

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

No single object has been misinterpreted as a “Flying Saucer” more often than the planet Venus.

Jacques Vallee

The show keeps rolling along

Well, I guess I was wrong an issue ago when I suggested that the Nitinol-Roswell story was dead when the first progress report made no mention of Roswell research. "Never say die" and historical revisionist Anthony Bragalia has released a new tome telling everyone that it is a lock that Nitinol was created because of Roswell. Like a broken record, he pretty much repeats himself with the same old tired mantra. I originally thought it might be a good idea to just comment briefly in the Roswell Corner but after reading the article a few more times, I just could not resist pointing out all the exaggerations, misrepresentations, and completely incorrect statements made by Mr. Bragalia. He could not even get my name correct (Hint: my name is Tim and not Tom). So, feel free to see how Bragalia's little house of cards collapses in my article starting on page 17.

Because of the late release of last issue, this has been a short period for me to get a newsletter out. As a result, the number of articles is less than I would like. I have to admit that I have been a little lazy enjoying the summer weather and performing astronomical observations/photography. The Perseid meteor shower was something of a dud for me as the weather was not good. Nothing is more disappointing than staying up late hoping for the sky to clear! Probably the most interesting thing my meteor camera recorded

was a nice near point meteor in Cygnus on August 13th (about 10PM). Another amateur astronomer was puzzled by it and reported it on the local astronomy club mailing list. After sharing the video clip, everyone seemed satisfied. Thanks to my video system, I was able to help him identify his unknown.

On the other side of the pond, Dr. David Clarke described more MOD UFO files being released. These are always interesting and, as expected, no smoking guns were revealed. Everybody likes to cheer about "disclosure" but, so far, there has been nothing unusual found in any of these thousands of documents. All of these government documents seem to indicate they have no idea what produces UFO reports other than simple misperceptions. However, they always seem to conclude that these UFOs are not a threat and that there is no good evidence that indicates alien spaceships are visiting earth.

In other "news", Kentaro Mori revealed that somebody has come forward describing how the Trindade UFO model may have been constructed! I could not resist and took a whack at the "model" to see how it might look. There is an article on page 13.

Ian Ridpath and I have been communicating about Rendlesham as it seems to

Front: Image of Venus and aircraft approaching for a landing. Which one is Venus? The one above the buildings was the plane but if Venus were lower, it would have been tougher to tell.

have been making news again. I think his website is very informative as was the now defunct James Easton site. I sent me a little article about some recent news regarding the fireball that may have started it all. It is not spectacular news and it is based on old memories. Assuming it is an accurate recollection of that night it does seem to confirm the theory that a bright fireball precipitated the beginning of the sightings in the forest. His brief article is on page 22.

On a personal note, I would like to report having a clandestine dinner with a fellow skeptic under the supervision of a government official, who made sure the discussion did not go too far into UFOs. Over some nice New England seafood, we managed to discuss various personalities in UFOlogy and I learned a few things about others I had contact with in the past. Overall, it was a pleasant evening of skeptical conversation where we planned to undermine UFOlogy. I can hear UFO proponents already whining, "Skeptics, Debunkers, and Pelicanists..... oh my!"

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I managed to enjoy an airshow on the 29th of August. Plenty of fun with static displays and acrobatics. As usual, I had one of my cameras out shooting lots of images. My wife took this one. We did not see any UFOs. I guess that only happens in Mexico.



The Maury Island UFO case seemed to be on several individual's minds. James Carrion put it on his "UFO bucket list". Meanwhile, Anthony Bragalia felt he had exposed the case as a hoax. Kevin Randle took note that it has been considered a hoax by many people prior to this (including the USAF) so Bragalia's posting really was not news at all. I am not sure why people even discuss this case any more. Randle seemed to be frustrated that people are not aware of it being a hoax. Duh... this is UFOlogy, where no case can ever be explained. People still believe that Mantell did not chase a skyhook balloon.

Anthony Sanchez describes the secret UFO base at Dulce.

The cover image states "truth is empowerment". I mentioned last month that using the word "truth" usually does not necessarily involve the "truth" but a person's version of what they think is "true". The same can be said here. I seriously can not accept this story any more than I could accept all the other ridiculous stories (like Richard Theilmann) that crop up. It is just not credible. To top it off, the "interview" was only part of the story. To read the rest of it, the author suggests you buy his book. Ahhh.....the bottom line seems to be money after all.

David Clarke discussed his efforts to release all the UFO files regarding Nick Pope.

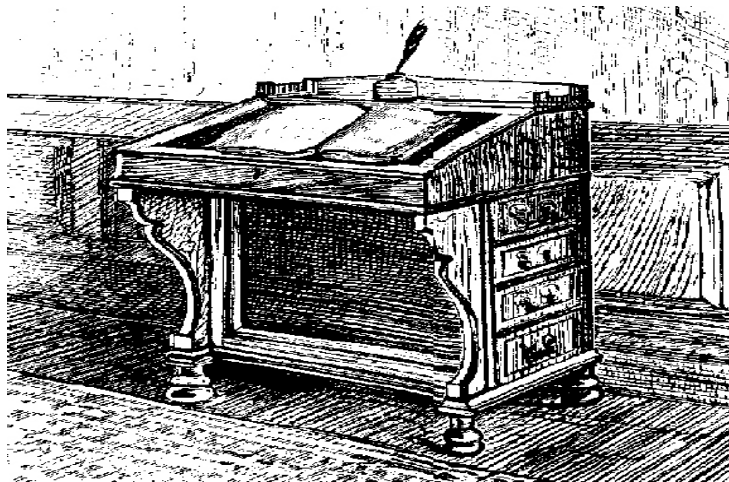
Pope, who proclaims he wants all UFO materials released, has stepped in and claimed that his privacy would be interfered with. It almost looks like Pope does not want any damaging material being released about how people viewed his performance while working for the MOD. Pope appears to be operating under a double standard.

Dr. Clarke's blog also announced the release of more MOD files on August 1st.

They were quite informative and the discussion about how fighter aircraft interception attempts against UFOs was most informative. Before the cold war ended, there were hundreds of attempts to intercept UFOs (most turned out to be Soviet aircraft probing NATO defenses) but after 1991, the RAF seemed to be uninterested in pursuing UFOs with fighter craft. Another item of inter-

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



est was the Berwyn mountains crash, which had been explained as a meteor some time ago. There also appeared to be a great amount of frustration by the MOD regarding Nick Pope (which is why Dr. Clarke was interested in those papers previously mentioned). Nick Pope's effort to elevate his position to the public as a major player at the MOD's UFO desk, created some frustration with his successor. His successor referred to his position as that of a "junior management grade". I guess that says it all.

Not happy with Dr. Clarke's comments about Rendlesham (among other things), Robert Hastings wrote a nasty entry on the UFO Chronicles blog.

Apparently, Hastings made a comment on a UFO discussion list in the UK. According to Hastings, it was never posted because he was being censored. The list's administrator, Joe McGonagle, stated that it was rejected because Hastings refused to follow list protocols. McGonagle noted that Hastings had the tendency to distort the facts regarding this problem (Hmm...Robert Hastings distorting facts is something I have never heard of before). Dr. David Clarke would then respond to Hastings comments. I think he made some valid points about Hastings' research and the Rendlesham case.

Hastings would fire back with the usual attitude he presents to anybody who questions his knowledge. He states that Colonel Halt explained it all. Hmm...one has to wonder how the stories compare to the stories told in 1980. The standard answer is that these individuals (including Halt) lied about the events that night in their statements. Meanwhile, Halt withheld any information about potential problems with the nuclear weapons from his superiors. Does this sound about right?

Roger Marsh, the UFO examiner, declared he saw his second UFO!

He proclaimed it was one of those exotic "green fireballs". It sounds like an ordinary fireball to me. Marsh was even more excited when somebody else reported seeing his UFO. That doesn't sound like a big deal if it was just

a normal fireball meteor. Looking at the American meteor Society's fireball log for 2010, several observers also saw the same meteor but they saw no need to file a UFO report because they knew what they saw was just an ordinary fireball. To call this a "genuine" UFO demonstrates an inability to differentiate between ordinary celestial/atmospheric phenomena and something truly "unknown". Last month, I quoted Hendry regarding the UFO examiner's blog entries. It bears repeating again:

...for a field that is composed of individuals who profess to be intrigued by aerial anomalies, there is a widespread ignorance about even the most basic characteristics of sources like meteors, ad planes, and balloons.

Marsh then added another post where he described how to plan a UFO sky watch.

He proclaims that there is evidence that these UFOs are "intelligently controlled" and that eventually science will accept the exotic nature of UFOs based solely on statistics. Well, if 60 years of statistics have not allowed UFOs to be acknowledged by science, I am not sure what another 60 years of the same statistics are going to prove. Mr. Marsh also wants everyone to bring cameras and tripods to these UFO sky watches. Not

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

once does Mr. Marsh ask those planning these watches to invite amateur astronomers or do some research about the night sky. Perhaps this is why he thought an ordinary fireball was a UFO. Ignorance of what exists in the sky is one of the reasons that UFO reports are filed. I guess the UFO examiner wants everyone to remain ignorant and pad his statistics with erroneous UFO reports of stars, satellites, meteors, and other mundane events.

Mirroring his desire to UFO sky watches was Jana Louise Smit. Again, there is no mention of bringing an evening sky chart or a list of all satellite passes from "Heaven's above". It is another case of people, who are not familiar with the night sky encouraging people to go out and report just about anything as a UFO. Not only is it bad science, it clogs the UFO reporting system up with IFOs.

I gave a description last issue of SUNlite (SUNlite 2-4 page 25) on how to make UFO observations that can produce data that can be analyzed. I suggest those planning these sky watches take my advice on this matter. Maybe Mr. Marsh should read SUNlite or, at least, take a basic astronomy course.

Paul Kimball laments UFOlogy's mediocrity in his blog. He says there are no new ideas and no new investigations. That is true. However, I take exception with his description of "self-proclaimed" skeptics offering little to the mix. It is not up to the skeptics to present evidence or ideas. It is up to the proponent to provide the evidence and the skeptics to examine it for validity. The evidence UFOlogy presents continues to be poor and I see nothing but excuses being made for the lack of results. In the last issue of SUNlite, I even described a program that could be done to obtain good evidence. *NOTE: Kimball deleted this post from his blog so the link no longer works.*

Colin Bennet wrote the second part of his "Child brides from outer space" series at the Reality uncovered blog. This is another take on the bizarre group of individuals involved with "exopolitics". I am just curious why those "leaders" in UFOlogy don't put an end to this kind of

nonsense. Instead they choose to ignore it, hoping it will go away.

MUFON's new director, Clifford Clift, made some rather interesting comments at the recent Denver MUFON conference. He implied that by studying UFOs and how they propel themselves, one could develop free energy. Does he really believe that "free energy" is possible and you can get something for nothing? After 60 years of studying UFO reports, you would think we would have "free energy" by now.

Michael Shermer produced a video showing how it is possible to create hoax UFO photographs. Most of it involved suspending models on string and throwing objects through the air. The results were fairly convincing and one could not see the suspension line in one photograph using a computer. Not bad for a bunch of kids playing around with models and some simple cameras. I noticed they did not employ a double-exposure technique. Oh well, Ed Walters has that market covered anyway.

Joe Capp complained about the comments by somebody, who claims he was from Snowflake, Arizona and that everybody there knows the Travis Walton story was a hoax. I compare this individuals comments to those UFO "Witnesses" who make various claims without any substance to back them up. I really saw nothing in this commentary that was new or provided real evidence to indicate it was a hoax. Some comment made by a vague individual on a youtube video is not very convincing stuff. I am just as skeptical of this person's claims as I am of Walton's. However, I find it most interesting that Capp is only skeptical of the testimony that contradicts his personal belief system but is willing to accept Walton's story.

The Magonia bloggers decided to post a poll on what their readers thought of the Alien Autopsy film. Last issue, I mentioned Kevin Randle's frustration with some of his readers, who thought there was something authentic about the film. The Magonia sample was smaller (47 vs. 540) but there was only one person who

stated they thought the film might have some authenticity to it. The problem is that there are readers (as well as some writers) of these blogs that just "want to believe" and only display skepticism towards potential explanations. As a result, there is a significant minority that is going to blindly believe in the Alien Autopsy film (and other items) no matter what evidence is put forward. This poll demonstrates that this "minority" is not reading the Magonia blog and their readers tend to be more critical thinkers.

Kevin Randle put up another poll on his blog on what people think UFO reports are. I did not like his selection of potential explanations. I voted (only once) for "misidentified earthly objects". I don't like that selection but it best fits my opinion. Stars and planets are not "earthly objects". He did allow selection of multiple answers (although I did not like any of the other answers including alien spaceships) but I think he should have added another category indicating how many people gave multiple answers. After all if you are going to put down "alien spaceships", why not select "interdimensional travelers" as well. The both have the same amount of evidence.

Kentaro Mori had an excellent article about the "Brazilian X-files". Apparently, Brazilian UFO groups were trumpeting a recent press release by the Air Force as some form of new revelations that UFOs were being taken seriously. According to Mori, the announcement only noted that any UFO reports received would go to the national archives since there was no effort or organization in the AF to investigate them. I doubt the records hold anything significant. They are only mirroring what UFO groups have done since 1947 and that is collect UFO reports like hobbyists collect butterflies, coins, stamps, etc.

Reality uncovered took up the Malmstrom case, hoping Robert Hastings would "come clean" about some of his claims made regarding James Carlson and Walt Figel. So far, Hastings refuses to comment. You have to wonder why. I think the evidence so far presented indicates Hastings has a problem with revealing **everything** he learns in his interviews and tends to omit important details.

The Roswell Corner

Change is good....isn't it?

Dennis Balthaser claims there needs to be a change in leadership at Roswell's UFO museum. Apparently, Julie Shuster (who is Walter Haut's daughter) is a control freak and had a problem with the city's celebration plans. Balthaser wants a house cleaning but really has no say on the matter. It appears that Shuster could care less what Balthaser has to say about this. Anything this controversial probably involves large sums of money.

Texas fishing

James Carrion had some interesting commentary and information regarding the travels of the head of the Army Air Force, General Carl Spaatz in July 1947. The public news record puts Spaatz in Tacoma, Washington on the 7th and then arriving in Corpus Christi, Texas for a fishing trip on the evening of the 10th. Carrion ponders where the General was during the interim, when the Roswell story broke. If you believe all the Roswell stories, Spaatz would have known about the incident long before July 7th so he would have cancelled all of his public appearances and returned to Washington (or possibly Roswell) to supervise the greatest event that ever happened. Instead, he just continued business as usual. Now Carrion seems to think that Spaatz was hidden away between the 8th and 9th during the controversy. Perhaps he went to Wright field or some other location. I think it is far more likely that Spaatz was enjoying some time off and taking a leisure trip around the country in his B-17 with occasional stops. After all, according to Carrion, he only flew from near San Antonio on the 10th. Why didn't he fly from Fort Worth or Roswell?

Fort Worth photography

Kevin Randle brought up some issues regarding the number of photographers at Fort Worth taking photographs of the debris. Ron Regehr stated that a

study was done that showed the photographs were taken with a different camera lens, which implied a third photographer (James Bond Johnson and, apparently, the base Public Information Officer being the other two). David Rudiak argued that the study did not account for the photographer repositioning himself. The end result of the exchange was that the study appeared to draw an invalid conclusion. I am sure James Bond Johnson would have been happy to hear that his legacy was still intact.

Trying to crash an alien spaceship

Anthony Bragalia discussed all the variables that could have caused the UFO to crash at Roswell. His article's title indicated he knew "how" it happened. However, he just examines all sorts of possibilities and offers no proof of "how" it occurred. As always, he is just performing speculation based on the Roswell mythology. Besides some sort of super secret ray gun (which there is no proof of existing), he also ponders more conventional explanations. Two of them have become part of Roswell folklore but are they accurate? Since nobody else seems to be interested in fact-checking his articles, I guess I should.

The first is that a thunderstorm made the UFO crash. This has been the standard UFO mantra since the original story surfaced back in the 1970s. Are we supposed to believe that a craft that can outmaneuver any conventional aircraft and navigate the interstellar void can not withstand a simple thunderstorm? Apollo 12 survived a lightning strike during its liftoff to the moon. Why can't an advanced alien spaceship do the same?

Mr. Bragalia claims he has evidence that there were thunderstorms in the Foster Ranch area in early July (Specifically the

dates of July 2nd and 4th). Unfortunately, the Albuquerque Journal's weather observations do not cover the Foster Ranch area. The nearest observations are for Carrizozo and Roswell. Both stations do not record any rainfall for the time period of 2-4 July, 1947. The best you get is the time period ending on the evening of the 1st showing a "trace" of rain for both stations. Weather maps from the time period (see next page) also indicate there was little thunderstorm activity in New Mexico. This does not mean that no thunderstorm could have occurred. However, it does indicate there is no evidence to support Bragalia's claim (He never presents any weather data). You can not state that a thunderstorm DID occur unless you have proof, which has yet to be done.

The other item Bragalia presents is that the radar could have affected the UFO. I am unaware of radar ever causing any aircraft to crash or affect any electronics in an aircraft. Even the most powerful radar beams are incapable of doing this (otherwise there would be an effort to develop radar as a weapon). To state that some really primitive low power radar sets available in the 1940s would be able to influence the flight of a supposed advanced technology spacecraft is quite the assumption. Maybe he is taking a hint from the movie, "Earth Vs. The Flying Saucers", where an electronic device is used to attack the saucer's propulsion systems.



In his "theory" regarding Radar stations, Mr. Bragalia states there was a secretive

Weather Report

Weather report for the 24 hours ending at 6 p. m. Tuesday furnished by the U. S. Weather Bureau Station at the Municipal Airport.

General Data
Observations for 24 hours ending 5:30 p. m. local time.
Precipitation is the amount of rain or melted snow in inches and hundredths.

Station	Temp	High	Low	Rain	Weather
NEW MEXICO					
Albuquerque	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Carrizozo	87	86	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Clayton	81	81	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Crownpoint	80	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Engle	70	66	24	0.24	Rain
Farmington	81	81	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Las Vegas	80	77	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Mosconito	82	81	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Otto	81	81	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Raton	86	86	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Rodeo	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Roswell	70	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Santa Fe	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Tucuman	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy

Weather Report

Weather report for the 24 hours ending at 6 p. m. Wednesday furnished by the U. S. Weather Bureau Station at the Municipal Airport.

General Data
Observations for 24 hours ending 5:30 p. m. local time.
Precipitation is the amount of rain or melted snow in inches and hundredths.

Station	Temp	High	Low	Rain	Weather
NEW MEXICO					
Albuquerque	80	82	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Carrizozo	81	84	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Clayton	87	87	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Crownpoint	84	87	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Engle	80	83	77	0.02	Clear
Farmington	87	84	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Las Vegas	85	84	77	0.02	Cloudy
Mogollon	82	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Otto	87	87	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Raton	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Rodeo	78	86	77	0.01	Clear
Roswell	82	85	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Santa Fe	82	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Tucuman	82	85	77	0.01	Pt Clwy

Weather Report

Weather report for the 24 hours ending at 6 p. m. Thursday furnished by the U. S. Weather Bureau Station at the Municipal Airport.

General Data
Observations for 24 hours ending 5:30 p. m. local time.
Precipitation is the amount of rain or melted snow in inches and hundredths.

Station	Temp	High	Low	Rain	Weather
NEW MEXICO					
Albuquerque	84	85	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Carrizozo	80	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Clayton	82	82	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Crownpoint	82	87	77	0.02	Cloudy
Engle	84	84	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Farmington	80	82	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Las Vegas	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Mogollon	84	86	77	0.02	Rain
Otto	85	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Raton	81	81	77	0.01	Cloudy
Rodeo	84	88	77	0.01	Cloudy
Roswell	84	88	77	0.01	Clear
Santa Fe	80	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Tucuman	82	81	77	0.01	Pt Clwy

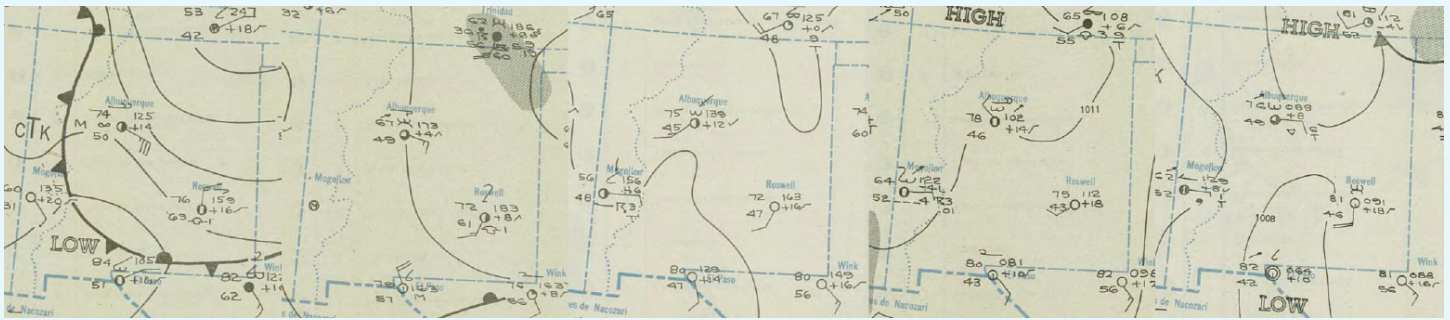
Weather Report

Weather report for the 24 hours ending at 6 p. m. Friday furnished by the U. S. Weather Bureau Station at the Municipal Airport.

General Data
Observations for 24 hours ending 5:30 p. m. local time.
Precipitation is the amount of rain or melted snow in inches and hundredths.

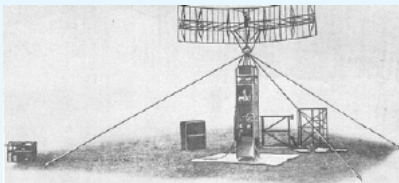
Station	Temp	High	Low	Rain	Weather
NEW MEXICO					
Albuquerque	87	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Carrizozo	84	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Clayton	82	81	77	0.01	Cloudy
Crownpoint	84	87	77	0.01	Rain
Engle	84	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Farmington	80	82	77	0.01	Clear
Las Vegas	88	88	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Mogollon	84	86	77	0.02	Rain
Otto	85	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Raton	81	81	77	0.01	Cloudy
Rodeo	84	88	77	0.01	Cloudy
Roswell	84	88	77	0.01	Clear
Santa Fe	80	80	77	0.01	Pt Clwy
Tucuman	82	81	77	0.01	Pt Clwy

The Albuquerque journal weather observations in the July 2-5 editions. These show the weather for July 1-4. Only on July 1st is there a "trace" of rain listed near the Foster Ranch



More weather charts showing the weather maps at 0130 EST on (From left to right) July 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. There is no indication of any violent thunderstorm activity in central New Mexico during this time period. (NOAA)

radar network located in New Mexico in 1947. The real facts are that Radar stations were few and far between in the United States during the late 1940s. According to Naval Historian, David F. Winkler, an array of air defense radars were only in the planning stage in July of 1947. He states that at the end of 1947, Air defense command only operated two radars (Arlington, Washington and Half-moon bay, California) in the entire United States! Winkler's research also notes that there were no **permanent** radar stations (beyond what was in use at White Sands for V-2 launches/MOGUL) in the entire state of New Mexico until 1949! The 636th AC&W squadron did establish temporary radar stations (with AN/TPS-1B sets) at Roswell and Kirtland as early as 1948 but the actual permanent stations did not get established until 1949-1950.



This AN/TPS-1B portable radar set was deployed to Kirtland and Roswell in late 1948 and appears to be the first radar stations established in New Mexico outside of the White Sands radar.

This is a list Winkler provides of all the radar sites that were permanent air defense radar installations for New Mexico and when they became operational:

Radar site	Year operational
Kirtland/West Mesa	1949
Los Alamos/El vido/Tierra Amarillo	1950
Walker/Roswell	1950
Moriarity	1952
Gonzales/Continental divide	1952
Las Cruces	1955
Gallup	1963
Silver City/Cliff	1972

None of the radar sites Bragalia lists were even close to the Foster Ranch, where the UFO supposedly met its demise and it appears that they were not operational in 1947. There is no indication that any of these sites were classified in the manner he describes (i.e. secretive locations where locals were paid off or told not to discuss them).

As a side note, the station he refers to as "the continental divide" was called Gonzales Air Force Station and was not operational until 1952. The land was not even purchased by the USAF until 1950!

SITE NAME: Continental Divide Air Force Station
LOCATION: Thoreau, New Mexico
DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM: The site consists of 131.53 acres of land, currently owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and contains six buildings and five electrical transformers that have been removed from poles and are currently stored outside.
SITE HISTORY: The land was acquired by the Air Force in 1950 and used as a radar surveillance station until 1962. Land improvements excessed to GSA in 1963 and transferred to Forest Service. The Forest Service used facilities



Continental Divide/Gonzales Air Force Station's 769th AC&W squadron patch

This article is just another example of Bragalia trying to present speculation as some sort of fact.



The air defense command radar network in June of 1948. Notice the lack of radars in New Mexico. (From "Searching the skies: The legacy of the United States cold war defense radar program" by David F. Winkler).

The China UFO story

On July 8th of this year, the Beijing news service reported the following:

An unidentified flying object disrupted air traffic over Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province, late Wednesday, the municipal government said Thursday.

Xiaoshan Airport was closed after the UFO was detected at around 9 p.m. and some flights were rerouted to airports in Ningbo and Wuxi cities, said an airport spokesman.

The airport had resumed operations and more details would be revealed after an investigation, he said.¹

This press release set off a flurry of activity on the internet. Various news services and discussion groups began to present images of the UFO as well as distorted retellings of what happened. The story had the potential for becoming a major UFO event that deserved monitoring.

The story grows

Following this release, more information came forth that made the UFO much more interesting for UFOlogists. For instance, there was the claim that it had been recorded on radar.

According to a story that first appeared in Zhejiang Online, the UFO showed up on the airport's radar a little past 8:30pm. Suddenly, airport personnel saw a "shining light" in the air, later confirmed by passengers that were flying at the time. Though airport spokesmen said the UFO was only visible to radars at the airport, several people around Hangzhou said they witnessed "a glowing object hovering in the afternoon sky and moving weirdly." One man managed to snap a picture of it before it suddenly disappeared.²

There was also the report that it was suspected that the UFO had some form of military connection.

As quickly as the report of radar contact appeared, it was later contradicted by follow-up news reports:

A staff member at Xiaoshan Airport in Hangzhou said a twinkling object was first spotted over the city's sky around 8:30 pm on Wednesday. However, the object did not show up on the airport's radar.³

Who first sighted the UFO is in question. In some of the stories, it was "airport personnel" and in other stories it was the pilots in an airplane:

A flight crew preparing for descent first detected the object around 8:40 p.m. and notified the air traffic control department. Aviation authorities responded within minutes, grounding outbound flights and diverting inbound ones to airports in Ningbo and Wuxi.⁴

Finally, a video surfaced where news reporters talked to Ruan Zhouchang, the spokesperson for the airport. The video stated:

Airport staff say the first reports of the UFO came in just after 8 PM from both air traffic controllers and civilians....Ruan Zhoucheng said there were few eyewitnesses because the incident occurred at night. When most staff members were not present and passengers were in the waiting hall.⁵

The spokesperson, Ruan Zhoucheng, stated through an interpreter:

I heard that some of the passengers whose flights just landed saw the object which appeared as glowing light[s]. It was not a normal civil aviation flight. What it actually was, no one knows.⁶

The photographs

As discussion groups batted this story about, it became clear that the photographs and videos being released were either years old or were not of the UFO being reported. One video clip was of the Russian Progress rocket launch on June 30th. Meanwhile, many of the still images showed what appeared to be aircraft in time exposures. This was noted in the last issue of SUNlite and in Kentaro Mori's article on the matter in his blog "Forge-tomori". However, there was one still image that supposedly showed the UFO that evening (see below) but it looked very much like an airplane contrail over the airport in the evening. The time of the event was 2040 China standard time, which was at the end of astronomical twilight (Note: China does not observe Daylight saving time). This means it was a dark sky so the photograph could not have been taken at 2040. This meant that there were no known photographs of the actual UFO that closed down the airport.

The facts as I see them

The basic facts of the case seemed to be:

1. There was no radar contact
2. The UFO was sighted visually by several individuals, which included Air Traffic Controllers, pilots, and passengers. However, not everyone seemed to notice it.
3. The UFO was just a light in the sky that was visible between 8:30-8:40 PM local time and disappeared less than an hour later.

As reported in the last issue of SUNlite,



One of the supposed photographs of the UFO that shut down the airport. It appears to be a contrail



Google Earth image of the airport with north being up.

James Oberg noted it was possible that Venus may have been the cause of the event and it can match the facts as described in the media. Oberg noted that a 2001 event in Siberia, where pilots refused to take off because of a UFO at the end of the runway, had been probably caused by Venus. As a result, one needed to see if Venus might have played a role.

The only specific time given for when the UFO was sighted was 8:40 PM CST. The airport closed between 8:45 and 9:41 PM so this indicates the 8:40 PM time was probably accurate. At 8:40PM, Venus was roughly at an azimuth of 281 degrees (WNW) and an elevation of about 9 degrees according to Orion's "The Sky" program. It set around 9:30 PM CST, which is only a short time before the airport reopened for business. So, we satisfy some criteria that Venus may have been involved. It was visible in the sky that night, it was bright, and it set/disappeared before the airport gave the "all clear" to resume flight operations.

I found weather data for the night in question at "Weather underground". These observations indicated a clear sky most of the afternoon, which turned to "partly cloudy" at 7:30PM. There was one "mist" observation at 8:00 PM but the rest of the time period until 11:00 PM was listed as "partly cloudy".

In addition to sky conditions, there was also a listing of wind direction. The wind that evening was predominantly from the East. This meant that aircraft taking off and landing at the airport would probably be using the runway pointed in

that general direction.

The Xiaoshan airport runway, as seen in Google Earth, is aligned in a WSW to ENE configuration. This meant that flights would be landing and taking off pointed towards the ENE.

I also used Flight aware one Wednesday morning (China is twelve hours ahead of EDT) to monitor the major

air traffic patterns heading to and from the airport. Most of the air traffic was involved in flying to and from Hong Kong (to the southwest) and Beijing (to the north).

Does Venus "fit"?

Well, that is a tough question since what we know about the sighting is vague at best. If it were pilots who first sighted the UFO during landing, it seems unlikely because the air traffic and winds indicated most flights were heading towards the northeast or south approaching the airport. This does not eliminate Venus but it tends to reduce that possibility IF it were reported by pilots in a landing pattern that pointed to the east. However, it is possible that a plane might be in orbit over the airport or maneuvering into the landing pattern that pointed it westwards. There is that possibility for an aircraft coming from the north or northeast to have to turn towards the west to get into the landing pattern. We do not really know without more information.

The other facts indicate Venus is in play as a potential explanation. It was visible at the times indicated. It was not an overcast sky and it was apparently clear enough for stars to appear. Most important is Venus appears as a bright light in the sky and has been mistaken for a landing aircraft by experienced air traffic con-



Venus at twilight is ending in late July. Similar conditions existed just before the events of early July in China

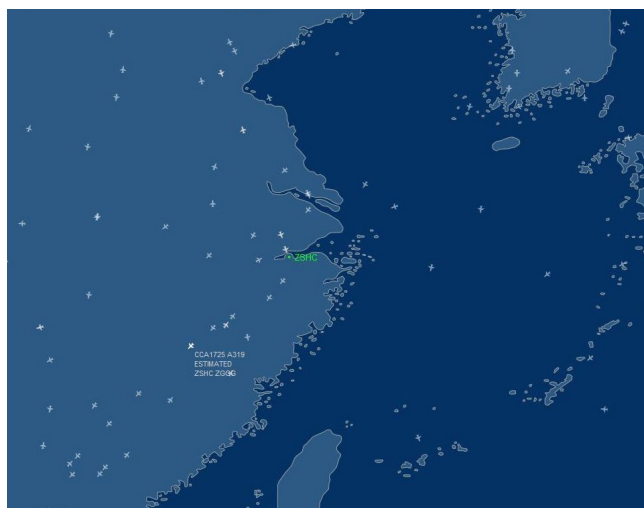
trollers before. Allan Hendry wrote in his UFO Investigator's Handbook:

My favorite comment, however, was provided by the FAA at Detroit Metropolitan Airport: "Do you know how many times we have cleared Venus to land?"

The potential for pilots, police officers, and other "trained observers" to make errors have been noted in the past. Just because somebody is trained as an expert in one profession does not mean they are an expert in everything else. Dr. J. Allen Hynek noted this when he discussed the failure rate of pilots to recognize IFOs:

*"What we have here is a good example of a well-known psychological fact: "transference" of skill and experience does not usually take place. That is, an expert in one field does not necessarily "transfer" his competence to another one"*⁸

This all indicates that Venus is a possible explanation based on previous case histories.



Air activity around Xiaoshan airport (ZSHC) at 2030 on Wednesday 21 July, 2010 (two weeks after the date of the UFO). Aircraft enroute to or departing from the airport is shown by the bright white aircraft. The pale aircraft are those enroute to or departing from other airports.

Venus Denied!

At this point one can consider the possibility that Venus is a plausible explanation that should be explored further. However, it seemed to be scorned by some UFOlogists/UFO proponents.

The best way to figure out how some UFOlogists think is to read the UFO Updates mailing list. Instead of carefully weighing what Oberg had to say, some on this list, which is supposed to represent the idea of objective/scientific UFO research, just blindly lashed out. I found it amusing that Robert Powell would state that Oberg was offering explanations without any thought even though he hypocritically made the statement that Venus was "least likely" with no explanation why. Based on his venomous remarks made towards Oberg (calling him "pompous" and "dogmatic"), Powell seemed to be rejecting Venus simply because he does not like Oberg. UFO Chronicles host Frank Warren mirrored Powells thoughts stating he felt there was only a small chance that the UFO could be Venus. Like Powell, he did not explain.⁹

Considering the lack of information regarding the event, I am not sure how they could refer to Venus as an "unlikely" explanation. It is almost as if they have not done any research at all on the case or lacked any understanding of case histories involving the planet Venus.

Last month's IFO University article on stars and planets demonstrated that such thinking is invalid and unscientific. Perhaps Powell, Warren and the others should do some reading on the subject of UFO investigations and how Venus can fool just about anyone. I might suggest they start with Allan Hendry's UFO Investigators handbook!

I saw similar responses by UFO proponents back in 2004 during the Mexican FLIR video, when it was suggested these UFO images were oil well fires. The same dismissive and closed-minded attitude was displayed back then in favor of the more fantastic idea that these blobs were exotic craft and operated intelligently. Of course, nothing could have been further from the truth and it was pretty well demonstrated the objects in the video were oil well fires. Those individuals were

wrong back in 2004 for being dismissive of the oil well fire explanation and these individuals might be wrong in 2010 in regards to Venus.

Until more data is available (i.e. direction the UFO was seen), then Venus remains a perfectly valid explanation to consider. As I noted, it has some flaws but there is nothing so far that conclusively eliminates it on the list of possibilities.

Chinese UFO groups

Chinese UFO groups from Shanghai and Beijing performed an investigation that may, or may not have involved, aviation officials. About three weeks after the initial news report, they released their findings:

According to the investigation, related departments said that radar did not detect any rumored UFOs, and the crews of two flights discovered the UFO. Furthermore, the aviation authorities have yet to publish any UFO photo or video information, and the photos and videos used by news reports or being spread online have no direct relationship with the UFO in the Xiaoshan airport.

As for the UFO in the Xiaoshan airport that caused flights to either be delayed or land in nearby airports, the investigation team believes that first, the UFO event possibly resulted from the activities of private or military aircraft because the airport radar also has "blind spots." Second, as the acquired information is limited and the photos taken near the airport area have already been considered to be an aircraft, there has been no evidence to show any relationship between the UFO in the Xiaoshan airport and an extraterrestrial flying saucer.¹⁰

This really did not resolve anything. Prior to this statement being released, it was already known that all the photographs were bogus and had nothing to do with the event. The comment that the airport radar has "blind spots" is interesting but that is not really anything new. Radar is not perfect and it is possible for low flying aircraft to avoid detection or large structures to create blind spots where aircraft might not be detected. The only thing this statement made was confirm that the UFO was never detected by ra-

dar. Of course, if the UFO was Venus, then it would not appear on any radar scope.

Private aircraft

On August 16, Time magazine writer, ChengCheng Jiang offered the private airplane explanation as to the cause of the airport shutdown. Apparently, private pilots in China tend not to file flight plans because of the bureaucracy and money involved. They feel the fine for not filing a plan is worth the risk. This explanation is plausible and worth considering since we still have very few details of the sighting.

Conclusions

There really is not enough information to draw any conclusions or eliminate any potential explanation (such as Venus, civilian aircraft, military experiment/craft, etc.). I tend to lean towards the Venus explanation as most likely because it can be seen as a bright light and appear to be approaching the airport. It would also have been obvious to observers compared to a small civilian or military craft flying with minimal lighting. I only favor this explanation but could easily shift my allegiance if better information becomes available. The one thing I think I can state with confidence is that there has been no evidence yet presented that indicates something "alien" or "unknown to science" caused the incident.

Notes and references

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9. One can find the quotes by Powell and Warren at <http://ufoupdateslist.com/2010/jul/m20-012.shtml> and <http://ufoupdateslist.com/2010/jul/m20-016.shtml>. I originally gave a selected quote to allow these individuals to speak for themselves but UFO updates posts a warning not to use their posts without the moderator's and poster's permission. While, I think this "warning" violates the idea of "fair use", I will honor their desire for privacy/concerns of copyright violation even though it is a public web site.
10. "Investigation: UFO seen in Xiaoshan airport is aircraft". July 26, 2010. Available WWW: <http://english.people-daily.com.cn/90001/90782/7080675.html>

Perseid meteors vs UFO report results

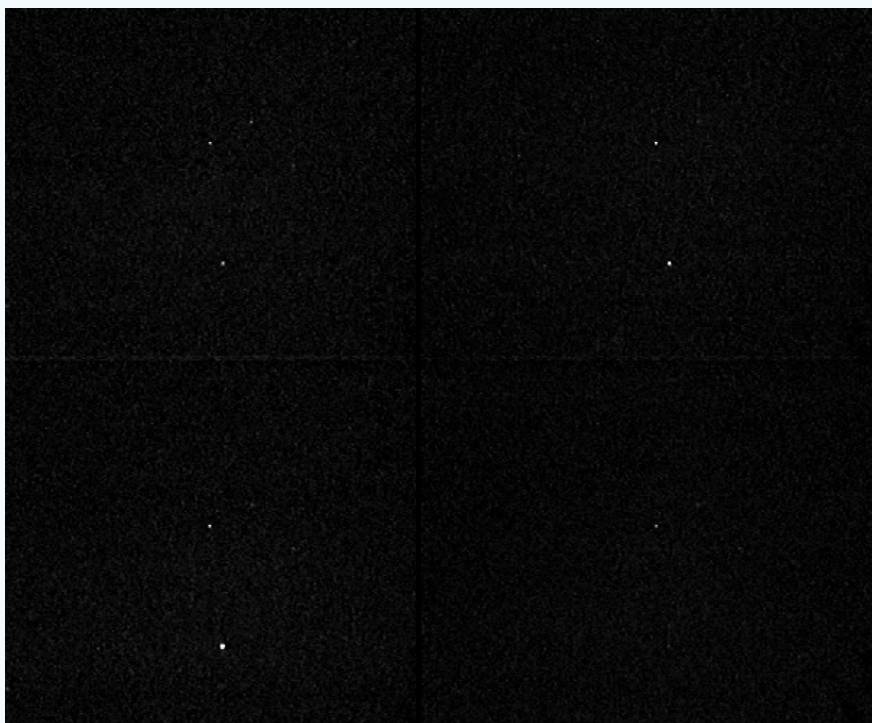
Last issue, I mentioned I would keep an eye on the MUFON reports to see if the Perseid meteor shower would produce UFO reports. I was also going to use the National UFO reporting center (NUFORC) but it had not been updated at the time of this writing. So, I did a quick sampling of the MUFON database for UFO reports between August 10-15. At the time I sampled on August 21, I counted 31 individual reports (32 total but one was a follow up on the previous report). Out of these, 13 had the potential for fireballs/meteor sources (40%). Breaking these thirteen down I noted the following:

1. Two reports described seeing several UFOs that appeared just like meteors. (Note: one of these reports had the witnesses describing meteors but also mention a faint object doing "figure eights", which is, assuming it is an accurate observation, not a meteor).
2. Four reports had probable matches with the American Meteor Society's (AMS) fireball table for 2010. Two of these were tentative matches because the witnesses seems to have grossly misperceived the event. The other two seemed to be reasonable

matches

3. One report sounded like Jupiter and a meteor was seen coming from the same area of the sky.
4. One report had the witness describing what could be meteors or satellites. Witness said they were too slow to be meteors but meteors can appear as "slow".
5. Four reports sounded like fireballs but were not in the AMS table. Considering the small number of observers in the AMS database, this is not that unusual.
6. One report could have been the same meteor as identified in the AMS table (by two separate observers) but the witness' description of the time duration appeared to rule it out.

The end result here is that there seemed to be an indication that the Perseid meteor shower (as well as the others active about the same time) does have an effect on the number of UFO reports being filed. Certainly the shower produces more meteors/fireballs, which witnesses can confuse as UFOs.



Four frames showing a near point meteor that was about -2 on August 13th. It was not a Perseid. The bright star above the meteor is Deneb in the constellation of Cygnus (note: the original video is available at <http://home.comcast.net/~tprinty/Astronomy/pointmeteor.wmv>. I cut down on the electronic noise in these frame grabs so all the stars in the video are not visible.)

Twenty-First Century UFOlogy No. VII* - Reflections on UFOlogy past

Matthew Graeber edited by Ray Palm

The story we are about to embark upon is like to an old sailing ship floating in calm foggy waters. While it may make a few creaking sounds from time-to-time and take on a wee bit of water, the vessel will not founder, as it is safely piloted throughout this UFOlogical waters.

The Captain can offer no promise of treasure for the adventurers who have come aboard. However, the voyage will be enlightening and factual. The seas are of 1973 through 2001 vintage (often tranquil and warm), for those of you who care about such details. But the story itself is timeless among UFO legends of the past (Does it deserve to be?). The old salts of saucerdom still excitedly yak about it as they gently sway in their hammocks down below in the bowels of the good ship "UFOria."

Some years ago I received a phone call from my dear friend Karl Pflock and during that conversation (which was punctuated by pithy jokes and Karl's infectious laughter) Karl asked my opinion on the famous Betty and Barney Hill Case of 1961. I had read quite a bit on the incident and was totally unconvinced of its reality. However, Karl felt it was genuine and accurately reported by the New Hampshire couple. In fact, he felt it may have been the last time aliens had visited earth and abducted people. I did not know it at the time but, Karl was involved with a plan to visit the scene of the Hill abduction and stay at a nearby resort lodge with a number of other UFOlogists (of both proponent and skeptical persuasions) to re-examine the entire story. During their visit they would even be guided to the actual site of the incident by Betty Hill herself.

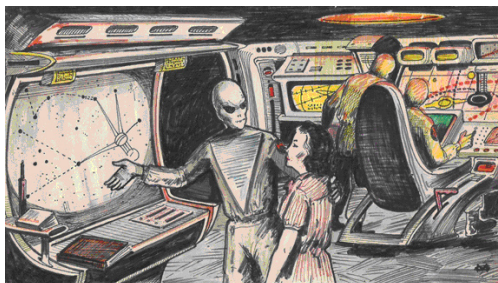
They would later write a book of diverse opinions on the Hill abduction ("Encounters at Indian Head"). The project was funded by wealthy UFO proponent

Joe Firmage. Karl had several pokers in the publishing fires at the time and we seldom discussed his private business matters. But, I do know Karl loved to work with other writers and this time the British UFOlogist Peter Brookesmith was his fine co-editor. The book published by "Anomalist" was a real nostalgic treat for me as it echoed many memories of UFOlogy past. Although I must admit, Mr. Martin Kottmeyer -- who was not actually present at the lodge in New Hampshire -- was the most compelling and persuasive contributing writer in my personal estimation.

Karl's beliefs about the reality of Hill case were fueled in part by his acceptance of Marjorie Fish's Star Map. After Fish's research was released to the public, it led to the wide-spread belief the aliens that had abducted the Hills hailed from somewhere within the Zeta Reticuli region of the universe.

During her abduction Betty Hill said the alien captain of the saucer attempted to explain where the earth was positioned as he showed the array of stars on a map (which featured solid and broken lines connecting the stars). The entire map looked like a pull-down, roll-up screen of some kind.

After details of the abduction became public, Marjorie Fish, a second grade school teacher, studied the Star Map which Betty drew from her recovered memory while under hypnosis. Fish was



UFORIC Illustration: Betty Hill being shown the Star Map aboard the saucer by the captain of the craft. This is merely an artist's conception based on a combination of the Hill's testimony and Mr. Snedeker's psychic impressions.

ILLUSTRATION - A



ILLUSTRATION - B

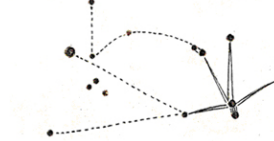


PHOTO PROJECTIONS OF THE STAR MODEL PREPARED BY MARJORIE FISH WITH LINES ADDED TO CONNECT THE BEADS. (A.P.R.O.)

Comparison of Betty Hill's Star Map and Marjorie Fish's Star Map, which Marjorie constructed using a large cardboard box with beads strung within. She optically sought the elusive pattern within a ten light year expanse of the universe as viewed from planet earth. She used astronomy books of the day from a local library but hadn't access to university telescopes or computers. She worked diligently to make her discovery. I believe Marjorie Fish epitomizes what a true UFO researcher should be like. (Remember, Miss Fish's work was completed during the years prior to internet availability for amateur UFO researchers.)

a very bright, methodical and studious researcher. At the time her work was the most compelling in-depth inquiry into the Hill abduction for believers simply because it seemed to add astronomical proof to the highly speculative abduction story. (Proof that it wasn't a hoax.) Moreover, Miss Fish was a member of MENSAs and her story was published in Astronomy Magazine, not some tacky saucer magazine or supermarket tabloid.

Now I am fully-aware there have been a number of computer generated university Star Map models which indicate there are several possible star patterns which may refute Miss Fish's earlier work and, the so-called Hill-Wilson Star Map is currently in vogue in saucerdom. However, I shall focus on Miss Fish's Star Map because I wrote her in early 1973 requesting she explain exactly how she went about her researches. I told Karl about this long-ago correspondence and later sent him a copy of Marjorie's hand-written, eight page, very detailed reply... identified as researches on the Hill Star Map prior to 1972.

The big points of the Marjorie Fish Star Map were:

- One of the stars in the pattern was not visible to the Hills because it was

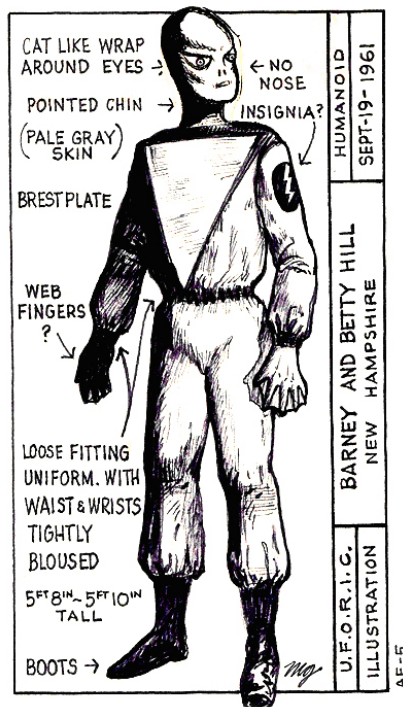
*Ed. Note: I lost track of Matt's article series and last issue I labeled it as part IX. It really was part VI. Matt sends me a lot of articles (for which I am grateful for) and I pick the article I find most appropriate for the issue. I will try and maintain the sequence right as we go along.

well-below the equator at the time of the event in fact, it was not visible to folks living in the north America at all.

- And there was a rather large star which was later thought to be part of a binary star system, not a single star. But perhaps the most compelling part of the Star Map was that one star in the pattern had not yet been discovered by earth's astronomers!
- Adding to the above, the lines connecting the stars which were said to be trade and exploratory routes were perfectly logical in the progression of flight, conservation of fuel and time in travel... In other words it made perfect sense!

Shortly after the news on Miss Fish's work broke in Astronomy Magazine, the startling findings were commented on by Phil Klass and others who wrote very persuasive and sobering pieces on the problems with the Fish Star Map. Mr. Klass was immediately labeled a shameless debunker of the first magnitude... which, knowing Phil, I assume he truly relished! I had written Miss Fish several times after that turn of events but she had moved, leaving no forwarding address. I did not bother to ask Mrs. Hill to help me locate her, feeling Marjorie may have wanted to re-establish her privacy. That is why I sent Karl a copy of her notes years later without attempting to contact her first.

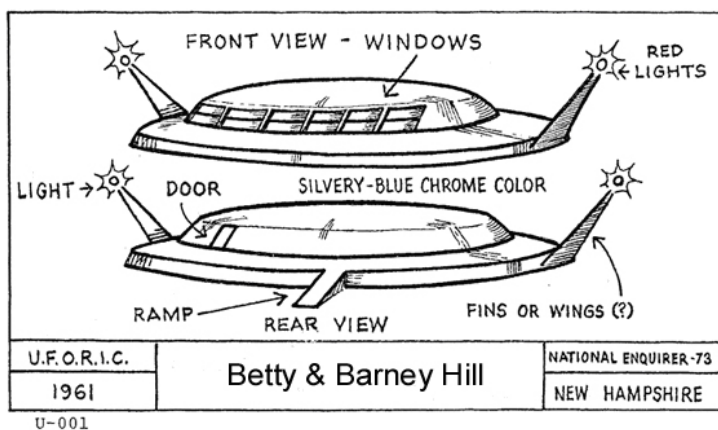
Mr. Arthur Chitouras wrote an article for the National Enquirer concerning psychic named Snedeker who felt he had seen the Hill space ship and alien in his mind's eye. The story "Did psychic 'see' space creatures woman claims she met?"



UFORIC Illustration: The alien as described by Mr. Snedeker in the National Enquirer (1973)

appeared on page 5 of the 9/16/73 issue of the publication. I had noticed it while I was in the checkout line at a Philadelphia supermarket, became intrigued by the sketches of the saucer and aliens. True, they were supposed to be mere psychic impressions of the UFO event but they were quite different in many ways from the Hill's original version of the story.

I wrote the Enquirer and received a reply on 3/29/74 along with many sketches and a thank you letter for my interest in their story. I sent a copy of those sketches to Karl along with several drawings I had created on the Hill case which were used in projection slides at UFORIC. (The above mentioned sketches appear below for 'SUNlite' reader scrutiny.)



UFORIC Illustration: The UFO the Hill's were taken aboard according to Enquirer story.

I recall interviewing Mrs. Hill twice after her husband Barney had passed away, initially speaking to Betty over the phone. I gathered more impressions about her after I spoke with her in person. She seemed to be quite an animated person and perhaps a little nervously constituted too. She was rather loquacious, spoke with a distinct New England accent, had deep lines in her face, smoked and her favorite flavor of ice cream was chocolate. She often dominated a conversation and seemed a bit guarded at times with her responses to questions. But she was friendly and seemed to quickly make herself at home in unfamiliar surroundings.

My first meeting in person with Betty was at the home of Mr. Mort Gale and his gracious wife Maureen in Cinnaminson, New Jersey. Mort was a friend and consultant to UFORIC (UFO Report and Information Center), a small research group based in Philadelphia that I had started. Mort worked with UFORIC researchers Gordon Myers and Kenneth Veach on biorhythm plots in regard to UFO event timing. My initial interview with Mrs. Hill lasted a couple of hours at their home. Mort and Maureen published "The Grapevine" which was a psychic newsletter and they also sponsored paranormal gatherings with speakers such as Uri Geller and Stella Lansing throughout the southern New Jersey area.

In later years Mrs. Hill authored her own UFO book which seemed to be the work of an unhinged mind. Karl felt she no longer was as stable as she was during her abduction of 1961. (I have no idea why he felt that way but that was his belief.) Betty's book featured houses walking on stilts (i.e., disguised UFOs?) and tractor trailers completely vanishing on exit ramps of highways. Also her book described UFOs disrupting railroad crossing signal lights, a statement which was curiously reminiscent of movie scenes in the films "Close Encounters of Third Kind" and "Fire in the Sky."

On one occasion several top UFOlogists of the day were invited to visit with Betty at the site she had prepared for saucer landings, a ring of lights on a hilltop property in New Hampshire. The group came away very disappointed, proclaiming they had not expected anything quite like what they had just experienced.

Of course, that does not prove anything but it may be a serious consideration in the possible sources of Betty's and Barney's memories. Mr. Martin Kottmeyer has pointed out that Betty recalled the aliens involved in her abduction had so-called "Cat-Like Eyes." While an alien with "Wrap-A-Round" eyes had appeared in an episode of the science-fiction TV series, "Outer Limits." Mr. Kottmeyer felt that TV alien had become part of Barney Hill's abduction recollections soon after it was aired. On the other hand, Betty had made no mention of such wrap-a-round eyes.

Moreover, a posted statement on the net concerning a past interview conducted with Betty Hill claims she told the interviewer she expected to make millions from her story just after he had turned off his tape recorder. Apparently, the interviewer revealed this after Betty's death as he no longer felt obligated to keep it in confidence. Hmmm, more to ponder; what might it possibly mean?

If we estimate that only one person in a million is inclined to do something like this, seeking money or publicity from a UFO story, then there must be a sizable number of such individuals out there considering that the U.S. population exceeds 300 million people. Think of the many UFO promoters, celebrities, enthusiasts and the throng of self-appointed experts who have been known to embellish UFO stories.

As is my customary approach to writing a story for 'SUNlite,' I asked a friend (Mary) to look over the draft and offer an opinion on the piece. In this case, I had also asked Mr. Ray Palm to edit the story. Mary (an ex-MUFONite) I have known for many years shared her thoughts on my rather nostalgic memoirs. Here is her response and I think her thoughts may open previously untouched doors on the Hill case.

* * *

Matt,

This is a very interesting re-visiting of an old case. You've put a new spin on things. You corrected a few misconceptions. It's a very good job.

I like that you point out the similarities to motion picture "aliens" and situations

which took place prior to the "abduction". The "false memory" syndrome could very well have been alive and kicking.

Barney Hill referring to the red-headed Irishman seemed very strange to me almost from day one. It told us more about Barney's fears than anything else. There were no red-headed Irishman in that "spaceship"... we both know that. Now, next, was there a spaceship?

There may well have been something, but we may never know for sure what it was -- but I don't think it was "extra-terrestrial".

Betty's "condition" later in life may have been in its earlier stages at the legendary time of the "abduction." Barney may have thought it more conducive to family harmony to join Betty in her pixilated behavior, for all we know.

But maybe Barney had a more "entrepreneurial" side to him and saw this as a way to supplement his postal worker's salary? Who knows? We never will.

I guess it's like a mystery where people keep looking for new clues to solve an old murder.

I do remember when he was interviewed on Merv Griffin's show. Barney sat down beside Merv and took out a pipe and began puffing away and talking... for all the world, he looked like a professor with a captive audience!

You know, Matt, for all these years I've thought that it was Betty who was the leader of that marriage, but, just now writing this about Barney, I think I may have had it wrong.

Maybe it was Barney, using Betty's suggestibility, who really engineered the story. Barney was a man who wanted to raise himself up. He was from Philly, joined the Toast Masters Club... did all the things that he thought would maybe bring him some note and distinction.

Maybe that's why things went south after Barney died? Barney was the real "brains" behind the story. When left to her own devices, Betty went bonkers.

You wrote a good piece of documentation and (if I might use the word) a fun article.

Please send your thoughts on the idea concerning Barney that just popped into my head.

Your friend and fan,

Mary

* * *

In regard to the sketches, please note Mr. Snedeker (the psychic written about in the National Enquirer article) depicts the aliens with webbed fingers like the aquatic creature from the movie "The Black Lagoon." Also, he has them wearing a triangular breast plate which if it were truly a hard metallic item would have made it very painful to sit down during their long journey across the universe -- that is, if the aliens are similar to earth men? Of course, the breast plate may have only appeared solid and one must remember Betty Hill did not mention seeing such an item on the captain's uniform.

But, wait! One UFO blogger describe the aliens as bulbous-headed and bald. Yet the Hills had described one as wearing a hat like a Nazi U-boat commander. Later this alien was described with having black hair and finally as a red-headed Irishman. That latter description is notable because during his youth Barney feared encountering Irishmen, as he had several bad experiences with them during his youth.

Moreover, Barney also was anxious about possibly encountering a hostile and racist motorcycle gang during his travels. He carried a loaded pistol in the trunk of his car. Barney did not grab a tire iron from the car's trunk for protection from the aliens as is widely believed. That was a journalistic 'fix' by the writer of the 1966 book ("Interrupted Journey"), and the same fix was carried over into the made-for-TV movie, "The UFO Incident," starring James Earl Jones and Estelle Parsons, aired in 1975.

Perhaps, far too little attention has been paid to the fact the Hill's compared the appearance of the strange aerial object they had observed through the tress as looking like a grinning "Cheshire Cat" of "Alice in Wonderland" memory. Certainly Betty's later stilt-walking houses are strikingly reminiscent of the walking alien attack machines in H.G. Wells' "War of the

Worlds" sci-fi story and the later fictional movie with a gigantic walking machine ravaging the earth ("Kronos" - 1957.)

As you may already know, we all have both a conscious and subconscious mental arrays of imagery available to us for comparative processes and with associating things. This can come into play when we attempt to better understand ambiguous visual stimuli such as during the sudden observation of an unidentifiable flying object. The subconscious arrays of associations are often analyzed when Rorschach plates are used in psychotherapy. Even World War II criminal Otto "Adolf" Eichmann was so analyzed during his four month trial in Israel in April 1961. He was executed in May of the following year.

Yet, such widely-accepted analysis is generally not a part of UFO researching. But I feel it should be. Not simply to debunk a particular case or, to bring the gleaming saucers down-to-earth a bit. Rather to seek a better understanding of the possible workings of the witnesses mind during their UFO experience.

Surely a subconscious array of associations may have become woven into the fabric of the conscious reports after the UFO is first compared to a kite, a bird, a plane, helicopter or balloon, etc. As those common place comparisons are exhausted and rejected, the witnesses may be influenced by their subconscious array. The point is this process is not an entirely conscious mental function. The combination of conscious prosaic comparisons and the associations springing "autonomously" from the subconscious are completely unknown to the observer(s).

If the subconscious contents are somehow linked to present or, prior reported UFO experiences then we have the problems of false memories and subconscious associations shaping the observers continuing UFO accounts. Not only the subconscious associations of the witnesses but also those of pro-UFO investigators, UFO psychics and UFO writers too. Additionally, we should also consider that some people may simply leap to the conclusion the object they had observed was an alien space craft without performing a comparative mental process at all. As you can see nothing is certain so, how

can a case be deemed "rock solid" or a witness be evaluated as "unquestionably reliable?" One must also allow for the possibility the witness may not be consciously lying or hoaxing but their story could be symptomatic of an early childhood developmental disorder or even a full-blown psychosis.

This sort of speculation will not endear me with many UFO and Hill case enthusiasts. The will-to-believe is very strong and may get in the way of reason, concern, and objectivity. It is a highly emotional issue for many individuals and my speculation may be seen as an assault on their model of reality. For that I must sincerely apologize. The psychological wound I have inflicted upon them was never my intention. But I still desire to know the facts even if I am completely incorrect with this line of thought which has absolutely nothing to do with my personal reality model. It is merely another facet of my UFOlogical learning experience.

Information about the Fish map

Matt's article is missing one key item regarding the Fish map. In the November 2008 issue of Fortean Times, Brett Holman penned the article "Goodbye Zeta Reticuli". On his blog "Airminded", Holman gives a brief summary of his findings:

Except that nobody ever checked Fish's model against new astronomical data gathered over the last three decades, in particular the parallax observations made by the Hipparcos satellite in the early 1990s. When you do this, the Fish interpretation falls to pieces! Using her own assumptions and the new data, six of the fifteen stars chosen by Fish must be excluded, which is no match at all. And that's what my article is about.

Trindade UFO news



Emilia Bittencourt describing the use of spoons to create the model

Kentaro Mori has shared information with me in the past regarding the Trindade UFO case. Some of it is new and some of it is not so new. Most, if not all, is very informative. I have always been under the suspicion that this is a hoax. There seems to be indications of this possibility but no smoking gun has ever surfaced. Mori recently sent me information that presented more information regarding this hoax scenario.

Confession?

Kentaro reports that a television show called "Fantastico", revealed that the case was a hoax. Their source of this revelation is the second hand testimony of Emilia Bittencourt, who stated he used two spoons stuck together and photographed them with the refrigerator as a background. To add to this, Barauna's niece supposedly confirmed this information but she was not recorded. She would later deny this.

As much as I want to believe this kind of information, I am skeptical. Anything second hand is always questionable even if it is information that supports my theory. Still, I decided to go playing with spoons to see if it was at least plausible.

The Model

When I read Mori's e-mail, I decided to toy with two plastic spoons at work. Using a heat gun, some cutters, and glue, I created a nice little model. It sort of looked like the Trindade UFO and made



me consider the possibilities.

However, I discovered it would not be so easy with the common tablespoons I had at home. Regular spoons have their bottoms not at the center of the oval but towards the handle. Additionally, they tend to be curved. As a result, you really can't



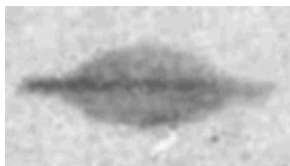
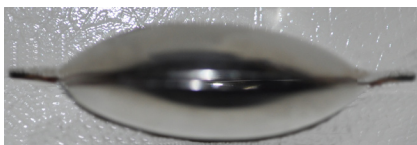
use those ordinary spoons to create the model.

I was only able to do it with the plas-

tic spoons because they did not have this shape and were flatter. So, I looked in our silverware drawer for any other spoons and found some round soup spoons that fit the mold correctly.



However, I would not be allowed to use those because of obvious objections from my wife. As I result I photographed two of these spoons together and photoshopped the handles to make the ends straight and short. I could have spent days running around stores looking for these spoons but felt it was unnecessary for this initial quick experiment. Keep in mind this was a quick and dirty attempt using photoshop. It is not intended to "trick" anybody.



The resultant image is a reasonable facsimile even though the ring is not quite as pronounced. That probably would not be too hard to duplicate with the right kind of spoon. However, just because the spoons sort of look like the Trindade UFO

does not necessarily mean we have the smoking gun of a hoax.

Technique

Quite some time ago, I proposed the idea that what was done at the time of the Trindade photographs was the use of some internal mask in front of the film plane. It was not well received but I felt it could work with a skilled photographer, who planned it out.

The use of a white refrigerator as a background does seem reasonable. White would not reveal any suspension thread as long as the lighting was correct and the thread was the same color as the refrigerator. Beyond that, I am something at a loss for how this might of worked in the internal mask theory.

If you take a photograph of a dark object against a white background, the negative will be white against a black background. That makes it impossible to be used as an internal mask unless it was a positive and the white background was cleared out somehow. This means we have to look elsewhere for a potential method for creating a hoax.

If it was a hoax, we have to assume that Barauna thought it out before hand. Additionally, the hoax had to have taken some time to occur. Despite claims that the UFO was only visible for less than 30 seconds, the cloud information revealed in the photographs suggests a time passage on the order of minutes. This seems to indicate the event was staged and whatever excitement was created during the "sighting" seems to have had little to do with the time the photographs were actually taken.

The story surrounding the photographs was that the negatives were examined shortly after development by various people. However, the size of the UFO would be small on the negative and identifying details would be highly difficult on a freshly developed wet negative. Is it possible that people perceived that there was something on the negative, when there really wasn't anything or something else?

A possible scenario is that Barauna photographed a bird flying across the sky. This might explain the long duration between photographs. A bird tends to be a lot slower than a high speed UFO and this would take some time to obtain the pho-

tographs. After the bird had passed, the charade of his friends screaming about a UFO could have started.

After the negatives were examined (but not too closely), Barauna could then finish the hoax off by creating a duplicate negative with the UFO inserted in place of the bird in the darkroom. The end result would satisfy all the requirements of the prints that we see today.

One must remember that Barauna was probably no weekend snapshooter and did operate his own darkroom. He controlled the negatives for a significant period of time before they were supposedly examined by the Brazilian military.

Multiple witnesses

As noted by Kentaro Mori, John Rimmer, and others, the story about this event being witnessed by dozens/hundreds of crewmen seems to have been highly exaggerated. There are very few witnesses, who are on record as having actually seen the UFO. Most of those seem to have been close friends of Almiro Barauna with the potential of being in on the hoax.

Negatives missing?

The negatives have not been available for many years. They were supposedly examined but it is possible to create a modified negative from prints or through duplication. Therefore, one can not rule out that possibility.. We don't really know what the negatives show but their disappearance from the record is suspicious to say the least.

Conclusions

This article was not meant to cover the entire case but to see how two spoons might look compared to the Trindade photographs and speculate about potential methodology in creating a hoaxed image based on the story told by Bittencourt. I think the spoons are a reasonable possibility as being the model for the UFO based on my little experiment. Now I just have to figure out the details of how it was done. However, I have to wonder that if I could successfully duplicate the hoax or convincing evidence surfaced of a hoax, would UFOlogy accept it? I doubt it because the Trindade case is a classic and everybody knows that UFO cases of this kind can never be explained.

In this installment, I felt it was important to discuss meteors and satellite re-entries. These celestial events are often misinterpreted by observers and UFOlogists alike. Recent entries by the UFO examiner of MUFON, indicate that even experienced UFOlogists seem to have a lack of knowledge on the subject.

Terminology

I have seen many people use the wrong terminology when discussing meteors. So, it is important to clarify a few terms.

A meteoroid is any small object that is in outer space up to the size of about a boulder. When a meteoroid enters the earth's (or any other planet's) atmosphere, it becomes a meteor. If the meteoroid survives its passage through the atmosphere and strikes the earth, it is called a meteorite. Any meteor that is considered brighter than the planet Venus is considered a fireball. If the fireball becomes very bright (usually full moon or brighter), it is sometimes referred to as a bolide. These bright fireballs can possibly produce meteorites.

Light display

A common question I have been asked in the past is how can something the size of a grain of sand be so luminous that it can be seen from so far away. This has to do with the meteor's interaction with the earth's atmosphere. What is actually being seen is not only the meteoroid glowing but it's interaction with the surrounding atmosphere. The meteor's passage excites the atoms of air molecules nearby and this causes them to glow.

Sometimes, a meteor can leave a persistent ion train. This looks like a brief smoke trail that rapidly disappears. In the case of bright fireballs, an ion trail can last for several minutes.

Meteor colors

The color of a meteor has a lot to do with the composition of the meteoroid and the atmospheric molecules that are disturbed by its passage. If the meteoroid is large, the color of the meteor will probably be dominated by the meteor's composition. However, if it is small, the composition of the meteor may have lit-

IFO University: Meteors and space debris re-entries



The Peekskill meteorite was a "green fireball" that produced a meteorite. Just because a fireball is green does not mean it is a UFO. (NASA photograph)

tle effect and the atmospheric molecules nearby will dominate the color of the meteor. Oxygen and Nitrogen molecules tend to give off a red color.

The Green fireballs and UFOs

Probably the most bizarre part of UFO folklore is the adventures of Lincoln LaPaz and the "Green fireball" phenomena of the late 1940s. LaPaz felt there was something unique about these objects because no meteorites were ever found and they were green in color. They also appeared to be confined to the southwest US but this may have been a case of people looking for them, while in the other parts of the US, there was little interest in doing so. The USAF was concerned because they, like UFOs, were seen as a potential threat/Soviet device. They spent some time and money trying to record these meteors on film with little success. Eventually, they lost interest in the matter but LaPaz continued to ponder the problem many years later with no satisfactory results. The "green fireball" phenomenon has been linked to UFOlogy because of its unique nature and that some people felt they were not "natural meteors". There never was any evidence presented to rule out these observations as nothing more than bright fireballs that were just green in appearance.

For some reason, when somebody now reports a "green fireball", UFOlogy likes to refer to as a UFO, when it is more likely they just saw a bright green meteor. A

good example of a "Green fireball" is the Peekskill fireball/meteorite fall of October 9th, 1992. It was recorded by many people on video tape (some sources list a total of 16 independent recordings including a football game) and was as bright (if not brighter) than the full moon. Its primary color was most definitely green but it was just an ordinary fireball meteor. This was demonstrated by it producing at least one meteorite that struck a parked car. Therefore, just because a fireball is "green" does not mean it qualifies as a UFO or that it is something so exotic as to dismiss it as just a bright meteor.

UFOs or plane crashes

The potential for a fireball to be misidentified as something else is well known. All one has to do is read the UFO reports associated with known fireball events. Many of the comments show the witnesses stating it could not be a meteor for various reasons. The problem is that many observers have never seen a bright fireball before. An ordinary meteor does not appear the same as a bright fireball. I still remember my first. It was a -8 bolide that lit up the ground when I was a young astronomer at Lyrid meteor watch. It left an ion trail that lasted several minutes.

Another comment in these UFO reports is that the meteor looked like a crashing aircraft and it will sometimes be reported as such. If the meteor breaks up and lasts long enough, witnesses may produce reports of a cigar shaped craft with windows. A good example is the fireball of November 16, 1999. This appears to have been an earth-grazing meteor that lasted 10-20 seconds. The witness reports in the NUFORC database are most interesting:

It first appeared like a large plane with a row of windows. I thought it was a plane attempting to land on the highway. As it grew closer I realized the object was too large to be a plane. In addition it had no flashing lights or landing lights. It was very long in length, possibly 200' to 500' feet. It had a row of what appeared to be windows yellow orange in color, with several lights in the front and rear the same color. It seemed to slow as it got closer to my truck, almost directly in front, about 1/4 mile away. It dipped down behind some trees, and disappeared.'

Does this kind of report sound familiar? You may recall me referring to the Zond IV incident in SUNlite 2-3. In that case it was re-entering space debris. This demonstrates that fireballs can produce the same effects. One can easily see the similarities between this fireball observation and the famous “Chiles-Whitted” event in July 1948.

Space debris re-entries

An event very similar to fireballs and abolides are satellite/booster rocket re-entries. These enter the earth’s atmosphere at much lower speeds and, as a result, they last a lot longer than meteors. While meteors rarely last longer than ten seconds, a satellite re-entry can last for tens of seconds. Because of the nature of these re-entries, there are usually described as a formation of lights/streaks or one dark object with lights just like in the Zond IV case.

On the 14th of November 1997, there was a display put on by a Russian booster rocket re-entry in the northwest United States. Like Zond IV, a significant percentage of the witnesses, who submitted reports to the National UFO reporting center (NUFORC), reported a large dark shape behind the lights. They were deceived by the “airship effect” just like the November 16, 1999 fireball.

A large, well lit flying wedged shaped object flying very low over my house without any noise...There were many lights outlining the wedge shape. They seemed to be about the same brightness although some appeared to be reddish while others blue.²



Jules Verne reentry September 29, 2008 (NASA)



The August 10, 1972 daylight fireball (National geographic)

Daylight fireballs

These are rare but do happen. The August 10, 1972 fireball is a good example but a more recent case is the July 23, 2001 event in Pennsylvania. The fireball was estimated at a magnitude of -20 to -26 (almost as bright as the sun) and was photographed by at least one observer. Most of the UFO reports in the NUFORC database referred to it as a fireball or “egg-shaped object”. There were a few who stated they saw it as a triangle or V-shaped object.

Data analysis

Curious, I decided to wade into the NUFORC database to see how many could have been caused by fireballs. I used the time period of July 10 to September 27 (for the years 2005-2008). This was chosen because this was when the most people would be out and it was after the fourth of July weekend when fireworks might create UFO reports that sound like meteors. There were a total of 4444 reports (by my count, which may be in error)! I initially started by examining the reports for short duration UFOs (<1 min) that sounded like meteors. I tried to avoid reports that might be Iridium flares or indicated motion that was too exotic to be a meteor. This produced a total of 431 potential fireball reports. I then decided to compare the 4444 reports with the American Meteor Society’s database of fireball reports. I received a surprise when I looked at my results. I counted 184 fireball identifications. Some observations from this data revealed:

1. Potential fireball reports made up about 10% of all the UFO reports filed. This is fairly consistent with Hendry’s data of around 9% (Number of meteors/

total UFO reports of 1307)

2. The AMS table had a more limited scope since it involved fireball report made by a small sample of observers, who were only observing in a limited number of areas and not always during bright moon periods. The matching of their data with the NUFORC database revealed about a 4% success rate in identifying UFOs. This does not mean that the remaining 6% were not fireballs. It just means that the 6% were not observed by the AMS observers to make an accurate determination.
3. Some reports that I would have dismissed as not being a fireball (due to duration and details in the observation) turned out to be observations of bright fireballs.
4. Some bright fireballs observed by AMS observer did not generate any UFO reports. That may have to do with the time of night or that UFO reporters recognized them as meteors.

Fireballs misperceived

Looking at the NUFORC reports that I identified as bright fireballs from the AMS data, I learned that some witnesses can misinterpret what they saw with all sorts of misperceived characteristics. Many will declare it could not have been a meteor because they know what one looks like. The problem is each fireball is unique and create effects that the observer may or may not be familiar with. Nobody seems to be immune to misperceiving these effects or thinking the fireball they saw was something exotic and not a meteor.

Notes and References

1. Davenport, Peter. National UFO Center UFO Reports Database. Available at <http://www.nuforc.org/web-reports/011/S11077.html>
2. Davenport, Peter. National UFO Center UFO Reports Database. Available at <http://www.nuforc.org/web-reports/002/S02918.html>

Last spring, I had received a copy of the holy grail of Roswell-Nitinol mythology. The first progress report of Titanium alloy research by the Battelle Memorial Institute, which supposedly contained an analysis of the metal obtained from the UFO crash at Roswell, was to finally reveal its secrets. Strangely, there is no mention of Roswell, exotic metals, Nitinol, or shape memory alloys (SMAs). In fact, it was so mundane a report, I assumed that the Nitinol-Roswell gibberish would die a quick death. That was not to be. Highlighted by an e-mail to me that referred to my previous "analysis" as "ill-informed" and "weak", Anthony Bragalia released another misleading and exaggerated column of how Nitinol was created because of Roswell. Despite claiming he addresses all my previous arguments, he really ignores them and repeats the same exaggerations he made previously as well as adding some new ones.

Trying to keep Center relevant

I had previously noted that Bragalia's depiction of events regarding Center's supposed encounter with the Roswell material had been wrongly reported. He still does this by stating Center examined the metal even though the original story was he deciphered hieroglyphics. Now, he supposedly found the source of this story and talked to him. As the reader may recall, I mentioned the source of this story in SUNlite 1-3 and it was an article written by William Jones and Dr. Irene Scott called "The Ohio UFO crash connection and other stories". They interviewed a young man, who was dating Center's daughter and was in high school at the time (Bragalia called him a close friend/professional associate of Center's in his original articles). The man is named "Nick Nickerson" and Bragalia claims he worked at Battelle and had quite an impressive resume'. Nick Nickerson's other claim to fame is exposing the Zanesville UFO photographs hoax by getting the photographer to confess. This supposedly demonstrates Nickerson's honesty.

The problem I have with all of this, is that we have no biography of Nickerson to examine. Does he have any scholarly articles on his area of expertise? I could not find anything but I really did not try hard. Why should I? It is up to Bragalia to back up his claims with something concrete. A lot of people claim to be a lot of things in

Trying to keep the Roswell-Nitinol boat afloat



UFOlogy. Some turn out to be true and others do not. Last SUNlite, I described how a gentleman was able to fool quite a few knowledgeable people into thinking he was a naval officer. Who is to say if this is not the case here?

In the original article, Scott and Jones stated that the individual they interviewed was **not** employed by Battelle. That seems to be a bit of conflicting information unless Jones/Scott chose to lie in their article about the gentlemen's involvement in Battelle. Is it a big red flag? Not really but it something that does need to be addressed.

Another problem is that the Zanesville case was exposed as a hoax by Everitt Merritt, a photogrammetrist employed by Raytheon. NICAP sent him the prints and he analyzed them finding fatal flaws in the images showing that the story told by the photographer had serious inaccuracies. When the Condon study attempted to contact the photographer, he did not respond. If Nickerson obtained the confession, it was probably after all this had occurred. At that point, it was like shooting fish in a barrel.

I do not doubt there is a Nick Nickerson and he may or may not have worked at Battelle. However, it is only his word that Center told this story. Center has no diaries and no papers suggesting he was involved in such a case. That kind of evidence coupled with the extraordinary nature of the testimony, makes it less than convincing as a "confession".

Metal testing 101

Bragalia likes to sound like he knows something about metallurgy. However, he doesn't because he continues to misrepresent the terms used to evaluate and test ALL metals and alloys. Accord-

ing to his article, by testing for "elongation" (used to create stress-strain curves on a given metal) and "minimum bend radius" (used to measure how much a metal can bend before being damaged), the Battelle team was trying to evaluate alloys for shape memory characteristics. Suggesting they were **specifically testing** for SMAs by measuring these values demonstrates a lack of knowledge on the subject or a desire to deceive the reader. When I mentioned this in the Reality Uncovered forum, Bragalia made a hit and run post where he stated that he knows they are "sometimes" standard tests. I responded that there is no "sometimes" about it. The bottom line is they are not specifically used to measure shape memory characteristics and their mention in the progress reports is standard for any alloy.

According to Bragalia's post in the Reality Uncovered forum, General Exon stated that these specific tests were done on the Roswellian metal. I pushed him on this but he did not respond. What Exon had actually stated was that they had performed various tests on the metal with no specifics. If any metal sample was given to a lab for evaluation, no matter what the source, it would be exposed to all these measurements and tests.



Drink up me hearties

Why let the facts stand in the way of a good story...right? This recent article simply repeats, with a few additions, most of the claims in his previous articles, which ignored or misrepresented many facts.

Bragalia states that Nitinol was not the actual Roswellian metal but the govern-

ment's efforts to duplicate it. He continuously attempts to make this link by suggesting that the second progress report was fed to the Navy labs so they could construct Nitinol. The evidence he uses is a 1972 technical report about Nitinol written over a decade after Nitinol was created. It was only mentioned because the author was describing the history of Titanium-Nickel research.

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.¹

This one statement is the only reference Dr. Wang made concerning the second progress report. It is a statement of fact and offers no additional information suggesting that the second progress report was instrumental in creating Nitinol.

As noted above, the "recipe" for Titanium-Nickel in (Bragalia's catch phrase for the Phase diagram) the second progress report is inadequate for creating Nitinol. This is plain and simple. Had Battelle "fed" this report to Buehler, he would have been unable to do anything with it. The research was over a decade old and it contained nothing that could help Buehler and his team. There were far more extensive phase diagrams and research on Titanium-Nickel that would have been more useful.

Exaggerating further, Bragalia states the following:

Battelle seemed to control the fate of Nitinol after its "discovery" at the US Naval Labs. NASA -working with Battelle - also has been shown to have immediately taken over direction of further "characterization" studies of the material (a fact that Wang's Nitinol co-inventor, William Buehler, complained about in an oral history.)²

Compare this to what William Buehler states in the oral history he appears to be referencing:

Technology Transfer: Awareness of NITINOL's unique combination of properties quickly radiated outside NOL. This occurred mainly through technical reports, presentations, various forms of media coverage and NOL's Technical Informa-

tion Organization. Let me cite just a few examples of the key organizations that became involved. NASA independently sponsored two major characterization studies, one at Battelle Memorial Institute (under Dr. Curt Jackson) and a second at Goodyear Aerospace Corporation (under William Cross). Dr. George Andreason, DDS, Professor at the University of Iowa, using some variable composition NITINOL wires, started studying its use as an orthodontic bridge (arch) wire. Raychem Corporation (under Jack Harrison) independently developed the successful hydraulic couplers for the then new U.S. Navy's F-14 jet aircraft. These very low transition temperature ternary alloy couplers were expanded radially in liquid nitrogen and then, on warming to room temperature, radially contracted with great force coupling the connecting pipes. The coupler was Trade Marked "Cryofit." Raychem also developed an electronic connector called "Cryocon"

These were some of the early technical accomplishments during the super active and harried 1960's. Following these lines of activity, the medical people were starting to show some interest. That initial interest was primarily under Lt.Col. C. A. Heisterkamp, MD., at Walter Reed and Dr. James Hughes, MD., an orthopedic surgeon at Johns Hopkins. This early medical research activity ultimately led to the many very important special medical devices employed today...³

This is not the picture that Bragalia paints in his article. In these recollections, Buehler is not "complaining" at all. He seems proud that a lot of people showed interest in Nitinol. Bragalia's claims that Battelle "controlled the fate of Nitinol" is completely false. Buehler makes it clear that a lot of people, besides Battelle and NASA, had access to Nitinol and its "secrets".

As one can see by these examples, what Bragalia tells the reader and what actually happened are sometimes two different things. This is why I am concerned when he starts telling people about his "interviews". For instance, he told me that Dr. Linus Pauling died "obsessed" about UFOs. I contacted Dr. Robert Paradowski, a friend of Pauling and his biographer, and he told me this was not the case. He described Pauling's interest in the subject as "mild" and sometimes "skeptical". To add to this, Bragalia ties Pauling in

with Roswell research because he made a brief one day visit to Battelle on February 7, 1951, where he gave a lecture. This tabloid style of investigation is meant to get eager readers to believe what he writes without having to establish facts or present sources.

Something completely different

According to Bragalia, General Exon stated the Roswell metal included an alloy comprised of "specially processed Titanium" and another metal.⁴ He provides no quotes. The closest I could find is in the book, Witness to Roswell, where Exon is quoted as saying,



*I don't know, at that time, if it was titanium **or** some other metal... **or** if it was something they knew about and the processing was something different.⁵ (my emphasis in bold)*

Note that there is no mention of alloying

Titanium with another metal. He uses the word "or" not "and". Exon appears to be just guessing and unsure as if he had no direct knowledge of what he is describing. This is certainly not the convincing statement that Bragalia repeats over and over again. Once again, we have Mr. Bragalia stating things that are not entirely accurate in order to get his readers to buy what he is selling.

A "Secret" UFO Investigator

Bragalia likes to think that anybody who comes in contact with UFO reports or the subject suddenly becomes a "secret" UFO investigator. The latest person to get this label is the Chief of Naval Research in 1948, Rear Admiral Thorwald Solberg. Bragalia proclaims that the Admiral must have known something about Roswell and Titanium because he wrote the foreword to the 1948 Titanium Symposium proceedings. What Bragalia never mentions is that the Office of Naval Research (ONR) sponsored this symposium. Since Solberg was the head of ONR, it makes reasonable sense he would write the forward and be very involved in Tita-

nium research! Is Bragalia really claiming that anybody involved with Titanium research had some knowledge about Roswell? Knowing how the interservice rivalries are, it is hard to believe that the USAF would even allow the US Navy a hint that they had an actual alien spaceship in their possession!

To link Solberg with UFOs and Roswell, he produced a document that refers to Charles Moore's 1949 sighting, where the Chief of Naval Research is listed in the header (under "via"). As is typical in almost all of Bragalia's research, he does not bother to explain the document to the reader. The content of the document is from the Commanding Officer, Captain Ruhsenberger, of special devices center of Long Island, NY. Charles Moore's report had been submitted to the commanding officer because he was associated with the ONR program SKYHOOK. Since this command was under the jurisdiction of the Office of Naval Research, it would have to go through the Chief of Naval Research's desk ("via") to make it to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) as required by the chain of command. It was also sent to the Office of Naval Investigations (which had an interest in UFO reports). This does NOT make Admiral Solberg a "secret UFO investigator" UNLESS, he was personally involved in the investigation. There is no evidence to suggest this. Bragalia states he intends to write a further article about Solberg's UFO investigations/activities. If this is the best he has, it is weak to say the least. I am sure this future article will involve more misleading arguments where speculation is presented as fact.

Believing=Learning?

In the meat of Bragalia's article, he makes several claims about the progress reports, where he states that "we" have "learned" various items from each of the reports. "Learning" indicates establishment of fact. Bragalia establishes very few facts (if any) in his articles so it is only Bragalia telling us what he thinks he found. He tends to repeat himself over and over again so you will have to bear with me repeating some of the same things.

- *Battelle had suddenly - after the Roswell crash - undertaken to perfect melting and "metal mixing" techniques and to create purity-levels for*

*Titanium never before attempted. (Ultra-high purity Titanium is required to make memory metal).*⁶

High purity Titanium is required for ALL alloys and not just Nitinol. While Battelle was perfecting their processes, other groups were also attempting to perfect their own processes so they did not introduce oxygen. To state that Battelle was the only group doing this is ignoring the history of Titanium alloy research.

This all did not happen "suddenly" after the Roswell crash unless Bragalia can demonstrate that people were not concerned about Titanium until immediately after July 1947. This is not the case because Air Material command started their Titanium studies in March of 1947 (BEFORE the Roswell crash). The Navy started their studies about the same time and the Army had started such work in late 1946. Bragalia presents absolutely no evidence that these studies started "suddenly" after Roswell.

- *Elroy Center was applying his new techniques for micro-analysis of novel Titanium alloy.*⁷

Center co-wrote one paper in this document where he discussed chemical testing the oxygen content in Titanium. There is nothing in this document that states he was micro-analyzing any Titanium alloys and that the techniques used to conduct these analyses were new. The same type of micrographs and analysis on alloys was being performed elsewhere. Therefore, they were not unique or "new". The same can be said for these "novel" Titanium alloys. These alloys were not new or unique because others had already begun to attempt them (see the Titanium Symposium papers by P.R. Mallory and company).

SOME PRELIMINARY DATA ON ALLOYS OF TITANIUM

By E. I. Larsen, E. F. Swazy, L. S. Busch and R. H. Freyer
P. R. Mallory and Co., Inc.

- *First-ever attempts at alloying Titanium with Nickel and other metals were made, including an expanded Titanium-Nickel "Phase Diagram" - the recipe for memory metal.*⁸

Bragalia keeps using the catch phrase of "recipe for memory metal" but it has been

shown that the phase diagram produced was not sufficient for creating Nitinol. It is the same thing as saying you have a recipe for cake and it says to use eggs. You can't make a specific cake with just being told to use eggs.

FABRICATION OF TITANIUM AND INVESTIGATIONS OF TITANIUM-NICKEL ALLOYS IN THE BUREAU OF MINES LABORATORIES

By J. R. Long
College Park Branch, Metallurgical Division, Bureau of Mines

Additionally, as I pointed out in SUNlite 1-3, the Bureau of Mines had alloyed the two metals in 1948 and wrote a paper about it in the Titanium symposium. Their phase diagram was far more extensive than the diagram found in the second progress report. P.R. Mallory and Company was also alloying Titanium and Nickel. Additionally, Dr. Wang documents that H. J. Wallbaum and his associates were investigating the Titanium-Nickel phase diagram as far back as 1938! Using the terms "first ever" and "expanded" are an exaggeration on the grandest scale and shows ignorance of the documented history of this alloy.

- *The report examines other Ti alloys that were later investigated by Wright Patterson for shape-recovery potential (including TiZr)*⁹

In no area of these progress reports, does it mention investigating an alloy for "shape recovery potential". Therefore, one can not conclusively say this was what they were looking for.

- *"Elongation" and "Minimum Bend Radius" tests were performed, indicating possible interest in morph-potential. Wright's General Exon recounted to author Kevin Randle similar tests being conducted on the Roswell material.*¹⁰

As I noted previously, there is nothing unusual about testing materials for "elongation" and "minimum bend radius" and they are not tests designed to specifically look for "morph/shape recovery potential".

- *One of the report's authors (Lynn Eastwood) had as his boss Battelle's UFO-involved Dr. Howard Cross. Eastwood supervised Elroy Center confessor to*

the crash.¹¹

Dr. Cross' involvement in the Battelle study on UFOs did not start until 1952 under Project Stork. There is no evidence that Cross was involved in UFOs in 1949. As pointed out previously, in that report, it was stated that there was no physical evidence to examine (something I pointed out in SUNlite 1-3)! If they had examined materials from a spaceship crash, they would not have made this statement. These men all worked at Battelle as scientists. It would not be unusual that they worked together on a project involving alloys and testing them. Dr. Center, a chemist employed by Battelle, was specifically used as a chemist to perform chemical testing for oxygen content, which is not unusual.

- *The work of the First Progress Report was similar to that of the Second. First-time ever work on characterization, melting, purification and diagramming of novel Ti alloys were conducted.*¹²

It already has been established that Titanium had been alloyed with other metals before work by Battelle had started.

- *The report's cover letter is signed by LW (Lynn) Eastwood, whose direct superior was UFO-involved Dr. Howard Cross. Eastwood supervised Elroy Center, who confessed to debris analysis.*¹³

There is no evidence to suggest that Eastwood, in 1949, had any idea that Cross was going to be involved in a UFO study that did not start until 1952 and no evidence that Eastwood had any idea that Center had supposedly attempted to decipher Roswellian hieroglyphics.

- *The report was done at the request of one J.B. Johnson, Chief of the Metallurgy Division at Wright Field in 1947. J.B. Johnson was supervised by Major General LC Craigie, Director of USAF R&D and the Engineering Division. Craigie's personal pilot (Ben Games) was interviewed by this author and by reporter Billy Cox in 2008. Games states that he had personally flown Craigie to Roswell Army Air Field immediately after the crash and then flew him to visit with President Truman.*¹⁴

The report was done because it was a contract that had to be fulfilled with the USAF (not Johnson). Johnson may have had input on what he wanted in the report but it was not his specific request that such a study was done.

As for Craigie and Roswell, there are no records to confirm Games flight and the flight records state that Craigie was elsewhere. Craigie's visit is also not entered in the unit history of the 509th air group for July 1947. It is a story told by one individual that records show is not true.

Additionally, Craigie became the commandant of the Air Force institute of technology on 3 September 1948. The USAF institute of technology was part of the air university and not associated with R&D in 1949 when this work was done. Therefore, at the time of the testing, Craigie was not involved in supervising Johnson.

- *Johnson appears to have facilitated the delivery of the metal ingots for the Battelle study and to have directed the submission and order of the Progress Reports. Johnson's behind the scenes involvement indicates that these studies were of high priority and urgency.*¹⁵

Johnson did not become very involved in "facilitating" delivery of ingots for the Battelle study. The ingots were made at Battelle for use at Battelle. In only one instance did Johnson "facilitate" delivery of ingots. Battelle provided two Titanium alloy ingots, at Johnson's request, to E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. There is not much to get excited about that. Saying Johnson was working "behind the scenes" seems to be an embellishment since he is mentioned in the report several times. If he wanted to be "behind the scenes", he would have made sure his name was not in the reports.

It is important to note that the documentation does not indicate a higher priority than any other study being done at the time. If making Nitinol was such a "high priority" and "urgent", why didn't Battelle create it right away with all the information they supposedly had at their disposal? Why did they have to involve the Navy a decade later to make it happen? Contrary to what Bragalia states, there is no indication of any urgency in these reports.

- *Elroy Center's work on Titanium purity (essential to make memory metal) is amplified on by scientists Mallett, Thomas and Griffith. They cite the work of one EJ Chapin of the Metallurgy Division of the Naval Research Laboratories where Nitinol was later said to have been developed.*¹⁶

Mallett, Thomas and Griffith were not "amplifying" anything Center had done. They were trying to determine oxygen content in Titanium using a method not attempted by E. J. Center. Their paper was for vacuum-fusion analysis of Titanium for Oxygen. They began testing using this method because Chapin and (for some reason not mentioned by Bragalia) Dr. G. Derge at the Carnegie Institute of Technology were reporting success with this method.

Meanwhile, Dr. Center's work on Titanium involved investigating what was called the Chlorine-Carbon Tetrachloride method for determining oxygen content. The first report had already concluded the test was not satisfactory. It was recorded in the second report only to give a description of the techniques and equipment used. Center and Eckert write in the second report:

*On the basis of results discussed above, it is concluded that the carbon tetrachloride-chlorine method is impractical for determination of small amounts of oxygen in titanium metal....*¹⁷

Most important to note is that this is the only section written by Center. For somebody who had supposedly had inside knowledge on the Roswell debris, he seems to have been assigned work that had little to do with trying to create a shape memory alloy (as Bragalia suggests what this study is for). All Center was assigned to do involved his job description as a chemist and nothing more.

- *A major discrepancy is found in the report and appears in the following, "The present data do not justify further investigation of binary Titanium-Germanium or Titanium Nickel alloys." However, this was not the case. In Battelle's Second Progress Report, we find that work was indeed continued on Titanium-Nickel alloy, to include feverish work on an extended "phase diagram," methods for melting Titanium,*

developing purification and micro-analysis techniques, etc. This is more than curious and it seems to indicate that Wright Patterson in fact was hell-bent on having the work continued. In fact results of these continued studies appeared in its next report for Wright under Wright's direction and insistence.¹⁸

This is another case of overstatement and misleading the reader. Bragalia apparently did not read the entire report or ignored what it stated. In the second progress report, they do explain why the two alloys are mentioned:

In the previous report, data on the mechanical properties and the response to heat treatment and aging of Titanium-Germanium and Titanium-Nickel alloys were listed in tables 1 and 2. The microscopic examination of specimens of these alloys, quenched from temperatures of 1450, 1550, 1600, 1650, 1700, and 1750F., has now been completed.¹⁹

This indicates that some of the data from testing the alloys was unavailable at the time of the first progress report. Since the reports are written to include all data (you just don't throw it out), they presented the rest of the information. This just closed the book on these alloys. No new alloys of these two metals were created after those described in the first progress report. The only discrepancy seems to be Bragalia's inability to understand what he is reading or his attempts to mislead the reader with erroneous information.



"Super Genius?"

After all of this speculation we are suddenly exposed to why somebody like Bragalia has unearthed the greatest secret never kept:

You must be sharp to discern the tangled web that has been woven. No document

you will ever see will outright declare that ET metal is here. Instead, one must carefully examine the contracts, connections and context of Shape Recovery research to understand its relation to Roswell. Like a sleuth, one must "back-track" the emergence of shape-memory metal. If one does this by studying its history, the documents that are available to us and the testimony of those involved - the truth becomes evident.²⁰

The implication here is that Bragalia considers himself much smarter than the people who wrote the history surrounding Nitinol. Does he really believe that all of these people have ignored these "obvious" clues for all of these years until he came along? I guess you do have to be "sharp" to twist, alter, and misrepresent these reports in a way that gets people to believe this nonsense is accurate historical research.

The tale of the tape

I think it is important for readers to recognize how inaccurate Bragalia has been in predicting what these Progress reports were supposed to contain. He originally wrote:

This is because if it does contain "phase diagrams" for the alloying of Nickel and Titanium- it will confirm the work on memory metal. It would strongly suggest that shape-recovery alloys were precisely what Battelle was attempting to create for the military in the time period directly after the Roswell crash....

Based on the sections of the studies that were found that reference this Battelle report- we know that this "progress report" offers the first "phase diagram" ever produced to attempt to successfully alloy Titanium and Nickel. This would be required to make memory metal. We can also infer that it examined refinement of Titanium to high purity levels. High purity Titanium is required to create the shape-recovery effect.

No references have ever been located to something that must surely exist- Battelle's "First Progress Report" on the memory metal. While the Second Progress Report (completed in 1949) refers to techniques to process the alloy, the First Progress Report (authored in 1947 or 1948) probably relates to the actual analysis of "Roswellian" memory metal.²¹

The presence of the phase diagram in the second progress report had already been mentioned in Dr. Wang's paper and the testing of Titanium for purity could easily be inferred. However, there was very little in the second progress report that covered this alloy and it made no mention of shape recovery studies contrary to what he predicted. Meanwhile, his prediction about the first progress report being the study of actual Roswellian metal was completely out of touch with reality.

After seeing the first progress report was no smoking gun for researching Roswellian debris, Bragalia now makes the claim that the examination of that material was highly classified and would never make it into some progress report or even mentioned. Any documents about studying this exotic material or references to it would not be mentioned in any of these studies/reports about Titanium and Nickel. The Battelle institute as well as the US military would make it appear as if the Roswellian metal never existed or was never studied at all. Hmm.....wouldn't the same thing happen if there never was an alien spaceship crash at Roswell? This kind of rationalizing away inconvenient facts is simply amazing. It demonstrates that Bragalia is preaching to the choir despite the fact that his Roswell-Nitinol ship has already sunk.

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Photographs

SINKEX photograph of the USS Towers (DDG-9) in 2002 courtesy of the US Navy

General Exon photograph comes from the Lebanon Daily News (Lebanon, PA) of June 26, 1964. P.24

New witness confirms that Rendlesham forest incident was triggered by a fireball

by Ian Ridpath

Around 3 am on December 26 1980, two security guards near the East Gate at the USAF base at Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, were startled by a brightly lit object apparently descending into nearby Rendlesham Forest. They went off base to investigate, and what they saw – or thought they saw – among the trees sparked off one of the most celebrated UFO events of all times, now generally known as the Rendlesham Forest Incident.

What could this falling object have been? When I began to investigate the Rendlesham case back in 1983, one of the first checks I made was with Dr John Mason of the British Astronomical Association's meteor section. Their records showed that a bright fireball had burned up over southern England at around 02.50 that morning, the very time that the guards saw what they thought was something falling into the forest.

Christmas Crackers

Those astronomers observing on Christmas night, 1980, may be forgiven for thinking they had overtaken the Turkey and Christmas Pudding. Roy Panther discovered his Comet (1980a) in the constellation of Lyra, early that evening, and three (possibly four) fireballs were reported.

The first object occurred at 17.20 UT (± 2 minutes) and was of magnitude -5. It was widely seen over Southern England and brightened and faded smoothly, with no fragmentation or anomalous behaviour. The duration of this event was only a few seconds, and from Sussex, the object first appeared near Beta Aurigae and travelled towards the southern horizon, extinguishing in Eridanus.

Two other fireballs, both of only a few seconds duration, were sighted at 19.20 UT (± 5 minutes), and at 02.50 UT (± 5 minutes) on Boxing Day. The first of these was only reported by 3 witnesses (all non-astronomers) and the second by 4 witnesses, all of whom estimated its brightness as comparable to the gibbous Moon and of 3 to 4 seconds duration. Further observations of all these objects are required.

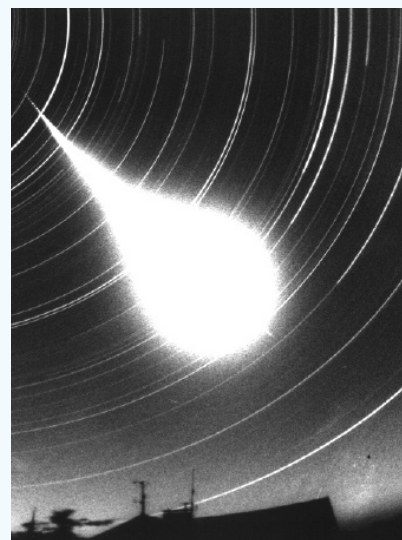
Without doubt, the most spectacular and best observed event was of major interest. It occurred at 21.08 UT, and was a fireball of extremely long duration and showing considerable fragmentation, followed by eventual total disintegration. It has been identified as the re-entry of the third stage of a Cosmos rocket launcher, and observations were made over most of Southern England, the track passing across the English Channel from near the Cherbourg peninsula, south of the Isle of Wight and running close to both Southampton and Dover.

Bright fireballs are a common cause of UFO reports, usually giving the appearance that something has descended to Earth nearby when in fact it has burned up high in the atmosphere. Dr Mason and I have long been of the opinion that this is what the security guards actually saw.

But I was troubled by the fact that there were no confirming sightings from the base. Surely something that bright would have been by someone else in the area? Thanks to a new witness who spoke to Linda Moulton Howe for one of her Earthfiles broadcasts in September 2009, we now have that confirmation.

The witness is Richard Bertolino, a former security guard at Bentwaters, the companion base to Woodbridge. The two bases lay a couple of miles apart, with Bentwaters to the north.

As Bertolino explained on the Earthfiles broadcast, he was on duty on the morning of 1980 December 26 when he and his driver saw what he described as "a very bright falling star. It had a blue-green luminescence, sparkle [sic] tail to it." He said their immediate feeling was that it was close to them and was "falling between the two bases".



This is a classic description of a fireball. Shortly thereafter Bertolino says he heard someone on the radio yelling "There's a UFO out here!". In the Earthfiles interview Bertolino estimates the time as about 1 a.m., but it is clear from the talk he heard about UFOs over the radio that what he saw was the 3 a.m. fireball that alarmed the guards at the East Gate of Woodbridge. His testimony leaves little doubt that it was indeed this fireball that sparked off the whole UFO chase in the woods, although Bertolino did not participate in that chase himself.

What the security guards actually saw when they ventured into the forest is another matter. Find out more about the 3 am fireball and the other aspects of the case at my Rendlesham Forest pages.

UFOs on the tube

Fact or faked

Initially this new SyFy show looked pretty good but the more I watched, the more it seemed the program was not truly interested in resolving too many cases. In the Arizona UFOs event, they attempted to replicate how a "hyper-jump" video could be hoaxed. I thought their attempts lacked originality to be honest. When they could not create a hoax, they set up several cameras to see if they could record some UFOs of their own. They managed to do so but after recording the UFOs (that looked like bugs illuminated by the lights) on various cameras, they dropped the ball. No analysis was done on the videos to see what they could have been. They just concluded there was UFO activity in Arizona.

I also disliked the California video of three distant red lights in the sky. My original thought was possible fire balloons or Chinese lanterns. They eventually concluded they were a hoax created by a balloon with lights attached. However, they attempted to test the Chinese lantern idea out in the desert under very windy conditions. The end result was the Chinese lantern burst in flames as it got blown down by the wind. The team concluded that a Chinese lantern would not work based on this test! To me that was unscientific because we are not told the wind conditions the night of the video. Based on what was described it seemed to be pretty still.

This show falls short on its intent based on what I saw about their investigations.

Bull!- Area 51

I sort of enjoy watching this show. They do tend to take on some of the more ridiculous personalities in the paranormal. In the UFO hunters episode, the only big name in UFOlogy they took on was John Lear. Penn Gillette was not very kind to him but Lear deserves it when he starts presenting a Lunar Orbiter photograph that supposedly shows mining operations on the moon. The "UFO hunters" trip to area 51 was equally amusing. How people can allow themselves to believe they have seen/recorded something exotic is amazing especially when it just shows lights over Area 51. Bull! is an OK

show but they really need to stop attacking the easy stuff. I would be more interested in a show exploring personalities and cases closer to the core of UFOlogy.

Secret Warehouses

The title says it all and they explored all those places where supposed secret locations existed hiding incredible secrets. The usual Area 51 segment was shown with the video of the alien interview. This was later examined and suggested to be a probable puppet (although Lester Holt tried to spin it another way). John Lear (the same guy laughed at by Penn Gillette) was also taken seriously.

The supersecret underground facility at Camp Hero in Montauk, NY was investigated. The "Montauk project" witness did not seem credible the instant he mentioned time travel and being abducted to conduct various mind experiments. Are we really supposed to simply accept this without question? The funniest thing in this segment was watching Richard Dolan descend into a water filled hole and then come out appearing dry! Later they crawled down some tunnels under Montauk Manor looking to see if they linked to Camp Hero. No mapping of the system occurred and they quit because they feared getting lost.

The finale was an investigation into the underground facilities at Wright Patterson AFB. Robert Collins descriptions of aliens being examined and stored was just as ridiculous as the rest of the show. To insult our intelligence further, John Mosgrove told his wild tale of how he made the cast of an "inhuman" mandible at the request of some AF personnel in 1979. His unnamed boss would then destroy it and carelessly throw it in the garbage! Not surprisingly, when his boss left, Mosgrove quickly pulled it out! The show would eventually have it examined by Dr. Shara Bailey at NYU. She felt it was a human mandible that had been modified by somebody. This show was two hours of me repeatedly uttering the phrase "you have to be kidding me" as Holt tried to spin these stories as being factual.

Book Reviews

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

The UFO Files - David Clarke

Last month I discussed a few books that described the history of UFOs in the US. This book covers the history of UFOs in the UK. It is well written, well sourced, covers all the major cases, and is highly informative. Dr. Clarke's on-line videos are superb and this book is an excellent companion to those clips. This should be in every UFO library.

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

The Randle Report - UFOs in the 90s - Kevin Randle

In my opinion, this is probably one of Kevin Randle's better books. Examining various cases, he tends toward skepticism in this book in cases where he has no personal interest invested. He even includes a chapter about the "The decline and fall of Roswell". He discusses all the problems with some of the key witnesses, who have turned out to be less than truthful. However, in other chapters, he goes to great lengths to convince the reader that Roswell was an alien spaceship crash and there is a cover-up. I suggest the reader ignore the Roswell stuff and examine the other chapters. Those are worth reading.

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

UFOs are real and here is the proof - Ed Walters and Bruce Maccabee.

I am not sure what to make of Dr. Maccabee when it comes to this case. Ed Walters appears to be something of a con-man and I don't think Dr. Maccabee wants to admit he may have been fooled. I saw nothing in this book that convinced me that these photographs were "real" spaceships in any way. Dr. Maccabee can not be considered an independent or impartial person in authenticating them. If you are an Ed Walters fan, I am sure you will nod your head reading this book. Otherwise, don't waste your time or money with this one.