Antwerp who dared to seek and establish reliable and completely verifiable answers on the UFO enigma.



A close-up from the photo you took at 8:36:56, showing the tree with the light pillar we're interested in (arrow) together with six of the stars that form the Orion constellation



This sky map shows a part of the southeastern quadrant of the sky with the positions of the brighter stars at the time the photo was taken. This was helpful in finding the elevation (15 degrees) and azimuth (106 degrees, calculated from N over E) of the brightest part of the double pillar. **(Editor note: I reversed the image to match with the star positions, which is why the writing is reversed)**



A Google Earth map with a line indicating the direction of the pillar.



A closer view of the sports field and the two spotlights which I believe were responsible for the reflection. The distance to these spotlights is 1.84 miles. This would implicate that, in order to produce a reflection under an angle of 15 degrees, the reflective ice-crystal layer should have been 1,301 feet above the ground.

Profile of Wim van Utrecht

Born in Turnhout, Belgium, in 1959.

Studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. Currently employed as a secretary at a lawyer's office.

Started off at the young age of 14 as a "field investigator" for the Studiegroep voor Progressieve Wetenschappen/ Groupement pour l'Etude des Sciences d'Avant-Garde.

Headed the Studiegroep voor Vreemde Luchtverschijnselen and edited the group's journal (SVL Tijdschrift) from 1982 till 1987.

Initiated CAELESTIA in 1994 and launched the project's web site in 2007.

Co-author with Frits Van der Veldt of Unidentified Aerial Object photographed near Zwischbergen, Switzerland, on July 26, 1975 (CAELESTIA, 1995).

Contributor to various UFO magazines and books, including International UFO Reporter (J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO studies), UFO 1947-1997 (John Brown Publishing, 1997) and Ronald D. Story's Encyclopedia of Extraterrestrial Encounters (New American Library, 2001).

Special areas of interest within the UFO/UAP field: photographic evidence and identified case reports.

Areas of interest besides UFOs/UAPs: fine arts, especially painting and photography.

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Website: <http://www.caelestia.be>

In Praise Of Bunk

Peter Brookesmith

The snorting, snarling guerrilla war between ‘debunkers’ (more aptly called ‘deniers’ or, to distinguish them more certainly from artisans of hosiery, ‘disbelievers’) and True Believers in almost everything ufological continues today with as much energy, zest and expenditure of ammunition as it displayed 50 years ago. Certainly nothing has changed since I published a long analysis of the nature of the conflict in 2001,^[1] except that the protagonists have got older.

If, as has been argued by various commentators on various occasions, True Belief is by definition a self-referring quasi-religious condition, then ipso facto, in its nature as faith, it is impervious to logical disputation. Some True Believers are impervious even to facts, or strategically avoid mentioning or addressing awkward ones.^[2] It seems fair to regard their position as immovable, if not immutable: UFOs and their ancillary experiences are plastic phenomena,^[3] and they have tended to become more elaborate over time. Claims that, three decades ago, Allen Hynek would have rejected as fantastical have been absorbed into the mainstream. This reinforces the perception that ufological True Belief is self-referring and unamenable to considering a possible other case for its fundamental assumptions. The bedrock of these, both among the majority of ‘serious ufologists’ and the people at large, remains that UFO and their occupants are from outer space. Alternative hypotheses entertained by True Belief involve yet more, and more exotic, entities (in the Occamist sense), as in trans-dimensional travel, ‘ultraterrestrials’, &c.

Debunkers, and their close cousins skeptics, on the other hand, are in theory expert exponents of the reasoned Socratic discourse, the objective investigation and the impartial conclusion. Some don’t quite live up to this lofty ideal, although the half-bemused but fully-charged sarcasm that they direct, often with some glee, at True Belief is surely forgivable among those long exposed to the strange and fragile nature of the claims

they choose to address. I’ve always presumed (perhaps accurately) that even the most poison-tongued of debunkers did not start out, at least, as crusaders against human unreason – and ergo as candidates for the intercession of St Jude. But rather that they began their engagement with this slightly mystifying subject as genuine skeptics: intrigued by details of a claim, doubting the efficacy of the extra-terrestrial hypothesis and other yet weirder ideas, but wondering, like the denizens of Damon Runyon’s Broadway, “What is going on?”

“More than somewhat,” is the response I would hope for, but in practice this is rarely what one gets. Not that what one gets is in itself dull. It is surely interesting, and often fascinating, to contemplate both the development of rafts of legendry around, for instance, crashed-saucer stories such as ‘Aztec’, ‘Roswell’, ‘Kecksburg’, ‘Berwyn Mountain’, and ‘Rendlesham’, and compare these with the results of various investigators’ assiduous efforts to discover what really happened – which usually turns out to be prosaic, if not always that simple when it comes to chance concatenations of events.^[4] Having satisfied themselves that most of the ends are tied up and reasonably explained, the debunkers then decamp to the next midden that needs turning over. The believers continue believing. Of course, wherever possible, they will ever after try to rip bits of flesh from the debunkers’ case, and in so doing develop a whole line of invective of their own; or, as in the case of Robert Young’s disassembly of the original ‘Kecksburg’ story,^[5] simply ignore it (presumably on the grounds that the deconstruction occurred before the legend’s resuscitation, and has largely been forgotten). Essentially the structure of such exchanges is adversarial. But there is no recognized judge or jury in these disputes, so the general state of affairs has come to resemble a feud. This way sterility lies.

By definition True Believers are immovable in their faith. Skeptics and debunk-

ers on the other hand can claim at least a knoll of moral ground in their dedication to reasoning within the limits of what is known – even if that is always provisional. If anyone is going to change the terms of the existing non-debate, and thereby extend its compass, it will be skeptics and debunkers who do so, since (in theory) their a priori interest in ‘what is going on’ and their commitment to a spirit of enquiry gives them, and not the other lot, the flexibility to do so.

The classic locus for the kind of further investigation and informed speculation in ufology that I have in mind, until recently, was Magonia (although thankfully its achievement still haunts us on the web).^[6] The founders have been at this kind of thing for 40 years and not surprisingly feel they have nothing further to say; they’re written out. But Magonia represents a critical habit that shouldn’t be forgotten and left to wither on some dusty vine.

Debunking, in the best and proper sense of the word, remains essential to the exercise. There is no point in looking round of the corners of, for example, the Rendlesham imbroglio without having a powerful handle on the nature of Geiger counters, the position of various marine lights, and – surprisingly enough – English constitutional arrangements, forestry management and Suffolk wildlife, among many other things.^[7] With such Marmite soldiers lined up – even if not always in as smart a squad as one might like – one has, with luck and perseverance, the answer to the skeptics’ first question: how do these legends come about? At this point the debunkers bunk off, whereas I (who have, after all, done a bit of debunking in my time) and many others to whom I’ve spoken lately, are still left gnawing grumpily at the next question: Why?

That is when and where I sing in praise of bunk. The reasons why people believe weird things are infinite, in their particulars, but most revealing in their general applications. The bunk is the key to otherwise secret mythologies. And these you can explore from the comfort of your own armchair!

None of this would vastly increase the appeal of the skeptical brigade over the essentially emotional (and reactive) ap-

peal of True Belief. But it would make skepticism a more variegated, exploratory pursuit than its current antagonistic tendency allows, and add to the gaiety of nations. True Believers maintain that skeptics and debunkers talk only to themselves in any case, and that may well be true. If so, they may as well stop looking over their shoulders, drop some of their misplaced puritanical righteousness, and have some fun.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Peter Brookesmith, "War of the Words", published in two parts, Fortean Times July & August 2001

2 See for example the extremely uncharacteristic silence emanating from the direction of Stanton T. Friedman on the ruinous effect of the Hipparcos satellite data on the 'Fish star model' that once seemed to give some credence to the 'star map' Betty Hill recalled seeing while aboard a UFO in 1961. Invitations to comment issued by Martin Shough on UFO UpDates in August 2008 have so far elicited no response from Friedman. See also Brett Holman, "Goodbye, Zeta Reticuli", Fortean Times 242 (Nov 2008)

3 See Martin S Kottmeyer, "A Plastic Phenomenon", REALL News Vol 6 No 2 (Feb 1998)

4 See for instance Andy Roberts's dissection of the Berwyn Mountain, Wales, UFO 'crash' claims at www.uk-ufo.org/con-dign/berwart.htm

5 See Robert Young, "Old-Solved Mysteries: The Kecksburg Incident", Skeptical Inquirer Vol 15 No 3 (Spring 1991), pp281-5

6 Magonia, edited by John Rimmer, became a focus for ufologists interested in a 'psycho-social' interpretation of 'contemporary vision and belief'. The print edition ceased publication with issue 99 in April 2009. Articles and reviews from the magazine are being archived at <http://magonia.haaan.com>

7 See the collection of articles by various hands in The Skeptic (UK), Vol 17 Nos 2-3, Summer and Autumn 2004 (double issue)

Arizona balloon UFOs

In mid-May UFO reports came in from the lower southwest by the dozens. It was photographed by some and Arizona television managed to record it on video. It looked like a small lightbulb hanging in the evening sky. Some of the witness descriptions indicated a diamond shape while others felt it was an upside down triangle. One witness in the NUFORC database stated it was squid-shaped. Those that saw it during the day, described it as a clear sphere hovering in the sky. Was this a UFO? Yes, because nobody could readily identify it. By the end of the day, the source had been located. It was a NASA research balloon launched from New Mexico. It eventually came down near Kingman, Arizona.

A recovery team picked up the instrument package on the side of a hill. In a few years, the NASA recovery team story will have them accompanied by soldiers armed with M-16s, who threatened innocent children and motorists. Who knows? Maybe in fifty years, Kingman will have it's annual UFO festival in May! Start making your plans now.

About a week later, the Space data corporation in Chandler, Arizona sparked more UFO reports when they launched about twenty balloons that were seen by various people in Arizona. The balloons were airborne cell phone relay stations and they are released regularly. On this

occasion, the company had released more than one and it drew everyone's attention skyward.

NASA once again spiked UFO reports in Arizona on June 11th and 12th with the launch of their EBEX balloon. MUFON's reporting site received seven reports by June 13th. Some thought it might be a balloon but they doubted it was because it was "out of the ordinary". Only one report clearly stated it was a balloon of some kind and he explained the sighting to his nephew using the internet. The other reports gave the same descriptions of "diamond-shaped" or "triangular". There even was a "cross-shaped" description. The payload landed southwest of Kingman and involved a recovery team as well. The crashed Kingman UFO myth will be a best seller in a few decades because it involved two crashed UFOs.

One of the witnesses was complaining about the "research balloon" explanation. According to them, animals were being affected by the UFO! That individual suspected that NASA was not telling the truth. Meanwhile, "Ye olde UFO store" in Sedona was requesting a "thorough" investigation into these balloons. They also seemed confused about how balloons reflect the light of the setting sun. One can only assume that MUFON will come to the obvious conclusion that these UFOs ARE balloons launched by NASA. One wonders if these investigators will be called (gasp) debunkers?



Amateur astronomer Jeremy Perez of Flagstaff, Arizona took this photograph of the June 11-12th UFO/Balloon using an 8-inch telescope. The wide field view shows the star-like nature of the object on June 12th. Thanks to Jeremy for the use of his image. You can find more at his website: <http://www.perezmedia.net/beltofvenus/>

E-mails to the editor

UFO Hunters

I just read your piece in the Sunlite about the show UFO Hunters on History channel and let me say I am in agreement for the most part. This show is laughable at best and does a huge disservice to us real UFO Hunters. Bill Birnes need to be hoisted on his own pitard(whatever that means) for what he is doing. Or better yet tarred and feathered(I know what that means)in a public place. The man is clown and should be on a comedy show not the History channel which apparently doesn't care about it's own reputation. The UFO Hunters is a joke and should be scrapped. Can we real UFO investigators ever live this down?

—Keith

Editor: Personally, I would love to see them replace their "skeptic" with somebody like Dr. Plait. It would be like a SCI-FI movie event, "The Bad astronomer vs. Bill Birnes". Of course that isn't going to happen. Sigh...I could only wish.

A criticism?

If I have a criticism, it's one I've felt building about ufological skepticism in general for some time, so it's probably premature to level it at SUNlite now. -- But it is that, while exposing the nonsense of both particular and general claims -- and the claimants -- is useful and interesting, there's more that skeptics could do to look behind the claims and examine how and why they come about. To which you might well respond: "Well, get going on a contribution, then." So I suppose I will have to now. Hmmm.

—The Duke



Editor: The Duke writes and delivers. See his article in this issue! I see where you are coming from and changing one's attitude/approach towards these things is often difficult. Maybe we can work together to make that happen.

ETH

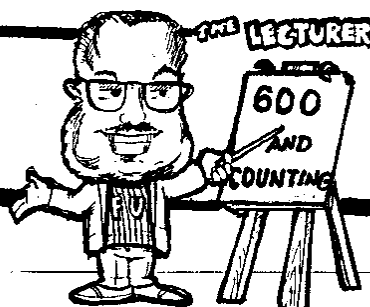
It is good that there is a new e-zine with a critical perspective on the UFO phenomenon. It is unfortunate that the scoop of the contributions in the first issue was quite narrow. There was, I think, too much focus on the ETH. I have no problem with providing arguments against the ETH, on the contrary. But focusing on the ETH gives, at least in my opinion, the impression that SUNlite's approach of the UFO phenomenon is an oversimplification.... I hope that in the next issue it will be clear that SUNlite has an open mind (in the sense intended

by Allan Hendry) and that SUNlite is not an e-zine for the sole purpose of preaching for its own glory. In short, I expect more articles on solved remarkable observations in the tradition of Philip Klass.

—Werner

Editor: I guess one gets very wrapped up in the ETH because it is the explanation most preferred by UFO proponents. While most of this issue continues to concentrate on the ETH, I will attempt to see if we can move forward and attempt to examine other claims. I also plan on some more detailed examinations of other cases in the future.

SEVERAL TOP SCIENTISTS AND ABDUCTEES HAVE LEFT THEIR CAREERS TO BECOME FULL-TIME SAUCER EXPERTS AND LECTURERS.



- MANY CRASHES
- MANY COVER UPS
- MANY LECTURES TOO!

Cartoon courtesy of Matt Graeber

21st Century UFOlogy: A challenge to skeptical thought

Matt Graeber

In the first edition of "SUNLITE" I contributed an article titled "The Illusionists", within that brief piece I offered some thoughts on how deplorably the Pro-UFO camp has performed as an investigative body over the past six decades.

However, that six decade long failure is not limited to the UFO camp of the saucer crash believers and so-called abductologists. The skeptics have also displayed short-comings with their tattered and time-worn explanations, guesstimates and well-reasoned assumptions on the UFO situation (which are often based upon optical flukes, psychology, general sciences and an assumed pandemic of a UFO malaise of some sort.) But, skeptics have failed to keep themselves current on cases, and although they persistently proclaim it is not their responsibility to resolve each and every case that comes along, they still expect to achieve dominance of authority concerning the phenomenon in the eyes and minds of the general public - while pointing to the fact the pro-UFO camp has not proven a single case. Thus, the time-worn arguments may have become ineffective and unconvincing in the minds of the general population.

Just use your search engine and compare the number of pro-UFO sites to those dedicated to skeptical thought on the enigma. You will discover the many samplings are not equal in number. I feel this disparity is linked directly to the passion of belief behind the postings, not, intellectual pursuit of the phenomenon.

I fully realize the UFO proponents haven't proven a single case to the satisfaction of the skeptical and scientific communities. But, they have made their case to the satisfaction, endearment and embrace of a substantial number of peoples around the world. They have done so with the ever-increasing number of sighting reports, etc.- which they present as "Evidence." - Thus, skeptics have failed in their quest for hegemony in the saucer world primarily because they do not offer excitement, mystery, exceptionalism,

entertainment or, a sense of awe in folks with their more intellectual explanations and ideas. Skeptics are perceived as being somewhat unimaginative, snobish, egg-headed and elitists.

In fact, the pro-UFO camp is far more progressive in the eyes of the common man, the entertainment media and the expanding throng of saucer aficionados. While skeptics are seen as being negative, ideologues, uniformly non-progressive and rather dull... Skepticism is uniquely blissful to skeptics, not the common man.

Engaging the saucer proponents in endless intellectual debate steeped in known physical and human behavioral sciences has proven to be completely ineffective from the saucer believers point of view, and somewhat short-sighted from the frequent alien visitations proponents' viewpoint. True UFO believer's see UFOs as the confounders of our physical laws, and a new concept of global politics and communion with our cosmic brothers. They truly believers in an assortment of government cover-ups concerning saucer crashes and the discovery of little alien cadavers in the desert of the southwest.

The skeptics tend to ridicule and point out the obvious flaws in such beliefs, yet, the beliefs persist and attract more and more individuals. Thus, the skeptical camp MUST approach these combined cultural mind-set from a more dynamic, humanistic and all-inclusive point of view. The methods of twentieth century skepticism are in need of drastic revision and expansion. Without attempting to understand the believer and accept his or her position as those of a person of some substance, importance and value, we may be doomed to continued fruitless debate and failed results.

Belief is a very powerful part of the human living experience. The attempted extinguishing of belief by intellectually accented argument and persuasion are not adequate as a substitute for the stirring of the human imagination and the anticipations of the soul. This is the dawn of an age of unbridled compassion, the blindfold is off the eyes of justice, the statistical norm no longer applies, as it is the 'exception' to the rule which makes statis-

tics necessary in the first place.

The challenges for skeptics are unique, more philosophical than scientific, more emotional than scientific and far more social than scientific. It clearly demonstrates (as the Lorenzens of APRO once said) and I'm paraphrasing and revising a bit here... When the emotional problems of UFOlogy have been resolved, the phenomenon may then, give way to science."

If you have any progressive ideas on how the above strategy might be accomplished (without abandoning critical evaluation and common sense principals) the author would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

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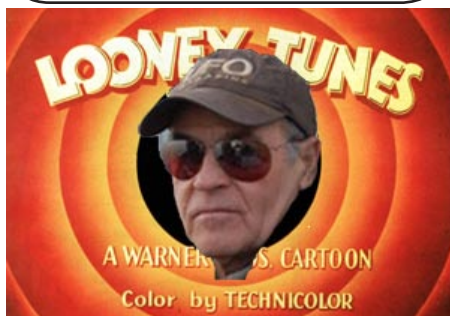
About the author: Matt Graeber is a retired commercial artist and once directed a pro-UFO Report and Information Center in Philadelphia, (UFORIC 1972-1980.) He has written for several U&IFO publications both here and abroad and is known to move about in both camps on the phenomenon.

Whatever happened to...

1. The proposal for passive radar development in detecting UFOs? In 2004, Peter Davenport revealed his proposal at a MUFON symposium in Denver, to research and establish a passive radar network to detect UFOs. Some proponents seemed excited about the idea in 2004. Five years later, I have yet to see any UFO organizations investing money in the development of this technology. Another one of UFOlogy's projects that went nowhere fast.

2. The UFO Research Coalition? It was my impression that it was to combine the efforts of NICAP, NUFORC, CUFOs, MU-FON, FUFOR, and NIDS. This would allow all the great minds of UFOlogy to pool their resources and get some answers. What happened? The website went up in 2003 and one would expect something to be done. The website looks mostly like a cut and paste with the rest being done in about a day. Don't expect the coalition to make any monumental discoveries in the near future. Their "UFO research" page is still "under construction" after six years!

The Bill Birnes show



Last month, I reviewed the UFO Hunters show and pretty much summed it up as a show full of a lot of nonsense. Since then, more shows have aired. I swore I wasn't going to watch anymore but I was bored after the Sunday baseball game and flipped it to an episode where they were discussing unidentified submerged objects (USOs) and they were at AUTEK in the Bahamas! It was called the "underwater area 51". Having been to AUTEK during my Navy career, I was intrigued and curious as to what they were going to say. I was VERY disappointed.

Any US submariner, who was stationed on the east coast knows all about AUTEK. Basically, it is an underwater canyon (called "The Tongue of the Ocean") off of Andros island that has only one deep water entrance. The Navy has placed all sorts of underwater sensors and buoys in the channel so they can monitor the position and noise signatures of the submarines in the area while they conduct various exercises. While I was stationed on one submarine, we spent a great deal of time in the area conducting various exercises with other subs and helicopters. For non-submariners, there is a nice description of AUTEK on line at the Global Security website. With that knowledge let's examine what the UFO Hunters declared AUTEK to be.

The first thing the show did was present several "former employees" at AUTEK. We are not made too aware of what their responsibilities were but one of them was part of a torpedo retrieval vessel. He sounds like a deck hand or junior enlisted if you ask me. Because he worked at AUTEK, Bill Birnes declares him that he is an expert witness in identifying things in and under the water! A guy running a deep sea fishing boat is just about as qualified IMO.

The next thing the "hunters" did was try and "crash" the gate at the AUTEK base. According to them, public tours were available but you probably have to arrange the tour with the base Public Affairs Officer (PAO). I would be interested in seeing any letters they sent to the base as well as the responses they received. While they were trying to "crash the gate", a Coast Guard helicopter came by and landed on the base. Bill Birnes and the other hunters "retreated" in mock terror fearing that the Coast Guard might hurt them. Is it any surprise that Coast Guard helicopters operate in the Bahamas? I would not be surprised if UFO hunters did not wait until the helicopter showed up to stage this little stunt.

The "hunters" dove on a cable going into the deep water channel. I was shocked! There are cables running underwater into an area that has all sorts of sound microphones and sensors used to detect and monitor submarines? I guess they figure those watching their show are stupid.

As if this is not enough, we presented with confirmation of all these tales about USOs through REMOTE VIEWING! Joe McMoneagle tells us how he remote viewed these USOs and their alien pilots. Joe adds that he can not confirm or deny anything because he is sworn to secrecy. It was quite the "performance" and deserves an emmy or an oscar.

The next lunacy we are exposed to is an interview with UFO guru, Maximilien de Lafayette. Mr. Max tells us:

1. AUTEK is a nest for contacting aliens
2. Between September 17 and 22, 1958, the government held a secret meeting with the aliens. Because of this meeting, the US received alien technology and build AUTEK. In return the US Government would not interfere with the UFOs.
3. AUTEK is built on top of Atlantis, uses alien technology, and is a gateway between multiple universes! Wow! I thought the stargate was in Cheyenne Mountain.

Not one shred of evidence is presented to support these claims but they are presented as if they are facts! Of course,

Uncle Max told us he could not give his sources because he would mysteriously disappear if he did. Yeah.....right.....

As if to test my credulity further, we are presented with a pilot who "time traveled" when flying from the Bahamas to West Palm Beach. According to the pilot, it took much less time than he normally takes to complete the trip. Calculations put him at an average speed of over 300 mph to do it in that time. We are not presented with any flight logs of when he left and arrived. We are just told to accept it. I was convinced.....NOT!

One other item that was completely misrepresented was their description about the restrictions of airspace near AUTEK. Gee....with all those military helicopters and P-3 Orions conducting tracking exercises on submarines in the channel, one would think they might need to have some operating areas to do this. The map shown demonstrated the operating areas were not overly large and there was plenty of airspace for civilian traffic. Talk about making a mountain out of a mole-hill.

Needless to say, I could not stop laughing. It is bad enough that Bill Birnes was taken in by a crude hoax but he keeps peddling this nonsense. There is a petition on-line these days for "UFO hunters" to be renewed for a fourth season. I would not be surprised that it was started by Bill or his close friends. I can only hope that the History channel comes to its senses. Maybe the "skeptologists" will replace it. I can only hope.....



The Stupid, It Burns

UFOs on the tube

UFOs in the 1970s

I was watching the History channel recently and stumbled across this UFO show. After a few minutes my interest was peaked and I began to watch the show hoping to learn something new. However, as the show progressed, I became very disappointed.

The first half of the show highlighted most of what Ted Phillips has done over the years. The Delphos case was rehashed and we were supposedly astonished by the fact the dirt from the site was still waterproof. Since it was sealed in bottles, I am not sure why I am supposed to be astonished. The chemical properties should remain the same which is why it was sealed to begin with. The supposed source of the soil being this way was because the soil had been treated with fulvic acid! Where did the fulvic acid come from? We are led to believe that it was from the UFO. However, the fulvic acid is common in fertilizers or from composting (where microbes create it while feeding on the decaying plants). This was not mentioned and I am not sure why the UFO would leave fulvic acid on the ground.

Further cases were presented with "mysterious" causes that I found less than compelling. About midway through the program, Phillips states something that I found amusing, "*We are dealing with a device under the control of something intelligent.*" He goes on to say this is based on what they do and how they navigate into a landing site. The "device under intelligent control" is standard UFO lingo for "alien spaceship" without saying "alien spaceship". It makes the UFOlogist sound "scientific". Call it what you want Ted but an alien spaceship by any other name is still an alien spaceship.

At least this part of the program was semi-intelligent and did present evidence. Unfortunately, the evidence was presented in a manner that you draw only one conclusion. They should have spent the entire show on the Delphos case actually conducting some real independent analysis. This is something I would expect from a serious science program. Un-

fortunately, the History Channel was not interested in real science.

The second half of the show really was awful. The UFO foot doctor, Roger Leir, removed a metallic object out of a potential abductee's arm. The metal fragment is presented as something exotic but we only hear Leir's commentary. I would like to hear a second opinion. Leir claims that there are metals in these fragments that do not come from this earth. What a monumental discovery! Why are they being presented on the History channel and not some scientific journal? Perhaps, because he is exaggerating his claims? Whenever Leir starts talking about removing fragments, I just remember how NOVA offered to test any fragments supposedly recovered from abductees. Not one item was presented for testing. Where are these items he removes being tested? Why haven't the results been published in credited journals? There is nothing because it is all smoke and mirrors.

We were next presented with a crashed saucer case. Ruben Uriarte tells us about how the UFO was tracked by the US military. We are led to believe that a UFO crashed in Mexico by colliding with a private civilian aircraft. While transporting the recovered debris, all the Mexican soldiers died (apparently due to exposure to an alien organism). Fortunately, the US was standing by to seize the UFO from the dead Mexican soldiers. It is all based on rumor and wild stories. There is no documentation presented and there was nothing to demonstrate one iota of this was true. Once I saw Ryan Wood, I knew it was a bunch of nonsense anyway.

The last part of the show had to do with the infamous New Zealand UFOs in 1978. I think the NOVA program, UFOs: Are we alone, pretty much shot this down.

Some of the UFO cases are well presented and others are not. The first half of the show was not too bad for a UFO program. The second half was too far-fetched. The show might be worth watching for the first thirty minutes but you can turn it off after that.

Book Reviews

Buy it! (No UFO library should do without it)

The UFOs that never were - Jenny Randles, Andy Roberts, and David Clarke

This is a superb book with lots of information. Not only does it devote the book to several major cases, it also addresses some other key UFO events in some short insets. The thing that caught my eye was Jenny Randles piece on "Rendlesham". Jenny was a big proponent for the Rendlesham case for many years. It took a great deal of personal integrity and fortitude to change her stance on the case. It is not often that UFO proponents do this sort of thing. This book is well worth the money.

Borrow it. (Worth checking out of library or borrowing from a friend)

The UFO Enigma - Peter Sutrock

This is an informative book with lots of specifics surrounding several cases. The conclusions of Sutrock are flawed in my opinion but the panel made it known that they were not overly impressed with the data presented by UFOlogy's best and brightest. It is interesting to note that some of the cornerstone cases of UFOlogy were missing from the presentation. What does that say for those cases?

Bin it! (Not worth the paper it is written upon - send to recycle bin)

The truth about the UFO crash at Roswell - Kevin Randle and Donald Schmitt

It was my opinion this book was bad when I first read it back in 1997. Looking at it now, I think it is even worse. I wonder aloud if there really is a person named "Grandma Lucky"? That in itself should have set off alarm bells.

While the first book was interesting, this one accepted too many far-fetched stories. A lot of the major witnesses (Kaufmann, Ragsdale, Dennis) were shown to be lying within ten years of this book being published. That pretty much states that this book has little to do with "truth" and sends this one to the bin.