

SUNlite

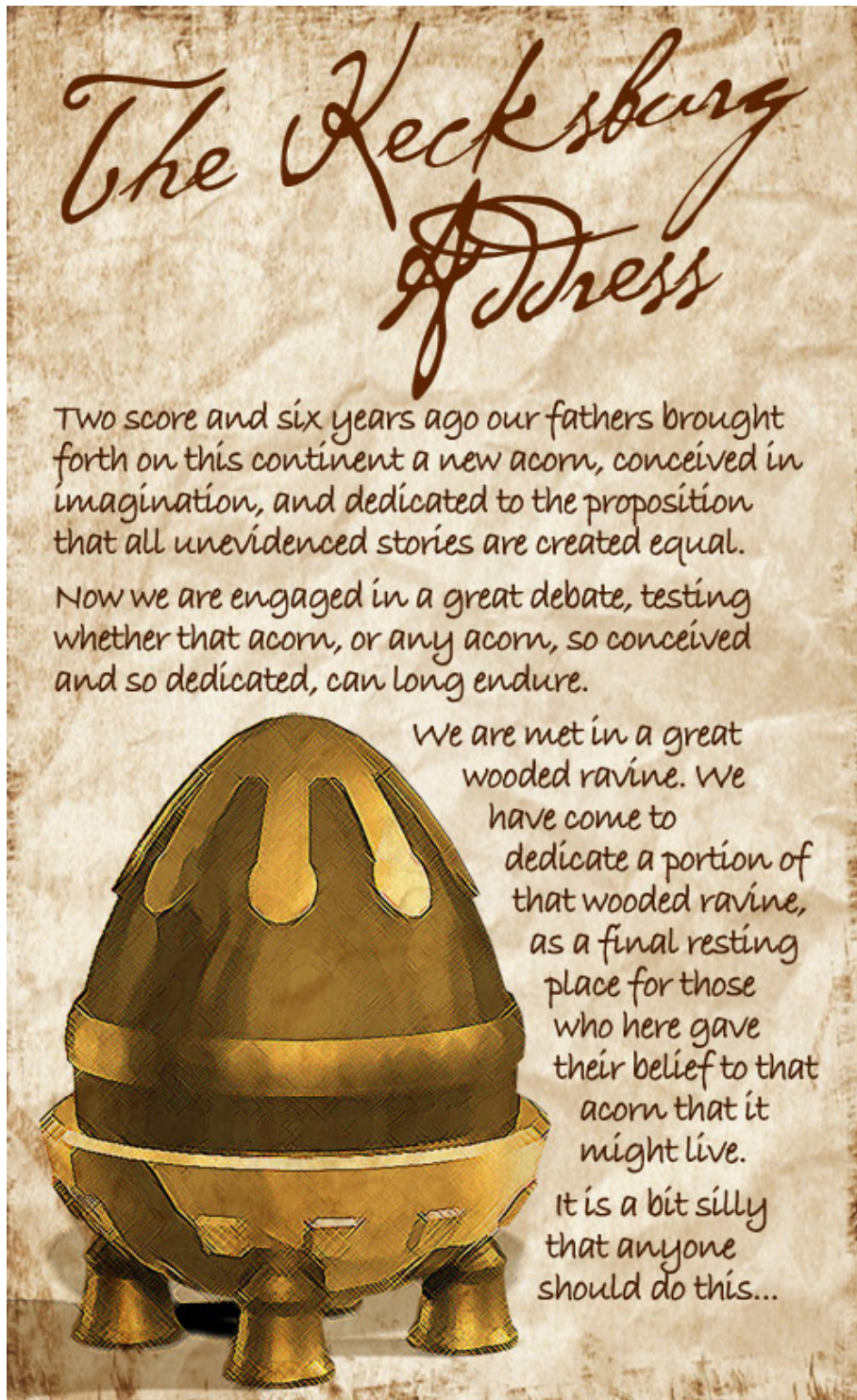
Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

"It's killing me to know this is going nationwide, because there's absolutely no truth to it. Something's gonna be put in the history books for my grandchildren to read, and it is just not true."

Ed Myers, Kecksburg Fire Chief in 1965

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The Kecksburg Dress

Two score and six years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new acorn, conceived in imagination, and dedicated to the proposition that all unevidenced stories are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great debate, testing whether that acorn, or any acorn, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

We are met in a great wooded ravine. We have come to dedicate a portion of that wooded ravine, as a final resting place for those who here gave their belief to that acorn that it might live. It is a bit silly that anyone should do this...

UFO crashology

The Kecksburg case stands as one of those UFO cases that never should have been one. If it weren't for the highly exaggerated claims of a few dubious individuals and the efforts of several UFO promoters, the case would have remained in the dust bin of "old solved mysteries". However, when it comes to making something out of nothing, UFOlogists are experts.

While reading the materials and eyewitness testimonies, I found it most interesting that all sorts of people claim to have been present but there is little evidence to confirm they were there. Some of these witnesses came from tens of miles away and had no idea where to go to find the crash site. They then managed to get past all the local crowds and sneak into areas that were supposedly well guard-

Per my request, Psychoclown provided SUNlite with this humorous bit of artwork to the left.

ed. Others were able to see underneath the tarp covering the "object" and, despite the flatbed driving rapidly by, were able to see distinctive writing. I wish my eyesight was this good in the dark. A lot of these stories just don't sound realistic to me but, to a UFO crashologist, they are golden nuggets to be presented as factual.

I want to thank Robert Young for all of his help in compiling the information for this issue. He did most of the legwork and I am just putting this together in a form so people can readily reference the material. I also want to thank Roger Paquay and Oliver Hallen for their contributions this issue. Such contributions are always welcome.

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Last issue, I described how the UFO examiner put up, what appeared to be, satellite observations as evidence of a UFO "wave" occurring in Pennsylvania.

Well, he continued to promote the wave with two reports that sound a lot like the ISS. On August 29, the ISS made a pass over Pennsylvania around 9:40 PM EDT. This is pretty close to the 9:15 PM time given by one of the witnesses and 10PM given by another.

He then presented the idea that it part of a sharp increase in UFO sightings during the last few months.

Mr. Marsh announced that there was an August "boom" for UFO reports. He reported that International director Clifford Clift stated they needed to look at the data over the next few months to determine what conclusions to draw. I guess that means the standard MUFON investigation results and ambiguous conclusions. Essentially, it means that you do the same old thing with the same old results! I am just curious why MUFON does not invest in some technology to take to these hot spots and gather real data? The state of Missouri was practically overflowing with UFO reports yet not one good bit of hard data regarding truly exotic UFO sightings, that could be verified, surfaced. I guess it says something about the quality of the reports, which matters over quantity.

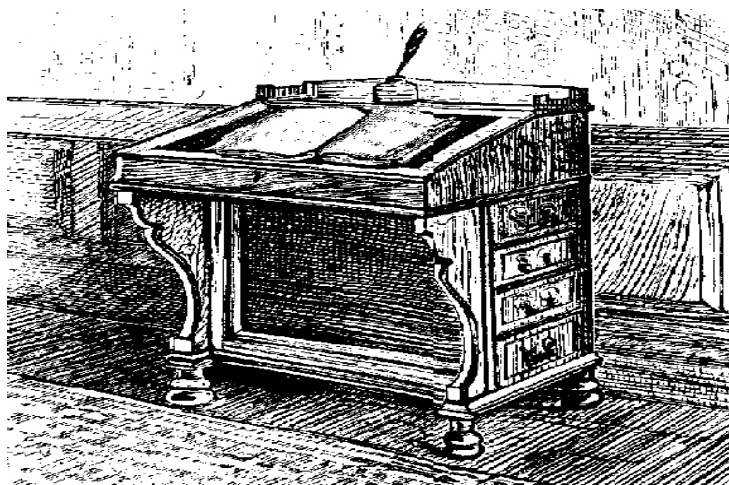
Alejandro Rojas seems to think there really was no increase in August compared to previous years. I think what is more important is the number of cases that are investigated and not solved than the number of reports. Raw reports can be made by the thousands. What is more important are the cases that withstand critical scrutiny.

MUFON's fearless leader Clifford Clift suggested that media reports and MUFONs international symposium may have prompted these UFO reports. Hmmm....where have I heard about the media causing an increase in UFO reports before?

As if the Pennsylvania wave/August "boom" was not enough, the UFO examiner then started promoting what was occurring in Missouri. Last issue,

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



I pointed out how ridiculous the report filed by the a MUFON investigator from the area was. MUFON finally decided to send one of their beloved "STAR Teams" to the "Show me state". I doubted they would accomplish much as I have come to the conclusion that some STAR team can be just as biased as the standard MUFON investigators. One would think that these MUFON STAR teams would actually get out an obtain really good data using state of the art video/photographic equipment. Instead, they just perform a detailed investigation, which is what the state MUFON investigators should have done in the first place.

While commenting about the events, Roger Marsh chose to suggest it was probably some sort of secret military operation and then complained that the mainstream media was not picking this all up. Well, the news did pick it up and found a potential solution to some of the sightings. Apparently, a group of stunt fliers called "KC Flight" practice at night so they can perform stunts at Friday night football games. One of the pilot's, Phillip Lamb, described how the group is finding the reports that MUFON has been promoting amusing. One wonders why the television reporters were able to find a solution so quickly while local MUFON

investigators appeared to be clueless.

MUFON would later release a statement from the STAR team that the demonstration team caused several of the UFO reports on October 4th and that B-2s were also responsible for some of the UFO reports. It is unclear if they learned about the demonstration team because of the

local television's investigation or they informed the station of their results. Pilot Phillip Lamb says his group probably caused reports On October 3rd as well. I find an interesting comparison between this event and the Arizona UFOs of 1997 described in SUNlite 2-3 and some of the Stephenville reports in 2004. In all these cases, we have very similar descriptions. Witnesses reported seeing huge triangular craft flying very low and silent. What they really saw

were just aircraft in formation with lights. One would think that UFOlogists would have a "lessons learned" file somewhere so they can take a look into that possibility before they proclaim what the witnesses saw was something unearthly.

Other UFO reports mentioned by the UFO examiner in relation to the Missouri "flap" don't sound too impressive. One witness states they saw a bright object in the east that moved westward over six hours time. Even more impressive is this "UFO" had been seen on at least one previous day in the same location. Last issue, I mentioned the source of such UFO reports. The planet Jupiter is in the east after sunset and is a very likely suspect here. I guess even a cursory examination of these reports before promoting them is too much to expect.

Joe Capp pronounced that the Caesar video was not a blimp and that evil skeptics were trying to undermine the witness. I discussed the video back in SUNlite 3-4. I stated that it was probably a blimp or man made aircraft used in conjunction with the Yankees-Red Sox game at Yankee stadium. Capp originally told Reality Uncovered's forum (which he keeps calling "reality TV") that one could not see Yankee stadium from Caesar's apartment. Now it seems that one

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

can see Yankee stadium from there but it was not a blimp. Capp duplicated my efforts regarding blimps. I had previously admitted that I could not find the offending blimp either but there are other craft that can hover and provide aerial camera shots for baseball games. The lighting visible indicates standard lighting for aircraft including an anticollision strobe. Ignoring this lighting and all the pertinent information regarding a baseball game (Capp incorrectly states there was a double-header that day), shows a poor research methodology. He was blinded by his desire to believe what was recorded was something exotic and not something ordinary.



It was pointed out to me that the source of the UFO model in the Trent photographs may have appeared in Life Magazine's photographic database of the Trents. Mr. Trent seems quite at home standing next to that truck with the wing mirrors that look familiar.

Leslie Kean is desperately trying to spin the issue with the Petit-Rechain photograph in her favor. Despite skeptics proclaiming the photograph was a probable hoax, she was more than willing to accept the flawed analyses of various UFO scientists as being accurate. Now that the witness has come forward and said it was all a hoax, she is attempting to shift blame by attacking the witness as a liar. There is no doubt that Patrick lied by hoaxing the image in the first place but, instead of admitting they were fooled, UFOlogists are now resorting to doing something they accuse skeptics of doing all the time, which is attacking the witness. Time and time again, Kean finds it easy to blame others for her failure to follow-up and verify the research

of others. She should be ashamed.

The UFO Iconoclasts/Anthony Bragalia have been going on about the 1966 Wanaque UFO sightings. Like all the old cases, one can't really resolve much from the information but Lance Moody alerted me to a photograph that was supposedly taken by a witness to the sightings.



Any astronomer will probably recognize the image. In case people have a hard time recognizing it, try comparing it to this image I took with a 200mm lens of a specific deep sky object:



Yes, somebody tried to pass off a photograph of the Andromeda Galaxy (perhaps taken from a textbook) as a UFO photograph! If you look closely, you will see all the stars in my photograph match up with the stars in the UFO image.

Did Clifford Clift really suggest that the United States set off a few nuclear weapons to increase UFO activity in the USA? Is this what one would consider the leader of one of UFOlogy's major groups? Even if this is a comedy sketch and he was just joking, the message it sends is very disturbing for those who find UFOlogy a serious pursuit. Maybe Clift should give up UFOlogical research and switch to comedy. Then again, one might call UFOlogy a comedy of sorts.

Robert Salas posted a petition on the White House web site, which basically amounts to wanting "disclosure" of the government's cover-up activities. The

goal was to gain 5,000 signatures in a month. On October 19th (several weeks later), the tally only indicated 71 signatures. I am sure the petition has those involved in the "cover-up" shaking in their boots. If the cover-up has been so successful for over sixty years, I doubt that a bunch of UFO aficionados will change anything. This is more of a publicity stunt for Salas to keep him relevant in the UFO community as his claims about a UFO caused missile shutdown at Oscar Flight continue to lack any credibility.

Kevin Randle wondered where all the good UFO reports have gone. This is a very good question. In my opinion, the reason why there aren't any good UFO reports is because there are plenty of resources to identify the source of most of these reports. Of the three prominent cases in the past fifteen years (Arizona, Stephenville, and O'Hare), only the O'Hare case remains "mysterious". Even that case lacks any solid evidence. All we are left with are mysterious reports from unidentified individuals. Not a single photograph exists demonstrating that something "unearthly" was actually seen! As a result, we are left with ambiguous cases from the decades ago where one can argue endlessly about without any possible conclusion.

Dr. Bruce Maccabee revealed that he has uncovered evidence that demonstrates the Goodyear blimp had nothing to do with the Rogue River sighting. While the logs seem to seal the deal, there are some inconsistencies. For instance, the blimp was photographed in the San Francisco bay area when it was supposedly in Portland Oregon! A probable solution is the photograph's listed date is wrong. Last issue I mentioned how the blimp explanation was discussed in the James Randi Forum discussion on the subject and it jokingly evolved into the "Gay Rodeo" blimp. While it was one proposed explanation, it was not the only one. I thought it was more likely that it was a plane seen under conditions similar to the Catalina island UFO film of 1966 (which also was a plane). One of these days I am going to build a time machine to go back and see what really happened in all these old UFO cases.

The Roswell Corner

Roswell debris goes missing!

Frank Kimbler announced in early September, that he had lost a piece of UFO debris he found at the crash site. He had mailed it via Fedex to a scientific laboratory for analysis. When it made it there, the package was apparently empty! There are three possibilities. The first being that it was never mailed in the package. The second was that the package was opened en route and the piece removed by the individuals/organization that opened it. The third possibility was that the piece was removed when it was opened at the lab by somebody. What is the most likely? Things that may you go hmmmmmm.....

Kevin Randle complained about the location of the crash site

Somebody (he who shall not be named?) stated that Randle's Bill Brazel site is the wrong crash location. Randle pointed out that Bill Brazel showed it to him and, therefore, this makes it correct. I wonder why two scientific digs/efforts (CUFOS and Doleman's group) in the area turned up nothing significant but Frank Kimbler loitering around in the same area (according to Randle) managed to discover debris of "unusual nature". What does this say for the two efforts previously conducted and why didn't they find these things?

Proposed new Roswell UFO museum cancelled?

A new 25 million dollar UFO museum has been cancelled and the plot of land set aside for it is up for sale. The UFO museum plans on staying at its current location. Did somebody really think it was worth 25 million dollars to build a UFO museum? If people were really interested in investigating UFOs instead of promoting them, they could have found a way to put the 25 million dollars to good use instead of wasting it on some tourist trap.

All our realities

Oliver Hallen



Image courtesy of Matt Graeber

There has never been a paranormal theory in ufology that has ever convinced me in the slightest that what it proposes and what has been presented to back it over the years has any validity at all. But what about the ways in which all this fits into our lives and perception of the universe. How they slot in with the nature of our own reality is a very intriguing matter, one that brings about many curious areas, questions and ideas which lead us to some fascinating discoveries and places. Like a great deal in this field though, navigating throughout it can be a perilous and uncomfortable task, one you must certainly be well prepared for. Considering it though, if an esoteric viewpoint of ufology is in some way accurate, could the answer to this important enigma lie beyond our own reality and, if so, how could we ever hope to acquire and understand it? It is very possible that we would never figure it out, however much we desperately try or want to. Then again, even if we think we could, would we be able to convey what it truly means and how it affects not only ourselves, but the world at large?

Trying to visualise reality and its meaning at a personal, global and universal level in ufology is a journey which requires looking in-depth at existence itself. Who we are, what we are, what we think, how we feel, where we go, what we do, how we do it ...everything. But can we honestly look at our own lives in this way or are we simply too close to ever provide an accurate, useful analysis, and everyone else to far.

A person's own reality is constructed over time through their individual and intricate history, past, present and possible future. It is projected via our personality covering countless areas ranging from our dreams and expectations to the normal and bizarre, influenced by the hopefully evolving viewpoint we have. The attitude and experiences of a person dictates very much how something is interpreted through that individual's own reality and how it is used. All of this is reflected in our very being and is fed into the subject and beyond through our research, creating a constant cycle between us and it. Such important areas like, for instance, memories, imagination, drugs, illness, hallucinations, technology and hypnosis have to be taken into account when considering how they can influence and affect our view of reality concerning the field. The supposed paranormal can manifest itself in many assorted ways dependant on ones idea of reality, bringing about the important questions: does it exist outside of us, inside or a mixture and what kind of control do we have in this, if any? The ways in which different personal realities understand existence can be very hard to grasp in the context of such an open, complex and ambiguous field as this. The lines can be blurred and perplexing when trying to determine the boundaries and interaction in such framework. Through its intricacy overall, the subject lends itself easily to confusion. Reality can be as strange and captivating as ufology is, and as wearisome and predictable too. How can one not be enthralled by all this when viewing our lives through the

diverse and complicated lens of ufology and the ways in which it shapes us?

Though beliefs and the notion of it are much debated and controversial, the many various ones found right through the subject are all influenced in some way and extent by the personal world constructed through life, this being used to comprehend that which was chosen and help make sense of the world by means of this choice. People have always found appeal in the enlightenment and scale that a belief supposedly provides and how it travels beyond what is perceived as the normal world. So many have for such a long time looked to it in various aspects of life as a guiding light in the darkness and confusion thrown up by existence by providing the necessary truths that are sought, ufology being no different here. It is what countless folk have turned to to somehow change and direct their world, whatever their plain of existence or state of mind. A faith's scope in ufology for the amazing and its purpose and function in reality for its followers can be limitless, though this is definitely not to say it is all of a useful or positive nature. The system and limits that are imposed by a set belief can seriously affect the way in which all the variety of areas in ufology are researched and contemplated, flowing into the field at large with little or no filtering, instigating all manner of problems ranging from unfounded accusation and inaccuracy to misunderstanding. Whatever the context belief is used in regarding ufology, and we can see how varied all of it can be, we must always balance it with rationality. Blindly following a personally tailored faith without question or deviation is definitely wrong, showing you only what you want to see. It is vital to recognise the difference between belief and fact.

Concerning the world outside of us, there is definite links between the physical and our own reality with outer factors shaping our very character, leading us to a hopefully fuller understanding of who we are, what we are doing and where we are going. For example, what we see or hear about something, including the way in which it is presented to us, influences ways in which we think about that particular area, how we deal with it and how we pass it on should we choose to. The different physical environments and

events we find or put ourselves in and the personal links we can have to these is certainly of real importance. The impact an occurrence can have can drastically change your life ranging from your personality and approach to situations to human relations, and of course, not always for the better. We have all seen how much emphasis can be placed on physical aspects from any angle for different reasons when researching and how they can be both used and misused by ufologists and others. How we interact with the outside world and all its possibilities should always make us look at and question the divide between our reality and the physical, and the strong and various links that exist throughout.

Our minds can and do change over time and bring about new and different ways of working, adapting and understanding, good and bad. The evolution of reality shows us that, in whatever form and magnitude, it is growing and changing with us whether we realise it or not. How we react to this can alter the course of our lives for both the better and worse. Reality nevertheless can be modified and controlled to suit one's own biased views, shaping the world both inside and out to match what is seen as being truthful even in the face of what logic and wisdom tells us is not. Such areas as logic and wisdom though can be the enemy of a true believer and sceptic mentality. What must be considered in all this regardless of who you are is that our own concept of reality in ufology could be wrong on any level. How can anybody be certain of everything concerning such an untrustworthy, dubious and unproven subject as this? Is reality here built more on self-delusion and mistake than genuine existence and happening, a complex construct made for personal reasons? Regrettably, although not surprising, it does play an important part in the lives of many researchers and others, with it spanning the varied spectrum of possibilities.

It is an essential part of study to look outside of your own viewpoint and approach to get as full an understanding as possible of ufology, and be able to examine and make use of what you discover and learn here in your own research. Too many people get set into a comfortable and narrow path which limits their scope, affecting the work they do in the field and how

it is used and viewed. They bolster and protect their position by carefully picking what suits and fits into what they believe is correct, ignoring or attacking anything outside the rule. The style and strength of reality can vary massively from person to person, with what helps or hinders it being of great diversity. We must remember that a threat to a person's reality is in turn a threat to their identity and existence, thus survival and preservation here can come at great cost. What are considered as positives in this can be just as damaging though when used in the wrong way. A lot of the time, I feel ufologists can be their own worst enemies.

Examining where we stand as a race now, and the road we took to get to where we are, is essential to understanding not just the past and present, but the future of ufology and how we can best approach and comprehend it, whatever the angle. I believe that what so many people need to realise is that with a pragmatic mindset and methods it will lead to the right perspective, and with this perspective we are that bit closer to understanding not just the field as a whole, but also ourselves.

Oliver Hallen is an ufologist based in England. Having been involved with this subject for over 20 years, he has conducted many varied research projects which include running his own UFO newsletter debris field times, writing a monthly UFO column for the Congleton Chronicle newspaper for more than two years, acquiring assorted documentation from various sources, maintaining his database project and contributing articles to UFO Research Queensland's UFO Encounter journal, Phenomena magazine and Anomaly magazine's website.

December 9, 1965: The historical record

Most of what is known about the Kecksburg event comes from testimonies made decades after the actual event. Any critical examination of the case must start by examining the documentation from newspapers, magazines, and the Blue Book files. One can then see how the event was recorded in 1965.

"A tremendous flash of light"

Around 4:43 PM EST on December 9, 1965, witnesses in the states surrounding Lake Erie saw a brilliant meteor that cast shadows onto the ground and left a debris trail in the sky that was visible for between twenty and sixty minutes. It was a truly incredible sight for those who saw it and it generated a great deal of excitement in the media and at project Blue Book.

Most of the reports came from the cities/towns lining the western half of Lake Erie. In Detroit and its suburbs, there were reports that a plane had crashed into Lake St. Claire, which prompted the Coast Guard to investigate. They could not locate any evidence of an airplane crash, which demonstrates how inaccurate and confusing these initial reports were.

Statements made by witnesses in the area described the brightness of the meteor, a sonic boom, and that the debris trail lasted in the sky for some time:

The light was so intense it created shadows. "As I stepped out of the door of my house, there was a tremendous flash of light, brighter than day," said Grosse Pointe policeman Edmund Denthuyts. "I saw my shadow on the ground from it," he added.¹

In Toledo, where the fireball was first reported, residents saw a blinding flash of blue-white light in the sky northeast of the city. Switchboards lighted up almost instantly, most of the callers believing a plane had exploded.²

Jack Kuechtges, Indian Hollow road, Grafton reported seeing a "flash in the sky" at about 4:45 pm. "It exploded over the lake near Lorain. There was a white

IRONWOOD DAILY GLOBE

Many See Dazzling Light Flash in Sky

puff of smoke in the sky for about 20 minutes after the explosion," he said.³

...Mrs. Margaret Lankin, who with her daughter had been hanging clothes when the fireball appeared. About 30 seconds after it disappeared, they heard loud detonations...H. Needham at the London, Ontario airport...described the lingering train as seen most of the time against a clear western sky.⁴

A majority of the observations of the fireball came from the states bordering Lake Erie. The further away the witnesses, the less likely they were to report it as it was low on the horizon and not as bright.

Meanwhile, at Blue Book

In his book, UFOs: An insider's view of the official quest for evidence, Dr. Roy Craig made the following observation:

What I found at Project Blue Book was little concern by Major Quintanilla, who was in charge of the project at that time, or by anyone else there, about the fact that public reports of UFO sightings were not investigated seriously by a great number of the "UFO Officers," one officer being so designated at each air base. Their interest was intense, however, in details of any report which might have been triggered by a satellite in decaying orbit and burning as it reentered the atmosphere. Blue Book personnel actively searched for pieces of reentered satellite, for the obvious and practical reason of learning what materials of construction the Russians were then using in their satellite program.⁵

This became very evident on December 9, 1965. The Blue Book file on the event includes what appears to be the duty officer's log, which accounts for all that transpired that night.

1835-2100 - This appears to be a summary of the events that transpired during this time period. The duty log describes

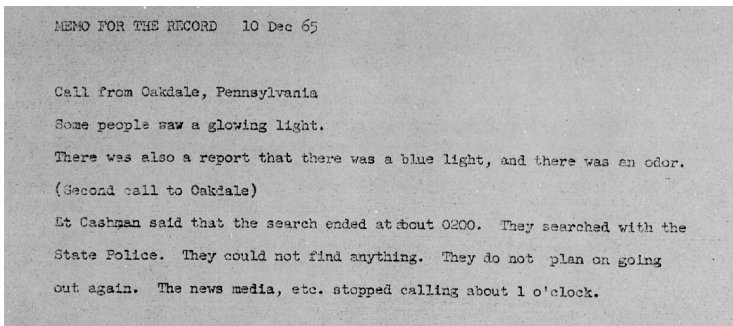
receiving a phone call from Major Horkamf of USAF defense command. The Major passed on information about receiving reports coming from the Detroit air defense command sector and to be prepared for UFO sightings. The log also mentions an AP report. Major Quintanilla was called and he came to the base. The reports from Kecksburg in the media apparently convinced them to send some AF personnel from the nearest location. The entry mentions a call to the Oakdale radar station and the dispatching of a three man team to pick up an object that supposedly started a fire. Additionally, somebody from Flint, Michigan called, stating they had picked up something that had fallen out of the sky. Calls from the news media were directed towards the USAF information officer. Finally, the entry mentions Quintanilla calling SPADATS asking if they had any reentering space debris. They replied in the negative, which had Quintanilla draw the conclusion that it may be a meteorite.

2250 - Detroit radio called requesting an exchange of information. They had reports of three objects but were not sure if anything hit. The response by the officer was that they knew as much as the radio station.

2300 - NORAD called wondering if the Oakdale team reported anything. They had yet to receive information. Major Quintanilla stated he would call them during the duty day if any word comes out of Oakdale.

2323 - A call from Mr. J.L. Borassa, Chief Special operations division OEP, describing the retrieval of three strips of aluminum from Lapeer, Michigan.

2340 - Officer called Lapeer, Michigan. The aluminum strips were going to be brought to him in the morning and he wanted to keep one for analysis. He agreed to send two strips to Blue Book.



Project Blue Book memo for the record revealing what the 662nd radar squadron found

lice, apparently concerned for safety of people trying to get into the woods and potential damage to private property, sealed off the road leading to the search area. The Miller farm became the site of most of the activity with the state police monitoring the search.

Reporter Robert Gatty interviewed several individuals. One of these was volunteer fireman Dale Howard. He reported hearing a "thump" nearby from his home. When he arrived, he was employed as being part of the road block. He told Gatty that the state police and army had directed him not to allow anyone into the area. This would end up creating the misleading headline "Army ropes off area". In truth, it was the state police's operation. Gatty would also pick up on a story that the US Army engineers were to arrive later.

Meanwhile, radio reporter John Murphy went on a wild search for the crash site. According to Bob Young, he initially thought the crash site was a burning wood pile near the Norvelt golf course. He eventually found the area and began talking to the bystanders watching the volunteer firemen and state police search the woods. He talked to Carl Metz, the state police fire marshall. Metz gave him a non-response and referred him to the army. Murphy then talked to Captain Joseph Dussia, the state police troop commander. Dussia told him to go to the barracks where he and the Army's 662nd radar squadron might be able to make a statement. When Murphy arrived at the barracks he saw at least one member of the USAF wearing Lieutenant bars as well as some personnel wearing army uniforms.

At this point in time, it appears that the initial search of the woods resulted in nothing being found. The members of the radar squadron seemed to have just

arrived at the state police barracks and had not even gone down to the woods. Some local fireman reported seeing blue flashing lights in the woods. This initiated a second search, which seemed to involve the members of the military.

As it got later in the evening, people began to lose interest and left the area. No source of the blue flashing light was discovered and neither was any object. By 2 AM, the USAF officer in charge, satisfied that nothing of importance was present, went back to his base and reported nothing was found.

Still, the state police and local media were not satisfied. The next morning another search was conducted of the woods with the same results. There was absolutely no indication of anything ever crashing into the woods. Captain Dussia would release a statement of the negative results and then comment, *"Someone made a mountain out of a molehill."*¹⁴

Notes and references

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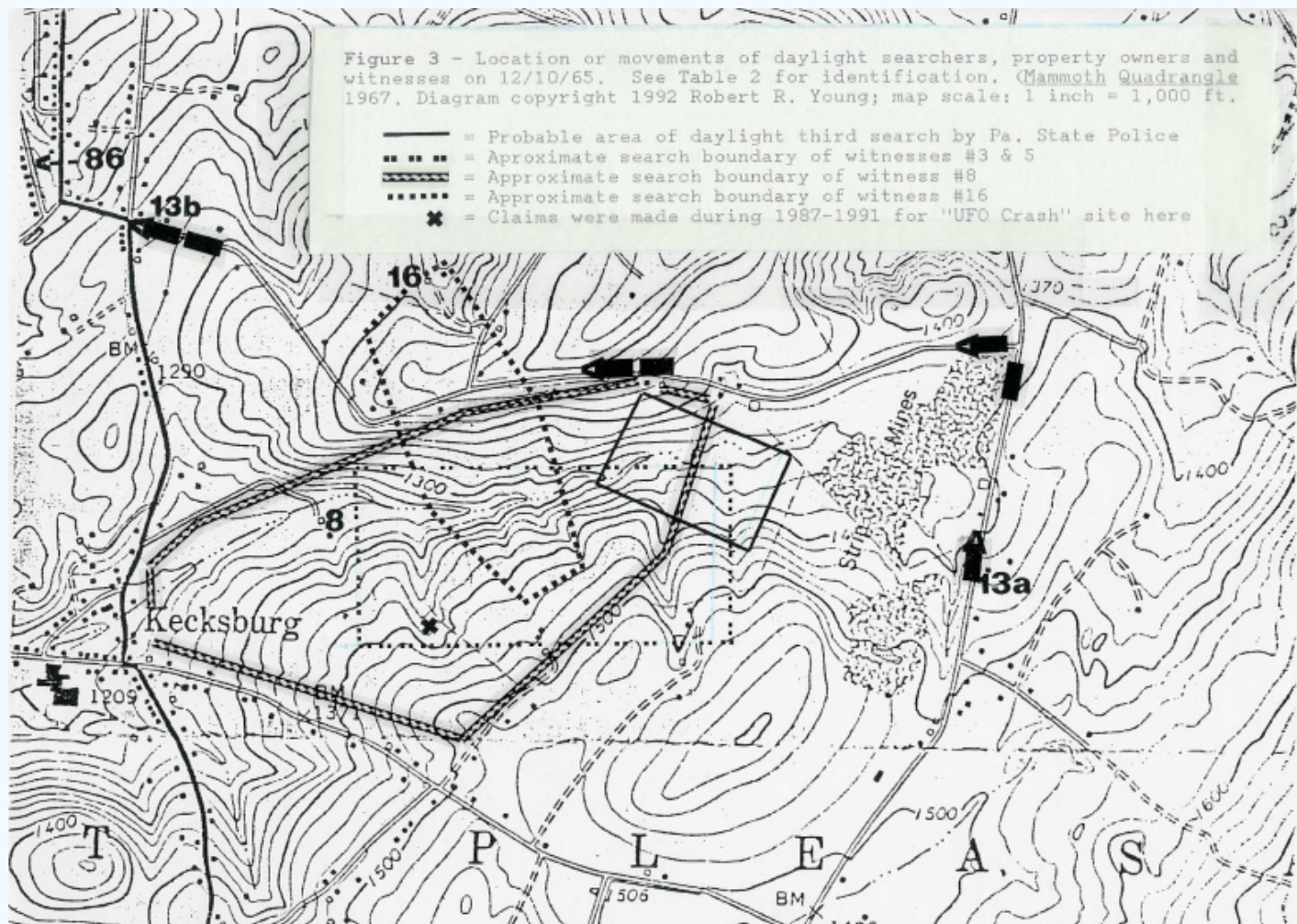
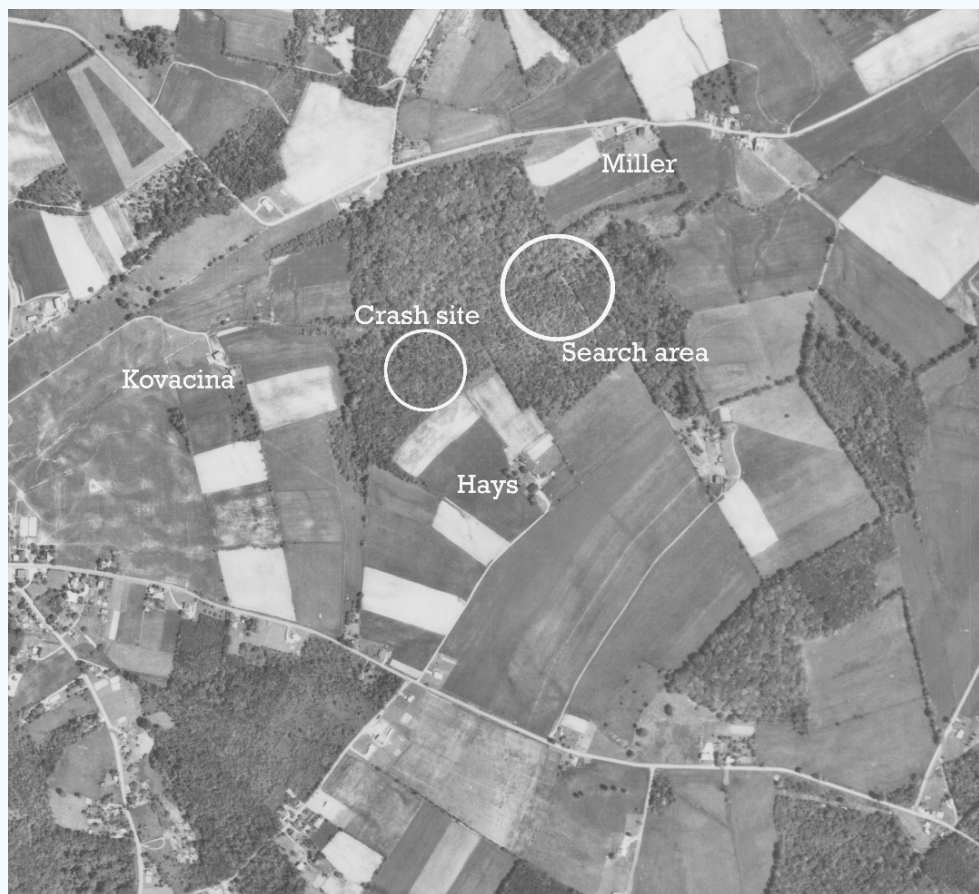
Meteorite Search Fails

Page 1 headline of the Uniontown evening standard December 10, 1965

Searching the woods

Bob Young's work regarding the events of December 9th, 1965 reveals some interesting items that were never revealed by those promoting the case. He reports that the woods was searched several times. This included a search the following morning in broad daylight by the state police and media. Like the search the night before, nothing was found.

The image below documents the searches conducted by various individuals/groups that Bob Young had interviewed. All reported finding nothing. To the right is a 1967 aerial image showing the location of two of the farms and one family (Hays), who lived in the area. The Miller farm was the site of most of the excitement that night. The Kovacina's also saw a lot of people searching the woods that night but saw no object crash or military personnel. Only the Hays seemed to have reported anything (marked by the crash site circle) and that was decades later. On the night of 9 December, Mr. Hays reported seeing nothing to the local media.



There were certain issues raised in 1965 that have reasonable explanations. Many of these were resolved by Bob Young's research and are outlined here.

The puff of smoke

The first question has to do with what Mrs. Kalp saw that night. She reported seeing a "puff of smoke" over the woods. Bob Young plotted the sighting line from her location towards the point in the sky where the meteor dust trail would have been and discovered that it lined up correctly with the woods, where all the excitement occurred (see Figure #1 on next page).

Explosive thump!

The report by Dale Howard, which appeared in the local papers, mentioned hearing an explosion or "thump" that evening around the same time the fireball was seen. The Tribune-Review would follow-up on this and state it probably came from a nearby quarry that had exploded some dynamite (see the article on page 34).

Army, Navy, or Air Force?

It seems there was a lot of confusion about what branches of the military were present that night. It is an established fact that the USAF sent members of the 662nd Radar Squadron from Oakdale to Kecksburg. However, where do all the stories about soldiers and sailors come from? There are several explanations.

1965 issues explained



A cartoon poking fun at the USAF blue uniforms and how they could be mistaken for some other profession.

The first report by Mrs. Kalp talking to a naval officer sounds like a miscommunication over the phone. If she physically met the officer, she may have confused the "sky blue" uniforms worn by the USAF officers with the Navy blue worn by Naval officers. For somebody who may have never seen a Naval or USAF officer before it seems like a plausible explanation.

The confusion between AF and army personnel has several factors to consider:

1. The types of uniforms being worn by the personnel sent from the Radar station were probably different. The Officer probably was wearing a standard blue AF uniform but the enlisted could have been wearing the green working uniforms that looked a lot like the Army working fatigues. The two different uniforms would give the impression of two different services being involved.

2. Oakdale was part of the Nike air defense system of Pittsburgh (See image below), which had Army personnel manning the missile sites. This association with the Army would give the impression to outsiders that they were Army personnel.

3. Oakdale, being part of the Nike system might have had some Army personnel at the base. It is possible that the USAF officer in charge was able to acquire a few privates from the army unit for this kind of work.

4. It was less than twenty years since the USAF became an independent service. WWII veterans would have remembered that the AF was once part of the Army. This could create confusion in some minds, who mixed up the two services.

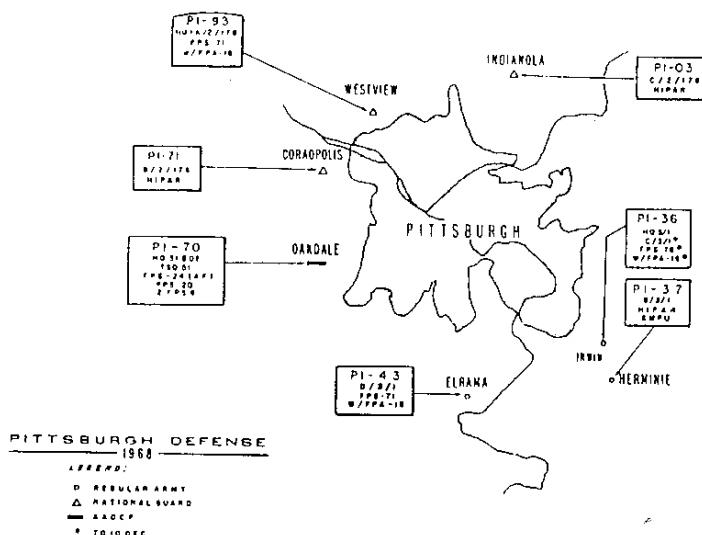
All of this confusion about the Army and Air Force would eventually lead to inaccurate headlines and generate stories of Army involvement in later retellings of the story.

The mystery light

Late in the evening, various individuals saw a blue light in the woods. This was not explained right away but Bob Young was able to track down a person, who admitted it was a prank they were playing that night (see figure #2 on next page).

Where are the engineers?

The story about the Army engineers and other specialists was more rumor than fact. According to Bob Young, it was being circulated around between the troopers and fireman. The media then picked up on this and reported it. As one can see in the Blue Book files, there was no mention of sending anybody but the Radar Squadron personnel. So, who made the call for the engineers (for which there is no record)? The idea that a junior AF officer would make a decision of calling in additional units without permission is unheard of in the US military especially when it involves units from other services. Additionally, it appears that he lacked any sort of communication with anybody in the command structure. As it was, Blue Book seemed to have a difficult time contacting them!



Nike missile system layout for Pittsburgh in 1968 (http://ed-thelen.org/page_b_35.gif). Notice that the missile batteries were manned by Army and National Guard units.

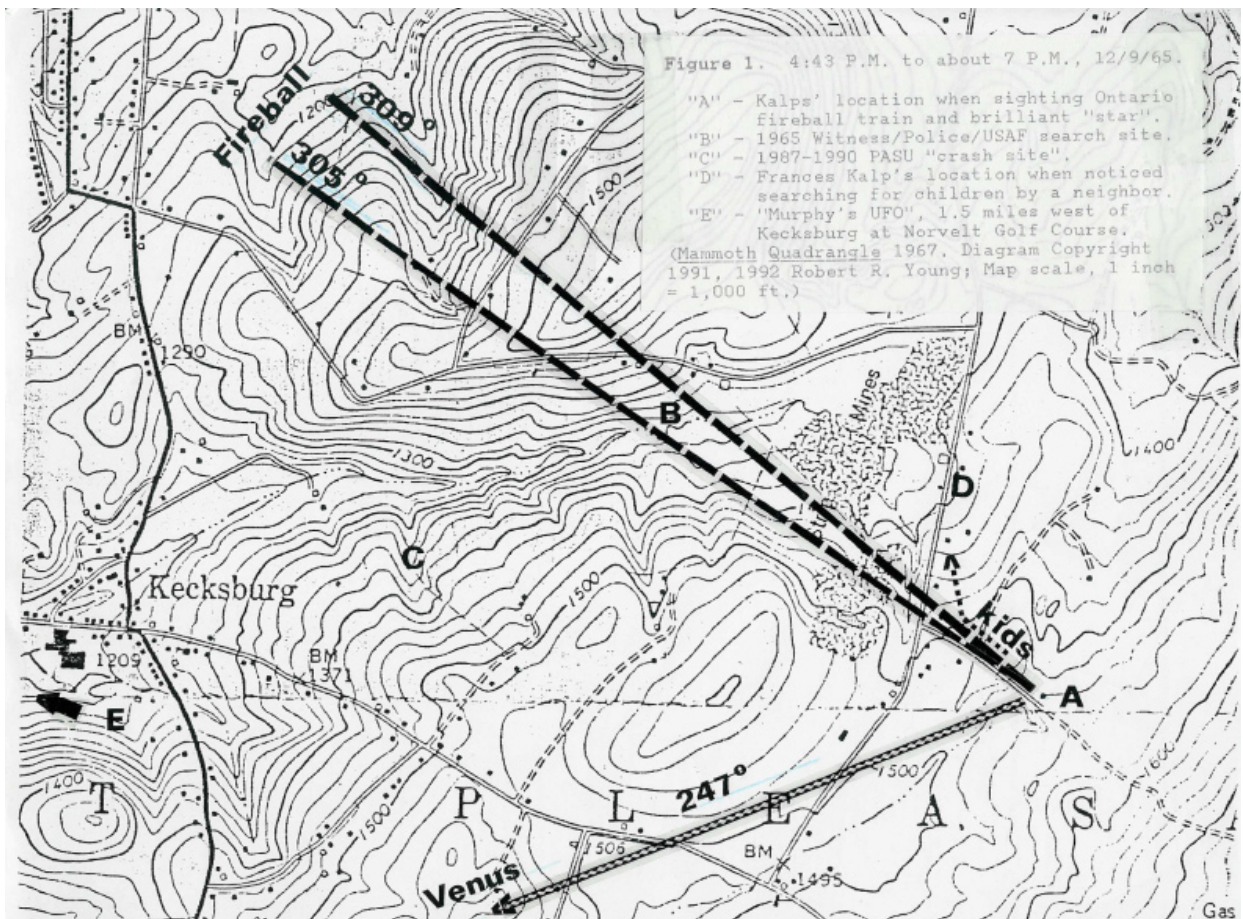


Figure 1. Bob Young's analysis of how the fireball dust trail could be misperceived as a "puff of smoke"

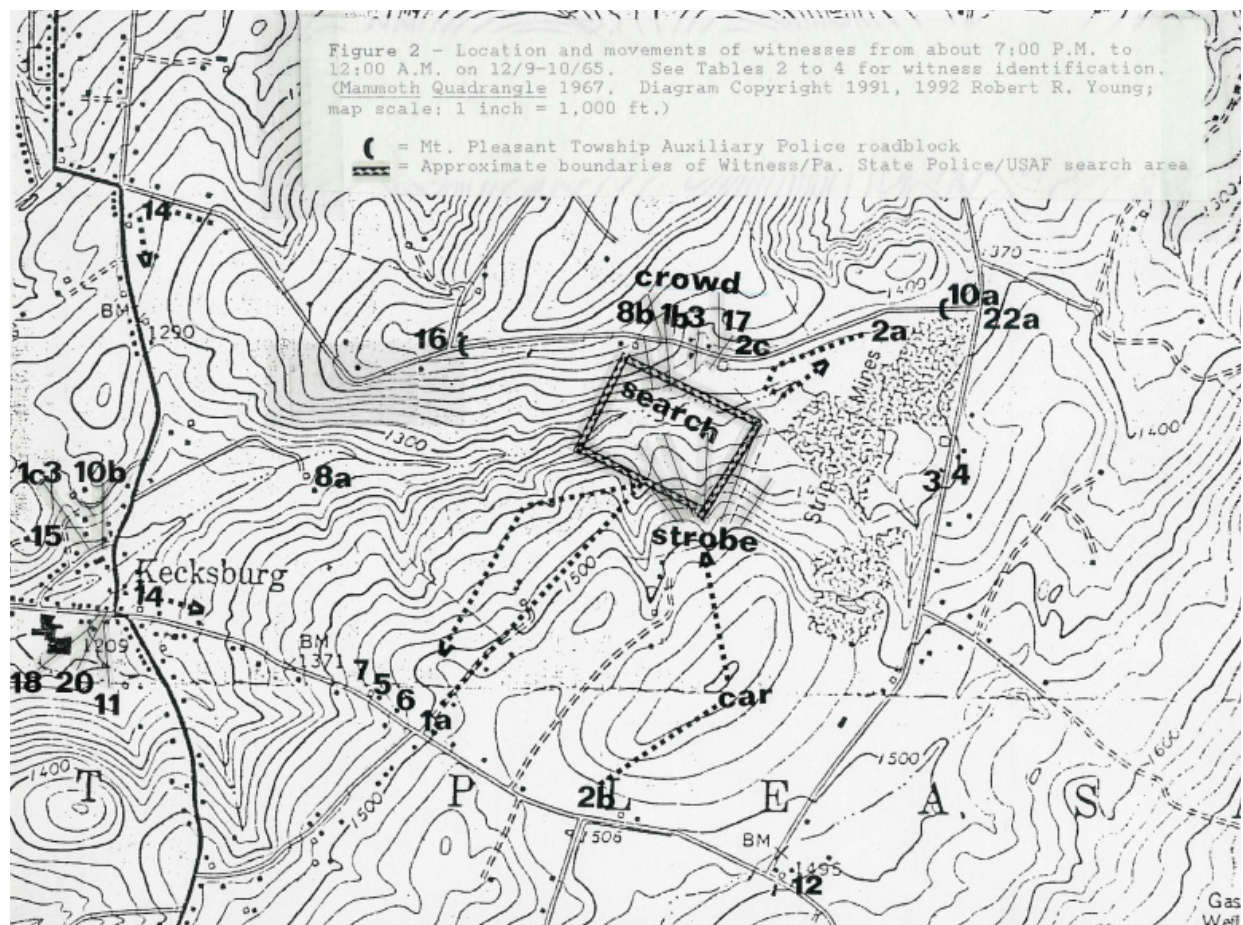


Figure 2: Bob Young's map of the search area for the night of 9 December, 1965. Note the location of the road blocks and the location of the strobe light prank that confused searchers

"The Abominable Space Thing"

by Bob Young

"SOMETHING" Landed in Pennsylvania

Why did U.S. military experts rush to see a fiery object
that crashed into the woods near Pittsburgh on December 9?

By Ivan T. Sanderson

North American Newspaper Alliance

This is the "Fate" article title in March of 1966. The original title was "The Abominable Space Thing"

A case study demonstrating how inaccurate or false information published by a well-known UFOlogist can remain unexamined while being cited for years, even decades, is that of the late Ivan Sanderson and his 1965 article, "The Abominable Space Thing".¹

Just about sunset on December 9, 1965 tens of thousands² in ten states and Ontario witnessed a bright bolide meteor. Among the witnesses were a woman and her children near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania about 45 miles east of Pittsburgh. This incident has been called the Kecksburg UFO Crash.

One of the things UFO proponents have claimed about the fireball is that it maneuvered, or at least changed direction, something meteors don't do. They have claimed that it made a sharp 25 degree turn to the east over Ohio, then travelled over Midland, Pa. and the City of Pittsburgh (where it seemed to go unnoticed) toward Kecksburg before maneuvering to a landing or crashing.

This change of direction by the object seems to have first been proposed only three days after the event by Sanderson, a UFO and cyptozoological writer, in his manuscript submitted to the North American Newspaper Alliance. It was published in many newspapers, then reprinted in Fate magazine. For decades UFO fans seeking to vicariously relive the

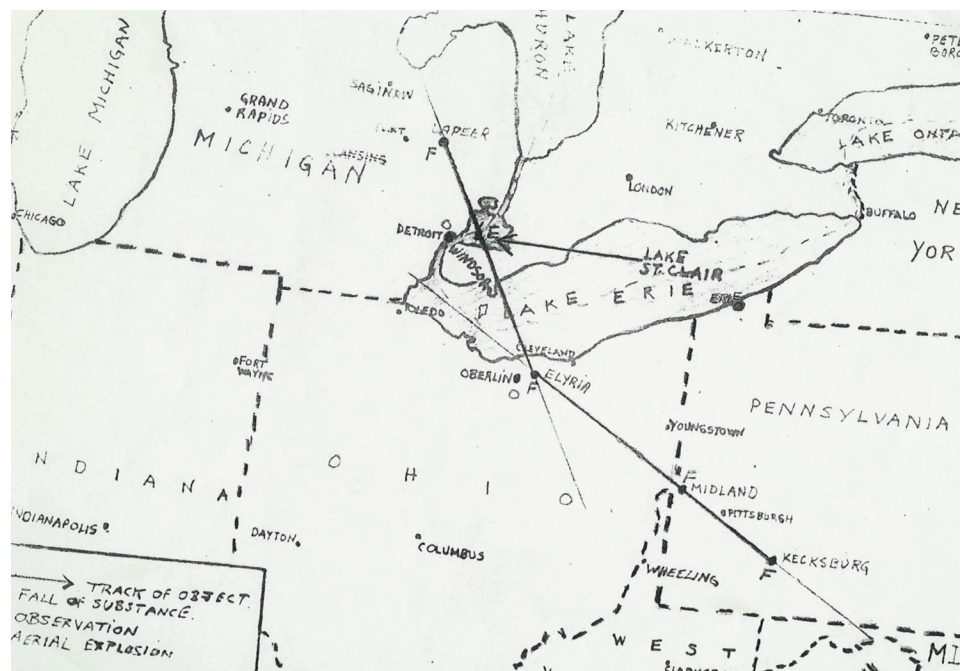
thrills experienced by witnesses or just redredging up old reports have started at the beginning of many saucer stories, managing only to prolong old myths and long-solved mysteries.

Sanderson drew lines between witness locations where the object was first reported to have dropped material to the ground (Lapeer, Michigan; Lorain County, Ohio; Midland, PA, and Kecksburg), believing that this "automatically pinpointed] the passage". Nothing actually seems to have been found at Midland and there is no reason to think that Lorain frag-

ments, or aircraft foil picked up at Lapeer were associated with the meteor. Since many other reported "landing locations" were not included by Sanderson, this early theory cannot be supported by what is now known. One example is a widely reported sighting from Erie, (9) where witnesses say the fireball disappear at the western horizon over the lake. Notes in the Blue Book files even report Air Force investigators going there. Why wasn't this "location" used by Sanderson? We'll never know. Playing "connect the dots" of witness locations on a map for an object visible for hundreds of miles does not prove maneuvering.

If Sanderson had drawn a line on a real map, as I did⁶, instead of using a hand-drawn sketch¹ or if later UFO crash enthusiasts had made even the most elementary check of his claim instead of repeating his method^(3,7,8) they would have noticed flaws in his story. They would have seen that a path from Lapeer, Michigan, to Elyria, Ohio, would be at an azimuth of 152 degrees, and from Elyria to Kecksburg would be at an azimuth of 120 degrees, a difference of 32 degrees, not 25 degrees as Sanderson claimed. An object using Sanderson's path would pass no closer than 26 miles to the south of Kecksburg

His speeds were also grossly in error, referring to miles/hour when the calculations clearly referred to miles/minute. This represents a 60 times error in speed,



allowing fantastic speculations about a maneuvering saucer to excite enthusiasts for years. Even with original witness reports and their scatted times, a rational analysis would have cast doubt on Sanderson's claims.

Western Pennsylvania UFO researcher Stan Gordon claimed in the 1990 "Unsolved Mysteries" show which kicked off national interest in the incident, that the object seem by thousands over the Midwest about 4:45 PM changed direction, then travelled for ten minutes before maneuvering and "crashing" near Kecksburg. This can be refuted by the fact that no local 1965 witnesses reported seeing two objects, the fireball in the western sky and then later the maneuvering UFO nearby.

However, I must tell you that a few months after I first presented this argument against a "slow" moving UFO, back in the early 1990's, one of the newly surfaced witnesses central to the later crash and recovery story suddenly began claiming the UFO actually circled the town. To this day, he is the only person to have claimed to notice this spectacular maneuvering. I'll let you, dear reader, draw your own conclusions.

The wide range of times for reports is probably due to the usual wide range of eyewitness "details" one gets from fireball reports. Clocks and watches are set at different times and many just estimate the times of such events. The many reports from airplane pilots collected by the FAA, and a seismic recording in Michigan allowed the actual time to be determined to within a few seconds.

Many of the original published times ranged from 4:40 to "about 5:15". The key Kecksburg witness, Mrs. Kalp, reported the time as 4:45 P.M. in the local Greensburg paper¹⁰, only one minute later than a 4:44 P.M. report from Oberlin, Ohio, carried in the Pittsburgh Press¹¹. This distance - 180 miles in one minute - would give a hypothetical speed of about 10,800 miles per hour, well within the speeds of meteors in the lower atmosphere or reentering space debris, which would have been visible throughout the sighting area. Why didn't the UFO investigators cite this speed? Was it because it would support the official cause of a meteor?

Proponents of a maneuvering UFO must explain how every 1965 Pennsylvania witness missed seeing a fireball brighter than the full moon at 4:44 P.M. low in the west, but only saw the UFO "maneuvering" nearby at about this same time. This includes three independent witnesses (all facing west) in Beaver County, Pa., about 60 miles northwest of Kecksburg. They must also explain how the accounts of every 1965 witness for which a direction is known or can be inferred can be explained by assuming they were watching the fireball over Lake Erie low in the western sky. Without an explanation for these curious coincidences between witness reports at Kecksburg and everywhere else, any theory of maneuvered flight can't satisfy the facts.

Mr. Gordon and fellow promoters of a crash as Kecksburg also must explain why three independent witnesses at Midland, Pa., (all facing west) also missed the fireball, and why they and Mrs. Kalp mistakenly thought the UFO appeared at 4:45 P.M., when hundreds of others first saw it as a fireball visible from hundreds of miles away. Without an explanation for these occurrences, the maneuvering UFO theory falls flat.

How an unexpected event lasting a few seconds can transmogrify into a 10-minute maneuvering saucer circling a town is truly a wonder of Ufology. It is, however, nothing new to astronomers trying to filter through reports of bright fireball meteors.

Ivan Sanderson was the source of the erroneous notion that the object maneuvered, and therefore could not be a meteor. He seems to have spoken to no eyewitnesses, relying on wire service stories and phone calls to state police spokesmen. His hand-sketches map was inaccurate and his "speeds" were grossly in error. Any present day UFO enthusiast who still cites his hastily written and inaccurate but widely reprinted article only demonstrates that old saucer tales seldom die.

Notes and references

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In December 1965, two types of investigations were made into the events that transpired the night of December 9th. Each wanted to determine where the remains of the object that was seen came down. Each employed different methodologies, which produced two completely different results.

Two investigations with two very different results

Initial scientific investigation

Eureka in just 7 days!

In less than one week, Ivan T. Sanderson had made his conclusion. The event involved an "unidentified" object (or "thing" as he described it) that had moved at an average speed of 16.5 miles per minute (about 1000 mph). Not only did the object move at too slow a speed, Sanderson also noted that the object changed direction during its flight. Both of these factors, **if correct**, ruled out the meteor explanation.

Sanderson achieved his quick success by making phone calls to various police departments and reading the news accounts. While this was a good start to an investigation, it was essentially the limit to Sanderson's research in his article. It resulted in serious flaws in his conclusions.

Bob Young's article on the previous pages pokes all the holes in Sanderson's effort and I see no need to repeat them. However, because of some very incorrect assumptions, Sanderson's calculations and trajectory were open to error. He rushed to publish his story and ignored a lot of data. As one will see, a far greater weight of the witness testimony would indicate a completed different trajectory that was consistent with the meteor explanation.

While Sanderson was trying to create his trajectory for the "thing", scientists employed a more methodical approach in trying to locate any debris from the bright fireball.

G.W. Wetherill, a geophysics and geology professor at UCLA, just happened to be in the area at the time. His effort was documented in the February 1966 edition of Sky and Telescope. It is important to note that this issue was published shortly after the event. In the 1960s, magazines such as Sky and Telescope usually were completed and ready for printing several weeks before the date they were published. So, the article was written no later than about a month after the event in mid-January. Like Sanderson's article, it was incomplete and missing important information that would later be revealed.

Dr. Wetherill started his investigation on 12 December by renting a car from Cleveland and visiting all the areas mentioned by the local media. The local FAA office was very helpful and they had reports from 23 pilots. Many of them thought a plane had come down in Lake Erie. Wetherill plotted the sight lines and determined that the meteor was seen over Lake Erie between Toledo, Ohio and Pelee island.

As the professor went further west, along the southern and western coast of Lake Erie, he determined that the meteor did not make it to the southern end of the lake and that a sonic boom had been heard on the western half of the lake. Based on his interviews and description, Sky and Telescope listed the trajectory as going from roughly NW to SE over the lake. This preliminary trajectory would later turn out to be slightly off in its direction but fairly accurate in determining the general location of the meteor's path.

All the claims of fragments being found were discovered to be "meteor-wrongs" and not meteorites. Additionally, observations by witnesses regarding the meteor's distance were often inaccurate:

These imagined happenings arose from the impossibility of estimating the distance to an object in the sky. Almost everyone who saw the fireball thought it was much closer than it really was. When it had disappeared behind a house or a tree, many people thought it had fallen only a few hundred yards beyond.

The most important thing that Dr. Wetherill noted was that the meteor disappeared over Lake Erie and did not make it to the south side of the lake. The witness reports had demolished that part of Sanderson's trajectory. However, further investigation and hard data would establish once and for all, that the meteor did not head towards Kecksburg.

Better data = Better results

It was fortunate that two photographers, Lowell Wright and Richard Champine,

50 Amarillo Globe-Times Thursday, December 16, 1965



Scientist Says Flying Object Was Not a Meteorite

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ivan Sanderson is a widely respected authority on the unexplained phenomena of science, although he is often at loggerheads with what the Scientific Establishment, among his many books are "The Glimpse of Life" (Random House), and his just published "Track of Great Objects" (The New Yorker). He has asked me to try to make some sense out of the strange object in the skies seen by many Americans last week. Sanderson says the object, at night with state patrol desks at the landing points.

By IVAN T. SANDERSON
NEW YORK (NANA) — Short before sundown on Dec. 9, a fiery, bright-orange object, or object, flew from Michigan over the tip of Ontario and west-ern Lake Erie, and then the northeast corner of Ohio, appar-ently landing in a densely wooded area about 30 miles south of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Its passage was noted by a large number of people on the ground and by several experi-enced commercial and private pilots.

Bits of it fell near Lapeer, Laramie County, and near Midland and Kecksburg, Pa.

Something else blew up in the air over Lake St. Clair, east of Detroit-Windsor, rocking planes in the area with sharp shock waves.

Pin-pointing these observations on the map shows that the object or objects passed in a straight line from somewhere east of Flint, Mich., over Lake St. Clair to Oberlin and Elyria, near Cleveland, Ohio, in a south-erly direction and then made a 25-degree turn to the east. From that point the line of travel was again straight, this time from the northeast corner of Ohio, appar-ently landing in a densely wooded area about 30 miles south of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Further, this "thing" was seen in northeast Indiana, a minimum of 120 miles southwest of its line of travel; over Erie, Penn.,

land almost every day and are ignored or at the most searched for only by enthusiastic amate-urs, great contingents of spe-cialists from the armed forces were on the scenes of the falls almost as fast as the state po-lice.

One of the military "spokes-men" stated for the record: "We don't know what we have here (but) there is an unidentified flying object in the woods."

Neither meteorites nor bolides fly; they fall. What's more, they don't just drift in at 16.5 miles per minute.

Then, apart from the odd re- port of two piles of shredded lead in strips only 1-1/2 in. of an inch thick having been found at Lapeer, Mich., where the thing was first observed to drop some- thing, and the 1,000-foot fire near Elyria, and the dropping fiery ball and smoke arising

Too Late to Classify

FRESH Jersey and Holstein milk calves. Sale 12:30 tomorrow, the 10th. Condon Livestock Company, 1500 S. Broadway, Houston 8331.

FOR SALE, residence, Miniature Poodles, AKC Registered, five necessary shins and a Dutch clip. EV-1270, continue.

CELLAR SALE, Antiques, Inc. Poup. group, 1-5 Friday, 9 Sat- urday, 1206 Buchanan.

LARGE, three-story apartment with garage. Nicely furnished. Pleasant view. PL-131.

EXTRA good paved business corner. 100 ft. x 100 ft. North Park. Only \$27,800. DP-597.

SEVERAL desirable building tracts near hills out of South West-ern. 10 per cent down. Waupaca, Wis. DP-1271.

GOOD USED portable dishwasher, guaranteed 360. Terms. Martin As- phalter (The G. L. Stern) 3049 W. 10th.

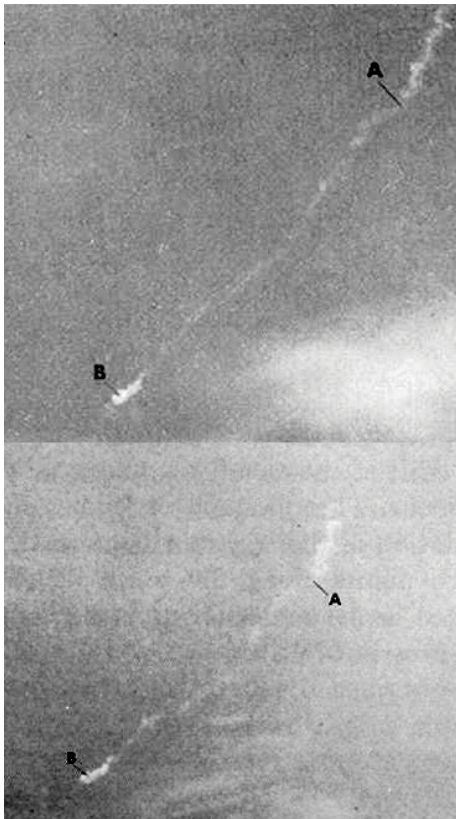
FOR SALE: Honda 50 cc. bike, FL-1318.

HAVE FOR sale good Holstein sec-ondary. 500. Phone. DP-1270.

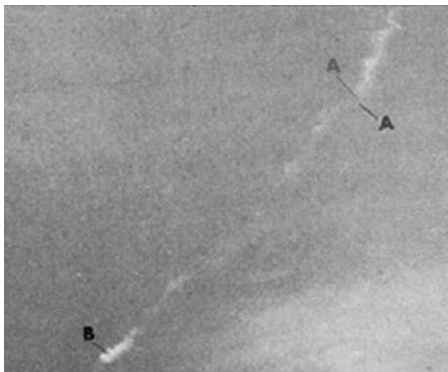
WRECKING, 1957 Ford, 1958 Ford, 1959 Ford, 1959 Pontiac, 1958 Oldsmobile, 1958 Studebaker, 1957 Oldsmobile, 1948 Lincoln, 1959 Plymouth. EV-1271.

Ivan T. Sanderson's original article, which appeared in the Amarillo Globe-Times On December 16th, 1965 (p.50). The article that appeared in Fate magazine three months later was not much different.

were able to photograph the debris trail in the evening sky after the event. This debris trail provided a source of data that was accurate enough to compute a good trajectory.



The two images of the trail used for computing the trajectory. While different parts of the trail are disintegrating, points A and B are consistent between the two.



In this image, I rescaled and aligned the dust trail images on top of each other to show there is little difference between the points used.

Dr. Von Del Chamberlain and Dr. David Krause would mention something that was very important:

The four Champine photographs cover a span of about 80 seconds, and reveal the total drift of the cloud was minimal. Although disintegration of the train is evi-

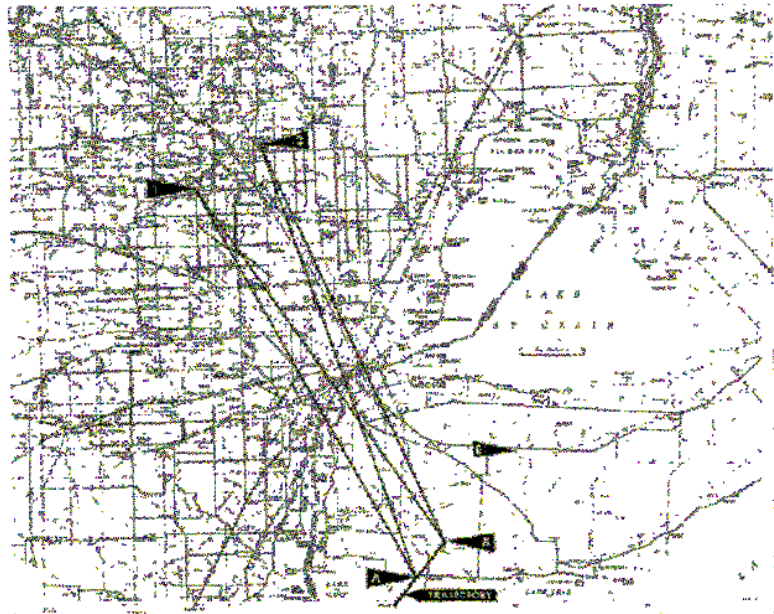


FIG. 4—Triangulation of points A and B from the photographs shown in figures 2 and 3. Locations 1 and 2 are the sites of the photographers Wright and Champine respectively. Point E is the earth point.

dent.²

Because of this, the scientists were able to select two distinct points on the debris trail (see above labeled A and B) and use them to compute a trajectory. Writing in the *Meteorites of Michigan*, Dr. Von Del Chamberlain (staff astronomer of the Abrams Planetarium in Lansing, Michigan) described what was done next:

*The author and two associates, David Krause and Ralph Johnson, went to both these locations and made transit readings based upon the photographs. The trajectory and end-point of the fireball were then computed (fig. 4). Interviewing residents near the computed end-point revealed the fireball trail did, in fact, end directly overhead in extreme southwest Ontario, thus confirming its trajectory and likely region of fall.*³

Luckily both sets of photographs had landmarks, which allowed for pinpointing the location of the photographer and the trails position in the sky. The use of a transit allowed for precise measurements of azimuth and elevation. The resultant trajectory showed the meteor had appeared near the northern shore of Lake Erie and headed northeast.

This was consistent with most of the witness reports that were being collected. Dr. Wetherill had collected some reports but Von Del Chamberlain in conjunction with Dr. J.A.V. Douglas and Henry Lee of

the Royal Astronomical Society of Windsor had collected close to one hundred reports from which to refine the data. Not only did they have the reports but they conducted many of their interviews with the witnesses "on the spot" in order to refine the observational data.

*On-the-spot interviews of some seventy observers (now close to 100) were made by Mr. Henry Lee, President of the Windsor Centre of the RASC, and the writer during part of January. Reduction of this sighting data confirmed the general ground position of the end-point as was determined from the photographs by Mr. Chamberlain.*⁴

More confirmation of the trajectory came from seismic data recorded by the University of Michigan Geophysics lab near Ypsilanti, Michigan. It was the only seismograph in the area that recorded the sonic event indicating that the terminal burst point was in the vicinity of the seismograph. Seismographs in Ohio and Pennsylvania recorded nothing. If Sanderson's plot towards Kecksburg were correct, then the seismographs in those regions would have recorded the terminal burst and the University of Michigan seismograph would not have.

All the data indicates the fireball's trajectory ended up on the northern shore of Lake Erie and did not end near Kecksburg. Ivan Sanderson's flawed analysis had been easily refuted by science....or

was it?

Trying to resurrect Sanderson

Over the years, UFOlogists have trumpeted Sanderson's trajectory as a definitive work of some kind. This changed when Robert Young produced the analysis by Von Del Chamberlain and Krause. Still there were some "UFOcrashologists" that decided that Sanderson must have been right in a desire to believe in a Kecksburg crash. David Rudiak took up the challenge and published a critique and counter-analysis on his web site and can be found at http://www.roswellproof.com/Kecksburg_triangulation_error.html.

On his web page, Rudiak spends a great deal of space explaining why the astronomers were probably wrong in their analysis. His argument is essentially based on three major points:

1. That there is no error analysis and that a potential error in computing the azimuth and elevation could shift the computed path towards Kecksburg.
2. That Chamberlain and Krause failed to notice or, apparently, lied about the "drift" caused by the winds between the Wright and Champine photographs. This drift could be the source of errors in their computations that would lead to a faulty solution.
3. That the apparent angular size of the dust train was not uniform across the length of the trail indicating the debris trail pointed away from the photographers and towards Kecksburg.

Rudiak's error is interesting because what he apparently wants is there to be some error in favor of a Kecksburg trajectory. He suggests potential errors in aligning the photographs with the local terrain. Ignored or unknown by Rudiak is the fact that a transit was used at the scene of the photographs and photographs carefully examined. Considering the fact that the differences between points A and B are only 5-6 degrees in azimuth, any error beyond a fraction of a degree would have been significant and obvious. Despite proclaiming an error could shift the

trajectory towards Kecksburg, Rudiak does not even demonstrate that such an error even exists! For it to fit the Kecksburg scenario, he has to have conditions just right and ignore all the supporting eyewitness reports gathered by Von Del Chamberlain, Krause, and Davis.

In his second major point, Rudiak makes a big deal about being able to measure drift due to high altitude winds and questioning the statements by Chamberlain and Krause that minimal drift was visible in the photographs. Rudiak's "major drift" has nothing to do with points A and B, which were used for the trajectory computation, but to the rest of the components of the trail. Chamberlain and Krause noted this disintegration in their paper but also mentioned that Champine took four photographs over a period of 80 seconds, which showed no significant displacement for the key points A and B. These two points were the only parts of the trail that were used for computing the trajectory so any disintegration/drift of those sections would have no bearing on the results.

Rudiak's third argument about the angular size across the length of the trail is faulty because it apparently assumes a constant width of the debris trail. It does not take into account how the dust trail was formed. Unlike bright fireballs at night, which leave trails of ionized atmospheric molecules that glow, the only trails left by daylight fireballs are due to the debris left behind by the meteoroid's passage. As the meteoroid travels into the atmosphere, its dimensions and shape vary and, as a result, the amount of debris left behind varies. One can just as reasonably argue that the any change in the dust trail's dimensions has more to do with the meteoroid's interaction with the atmosphere than with a change in perspective.

Chamberlain and Krause were much more thorough in their analysis of the event than Rudiak suggests in his argument. Rudiak implies the astronomers were working in a vacuum and relied solely on the photographs, which is not the case. They interviewed tens of witnesses and performed on the spot interviews to refine the data. They were interested in computing where any fragments had fallen. They would have checked for

errors in their calculations if the witness testimony indicated a different path. According to Dr. Douglas, this was not the case.

When I first read David Rudiak's work, I contacted Dr. Von Del Chamberlain mentioning this critique. His observation of Rudiak's analysis was that he ignored all the scientific data gathered by hard work and investigation that confirmed the triangulation from the photographs. Von Del Chamberlain also suggested that David Rudiak was just trying to "prove" what he wanted to believe and ignored the confirmation by eyewitness reports and seismographic data. The bottom line is that he saw no reason to change the conclusions of his paper based on Rudiak's speculation/belief in a spaceship crash at Kecksburg.

To top it all off, while apparently rejecting the work published in a scientific journal, Mr. Rudiak seemed perfectly willing to accept the self-published conclusions of Sanderson and the decades old recollections by eyewitnesses dug up by Stan Gordon. Can this be considered a reasonable scientific approach? It sounds more like pseudoscience, which is no substitute for the real scientific work that was done in 1965-66.

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One would think that the lack of anything being found or the published scientific works would have been enough to put the Kecksburg story away for good. Dr. Hynek seemed willing to accept the meteor explanation as was NI-CAP, the primary UFO organization in the United States! However, the event would not go away, and over the years, the story would evolve into the legend it has become today.

Lost in the woods

The following week, radio reporter John Murphy decided to produce a radio documentary called, "The object in the woods". In the program, Murphy proclaimed that several people chose to withdraw their interviews because of possible repercussions from the state police or the army. As a result, his story was somewhat watered down. At no time, did Murphy mention that something was brought out of the woods or that vast contingents of military personnel were involved. All that was suggested was that something was in the woods. No shape or size was given. Despite the suggestion that people were pressured not to talk, the radio station made the following statement at the beginning of the program:

This station has not been contacted by any official agency of the State, Federal or local Governments in connection with this program. We have received very good cooperation with the State Police and with the military and we were able to receive all the information that we wanted this past week. We have not had any political or otherwise influence put on us concerning this program, whatsoever.¹

Most of the program recounted Murphy's adventure that night. Murphy mentions seeing a few military personnel from the Army and Air Force at the state police barracks. He also mentions that he was not allowed to go with the searchers in the woods even though he felt he had been authorized to do so. Beyond that, there is very little information to add to the story. There is no mention of military personnel/equipment, no mention of an object being removed from the woods, or mention of any threats made directly to anyone by guards or the government.

The Kecksburg story evolves into legend

Murphy would eventually die in a tragic hit and run accident. UFOlogists and other television programs have put a sinister spin on all of this over the years with the implication he was "terminated" for knowing too much. There is no evidence to support this claim other than some very overactive imaginations.

Sowing seeds

Already mentioned in this issue was Ivan T. Sanderson's article about the events that evening. However, a lot of his article were essentially "poetic license" and not very accurate. This is a pertinent example:

Yet, although meteors land almost every day and are ignored or at most searched for by enthusiastic amateurs, great contingents of specialists from the armed forces arrived at the scenes of the falls as almost as fast as the State Police got there. One armed forces' spokesman stated for the record, "We don't know what we have here, (but) there is an Unidentified Flying Object in the woods." Neither meteors or bolides fly; they fall. What is more they don't just drift in at 1062.5 miles per hour.²

The actual quote in the Tribune-Review was, "We don't know what we have yet."³ There never was a mention of UFO being in the woods. Additionally, Sanderson mentioned large groups of specialists going to all the locations falls were reported. As one can see from what is documented, this is far from the truth.

Serious business

In his book, Flying Saucers: Serious Business, Frank Edwards mentions the Kecksburg incident and the role he played. According to him, he was at station KDKA being interviewed by Mike Levine, when the event occurred. Edwards concluded at the time it was probably a meteor. However, he seems to have changed his opinion after reading the stories in the papers and the article by Ivan Sanderson.

Edwards seems to have used Sanderson's article as his primary source. Instead of a "puff of smoke" that was reported, he draws the conclusion that something was burning in the woods even though there never was any evidence for this. He also repeats the military involvement described by Sanderson:

Sanderson says that newsmen and State Police officers who converged on the area discovered that sizeable contingents of various military units had already reached the scene.⁴

However, this is not what Sanderson stated. Edwards had misinterpreted what was written.

Part of the greatest flap yet?

Jerome Clark also apparently used Sanderson as his source of information in an article for Flying Saucer Review in 1966. According to Clark:

At Cleveland, radar traced it at a speed of 1062.5 miles per hour.⁵

There never was any mention of radar contact in any of the news reports or in Sanderson's article.

Clark also ran with the story told by Sanderson, the same way Edwards did:

At 4:50 the sightings climaxed with the crash of a brilliant orange UFO into a woods thirty miles south of Pittsburgh. One of the witnesses, a farm-woman residing near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, notified State Police immediately. Responding to her call, law officers were startled to find sizeable military units already at the scene. One service official told newsmen, "We don't know what we have here, but there is an Unidentified Flying Object in the woods."⁶

The quote by the "service official" came from Sanderson with the parenthesis around "but" removed. This appears in Edwards book as well. As previously noted, Sanderson got the quote wrong. It appears that either Edwards or Clark changed it slightly and then the other used the quote. Nobody went to the original source. They were just repeating what others had stated.

Trying to create a scenario to explain all the conflicting reports of fragments in the media, Mr. Clark boldly proclaimed:

*The only conclusion to be drawn, improbable as it may be, is that several UFOs met with violent disaster, **within minutes of each other**, over the North-east on the afternoon of December 9.⁷*

Of course, it isn't the only conclusion one can draw but it is the only conclusion a UFOlogist will draw. Liberally using Sanderson, Clark and Edwards misrepresented the actual events and laid more seeds for the future evolution of the Kecksburg UFO crash.

The Phoenix rises

The Kecksburg story lay dormant for about 10-15 years as nobody seemed interested in crashed flying saucers. However, in the late 1970s, Len Stringfield began to start writing about UFO crash rumors he had heard over the years. Roswell was becoming a popular name in UFOlogy and the interest in potential UFO crashes rose.

The phoenix of Kecksburg first began to rise thanks to the efforts of Clark McClelland. Writing in his "The UFO Crash Retrieval Syndrome status report II: New Sources, New Data, Part II New Support Data", Len Stringfield states he was told about Kecksburg by McClelland on October 5, 1979.

McClelland recounted many of the news reports at the time but then used Ivan Sanderson's flawed air speed calculations without checking up on them. He then described pursuing the possibility that it might have been Cosmos-96 that caused the incident.

Like Frank Edwards and Jerome Clark before him, McClelland apparently used Sanderson as a primary source for the following with some additional embellishment:

Within an hour following the impact of the object at Kecksburg, a large contingent of military specialists arrived at the scene almost as swiftly as the Pennsylvania State Police and volunteer fire groups. They quickly cordoned off the area and

ordered on-lookers to leave.⁸

On January 11, 1980, McClelland interviewed several of the witnesses who were mentioned in the 1965 newspaper accounts. James Mayes and Melvin Reese repeated their story about seeing a light in the woods. Mayes also mentioned that the military personnel had set up a command post in the Kecksburg fire hall and were in contact with their base, which was west of Pittsburgh (Oakdale is west of Pittsburgh). McClelland implies this was Wright-Patterson and does not mention the 662nd radar squadron, which was published in the newspapers. His claim about on-lookers being ordered to leave is in also contradicted with what was reported in 1965 where the roads were jammed up with all sorts of curious people.

Mayes also recalled that a large military truck had come into the area and exited later with a large object covered by a tarpaulin. This would be confirmed by Robert Bitner, who stated he was the fire chief in 1965. Bitner claimed to arrive later in the evening in time to see a 10-ton truck exit the wooded area, under guard, with a tarp covered object that was 6 feet high, 7 feet wide, and 17 feet long. When it left, the vehicle was under escort to an undisclosed location.

In conclusion, McClelland would write:

The Kecksburg incident was not caused by a meteor or anything astronomical. Of this we can be sure. Perhaps further study of the re-entry data will determine an association with the Cosmos-96 that returned to Earth on December 9, 1965. This remains to be proven. Was it a craft alien to Earth? Information gained so far may eventually favor this theory. What is certain is that something important was apparently retrieved by the military and as yet, the object and its origin remain a mystery.⁹

In this article, one can see the how the Kecksburg story is evolving. The appearance of a few radar technicians from a nearby radar station who arrived late in the evening has evolved into a large number of "specialists" (with the implication that they specialized in crashed UFO retrievals) arriving before or at the same

time as the police and fire department. Additionally, we see the appearance of the truck with the recovered object underneath a tarpaulin. In 1965, the only mention of something being retrieved was made by Captain Dussia in the December 10, 1965 article about the search failing to find anything.

About something that was carried out of the woods, Capt. Dussia said it was the equipment used in the search.¹⁰

Stringfield and McClelland were moving the case from a mysterious object that nobody could find to a full blown crashed spaceship retrieval.

Kecksburg Crashology

By the mid-1980s, it was Stan Gordon, who picked up the Kecksburg story and began to look for additional witnesses who could shed more light on the cover-up that had occurred in association with the UFO crash.

According to Gordon, he was interested in the case when he was a teenager:

He heard reports that something crashed in the woods near the tiny village of Kecksburg at approximately 4:45 p.m. that evening...On his black-and-white TV, Gordon watched the local news and occasional special bulletins that broke into regular programming to state that the military had arrived on the scene and that the area was cordoned off. A search was underway to locate the object.¹¹

Already convinced that it was some extraordinary event, Gordon began to research the case and disagreed with the conclusion it was a meteor because of what had been previously stated about the event.

As previously noted, the various elements were already established in place. Sanderson had planted most of the seeds. The object could not be a meteor because it had changed direction and was too slow. The military that was present had ballooned from a handful of technicians to units of significant size and were controlling access to the wooded area. Finally, there now were witnesses who were proclaiming there was an object and it was carted away by the military. All Gordon



The model UFO used in the Unsolved Mysteries program based on James Romansky's description is now a monument to the Kecksburg crash. (courtesy of Wikimeida commons photographer Ryright)

had to do was canvas the area with this story and faded memories/imagination would do the rest.

Gordon showed up in shopping malls and on radio talk shows promoting the story. Eventually, he found his star witness. In 1987, while at a local shopping mall with one of his displays, James Romansky came up and told Gordon he was there that night.

Romanskying the Acorn

James Romansky's story is the first to have made claims to have actually seen the object in the woods. In early accounts, he went by the pseudonym of "John" or "Pete" but would reveal his name in time for the filming of the "Unsolved Mysteries" episode in September of 1990.

According to Romansky, he was an 18 year-old volunteer fireman with the Lloydsville fire department about a dozen miles to the north. He had heard the whistle and, thinking a plane had gone

down, proceeded to Kecksburg with the fire truck.

When the truck arrived at the Kecksburg fire station, Romansky and his group were assigned to search an area of the woods that was part of a larger grid search:

We was into our grid area and we heard on our walkie-talkies that another team found where the object was and it wasn't so far from where we were, so we high-tailed it over into a hollow and came upon the object.

There were eight, nine, 10 guys there, standing around looking at this thing. I stopped and looked and said, 'Whoa, this is no aircraft. What the hell is it?'

It looked like a giant acorn. It was oblong and had a bumper around it and in back it was perfectly flat. I saw no doors, no motor, no windows, no seams, no rivets.

But there were two unique things: one was the color, a golden bronze. It was a weird color. And the other thing was on

this bumper... it looked like ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. Rectangles, lines and circles.¹²

Romansky then states somebody came in with a Geiger counter and ordered everyone out of the area. The military had arrived and taken charge. According to Romansky, the Kecksburg fire hall was filled with all sorts of military personnel and he was not allowed inside. There were even armed guards outside the building.

As they stood about, Romansky saw a convoy of military vehicles, which included a wrecker and large flatbed vehicle head towards the woods:

...it's there an hour, hour and a half. And then it comes out, hell-bent for leather, and on the back of that truck was the object, covered by a tarpaulin, maybe 15 foot long, eight to 10 foot in diameter, big enough for a man to stand in.¹³

Romansky's story (Under the alias of "John") began to appear in UFO articles in 1987 but on May 6, 1989, Kim Opaka published his story in the Latrobe, Bulletin (Kecksburg Crash Controversial). With the shape of the object established in the public record, all stories could now draw on this information to generate new and more exciting tales.

However, Romansky's credibility began to wane as soon as his name was revealed. In 1966, Romansky was convicted of robbing a bank. The excuse made for Romansky was that he was young and needed the money. Quotes in the news reports from the trial indicated a less than repentant individual. One gets the impression that he is not the most trustworthy of individuals.

Meanwhile, there is little evidence in his story that can be proven to be true. Bob Young stated that the reason the 18-year old Romansky was not allowed in the firehouse had more to do with the bar that was there. Romansky was too young to be allowed to participate in the festivities. According to then fire chief Ed Myers, "We probably sold as much beer as we ever did because of all the people."¹⁴

The rest of his story about being part of some search grid and using Walkie-talkies is also disputed by Myers. Meanwhile,

the have been no fireman that have come forward to confirm what Romansky stated. Even though he was working closely with all these people in the search, he has yet to produce a name that will confirm his version of events. Fortunately for Romansky, another witness would appear to help him out.

Beating the Bulebush

The second major witness to the acorn did not publicly appear until the fall of 1989 when Stan Gordon referred to him as "Jack" in the MUFON journal. According to Gordon, he got a tip in September 1988 that led him to "Jack", who confirmed the story told by Romansky

Jack, a pseudonym for the actual witness, lived about a mile from the crash site at the time of the occurrence. Jack had been listening to the radio, and had just heard the report that something had crashed in the area. He drove up the road to the highest lookout point. This road is now called Meteor Road, since it was this track that was jammed with cars from the public during the night of the search in 1965.

When Jack got to the top he looked down to the wooded area below and saw a group of about 10 people standing around and pointing to something. Curious, he walked down the steep bank to see what was so interesting. When he arrived at the spot, he noticed a series of trees had been knocked down, and about 20 feet away from him and the group was a strange object semi-buried in the ground.

It was nearly dark and Jack used his high beam flashlight to explore the device. His basic description is quite similar to Pete's. But Jack claims that at the time he saw it, bright blue sparks "like a welder's torch" were coming from it. This sparking kept up for some time, but seemed to be almost stopped just before he and the others left the site. The object made no sound, but the observers were hesitant to approach it any closer. The people talked among themselves as to what the strange object was. There were no homes in the area, and apparently none of these people (we don't know their identities) ever officially called this report in to the police. Jack's report of the blue sparks now brings up the possibility that some of the reports of a blue light in the woods during the early

evening hours may not all be dismissed as the prank we had discussed before.

It also has to be pointed out that apparently Jack and the others got to the site before either Pete, the other members of the search team or the military. Jack came in from the opposite side from where the state police had initially entered. Pete also came into the area from a different point. Jack mentioned that as they were moving out of the area, they saw distant lights in the woods. Some of the people commented that whoever came out of the object was walking away, but it was likely that they were seeing the search parties beginning to arrive at the location.¹⁵

"Jack" appears to be the first published account of witness Bill Bulebush. Although we don't know if "Jack" is really Bulebush, there are no others with a similar tale.

Compare the story in 1989 with the story told by Bulebush in 2000:

It was about 4:45 in the afternoon and Bill Bulebush was in his driveway, flat on his back under the dashboard of his Corvair, his head beneath the steering wheel, the tools he needed to install a CB radio in his hands, when he was startled by a strange, sizzling noise overhead. He craned his neck and looked through the windshield and saw a bright light speeding across the clouds so fast it seemed to set the sky on fire.

"I got out of the car and walked out toward the road where I could watch it," says Bulebush, 74, recalling the afternoon of Dec. 9, 1965.

"I went down over the hill toward the mountain, then I seen it coming back. It was like it couldn't make up its mind what it wanted to do. This thing floated and made a U-turn and headed into the ravine. I got in my car and took off over the back road."

That back road - a lightly traveled two-lane stretch then called Kuhn's Road and later rechristened Meteor Road - winds above the farmland and woods that make up Kecksburg, Pa., a crossroads community in Westmoreland County about 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

Bulebush parked his car, got out and

looked down into the valley to see where the thing had landed. The landscape was familiar. Bulebush had lived there his entire life.

He grabbed a flashlight and walked down the hill into the woods. The tops of trees had been sheared in the same direction as the fireball's path. He smelled sulfur. Then he came upon it: an acorn-shaped object about the size of a Volkswagen bug, burnt orange in color, with a raised ring around the back and markings that looked like backward letters.

Frightened, his heart pounding wildly, Bulebush stood behind a tree, staring, expecting something to jump out - although he couldn't see how anything could possibly exit the strange capsule.

"There was no doors, no seams, no nothing," he says. "It laid there and arced for a while, like it was cooling down. If I'd had my camera, that picture would be worth a million dollars."

When other people started to rush into the woods, Bulebush decided to leave. He was afraid of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. "I didn't want to be running around with this light shining and get shot for no reason," he recalls.

In the early darkness he made his way back to his car, went home and told his wife what he had seen. "She asked me, Did I stop at the club? Was I drinking? I said, No, no, I wasn't drinking. She said, You better not say nothing to anybody."

Bulebush followed her advice for nearly 25 years. Until one day when out of the blue Bulebush got a phone call from a man who said he'd spent decades researching UFOs and the mystery of Kecksburg.¹⁶

It is important to note the changes. The original story involved him and ten other people. He then changed it to he was alone. This probably has a lot to do with the lack of people coming forward to verify this version of events. Additionally, he originally heard about the crash on the radio. Now, he is outside and saw the meteor crash and where it went.

In a later version, Bulebush would change his story again. For the television program, UFO files: Kecksburg, he was no

longer installing the CB radio but working on his car. He had the CB radio on:

I heard guys in Ohio talking on there and they were jabbering, they were coming east. They said they seen this thing going east...¹⁷

One wonders how a 1965 CB radio could receive signals from Ohio that was over 60 miles away when most CB radios can only receive signals from about ten to twenty miles away. Another revision is that instead of going home and telling his wife, he grabs his son and takes him down to the road to see everything. Bulebush comments on the military:

I never seen so many people and the Army was there. I couldn't figure out how the Army got there so quick. The Army kept everyone away.¹⁸

Bulebush seems to have problems telling a consistent story. Is this a case of increasing the size of "the fish that got away"?

Like Romansky's tale, this story can not be confirmed either. One has to wonder where the "tip" came from. Perhaps it was James Romansky OR some other UFOlogist who had primed the pump for Bulebush. Unfortunately, he did not get the story exactly right the first time so he had to refine it.

Fortress Hays

The story of the military involvement ballooned when Lillian and John Hays described how their house was turned into the center of operations that night by all the military. According to popular Kecksburg lore, their farm was the closest to where the object was found and, therefore, the military set up their command post there. Throughout the evening, the military came and went. Young John Hays was up in his bedroom looking out the window in his room and saw the military cut the fence to allow passage of their truck into the ravine. He saw the flatbed go into the ravine and pull out an object the size of a volkwagon. The next day Hays and his brother went down into the woods and saw damage to trees and the ground.

The problem with the "command post" story told by the Hays family is that it ap-

pears to be refuted by the father in 1965:

...Don Hays, Mt. Pleasant RD2, who was working on his automobile about 5:15 PM Thursday night and was about as close as could be determined to the area where the search was conducted, reported nothing and saw nothing.¹⁹

Additionally, the Hilland's, who owned the home the Hays were renting, disagree with Lillian and John's account. According to Bob Young, Mr. Hilland told him that there wasn't even a phone installed in the house in 1965. Bob Young could not confirm this but, if true, it would indicate that the Hays story is completely fabricated.

Of course, one really does not need the evidence of the phone because the father reported he saw nothing in 1965, which indicates somebody is lying.

Local resident, Ray Howard claims that the vehicle could not even have made it down into the ravine area.

Ray Howard, of Kecksburg, expressed doubt that any flat-bed truck would be able to get in and out of such a steep ravine.

"There's no way," he said with emphasis. "They couldn't have gotten within 500 feet of that thing."²⁰

The topographic maps of the location indicate a very steep grade into the "ravine". Is it even possible that a vehicle described by the witnesses could have made it into the dense woods shown in the Sci-Fi Channel's program? Why was there no evidence of the truck and flat bed's passage into these woods when the police and media searched the area on the morning of December 10th? Where are the photographs showing the vehicle or the trail it left behind? There is no evidence presented to date that any vehicle of significant size ever went into those woods. It seems unlikely that this story is accurate.

Moonsuits

Bill Weaver drove into Kecksburg to see what was happening. According to him, he could see what was happening in the woods from a location that was near the Hays home. He tried to illuminate the

woods with a spotlight in his car but was ordered to turn the light off.

In the Unsolved Mysteries broadcast, Bill Weaver told a story of seeing box-type truck appear and two men stepped out with a large box. They were dressed in "moon suits" as if they wanted to avoid being contaminated. Weaver was then ordered out of the area.

This appears to be confirmed by Lillian and John Hays, who stated they heard that NASA was on its way. John Hays would state that he later saw men in white suits outside his home.

However, what evidence is there that NASA even was aware where the "crash site" was located. In the "memo for the record" (10 December 1965), Project Blue Book writes:

Houston Space Center requested information as to the sighting near Acme, Pennsylvania. Major told him that an Air Force team along with the State Highway Patrol searched the area until 2 o'clock this morning. Major gave him the location as 45-50 miles east of Pittsburgh.²¹

This phone call occurred on the morning of the 10th AFTER they had learned about the results of the search. If NASA was not informed until AFTER the search was complete, it means they were not involved that evening as claimed. There is no mention of NASA being in communication with Blue Book in the handwritten log found in the Blue Book Files. In the log and the "memos for the record", it appears that people were interested but knew just as much as Blue Book did. Everyone was waiting for what the Oakdale group would report before taking any further action.

Boots on the ground

In the story now being presented, the military's involvement at Kecksburg reaches mythic proportions. Instead of a few technicians from a local radar squadron, vast numbers of armed military personnel are now present. Some of the more interesting stories about the military personnel include:

1. Dave Newhouse stated a guard pointed a gun at him and ordered

him to leave. (see image below from the Sci-Fi Channel program where he demonstrated how a military guard pointed his gun at him).



2. Don Sebastian stated he snuck around the roadblocks and saw armed soldiers marching in a line. He then heard several screams that were, to him, not human. He rapidly departed the area.
3. Robert Blyston would claim that the town was under martial law with MPs at every corner!
4. Jerry Betters says he saw the flatbed and the UFO, which was still uncovered enough for him to see it. When they were noticed, an officer ordered them out of the area at gunpoint.

Then there were the military vehicles:

1. Linda Foschia reports seeing a Convoy of army trucks, jeeps and the flatbed truck first reported by Mayes and Bitner in 1980.
2. Bob Bitner described a personnel carrier, and a 6X6 army truck (with a canopy) had shown up near his location. He states the 6X6 went down into the woods

Probably the best “debunking” of all this was produced by Leslie Kean even though she tried to spin it a different way:

Our private investigator was able to locate Cashman and three other key personnel from the 662nd, and Gordon interviewed a fifth in 1991. Only one of these, a lieutenant whom I will not name to respect his privacy, said he actually went out to search for the object that night. This officer said he did not observe any Army presence

in the area, any excess civilian activity, or the large spotlights in the woods observed by witnesses and reporter John Murphy. This seems impossible if he was anywhere near the correct location and directly contradicts press reports about the large military presence and civilian crowds. He said he and three other members of the 662nd searched the woods with flashlights and found nothing.

It is revealing that puzzling discrepancies exist among key points of the various accounts, as well as between aspects of the statements of these officers and reports from both the media and Project Blue Book. For example, the lieutenant who searched the woods said there were four in his search team; another officer told us that he had driven with the team to a nearby barrack while two from Oakdale conducted the search with a state trooper. (This could have been the three man team referred to by Blue Book, although Blue Book said that the three were all from Oakdale.)

Another officer told me there was no search at all, and that the reports coming in to the Oakdale base concerned only an object in the sky and not an object on the ground. He remembers very well the high volume of calls from the local area and speaking to some of the callers, and says that if there had been a search, he definitely would have known. He was adamant that there wasn't one. And yet another told me that the object was a Russian satellite, but insisted that he made that determination only from newspaper and television reports.

According to Project Blue Book records, Cashman called Blue Book headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base twice from the Oakdale base, including a final call at 2 a.m., to report that nothing was found. Oddly, Cashman says he has no memory of any event, phone calls, or heightened activity at that time. He stated that he was the Blue Book liaison officer (as stated in the Blue Book files), as opposed to the lieutenant who told me he was the Blue Book officer.

We are not certain whether these contradictory and sometimes confusing reports are simply a question of jumbled memories after all these years, or if other factors are at play. Is it possible that this small

group was taken to a different location from the one that was cordoned off by the Army, and that they searched the wrong site? If this did occur, was the state trooper who took the Air Force team to the wrong site instructed by someone to do so? If so, the officers are honestly reporting that nothing was found. Would it therefore have been possible since Project Blue Book did not have access to cases higher than a secret clearance that Blue Book actually never knew about an object retrieved from another location by the Army?

On the other hand, Murphy reports seeing what appeared to be members of the 662nd Radar Squadron at the edge of the woods after leaving the police barracks where he had first encountered them. If the lieutenant was one of these men, he could not possibly have missed the surrounding military and civilian activity. Were these officers perhaps sworn not to reveal what happened for national security reasons, and thus their cover stories have differences? We don't know, and we won't know until the government releases the records.²²

A very likely answer as to why they saw no soldiers is that there weren't hundreds of soldiers and vehicles in the surrounding area. Remember, the story about “heavy” (more than a dozen men) military involvement did not surface until years later. Many residents do not recall all these military vehicles/personnel and, for some reason and contrary to what Kean states, the 1965 media did not report this either.

Military Invasion debunked?

One of the key ingredients of the military's involvement has to do with the flat bed used to pull the “acorn” out of the ravine. If the military was going to send a flat bed pulled by a tractor, they would use their own equipment. The tractor in use at the time was the M123.



The M123 tractor probably would have

been capable to carry a large object as it was often used to haul large vehicles like the M113 personnel carrier. However, one wonders if it had the capability to navigate such terrain and it has one nagging problem. The M123 wheelbase is outside the limits for use on US roadways.

*The width of the item exceeds the legal limitations for highway movement in CONUS and the recommended highway limitations in oversea areas. Special permits will be required in CONUS, and special routing may be required overseas.*²³

For the vehicle to be routed on US roads would mean the command would have to obtain special permits for its use. It would have been unlikely for such permits to be allowed on such an extremely short notice.

Another key ingredient in the present Kecksburg story involves more vehicles in a convoy. This brings up some interesting questions:

1. What was the source of all these vehicles and men? There are no military bases within two hours that have such equipment and manpower. It is unlikely that the 662nd radar squadron or the Nike missile batteries would have them.
2. Why didn't anybody outside of Kecksburg see this convoy? It would have drawn considerable attention and certainly would have been mentioned in the media.
3. A huge traffic jam, mentioned by the media, lasted most of the evening. How did the military navigate this traffic without forcing vehicles out of the way?
4. Where are the photographs of this convoy traversing through Kecksburg? Despite professional news photographers being present, there isn't one image of a military vehicle.
5. How were these vehicles fueled since many were probably working outside their operational range? Nobody reports seeing them fueling at any location.
6. Bob Bitner mentioned "a personnel

carrier". He was clear to make it a vehicle different than a standard military truck. This implies he was talking about a tracked vehicle of some kind. The M113 was the standard personnel carrier of 1965 and was not authorized to be used on civilian roadways in the United States. One would need to transport such a vehicle with the M123.

The probable response as to why these vehicles/convoys were unreported in 1965 is that this was all covertly done and was missed by everyone. The does not stand to reason. The military could not have halted traffic on the minor roads to allow their vehicles to arrive without somebody noticing. All the media reports from 1965 fail to mention the convoy and cordoning off of the roads to allow for its passage.

Another key ingredient in all of this is the claim that the military had arrived in force and established, as one witness called it, martial law in Kecksburg. There is absolutely no evidence that this occurred. For the military to perform the way it did in the Kecksburg legend, it would have violated the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prevents the military from search, seizure, arrest, or anything similar to this without lawful authorization.

Other claims of military personnel raising weapons on people to make them leave are just pure fiction. To even load a weapon under these conditions would be a serious violation of any sentry. It would mean that one would have been intending to use deadly force when it was not necessary.

Like the convoy of vehicles, all of these armed military guards are missing from the media at the time. If there were personnel everywhere as claimed, then we would have seen photographs in the headlines instead of Mrs. Kalp talking to Robert Gatty (Greensburg-Tribune review) or a bunch of civilians standing on the road looking at the search area (Uniontown Evening standard). How can such claims be so readily accepted?

In all of this military involvement, it is important to note the following:

1. Not once have any Army or Air Force

personnel come forward to confirm they were the members of unit (other than the 662nd radar squadron) that was activated to retrieve a crashed UFO at Kecksburg. The story described involves about a hundred men or more. How hard would it be to produce a unit identification and some names of those involved?

2. There are no military bases with the equipment and personnel available in range from where these units could have come from in such a short time period and Kecksburg crash proponents have offered none. It is as if the military materialized out of thin air and disappeared the same way.
3. Nobody ever lodged a complaint with any elected official about the military's unlawful behavior that night. Having homes invaded, death threats made, and destruction of property would have caused some sort of complaint and elected officials would have responded by talking to the governor or to federal officials.

Does science support the crash?

By 2003, the Sci-Fi channel turned their attention to "The Roswell of the east" because it was a recent case. They believed it would be possible to find some real evidence if they looked hard enough. As a result, they sent several scientists into the woods to look for evidence of the crashed Acorn.

Geomorphologist and Geoarcheologist, J. Steven Kite spent a significant amount of time in the Ravine trying to locate evidence that a crashed acorn had damaged the ground. They could not find anything to indicate there was any damage to the ground in 1965 by impact, heavy vehicles, or covering up of the area. Leslie Kean would write that this means the impact was a very low-velocity and that it was possible that the stream in the ravine might have, through erosion, hid evidence of the retrieval and cover-up.

However, Kean presents not one expert opinion that demonstrates the small stream could have eroded away any evidence of a cover-up. Additionally, how can she make the claim that it was a low

velocity impact when the two star witnesses, who saw the acorn (Bulebush and Romansky), indicate it was half-buried in the ground (Romansky referred to it as a "crater" in his 1989 testimony to Kim Opa-ka) and there was some form of gouge. This is hardly the description of a low-energy impact. What Kite's findings actually proved was that there was no evidence to support the stories of Bulebush and Romansky.

Since Kite's findings were inconclusive at best, the findings of Ray Hicks were considered more important by Kean and the Sci-Fi channel. Hicks took core samples of trees that were supposedly damaged by the passage of the acorn. These damaged trees were identified by photographs taken by Stan Gordon around twenty years after the event. When Hicks analyzed the core samples he suggested that some of the trees had a change in their growth rates that occurred around 1965. The implications were that the acorn had managed to knock these trees down and soft-landed in the ravine exactly where Bulebush and Romansky stated.

At first glance, this evidence does look impressive but it seems incomplete. How many trees were actually tested and what were the results? Were these results consistent with this trajectory? Whatever study was done seems to have never been published in a scientific journal. However, Leslie Kean does give a few quotes from Hicks. Hicks had stated that the rings indicated that one of the trees had a reduction in growth around 1967 or 1968. He only suggested that if he was off in his count, it might support the 1965 crash. Exactly how many people counted the rings and exactly what is the margin for error? This tree ring analysis was being presented as something of an exact science but now it appears that it could be off a few years!

What is most interesting is how the same Ray Hicks felt about the results when he was interviewed by AP reporter Joe Mandak:

Forestry professor Ray Hicks counted tree rings and determined that trees in the area were damaged in 1965. Hicks, however, said the trees were likely damaged by ice, and then snapped off by the wind. He says his findings don't support Kean's

claim that "something physically landed" at the site.²⁴

I am not sure why there are conflicting reports from Hicks. Since he was paid for his findings, Hicks probably had to word his report so as to satisfy his employers. That means he would have to word it in a way that a crash **might** have caused the damage. Kean and the Sci-Fi channel seemed to have "cherry-picked" the right analysis and comment that supported their case. They withheld any information that was contradictory to their case.

Frag files

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In a final desperate effort to produce real evidence, Kean and the Coalition for Freedom of Information (CFI) filed numerous FOIA requests for NASA documents regarding Kecksburg. NASA released what they had and suggested that any records regarding Kecksburg would have been in their Fragology files. These are records of material that had been examined after reentering the earth's atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the boxes of these records had been missing since 1987. However, there was a summary sheet of what was included in the boxes. This document did not even list Kecksburg. UFOlogists suggest that the important records aren't listed since the classification would have been higher than Confidential. Of course, NASA could easily have stated they had no records on Kecksburg because they did not go there.

To further complicate matters, a NASA spokesman, Dave Steitz, was quoted as saying the following regarding the request:

As a rule, we don't track UFOs. What we could do, and what we apparently did as experts in spacecraft in the 1960s, was to take a look at whatever it was and give our expert opinion," Steitz said. "We did that, we boxed (the case) up and that was the end of it. Unfortunately, the documents supporting those findings were misplaced.²⁵

UFOlogists have leaped onto this statement as an admission that NASA did retrieve something that evening. The truth is that Steitz suggested this was possible since the discussion was about the Fragology files that were missing. Steitz was not present in 1965 and was not involved in the Fragology effort. It was not an open admission that NASA did recover debris that night. It only suggested that **IF** they had done such an operation, then it would have been in the Fragology files. There is no evidence that suggests that they did.

This was confirmed after years of diligent searching by NASA because of the lawsuit. Nothing could be found relating to Kecksburg. Boxes and files were still missing but there is no evidence to indicate what was in those boxes/files had anything to do with Kecksburg. By 2009, Kean was satisfied that the search was complete. She made many suggestions about why there were no records (some involve the standard conspiracy theory). She also wondered why NASA had no files on the fireball incident but had records about other fireballs. The most likely reason is because they knew nothing came down. As we know from the Blue Book files, they told NASA they had found nothing at Kecksburg. Scientists also had

stated the meteor headed into Canada. It seemed, with this fireball, NASA saw no reason to pursue the matter.

The bottom line in all of this, is there is no evidence that NASA was ever involved in Kecksburg beyond a phone call to Blue Book. Kean and CFI wasted a lot of people's time and tax payer dollars conducting a wild goose chase just so they could make headlines.

The myth exposed

What this all boils down to is that the Kecksburg story has evolved from its simple roots into an incredible story that is not supported by any evidence that can be verified. For some reason, there are quite a few UFOlogists, who find this case truly compelling. The truth is, it is only compelling when you listen to the crash proponent's version of events. If you look beyond the wild tales and the smokescreen hiding pertinent information, you quickly discover that this case is devoid of substance. This is more about people seeking attention than a real investigation designed to produce facts that can be established.

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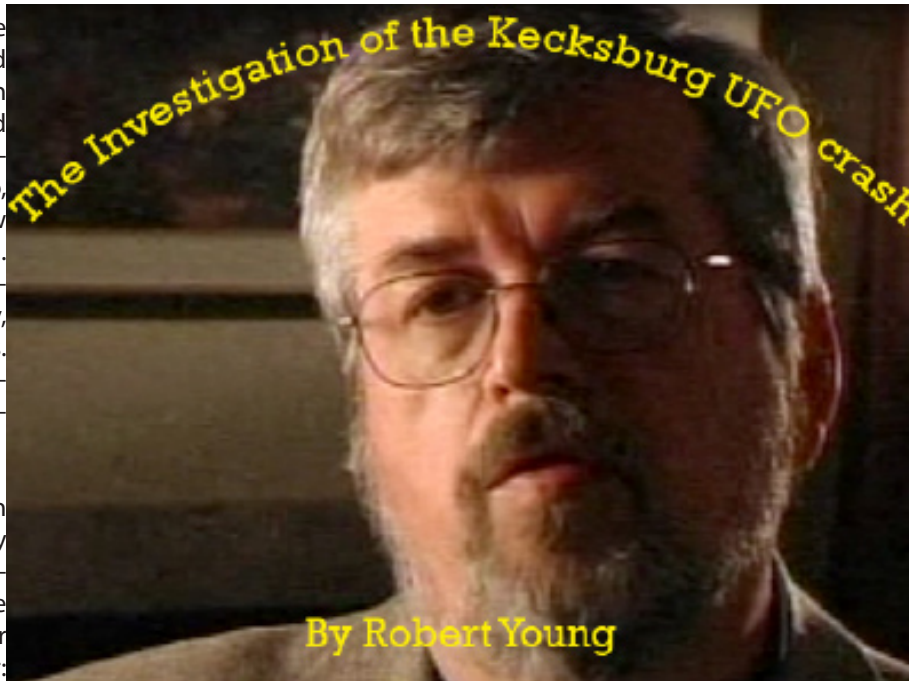
Some people believe that UFOs have landed or crashed, and have been recovered by the United States Government. Sometimes, as the stories go, dead or living alien crew members were involved. There are sometimes people who claim that they, or others, are witnesses. Books, movies and television programs have presented their accounts.

Stories like this have been circulating since shortly after the first flying saucer reports in 1947. The claims are often similar and many people wonder: could there be something to these stories?

In 1950 Frank Scully, a Hollywood columnist, wrote one of the first American UFO books, *Behind the Flying Saucers*. It was a popular best-seller. Scully retold a story about landed saucers and little dead crewmen he had heard from two acquaintances. One of them, a mysterious "Dr. Gee", told Scully he was a Government scientist working on a secret magnetic propulsion project. This was only five years after the secret World War II atomic bomb project. Many readers did not recognize the phony science claims in the book. To them, it seemed like a good explanation for the "saucers".

Two years later a magazine article by J. P. Cahn showed that the story was a hoax.² It later turned out that "Dr. Gee" was one of many aliases used in confidence schemes by Leo GeBaur, owner of a Phoenix, Arizona, radio and TV parts store. Some things in the story may have come from a 1949 movie, "The Flying Saucer". GeBaur and his friend were later convicted and jailed for fraud. People invested in an oil prospecting device that they said was based on saucer technology. It was only a war surplus electrical device worth a few dollars.

Many things in later "crash" stories seem to have come from "Dr. Gee's" tale: The craft were said to have no visible seams, rivets or doors. The saucers were magnetically powered, and made of metals un-



known on Earth. Readers were told that scientists had a hard time entering the disks, even after using a diamond-tipped drill and torches. Alien writing like "Egyptian hieroglyphics" was found. The recovered saucer was supposed to have been taken on a covered, flat-bed truck to the Air Force technical center at Wright Field, Ohio.

A recent widely-publicized crash claim has been that a UFO or Soviet spacecraft was recovered by the military in 1965 at Kecksburg, Pennsylvania. I took a close look at this story and learned just how such claims can become widely told and believed UFO stories.

Near sunset on December 9, 1965, a brilliant fireball brighter than the full Moon was seen by thousands in 10 states and Ontario. Witnesses mistakenly thought it had crashed, landed or dropped fragments at 17 places in six states and the Canadian province.

Much more is known about this fireball than most objects of its kind. By good luck, the cloud it left in the sky was photographed seconds later from two places in Michigan. A sonic boom was caused when the object finally burst apart as it travelled at supersonic speed through the air. This was recorded by a seismometer used to measure earthquakes. Michigan State University astronomers Von Del Chamberlain and David J. Krause used a process called triangulation to find the

object's path through the atmosphere.

They found a speed of about 8.7 miles per second, within the speed of meteors entering the Earth's atmosphere. This is about twice as fast as man-made space objects returning from low orbits. A possible orbit for the object was determined out to the asteroid belt, between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, where many bright fireball meteors originate. The astronomers concluded that

the object was a meteor, and that it was probably not man-made space debris because of its steep path. Their research was published in 1967-8 in a scientific journal^{7a} and by the Michigan Geological Survey.^{7b}

The conclusion that the object was a meteor and not reentering space debris had also appeared, with a photograph, in the February, 1966, issue of *Sky & Telescope* magazine. This article explained how Chamberlain and Geophysicist G. W. Wetherill had spoken to or reviewed written reports from more than 120 eyewitnesses. Some reported that from the south shore of Lake Erie the fireball had disappeared at the northern horizon over the lake. This showed them that the meteor did not fall south of the lake.

One of many places in Pennsylvania where people saw the meteor low in the western sky was Kecksburg, a small town about 30 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. Two children, who lived nearby at Acme, told their mother that they had seen "a star of fire". The woman went outside and looked in the direction of the Ontario meteor. (See Figure 1 on page 11 of this issue) She reported that she saw what looked like "blue smoke" in the sky. It seemed to slowly fade away over a nearby wooded hill.

After first allowing her children to look for anything which had come down, she then went to find them and they returned

home.

They made no report until at least 1 1/2 hours later, after the fireball was reported on local radio as a possible airplane on fire. This delay suggests that the event did not seem important to them.

About the time of their report, on nearby KDKA-radio, Pittsburgh, was a popular call-in show with well-known flying saucer lecturer Frank Edwards as a guest. Although Edwards concluded on the air that the object was a meteorite, in a best-selling book the following year he claimed there were things wrong with the official explanation. He must have had second thoughts later because in his next book the incident was not mentioned. Frank Edwards' UFO claims on the radio that night may have been important in the development of the UFO crash legend.

John Murphy, news director of WHJB-radio, Greensburg, Pa., a local station, called the Pennsylvania State Police to relay the woman's sighting. A report was also sent to the Associated Press (AP), which then issued its own bulletin calling the fireball a UFO.^{9a}

According to once classified documents in the National Archives, the U.S. Air Force "Project Blue Book" UFO investigating office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio was notified of the news bulletin. Following normal 1965 procedures for investigating a UFO report,³⁵ it asked personnel at the nearest Air Force base, a North American Air Defense Command radar site of the 662 Radar Squadron at Oakdale, Pa., to investigate. They were asked to collect what had been reported to be burning debris. Three men were sent to Kecksburg, and to Erie, Pa., where a civilian pilot had reported that the Ontario fireball fell into Lake Erie.^{9b}

Hundreds of people who heard radio or television broadcasts travelled to Kecksburg. Some, including members of local fire companies, property owners, State Police and spectators searched an area pointed out by the Acme witnesses, or just stood around watching.

UFO crash proponents say that local fire companies were called out. My investigation and an inquiry by former fire company officers have been unable to verify this

WEATHER

Cool, chance of rain tonight.
High 46, low 32.

The Evening Standard

"THE PAPER THAT GOES INTO THE HOME"

UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1965

LATE HOME EDITION

PRICE—SEVEN CENTS

Search For Meteor Is Unsuccessful

Hunt In District Is Ended

New Site Chosen For L. Highlands School

Unit No. 1 Committee Is Elected

Tract Is In Center Point Of Townships

Hunt In District Is Ended

Search for meteorite in Westmoreland County became a hunt for one and only one thing this morning and night when a fireball reportedly struck that area.

But officials called off a search for any such object early this morning and said that it was a meteor.

A meteor is a fireball of stone or metal that burns up as it enters the earth's atmosphere. If the object strikes the ground it is termed a meteorite.

Fireballs were seen last night from the state of California, through the midwest and in Pennsylvania.

Residents in the Kecksburg area spotted the "fireball" about 5:35 p.m.

Capt. Joseph Dennis of the State Police at Greensburg, said an eyewitness saw 201



SEARCH FOR METEOR — Residents of Kecksburg area this morning stand at site where meteor was supposed to have fallen last night.

New Site Chosen For L. Highlands School

Unit No. 1 Committee Is Elected

Twelve ballots were required to elect a nine-member after an opening committee last night for Administration, Unit No. 1, of the school district.

Members of the committee were elected to direct the construction of a school reorganization committee at Albert Gallatin Junior-Senior High School near New Geneva.

The nine-member committee will operate administratively until the 1966-67 school year, at which



Tract Is In Center Point Of Townships

Local Highlands School 1 Board last night voted to take an option on a large tract along Shady Ave. as the proposed site of the new senior high school building.

The property lies at the north end of Uniontown, between the Lemon Wood Acres housing project and the Rockwell Manufacturing Co. plant.

A site committee from the Board which recommended the

The late edition headline for the Uniontown, PA Evening Standard announces nothing can be found in the Kecksburg woods.

among the records of four local fire companies. Some say that a large military recovery operation occurred at Kecksburg. This also remains unproven. Another unproven claim is that the Army was involved. This rumor may have started because the Air Force Squadron was based at the Oakdale Army Engineers Support Facility.⁵

Some people even say that the military "roped off", "sealed off" or "quarantined" the area. This was not supported by a single one of 61 eyewitnesses contacted for this report. What happened is that a State Police Fire Marshall, Carl Metz, ordered that the road past the search site blocked off at either end so that fire vehicles could use it, if needed. This road was later officially named "Meteor Road".⁵

According to Edward Myers, 1965 Kecksburg Fire Chief, and other participants, the roadblocks were manned by fire police from the Mt. Pleasant Unity Fire Company. Combat or riot-control equipped soldiers were not involved, as has been portrayed in a wildly imaginative television version of events.^{5m} It is hard to believe that if armed troops were present this would not have been reported by the many TV, radio and newspaper reporters at the scene, who in 1965 reported no such activity.

The State Police led one search with flashlights which found nothing. Then reports of a flashing blue light brought the three Air Force men and the police back to the woods.^{9a} This light seems to have been caused by several high school students who went into the woods to search,

found nothing, and then ran through the trees flashing a camera strobe. This attracted spotlights from the crowd on the opposite hillside. I obtained a long, signed statement from one participant which fully explains these blue lights reported by some eyewitnesses.

An unnamed spokesman for the 662nd Squadron reported, "There is an Unidentified Flying Object in the woods..." This suggests to some people that this must have been a "true UFO" event. Seldom is the rest of his statement considered: "We don't know what we have yet." According to a once-classified telephone log in the National Archives, the officer in charge of Project Blue Book, Major Hector Quintanilla, told superiors at the Pentagon that the fireball was a meteor.^{9b}

An exciting headline the next day in an early edition of a local newspaper is often used by UFO crash supporters. A close reading of the article, however, shows that the reporter was unable to talk to anyone who had actually seen an object or to the Acme witnesses. It also gave an inaccurate location for the search, which was really 1/2 mile away on another farm.¹⁵

Proponents of a UFO mystery like to show copies of this article on national television. They have never displayed three other articles published the same day in a later edition of the same newspaper. In these the paper reported results of the official search and statements that the fireball had been a meteor.^{16a} In an editorial the following day the newspaper concluded, after the on-the-scene inves-

tigation by its staff, that nothing at all had landed.^{16b}

After a few inaccurate articles in flying saucer magazines^{5l,5p} and Edwards' book, the incident was forgotten. In the 1960s no major UFO investigator or group seems to have taken the incident seriously.

The crash legend developed after the involvement of UFO buffs and writers who sought witnesses and promoted the incident. Prominent among these was a leading Pennsylvania UFO investigator, Stan Gordon, of nearby Greensburg. Founder of his own local UFO group, Gordon was also the state director of the Mutual UFO Network, the nation's largest organization of UFO investigators and enthusiasts.^{5d-h}

The first event in the "modern" development of the Kecksburg legend occurred November 16, 1979, on a radio call-in show on KDKA, Pittsburgh. Guests included two UFO investigators and two well-known "abductees", people who claimed to have been forcibly taken into UFOs by aliens. The Kecksburg incident and the old press reports were mentioned. Four listeners called who claimed to be 1965 Kecksburg eyewitnesses.

The investigators later interviewed two of the callers. One said that he was a former fireman and had seen a flashing light in the woods, but had been unable to see any shape to the object. The second man claimed that he was the 1965 Kecksburg Fire Chief. He said that from 25 feet away he had seen a "military 10-ton" flat-bed truck with a tarp over a 17-foot long object surrounded by military guards.

For 10 years this man's story circulated among UFO enthusiasts interested in Kecksburg. By 1985, when he retold the story to a local newspaper reporter, the vehicle was just a "heavy" truck with a tarp covering the back so that "you couldn't tell if there was anything inside". By 1990 his truck was only a military "troop-transport".

In the 1985 interview this witness claimed that the military had prevented him from going to the crash site. Gordon later reported that the man actually did not arrive until late at night, never went to the

claimed impact site or the fire house, and only learned the next day that the firehall had been "overtaken" by the military.

By 1990 it was apparent that this key source for the UFO crash story was not the 1965 fire chief, although he had held this position at another time. He never responded to the author's written request for details of his personal experience. This early story is no longer featured by supporters of a mysterious crash and recovery.

Beginning in 1984 Gordon and other investigators began trying to obtain U.S. Government documents through the Freedom of Information Act.^{5d} Microfilms of the complete 31-page Air Force file on the incident had been available publicly at the National Archives, Washington, D.C., since 1974. These once-classified files show that the sighting was judged to be "astro (meteor)", with "No Physical Evidence". Also included is a copy of the 1966 Sky & Telescope article with its photograph and correspondence with the photographer.^{9b}

Despite years of effort by Mr. Gordon and others, nothing has ever been found in Government files to contradict the official version that the fireball was a meteor and that nothing was recovered.

Local UFO enthusiasts, however, were certain that something mysterious had happened. In August, 1987 they set up a display at a regional mall, a few miles from Kecksburg, during "International UFO Awareness Week". This was preceded by statewide wire service publicity. After hearing them retell the "UFO crash" story and show 1965 news clips, one visitor said that he had seen the crashed UFO.^{5d}

According to him, the UFO was buried partly in the ground. In the flashlight beams of searchers the object seemed to be shaped like an acorn with markings that looked like "Egyptian hieroglyphics". There were no rivets, seams or openings in the craft. "It was definitely not of this planet", he told a 1989 interviewer.

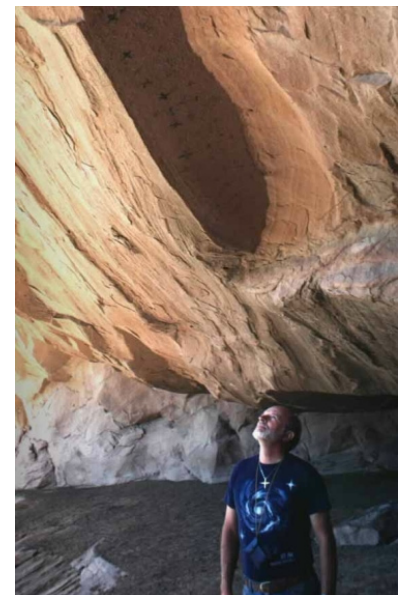
According to this man's story, military officers then arrived and told searchers to leave. Armed troops occupied the fire house and would not allow the firemen to enter. He said that he saw a military

convoy with a large flat-bed truck carrying a covered object, escorted by machine gun-armed jeeps, race away from the area.^{5d-f}

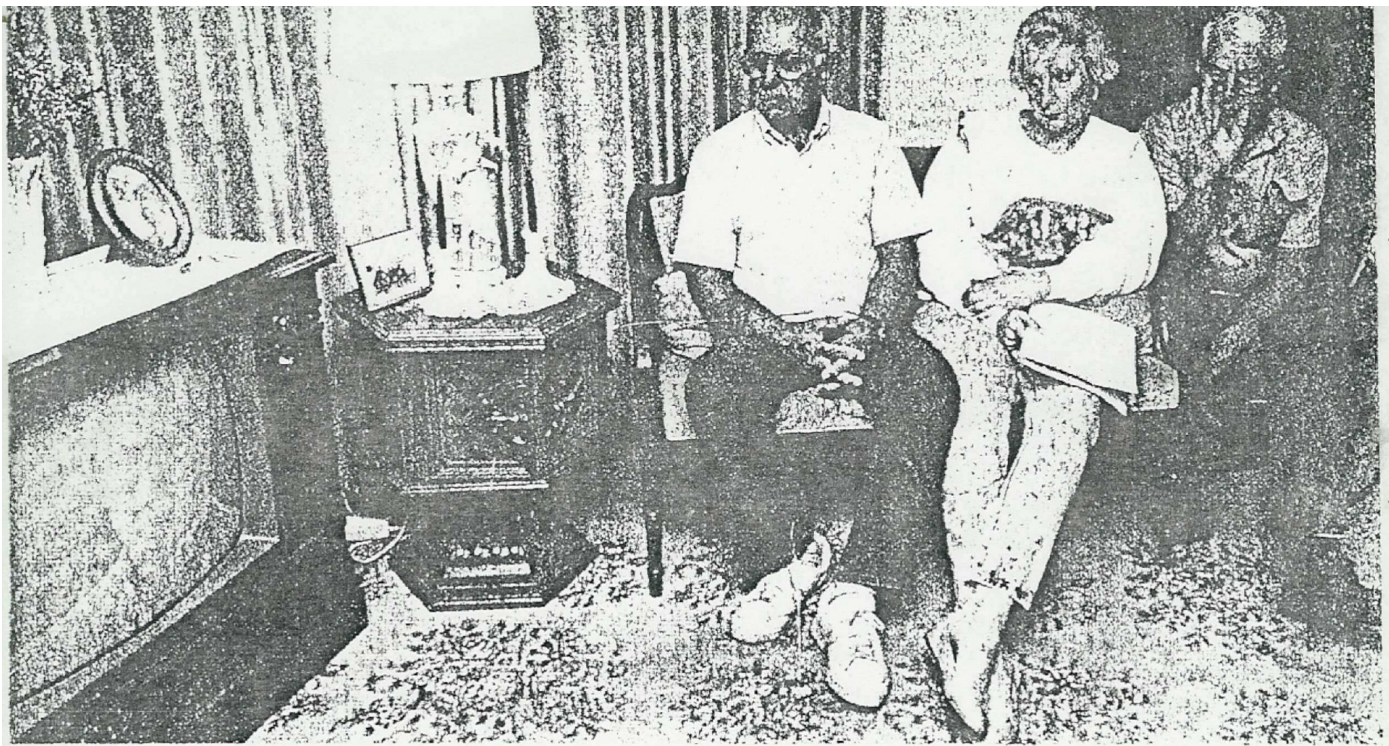
After 22 years UFO investigators finally had an eyewitness who said he could lead them to the crash site. It seemed to confirm their own estimate of the crash location, leading them to believe that the witness's story was true. This account was repeated for several years in UFO publications, television programs and among UFOlogists.

Three other eyewitnesses later came forward. After questioning by believers, one told a story which seemed to confirm the description given by the Mall witness. He said that he had been the first to find the UFO in the woods, but when other searchers approached he had just run away. Gordon was now convinced that they were on to something, and he ignored this improbable reaction by this second witness. The man had never publicly told his story before, but he decided to step forward from a crowd in the presence of network television cameras.

The trouble with all of these stories is that their crash location matches the mistaken search locale published in 1965 in the local newspaper. This was first called to my attention by the 1965 Kecksburg Fire Chief, Edward Myers, and suggests that these stories were stimulated by this old newspaper clipping or the saucer enthusiasts.



Dr. Von Del Chamberlain from his web site



NON-BELIEVERS

Carl Porch, right, waves his hand disdainfully as he and Mr. and Mrs. George Kovacina watch a television production on the so-called Kecksburg UFO. The

three were among a group of people who believe the story is a hoax and gathered at the Jerome Miller home to watch the telecast.

'Hatfields, McCoys' view UFO show

Page 1 story in the Greensburg Tribune-Review of Septemeber 20, 1990

On September 19, 1990, a highly dramatic version of the incident was first featured on NBC-TV's "Unsolved Mysteries". It reached an audience of tens of millions and has been repeatedly broadcast.⁵ⁿ

Five months before the program was filmed Drew Fleming, a representative of Cosgrove-Meurer Productions, the show's Burbank, California, producers, telephoned astronomer Von Del Chamberlain about his 1967 scientific article on the meteor's path. Chamberlain positively identified the fireball as a meteor, not a UFO, and followed with a March 7, 1990, letter. He emphasized that a great deal was known about this event which was like similar fireballs that occur frequently throughout the world. Chamberlain sent Fleming a copy of his article, which included photographs of the meteor cloud, and offered to provide any more information needed. The pictures and research by the astronomers were not mentioned on the program.

In late July 1990 a producer for the show interviewed local residents. Among these were five, including several prop-

erty owners, who told her that the UFO crash tale was not true. Three agreed to appear on film. They say that they were never contacted when filming occurred. Also not mentioned on TV was a signed petition to the show's producers from 46 eyewitnesses and property owners who said that they believed the official story that nothing happened. They received no response.

After the broadcast, more than 100 people called the TV program's telephone "hotline" to report that they were also eyewitnesses. Most probably remembered the meteor in the air, the search, or the press accounts. One new witness's account includes details added to the television show for dramatic effect, and cannot be taken seriously.

Others say that they saw the UFO in 1965 at Ohio Air Force bases.²⁶ My investigation showed that these Ohio stories all bear resemblances to the 1950 hoax in the Scully book (see page 35 of this issue). For example, one hotline caller claimed that he was a civilian truck driver who stumbled on the recovered UFO at

Wright Patterson Air Force Base. He and his cousin, who at first denied being present but later supported the story, say that they were told that the object was a "spaceship" with "at least two bodies inside". They were told that all attempts to enter the craft using acetylene torches, a diamond head drill, and acid had failed. All records of the family business for which they worked, they said, had been destroyed in a fire, so they had no proof.

Several people who called reported seeing the object at Lockbourne Air Force Base, near Columbus. These stories closely match a 1954 hoax from the same city reprinted in several UFO books. Many of this story's details seem to have been lifted, word to word, from the Scully book. Crash proponents have accepted all of these new witness claims, even though they may contradict each other.

Since I began my investigation of the Kecksburg "crash", I have collected the accounts of more than 200 people who said that they were eyewitnesses. All but a tiny handful of these can be explained by the brilliant meteor in the sky over Ontario,

the unsuccessful search for its debris, or the admitted flashing light prank in the woods.

About ten remaining Pennsylvania accounts would, if accurate, support a crash and recovery. However, they are from unknown or now dead people who never publicly made the claim in their lifetimes; people who are repeating the tale first told on the radio in 1979 or later on "Unsolved Mysteries", and several who seem to be taking part in a hoax. For each and every one of these accounts, there are other people who say that they were also present at the same locations and that the crash and retrieval did not occur.

On April 21, 1992, I sent a copy of the 1967 Chamberlain and Krause article to UFO researcher Stan Gordon and asked for his reaction. He remains silent.

A photograph of the meteor cloud in the February 1966 Sky & Telescope is included in the USAF Blue Book file in the National Archives. Gordon says that he has been in possession of this file since 1985.^{5f}

Investigators claiming a UFO or spacecraft crash have seldom revealed the existence of the Michigan photographs. Nor have they discussed the research published nearly 30 years ago showing that the object was a meteor which never came near Pennsylvania.

People engaged in scientific research are expected to discuss all the available evidence for or against a hypothesis. Those who claim to have seriously researched the December 9, 1965, event must account for these photographs. Instead, they continue to ignore their existence.

We can therefore conclude that it is the UFO investigators, not the Government, Kecksburg doubters or the Pennsylvania State Police who have been guilty of a deliberate, continuing cover-up of documents and photographs revealing the truth about the Kecksburg "UFO crash".

On October 9, 1992, a fireball was seen over New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The meteorite dropped a 27-pound chunk which struck a car at Peekskill, New York. It was a Friday night and tens of thousands attending local football games saw the meteor.

Hundreds of residents from the Kecksburg area were in the bleachers of the Mt. Pleasant Area High School stadium. Many remarked that they now understood how a meteor could have created the 1965 UFO accounts.

On the following Sunday four local men asked the second witness to the UFO in the woods to go to the crash site. They were all longtime acquaintances; some had gone to school with the witness. The four had always been doubters about the UFO story and pointed out that it seemed impossible for a large truck to negotiate the steep ravine at the crash site. When asked what he would tell people if it was shown that the story was a hoax, the second witness told his friends that he would say that he just told the story to get on television.

In January 1994 a rumor began to circulate of a UFO crash in Central New York State. According to one published version, people who lived near a heavily wooded area between Fabius and Pompey, southeast of Syracuse, reported that an object had cleared a path through trees as it landed. An increase in aircraft activity and military trucks in the area was reported. One source speculated that there must be a "cover-up" because there were no reports of plane crashes or meteors.

The similarities of the claims to the Kecksburg incident, then being featured repeatedly on "Unsolved Mysteries", intrigued me. The story involved a wooded area, trees knocked down by an impacting object, military trucks, mysterious aircraft, and rumors of a cover-up.

I contacted seven UFO investigators from the Mutual UFO Network and the Center for UFO Studies, the two largest American UFO groups. Three investigators from New York State reported that they had also heard rumors or received reports. One said that there were several reported "landings" in the area, but he had no details.

One MUFON investigator, Rosemary Riggall, thought it might be important that a highly visible meteor, which had to be of "tremendous size", had been reported about the time of the crash. Dana M. Schmidt, the assistant state director for MUFON, also suggested a connection. I

believe Riggall and Schmidt are absolutely correct in drawing a connection between the reports, but I believe the meteor was most likely the October 9, 1993, event, which received wide publicity.

More UFO crash rumors based upon the televised Kecksburg hoax can be expected. There are always people who like to tell a good yarn, or who seek the lime-light. Some UFO investigators will be able to distinguish between rumor and fact. Others, convinced that they are on the trail of an exciting mystery, may spend years chasing "witnesses" and engaging in searches for once-secret Government documents. Perhaps it is just the thrill of the search, itself, that interests them.

Folktales are traditional stories or beliefs which are not necessarily true, but which are told or retold by a people. UFO enthusiasts who are unaware of the folklore tradition which began nearly 50 years ago with the tale told to Frank Scully by "Dr. Gee" will continue to be fooled by UFO "crash" stories.

Before we accept claims about a subject as important as extraterrestrial visitors, we should be sure to ask ourselves if the evidence, and not just the stories, support the claims being made.

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In 1980, Clark McClelland was the first to suggest that Cosmos 96 might be the source of the Kecksburg crash. There seemed to be little follow-up on this until 1989, when Stan Gordon stated that he had information that Cosmos-96 had come down earlier that day in a different location.

That seemed to settle the Cosmos-96 idea but in 1993, skeptic James Oberg picked up the idea that it still could have been the capsule from Cosmos-96. In his article for Omni magazine, Oberg notes that the orbital data did not support it but also noted there may have been different segments of Cosmos-96 that had come down:

*The released tracking data couldn't be positively identified with specific pieces of the failed probe. It could have been the jettisoned rocket stage or a large piece of space junk. The probe itself could have been headed off toward Kecksburg.*¹

The implication was that the capsule may have come to earth at a later time. Oberg also suggested that it could have been a ruse by the United States so the Soviets did not know we had recovered some of their spacecraft. The data could have been faulty or the it could have been altered as a form of cover-up. The reasons were obvious according to Oberg:

*In the 1960s, U.S military intelligence agencies interested in enemy technology were eagerly collecting all the Soviet missile and space debris they could find. International law required that debris be returned to the country of origin. But hardware from Kosmos-96, with its special missile-warhead shielding, would have been too valuable to give back.*²

Needless to say, Oberg's suggestion was dismissed because the USAF data pointed towards a return to earth twelve hours before. Some of those people who want to accept this data also reject the information that the USAF recovered nothing that evening at Kecksburg. This is a good example of saucer logic:

1. The USAF/NASA lie about UFO reports and recoveries
2. The USAF/NASA do not lie about their orbital data when it eliminates a conventional explanation.

Since conspiracies expect the government to lie, why do they suddenly feel that the government is telling the truth

The Cosmos 96 connection

in this case? This was the argument put forth by Oberg. This Cosmos-96 connection stayed pretty much in limbo until the late 1990's when more data was released regarding the orbital elements.

In December of 1998, James Easton released his Pulsar Newsletter No. 2. In it he described his research into the Cosmos-96 connection. Most importantly, James reported the following exchange between himself and Dr. David Williams of the National Space science data center:

I wrote to Dr. David Williams, the mission's contact at the National Space Science Data Center and asked if he might be able to shed any further light on a possible connection with the Kecksburg events. Dr. Williams was most helpful and replied, "Unfortunately we don't have much information on the Cosmos 96 mission here at the data center, but I have at least something I can add to our record... According to the 'Handbook of Soviet Lunar and Planetary Exploration' by N.L. Johnson, the Cosmos 96 may have exploded during an orbital restart into 8 large pieces which entered the atmosphere around December 9. There is apparently information on this in Science News of 22 July 1967 and 'Soviet Space Exploration, the first decade' by W. Shelton (1968, p. 231)..."I still haven't found much on Cosmos 96, even after contacting the U.S. Space Command, but I've put a mention of the Kecksburg incident in the record at: <http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/database/www-nmc?65-094A> (note: this is now found at <http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/database/MasterCatalog?sc=1965-094-A>) 'This mission was intended as a Venus lander, presumably similar in design to the Venera 3 which had launched a week earlier. The spacecraft attained Earth orbit and the main rocket body (65-094B) separated from the orbiting launch platform. It is believed an explosion (perhaps during ignition for insertion of the spacecraft into a Venus transfer orbit) damaged the platform, resulting in at least six additional fragments (designated 65-094C - H). The damaged spacecraft remained in orbit for 16 days and reentered the Earth's atmosphere on 9 December 1965. There is some speculation that the reentry of the Cosmos 96/Venera-type spacecraft was

*responsible for a fireball which was seen over southwestern Ontario, Canada and nine states from Michigan to New York and purported to have subsequently landed in Pennsylvania southeast of Pittsburgh near the town of Kecksburg (40.2 N, 79.5 W) on 9 December 1965 at 4:46 p.m. EST local time (21:46 UT). Uncertainties in the orbital information and reentry coordinates and time make it difficult to determine if this could have been the Cosmos 96 spacecraft".*³

Easton also exchanged information with James Oberg. At the time, Oberg continued to point out that part of Cosmos-96 could have been responsible for the Kecksburg controversy:

The Soyuz-1 impact was at about 300-400 mph but the most damage was the explosion of the soft-landing engine post-impact. A Kosmos-96 type vehicle would have impacted somewhat slower because it would have been smaller. But orbital elements released by NORAD showed that at the time of the reported impact, K-96 was not passing anywhere near Kecksburg. The only way to reconcile the tracking data is to:

1. *Either assume the tracking data was generated as camouflage for the true flight path which crossed PA at the right time, or*
2. *Assume there were other fragments in higher orbits (quite plausible considering how the vehicle originally exploded weeks earlier) that underwent different orbital evolution before decaying at the "matching" time of day and location.*⁴

This argument began to fail simply because there was no evidence that an actual recovery had occurred and nothing could be found to suggest that the capsule had come down in Pennsylvania.

By 2003, it became apparent to Oberg that the Cosmos-96 connection was unlikely but had not been completely eliminated. Oberg still maintains that Cosmos-96 could still have something to do with the events in question but he now felt the meteor explanation was most likely:

I will not _mislead_ anyone by arguing that _I_ happen to want people to believe that the Kosmos-96 prosaic explanation is credible and consistent with all trustworthy evidence. The least unlikely explanation in my view is that the natural fireball

meteor - and it was so well observed and recorded that it looks exactly like thousands of other natural bolides and it's pre-impact trajectory could be computed and found to be 'natural-meteoroid-like' - led to somebody's suspicion that it was connected with the imminent entry of a very high-priority space object (Kosmos-96) so when the meteor was seen and reported, some low-level DoD pawns drove over to nose around.⁵

Based on what Dr. Craig wrote about Bluebook and its interest in re-entering space debris, this was probably the reason the AF personnel from Oakdale were sent.

While most skeptics agreed in 2003 that Cosmos-96 was unlikely, Leslie Kean decided to make sure that she was given credit for shooting down the Kecksburg-Cosmos-96 connection. In her article about Kecksburg in the International UFO Reporter, she declared she had conducted several "decisive" interviews with NASA experts and they concluded what most people already knew. That being that Cosmos-96 did not come down at Kecksburg.

While Cosmos-96 was an interesting possibility regarding Kecksburg, it was untenable. It was only a coincidence that it came down to earth on the same day as the "Kecksburg UFO crash" incident.

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Moondust and Lt. Paquette

In his book, A history of UFO crashes, Kevin Randle mentioned a message from the project blue book files where a Lt. Stephen Paquette of New Hampton, Massachusetts is told he was going to be part of the search team. Paquette was quoted as stating, "From what I've heard, the Air Force Department in Washington is supposed to release something in the morning".¹ Randle suggests that Lt. Paquette might have specialized training if he was in Massachusetts and was "alerted" for the event:

*There is no evidence that Paquette ever traveled to Pennsylvania, and it seems unlikely than an officer in Massachusetts would be ordered in, unless he was part of a special unit or had some sort of special training or expertise. That seems to be the case here.*²

This all ties into government project called "Moondust", which was supposed to retrieve objects from space that were of unknown or foreign (i.e. Soviet) origin. Randle implies that Lt. Paquette may have been part of this project.

Intrigued by this, I wanted to see the document myself. However, after searching the Blue Book Archive and Fold3's Bluebook pages, I could not find the document. However, I did find several that mentioned a Lt. Stephen Paquette investigating UFO cases for the 662nd radar squadron at Oakdale in 1965 and 1966. The coincidence of the name and location made me think this was the same person.

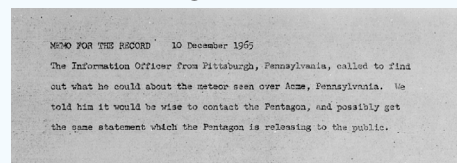
With no luck on trying to figure things out, I contacted Mr. Randle asking if he might clarify the situation. He answered that the document was in a CUFOS file on Kecksburg, which included project blue documents and sent me a copy. What it appears to be is a news wire teletype printout and the two sentences state:

*Air Force Lt. Stephen Paquette, of North Hampton, Mass, said he had been order to participate in the search. "From what I've heard, the Air Force Department in Washington is supposed to release something in the morning," he said.*³

Randle had made a minor error in calling

it New Hampton in his book, which also led to some confusion (there is a New Hampton in NH but not Massachusetts). When I had pointed out to him the documents that mentioned Lt. Paquette, he seemed to agree that the statement may have been an interview with Lt. Paquette who was FROM Northampton, Massachusetts and not actually IN Northampton, Massachusetts. Kevin Randle would follow up with a blog entry describing the revelations. He would concede that there was little chance of Paquette being some specialist, who would be called in to recover crashed space debris.

In the Blue Book Memo for the record, we see the following⁴:



This might have been Lt. Paquette or where Lt. Paquette got his information about an upcoming press release in the morning. Somebody in the media contacted the UFO or public information officer for the 662nd radar squadron, once they learned that members of that unit had been sent there. When contacted by the media, Lt. Paquette gave a standard response.

Being involved in UFO investigations, it seems likely that Lt. Paquette would be told to be "on call" in case there really was a UFO that had come down in Kecksburg. However, the speculation that he was involved in "Moondust" is just not valid.

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The story they don't want you to see

RESIDENT TELLS OF MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT—
Unidentified Flying Object Report
Touches Off Probe Near Kecksburg

By BOB GATTY

When Robert Gatty, 40, of Kecksburg, Pa., told the Greensburg Tribune that he had seen a flying object which he said was a saucer-shaped craft, it was Thursday night and the flying object was still in the air.



Reporter Talks To Mrs. Arnold Kalp

It is not clear when the object was seen, but Gatty said it was seen on Thursday night and was still in the air.

Gatty said he saw the object while he was walking to work. He said the object was about the size of a saucer and was moving very fast. He said he saw it for about 10 minutes and then it disappeared.

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VOL. 80, NO. 261.
Sea
To

An all-night search for an unidentified flying object which reportedly was seen landing in the Kecksburg area has turned up "absolutely nothing."

The Tribune-Review

CITY EDITION

VOL. 80, NO. 261.

10 Cents Single Copy
50 Cents Per Week Home Delivered

GREENSBURG, PA., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1965.

Searchers Fail To Find 'Object'

An all-night search for traces of an unidentified flying object which reportedly was seen landing in the Kecksburg area has turned up "absolutely nothing."

Authorities from State Police Troop A Headquarters in Greensburg, who were among the probes who scoured an area five miles by three miles in Mt. Pleasant Township, discounted the sighted "landing" in Kecksburg of an object that was spotted in the sky in a wide area covering several northeastern states and part of Canada late Thursday night.

Report Discounted

The supposed object in Kecksburg which touched off a rapid-fire investigation by various government, military and police agencies was discounted, however, following an in-depth check of the area around the Westmoreland County community.

Today Capt. Joseph Dussia,

commanding officer of Troop A, said that the search "uncovered absolutely nothing" and labeled it an incident that might have been stirred by the "imagination" of two young boys. The youths reported seeing the flaming object fall into a wooded area in Kecksburg, triggering a wide response by various agencies which conducted a thorough probe that began early Thursday night.

Search Called Off

The initial search by state police was called off about 2 a.m. today but another detail returned to Kecksburg later "just to make sure."

"Someone made a mountain out of a molehill," Capt. Dussia told The Tribune-Review this morning. The state police commander said Troop A has been plagued with telephone inquiries from various sections of the nation, including calls from government officials in Washington, D.C.

Officials Interested

Government officials were interested in learning about initial reports that the mysterious object might have been a part of a missile on a test flight.

As far as authorities here are concerned the only thing that might have been spotted was a meteor which probably swept over the district and just appeared to have fallen near Kecksburg. The actual drop area of such an object, however, is difficult for the layman to calculate.

As a precautionary measure, however, state police and army authorities pressed into service search teams with geiger counters and other instruments and combed a wide area in Kecksburg, "inch by inch," but turned up nothing.

Carried Equipment

About reports that something was carried out of the woods, Capt. Dussia said it was the equipment used in the search.

About the only thing that

wasn't reported during the excitement, the state police officer added, was "little green men getting out of a space ship."

No Answer

A spokesman for the 662nd Radar Squadron at Oakdale in Allegheny County, which also was called into the investigation, said there was "no definite answer" to what the object was. He told The Tribune-Review that the object was not any of the "hardware" of the Defense Department. He said that as far as the department is concerned the object was a "natural phenomenon."

ASTRONOMER SAYS—

**Fireball Believed
A Geminid Meteor**

PITTSBURGH (UPI)—An astronomer said today that a large fireball which streaked across the sky Thursday night and was seen by thousands of persons in at least nine states and Canada may have been a Geminid meteor from the constellation of Gemini.

A shower of Geminid meteors had been expected today, Dr. Nicholas Wagman, director of the Allegheny Observatory here, said.

Not Bright

"As a rule, they are numerous but not bright," Wagman said. "A bright one, such as the one sighted last night, is generally sporadic."

Wagman said there were reports of a shock wave in parts of Western Pennsylvania at the time of the sightings.

"The last such shock wave was in 1938, and later pieces of the meteorite were found north of Butler, Pa.," he said. "It is possible something may be found this time, too, once all the reports are coordinated and the area where it hit can be pinpointed."

Butler is about 30 miles north of Pittsburgh. Police in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan searched for the object.

The orange ball was seen by airplane pilots, weather observers, Coast Guard personnel at Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and residents of Idaho, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and New York.

Air Force officers, State Police and area scientists combed a 75-acre mountainous wooded area of Mt. Pleasant Twp., Pa., about 30 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, for an

object which one woman reported crashed to earth "smoldering."

Believed Meteorite

Sources at the Pentagon indicated Thursday they believed the orange flash was a meteorite.

Dr. Paul Annear of the Baldwin Wallace Observatory said the flash could have been a bolide, a meteor which disintegrates as it falls to earth, or a meteor shower expected to come next week.

He added that the large number of sightings by airplane pilots indicated validity of the reports. "After all, these people should know what they are talking about," he said.

Officials at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, refused to speculate about what the object might have been.

A spokesman for the North American Air Defense Command at Colorado Springs, Colo., said Norad tracking stations did not track the flash of light but said if it was a meteorite it would have shown up on their radar scopes.

National Guard and Air Force personnel both denied early reports that the flash came from a rocket fired in Ohio.

Reports of debris falling were also made in Midland, Pa., on the Pennsylvania-Ohio border.

The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Mass., which said it had no reports about the "fireballs," said often a speeding object appears to crash to the ground a short distance away but is really over the horizon and out of sight.

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The Coalition for the freedom of information (CFI) web site gives you a link to several pdf files showing news clippings from the Greensburg Tribune-Review.

<http://www.freedomofinfo.org/news/Gatty2.pdf>

<http://www.freedomofinfo.org/news/Gatty1.pdf>

These articles supposedly prove that a UFO crashed at Kecksburg. Headlines like "Army ropes off area" and "Resident tells of mysterious incident" sound like it was a night of hunting down crashed acorns. However, this isn't the whole truth because one of the articles is selectively edited out. In the image above, the larger headline on the right side was cropped off. The apparent reason is to prevent the uninformed reader from seeing evidence that indicates nothing was ever found.

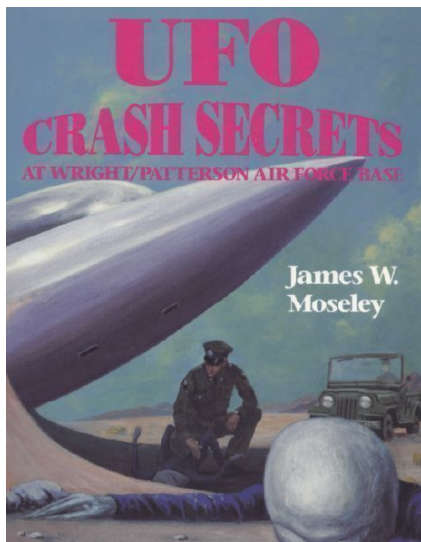
The full article is to the right and it paints a completely different story than the one told by CFI. In this light, it demonstrates that an organization using the term "freedom of information" is nothing but a bunch of hypocritical UFO proponents more interested in promoting themselves than promoting a real search for the truth.

The Kecksburg UFO crash Columbus Connection: Re- covery of a 40-year-old fly- ing saucer hoax?

By Robert Young

Stories of a Dec. 9, 1965, "UFO crash" and recovery at Kecksburg, Pa., were stimulated by a bright fireball meteor high in the sky over Ontario and an unsuccessful search for debris. (Chamberlain, Krause; USAF; Young). After NBC-TV's "Unsolved Mysteries" featured the claims (1990), more than 100 people who said they were witnesses called the program's phone hot line. Soon stories by former military personnel surfaced placing the recovered UFO at Lockbourne and Wright-Patterson Air Force Bases in Ohio (Gordon 1990; Santus 1990).

The Lockbourne accounts bear curious similarities to a 1954 tale from the same city which proved to be untrue or unsubstantiated. (Moseley) Parts of this earlier story seem to have been lifted almost verbatim from Behind the Flying Saucers by Frank Scully. This 1950 best-seller, one of the first American flying saucer books, also stimulated many "UFO crash" tales.



Scully thought that he had the story of how the bodies of 34 little men were found in and around three crashed disks. His informants were an "industrialist" and a mysterious "Dr. Gee," a man who claimed to be a "Government scientist" doing top-secret "anti-gravity research". This was only five years after the existence of the

Manhattan Project to build the atomic bomb was revealed and seemed plausible to many folks, particularly those unable to judge that most of the "science" in the book was nonsense.

The author was shown to have been the victim of a hoax (Cahn). "Dr. Gee" was one of at least nine aliases used in various confidence schemes by the owner of a Phoenix radio and TV parts store. Both of the book's informants were subsequently convicted of a confidence scheme to defraud investors with an oil exploration "doodlebug", supposedly based upon saucer technology.

Flying saucer writer James W. Moseley investigated this first Columbus story in 1954 and wondered whether the witness, "Miss Y", had just rehashed Scully's tale, added a few things of her own and served the story "cold to two suckers" (himself and a previous investigator). Moseley concluded, however, that her co-workers and supervisor, who had all denied the story, could also have been lying and that he had no way to know who was telling the truth.

I decided to apply the direct approach to Moseley's hypothesis by simply checking the Scully book. There are 19 parallels between the 1954 Columbus saucer crash and the Scully tale, including eight which seemed to have been lifted verbatim. For example: Scully had called for a WAC with Army Intelligence to come forward publicly with a woman's perspective on how the aliens managed to live in the 30-foot disks. "Miss Y" was first described as a WAC at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, an Air Force intelligence headquarters, but this was untrue. Scully described a "36-ft. in diameter unmanned disk"; "Miss Y", a 30 to 40-ft. unmanned saucer.

Also, in neither story did the saucers crash. "Dr. Gee's" landing ships were, "set on automatic float"; "Miss Y" said that they, "floated gently to the ground." "Dr. Gee's" saucers had, "Portholes which they can see out but nobody can see in...half-silvered to stop cosmic rays"; while the Columbus saucer was, "Not like ours... portholes of one way glass not visible from outside." "Two metals unknown to us" and not found "on this planet" became "One or more alloys not found on this planet". Both discs were powered by "magnetic power", and so on.

"Miss Y" may have inadvertently con-

firmed the source of her story. Despite claiming to have been told that photos she had seen and information were classified with a "top security designation", she told Moseley that the facts she gave him were, "Public knowledge and that she was not breaking security to tell them."

It seems that 15 parallel elements in the 1954 hoax and the 1990 Ohio stories strongly suggest that the Kecksburg "UFO crash" Columbus connection is nothing more than retelling of this 40-year-old hoax and the grand-daddy of many crashed flying saucer tales.

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TABLE 1 - fifteen curious similarities in two tales from one city

| | 1990 Kecksburg (Source noted) | 1954 Columbus (Moseley or Clark) |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Location | Columbus, Ohio (Lockbourne AFB) | Columbus, Ohio (Columbus Army Supply Depot) |
| 2. The crash site was nearby, but Lockbourne AFB or Columbus ASD were not on the direct route to the final destination near Dayton: | Crash was 200 miles east in Pennsylvania (Gordon;Santus) | Crash site was north of Columbus |
| 3. Destination | Wright-Patterson AFB | First investigator said the events were at Wright Field but witness said that was the destination. |
| 4. Involvement of military personnel was alleged. | Witness "Adams" was in USAF Air Police. (Santus) U.S. Army Sergeant. (Stone) | Claimant alleged to be a WAC was actually a civilian clerk who worked for the Army and FBI. |
| 5. Witnesses involved in classified message traffic. | Only people with "Crypto" (involving codes) were involved. (Gordon) | Witness claimed access to decoded messages and classified photos; others involved denied story and said she had no codes clearance. |
| 6. Classification | A "Top Secret" operation. (Santus; Stone) | Photos were "classified...carried a top security designation." |
| 7. Witnesses stumbled on classified event, then were told the details | Civilian truck drivers saw UFO in restricted area, told about events by workers (Gordon) | Witness saw "classified" photos, was told about "top security" events by the photographer. |
| 8. Base status | Base placed on "Red Alert". (Gordon; Santus) | Base place on "Red and White Alert". |
| 9. Guards | "Shoot to kill orders" for guards. (Gordon; Santus) Technicians were armed.(Gordon; Santus) | Very heavy guard; feared base would be under attack from other saucers to recover crashed disk. |
| 10. Transport | Trucked from crash. (Santus) | Flying saucer trucked from crash. |
| 11. Truck passage through base. | Truck entered Lockbourne AFB through back gate on its way. | Object went "through Columbus Army Supply Depot" on its journey. |
| 12. Transport | Object on flatbed truck covered with tarp. (Santus) Object on flat-bed truck (Gordon) A 10-12 foot wide object on a truck covered by tarp. (Stone) | 30-40 ft-long object on a truck, or "about 30 feet in diameter". |
| 13. Inaccessible | Witness told "all attempts to get the object open had failed". (Gordon) | Scientists had trouble getting inside the saucer. |
| 14. Source was ET | Witness told the object was a "spaceship". (Gordon) | Witness alleged decoded messages said craft was "interplanetary". |
| 15. Alien bodies | "At least two bodies were inside". (Gordon) | First investigator claimed that "bodies of six little men were found" and taken to Wright Field; the key witness reported rumors of crashes with bodies. |

TABLE 2 - PARALLELS BETWEEN 1950 SCULLY AND 1954 COLUMBUS CRASH TALES

| | Scully 1950 | Columbus 1954 (source: Moseley) |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Destination | Shipped to Dayton. (p. 136) | First investigator said events were at Wright Field; "Miss Y" said destination was Wright-Patterson. |
| 2. Transport | "Transported in Army trucks... to Dayton, Ohio": (p. 172) | "Trucked to Wright Field". |
| 3. WAC | Scully calls for a WAC in Army Intelligence to give info on how aliens lived in saucers. (p. 182) | Witness first said to be a WAC at Wright Field with access to codes. This was untrue. |
| 4. Scientist | A "Government scientist" ("Dr. Gee") was brought in to examine the saucer. (p. 37) | One scientist was brought in from another base. |
| 5. Size of saucer | 36-ft in diameter unmanned disk. (pp. 23 & 172) | 30-40 ft unmanned saucer, or "about 30 feet in diameter". |
| 6. Source of saucer | "...did not come from any part of this Earth." (p. 23) | "Extra-terrestrial...interplanetary." (Moseley 1954) |
| 7. Comparison to photos in print | Looked like the object in the 1950 McMinville, Or., pix in LIFE. (p. 26) | "Looked like the newspaper drawings I had seen of flying saucers." |
| 8. No "crash" | "They did not crash, and in only one ship was there any imperfections." ("Dr. Gee": p. 168) | "The saucer hadn't really crashed..." |
| 9. Emergency fail-safe on saucer to prevent crash. | "Ships set on automatic float in case anything happened to the pilots." ("Dr. Gee": p. 40) | "...having floated gently to the ground due to a 'lack of magnetic power on which they run'." |
| 10. Saucer emitted radio signal. | A tiny radio "Emitted a sing-song note 15 minutes past the hours." ("Dr. Gee": p. 40). "A small, pilotless disk-shaped job equipped with... television or impulse transmitter". (p. 29) | A radio regularly gave off beeps. |
| 11. Interior inaccessible. | Could not see door. (p. 29) | "No protrusions..." |
| 12. Saucer assembly | "Assembled in segments...fitted in grooves." (p. 132) | "...other than a rim where the upper and lower halves...met...appeared to be made of pieces of metal riveted together." |
| 13. No fasteners. | No rivets, bolts, screws. (p. 25) | "Couldn't see any rivets." |
| 14. One way glass | "Portholes which they can see out but nobody can see in...half-silvered to stop cosmic rays." (p. 182) | "Not like ours...portholes of one way glass not visible from outside." |
| 15. Metallurgy | "Two metals unknown to us...(p. 23)...not... found...on this planet." (Dr. Gee": p. 180) | "One or more alloys not found on this planet." (NEXUS) |
| 16. Inaccessible | "Would have spent months getting in...One ship defied all efforts to get inside despite the use of \$35,000 worth of diamond bits." (Dr. Gee": p.29) | Scientists had trouble getting in. |
| 17. Magnetic propulsion | Saucer was "driven by magnetic power". ("Dr. Gee": p. 40) | "Magnetic power on which they run." |
| 18. Alien Bodies | 34 little men were found dead and outside three disks. ("Dr. Gee": p.22) | First investigator said "six little men" were found. Witness claimed rumors of other crashes with bodies. |
| 19. Panic prevention | Secrecy was to avoid panic. | Secrecy was to avoid panic. |

About the Herschel Effect and the text "The Belgian wave and the photos of Ramillies"

by Roger Paquay

Editor note: I tried to keep Mr. Paquay's article in its original form. I only edited as much as I felt necessary to fix any problems with syntax.

The fact that PM, the witness that took the Petit-Rechain (PR) picture revealed that this picture was a hoax completely changes some conclusions made by Auguste Meessen (AM) in his text(1). And from this fact I had to revisit his text. This fact conduct to this second answer.

This second answer will show how my text are distorted or misinterpreted. Phrases and ideas were taken out of context and so they had not the same meaning. I must replace them in their context. Moreover new data on PR picture invalidate the conclusions of AM.

In an article "The Belgian wave and the photos of Ramillies" (1) that can be found on www.meessen.net, Mr Meessen try to show that my arguments to say the Herschel effect is not necessary to explain the Ramillies picture are futile.

He writes (p 18) (1):

It is true that we have no direct evidence of an emission of IR light by the triangular object at Ramillies but we got convergent indirect evidence. This is usually sufficient in Science.

But he does not precise these indirect elements, the only given is the experiment on Herschel effect.

He adds (p 18) (1):

Mr Paquay tend to defend his plane hypothesis and tries therefore to show my experiment was irrelevant, but he makes two important errors. The first one is to claim "the Herschel effect is weak, in the laboratory it required 150 watt at 30 cm, without the lens". He seems to ignore the glass is transparent to IR as well as visible light....."

I answered on this argument: I know very

well that glasses are transparent to IR from 700 nm to 2400 nm. **But what he omits to say is that, in mails exchanged in 2006, I asked him, in order to have a significant experience, to make it in the same conditions that these of the observation:** IR source placed at distances between 300 m and 1500 m, the apparatus in the same configuration, same film 1600 ASA, same diaphragm, same exposure time 1/125 sec, lenses on the apparatus.

When a scientific laboratory tries to verify an experiment he must do it in the same experimental conditions.

Weakness of the Herschel effect: in the laboratory it required 150 watt at 30 cm without the lens. If the engine emitted IR, as Meessen say, in all directions, thus a non laser emission, the front of wave would be spherical. This implies the energy received on a little square surface decrease as the square of the distance. Thus if 150 watt are necessary at 30 cm and are used for the experiment, the energy on the film at 300 m would be divided by 1000000 (one million) and at 1500 m by 25000000 (25 million) if we use the same power. Then we are at a very weak level, weaker then the ambient IR.

Moreover he always says I defend my plane hypothesis and this is not the case. I use the data given by the witnesses and these data give dimensions that correspond with plane dimensions. I had indicate that all dimension between 12 and 60 m could match with the correspondent distance between 300 and 1500 m, but AM avoid to look this part of the text, part that show there are more than a plane hypothesis.

AM continues (p 18-19) (1):

The second error is that he believes that if the object had emitted sufficiently strong IR light, it should have heated the skin of the witness. They would have felt it.

Comment: With 150 watt at 30 cm you feel the heat on the skin!!!

In a document from 27/09/2006 AM wrote:

You think that, if the flying engine had

emitted IR light with enough intensity to erase the latent image, the witnesses had to feel a wave of heat. You ask me to redo the experiment with an IR source several hundred meters faraway.

In fact we don't know, nor you nor me how the ufo had proceeded. For simplicity I supposed the ufo could have lighted the whole landscape (scenery) with IR light in a continuous way, But it is sufficient to accept there was sufficient IR light in the lens at the same moment the picture was taken in visible light.

Comment: this text shows many suppositions that are unverifiable.(I suppose!, It is sufficient to accept!!)

To justify the heat feeling could not happen, A M speaks now of Led technology that did not exist in 1990 and his experience did not use Led. Moreover he adds now the necessity of simultaneous emission of UV. **We know that glasses are opaque to UV and this was demonstrated in the Acheroy report for the PR picture.**

On 27/07/2011 the witness that took the Petit-Rechain picture recognized in the medias, TV and press, that the PR picture is a hoax.

So there could not have been UV emission in this case, no propulsion or orientation engine by means of plasmas and UV, no advanced technology, no ionization of the air round the engine by plasma effect.

It seems evident that the whole argumentation based on UV emitted by engine in the Petit-Rechain picture falls down and the phrase (page20) (1)" ... this yields strong photographic traces, as demonstrated in our analysis of the Petit-Rechain color slide" **has no more signification.**

So you cannot put forward p24 (1) that ufo propulsion involve plasma effect (page 24 "The required UV light result from pulsed ionization belonging to the propulsion system") since this conclusion comes from the PR picture that is a hoax.

It would be time to see the consequences of this hoax. The whole conclusion of this analysis by different people and labs must be considered as

“non existent”. In the same way all the other case that used these conclusions to be explained must be revisited or considered as problematic. But you don’t prove the ETH origin of the engine!!

On page 12 (1) you indicate that I used the altitude in place of the distance , this change effectively the distance by 1.414. Nevertheless the photographer says he took four pictures in 1’30”. Which of these four picture was taken under an angle of 45° ? It is not indicated so we can doubt the estimation of the distance. The four pictures cannot have been taken at 45°, only one can.

But if I use 300 x 1.414 the distance become 424 m. This data change the angle from 11.2 to 8.02°. With this value my conclusion is the same:

“the angle of view of the engine impeach him to be seen entirely in the viewer. Indeed, the horizontal field of view from the 300 mm lens is 7°.”

The estimated distance by the witnesses remains false.

You then calculate the hyperfocal to show the distance is close from 500 or 600 m. But this calculation give no indication: the hyperfocal is used in photography to obtain the greater sharpness zone, zone between the closest sharp point and the more distant sharp point. The setting to use the hyperfocal does not place the setting at infinity as you say, there is a different setting depending from the diaphragm aperture. You cannot determine a distance with the move of the lens. On a 300 mm lens the move to go from 50 m to infinite as focusing takes only 3 mm .

Moreover, p 9 (1), you wrote: **“All pictures were taken with a setting at infinity.”** This implies the hyperfocal was not used to have the greater field of sharpness.

You say the lowest value of the distance would thus be close to 600 m and the altitude could be as low as 425 m which is compatible with the estimated upper limit of 500 m.

If you read VOB 1 p 420 bottom, you find “the declaration of the witnesses”:

We admit that the object flied above us at an altitude close to 300 m rather then 500 m. His wingspan is comparable to that of a 747.

About the drawings: you must see that drawing “a” by Patrick Ferryn differ from drawing “c” by Jose Fernandez.

On page 13 (1) you write:

His only justification of the plane hypothesis was he observed the landing lights of an approaching B747 (at the airport of Bierset, near Liège). At a distance of 15 or 20 km he saw a single light. When the plane approached he saw 2 then 4 lights. This happened also at Ramillies but does not prove the object was a plane.

You try to make think I had made only one observation in Bierset. This is not the case and Bierset has nothing to do in this discussion. The photomontage I joined to the Ramillies case was taken from my home in Waremmes where I can observe this fact nearly each day since many years. My home is situated under the aerial path for approaching planes each night when the wind is in the good direction. The photomontage was already done before I visited Bierset where you could see the observation each 45 sec at about 11 pm.

In 2003, a long time before I visit Bierset, I discussed different cases of the Belgian wave with Pierre Magain and showed him my conclusions on the Ramillies case. These conclusion did not changed since this time.

You say my airplane hypothesis is unrealistic and unable to explain the observed facts. But you don’t prove it seriously. It is your conclusion that proves you cannot accept one people contest your conclusions. You are not the only one that can think rigorously.

And you are not the only holder of the “TRUTH” as you try to make belief when you write *“We restore the truth”*, your truth you want to impose by intimidation , manipulation of my texts, false accusations.

On page 20 (1) A M insinuate that the text I edited on Euroufonet and on Sunlite about the Ramillies picture contains calculations errors. This assertion is false. This is pure defamatory affirmation . I an-

swered on the two sites about this (3). It is inadmissible to deliver false assertion to discredit someone.

Sorry for the Ramillies picture, the elements and photo you edited in this text show clearly that the engine is correctly photographed and that the absence of other points then the lights, **five and not four!!**, is explainable , the sky was dark and could not act on the film, thus this part of the film was totally underexposed. My conclusion will stay the same: the Herschel effect is not necessary to explain the Ramillies picture.

See my precedent answer on the two sites, on SUNlite 3.3, May-June 2011 and euroufo on 18/04/11.(3)

About the shape of the engine in Ramillies: **AM avoid to speak about the photomontage that was joined to my article.**

This photomontage shows exactly the same arc that the drawing made by the witnesses in Ramillies. Why avoid to compare the two?

About this picture of Ramillies I had signalled to Patrick Ferryn and mr Meessen in a mail dated 12/12/2006 that “implicit elements in this case had been forgotten”. Here below the extract from this mail:

What I said is that there was in the Ramillies observation one element non cited by the witnesses. I verified the validity of this “hidden element” in the ad hoc literature. The three witnesses had the possibility to furnish this element, and you had to think to it because it is implicit with the other data. I will not transmit it to you but, if one day I must edit it, the reaction will be: “how is it possible that Mr Meessen did not saw this detail?”. Detail that change immediately the perspective on this case.

This implicit element was a characteristic of the lens, “the angle of view from the lens”; immediately you also calculate the angle of view for the engine (“estimated dimension)/ “estimated distance”, angle of view that must be the same as the angle of view of the image given by (dimension of image)/ focal distance. This was not the case. These elements showed immediately there was contradiction between the estimated distance and the es-

timated dimension of the engine. Moreover this showed immediately that the engine was far away then the estimated distance or was smaller than estimated.

This was the reason I decided to analyze this case.

You may remark that Mr. Meessen avoid to speak about this fact. He does prefer to speak about "my negativistic attitude". This assertion shows that he don't accept other ideas then his own ideas.

We also can see that the same elements as in the Ramillies picture were neglected in the analysis of the Petit-Rechain picture, the angle of view of the lenses and the angular dimension of what was seen on the picture. These elements showed since the beginning the PR picture was a hoax. Moreover there were many other arguments developed.

The analysis of Petit-Rechain picture can be found on Sunlite 3.2 , March-April 2011.(4)

On page 21 (1) you write:

The frontal arc was luminous and visible in the viewfinder up to its edge. This was not an illusion as Roger Paquay dared to claim.

I don't speak of an illusion for the view trough the viewfinder .

I wrote:

***The drawing** at point C shows a curved shape, pure mental interpretation (paréidolia), that occurs when an observer mentally links points of light that are separate in a dark sky.*

I was speaking about the drawing!!! Moreover the photomontage I joined showed exactly the same thing as the drawing and gave also the impression of a continuous arch. This is pure "optical illusion" due to mental interpretation.

A magnificent example of this type of illusion is called " Illusion de Kanisza" you can find on the web, just type "illusion de Kanisza" in Google and you will find it. This illusion is made with three points placed in a triangular position . When you look

these three points you see a non existing figure, a triangle. Moreover this triangle seems to be above the points plane (this fact is not yet explained).

In his conclusion he said (P22) (1):

They distort the facts, to adapt them to their belief or preconceptions.

Then (p 23) (1)

...he does not want to accept facts that are contrary to his preconceptions or belief.

You add that in Ramillies I distorted the fact. This is not the case I used the data given by the witnesses and search what they can say to us without preconception. You don't agree the conclusions that differ from yours. But I never present as "FACTS" ideas that can only be "HYPOTHESIS" as you do.

Explain why the localization you gave in your text differs from the localization that can be found in VOB1! This is distortion of data and this distortion is not done by me.

In your text "The Belgian wave and the photos of Ramillies" (1) you continuously distort and manipulate my texts and present them as there were false. You omit knowingly data and remarks I did because they implied other conclusion then yours. It is an inadmissible way of work.

In your document page 19 (1) you write:

Mr. Paquay claimed also that the Herschel hypothesis is not very probable and inconsistent with the data, since the emission of IR light would require a very advanced technology.

It is not what I said: here you will find my text from November 2005, **he showed that this explanation needed that AM made hypothesis and I cited them:**

As preamble I wrote:

This explanation of the lack of image by Herschel effect is contestable for many reasons we shall evoke.

This hypothesis (done by A M) presuppose a certain number of **assertions non**

verifiable, postulatium, or is in contradiction with data given by the witnesses.

1. The Ufo is equipped with an advanced technology.*
2. The Ufo **knows** he is observed and photographed.
3. The Ufo can emit an IR light in a period shorter then 1/125 s and send it on the camera lens, or it emit the IR light continuously in all directions. By this way it would be detectable by military satellites. But this did not happen despite the extreme sensibility of the IR detectors and, since the distance, it would need an emission power more greater then the 150 watt used in laboratory at a very short distance. This emission would give an intense impression of heat on the witnesses and they don't signal it.
4. If a Herschel effect had existed, how explain the four non erased points on the negative. How in these conditions speak of an erased photo?

***It is A. M. that write on p 1 (1) of his text: "The central difficulty is that UfOS displays a very advanced technology, suggesting an ET origin"**

This assertion is a postulatium, non verifiable assertion that can only be presented as "Hypothesis" and not as "Fact".

I add now that the original picture you present in your document show clearly five , and not four, non erased points, the whole environment is non exposed because it is the dark sky.

In a mail in French language dated 27/11/2006 I wrote to AM and asked the following questions :

About the Herschel effect, I wait for an answer to the following questions :

1. *It needed to you 150 watt IR power at 30 cm and without lens, what power would be necessary to obtain the same result at 1500 m and with the lens ?*
2. *How do you explain that on an "erased" picture you can find four non erased*

points? It is illogical. How can you explain that?

3. How do you explain the lack of heat sensation on the witnesses, since 150 watt at 30 cm give a heat sensation?
4. What was the power of the IR projectors to blur and non erase the photo of the "Rideau de fer"?
5. How do you explain that, in summer and in the warm areas where temperature exceed 40°, the film are not influenced by IR ambient that is important at this moment and emitted by the whole environment? Could the answer be that usual films are not very sensible to IR?
6. **Why will you not do the experiment in the same real conditions as when the photo was taken: same distance, presence of the lens, same exposure time and same power as I suggested it?**

He did not answer but suggested I indicated black radiation what is a nonsense. Then I replied :

Why don't you answer the questions on Herschel effect? You pretend I made two reasoning errors. I never supposed a black radiation (as you pretend). You know very well that, in summer, the whole environment emit or reflect IR radiations. Then, where is the fault?

Comment: This IR radiation never affect the photos you take in summer!!!

I added:

Your experience proves only the existence of the Herschel effect but don't prove the photo was erased by this means. There are four non erased points.

Moreover on the photo you present now as the real Ramillies photo there are five points and not four as in VOB 1. How do you explain that? This is distortion of data. Who distort?

I continued:

You assert, always without proving it, that I don't take in account the whole data. You also neglect very important data that had

to be taken in account before to speak of erasing by Herschel effect. I let you the possibility to find them and I keep them for me. If you had taken in account these data you had immediately found that the witnesses were wrong and you had not to invoke a sophisticated explanation when a single explanation was sufficient (Principle of "Occam's razor")

The psychologists on basis of very serious and rigorous experiences arrived at the following conclusion:

"When someone don't know what he is seeing, when someone belief to know what he will see, the perception is disturbed (distorted)."

This apply perfectly for the Ramillies case and to the witnesses effectively. On basis of an estimation of the distance that was false, the witnesses do immediately for the heard noise one interpretation oriented ETH. "This cannot be a plane reactor because the noise is weak an the engine is extremely close." They don't look for the other hypothesis: "The noise is weak because the distance is greater than our estimation". Calculation, with the witnesses data, shows that the engine is far away, 1500 m in place of 300 to 500 m. **In this case, considering the greater distance and the fact that the witnesses say they hear the noise after the engine passed behind them it may be a reactor noise. This last fact is very characteristic of a plane.**

Moreover in VOB1 p 420 you can read:

I took a fourth photo. It is only at this moment we heard the whistle typical of a reactor. But we unanimously recognize it was strangely weak for the low altitude at what the object was passing". This shows an immediate interpretation without envisaging the other possibility.

We can also ask how he and the photographer explain the fact that , on this photo, the dimension of the engine is only 4,2 mm in place of 12 mm as indicated by the photographer.

In page 24 (1) you write this could not be a plane because the estimated speed was 100 to 150 km/h. You know **it is impossible to estimate the speed of an engine on the dark sky since the dimen-**

sion and the distance are unknown. As I showed it, the distance was about 1500 m, 5 times far away then estimated. In this case the speed was underestimated by a factor 5. So the speed is more probably 5x100 or 5x150, 500 to 750 km/h and this match perfectly with a plane. Moreover at this distance the details of structure cannot be seen.

In your conclusion, p 22 (1), you write:

They treat the witnesses and investigators as if they were liars or fools.

This assertion is completely a nonsense.

We never treat the witnesses of liars or fools. We always say we agree the witnesses saw something strange they did not know or understand. **So we never say "Ufo cannot exist"**. We add that, the recovered data, permit different interpretations that don't constitute attacks against someone but may be discussed and compared with yours. But we never try to discredit someone as you do continuously. Moreover we search without preconception. What we find is in contradiction with your conclusions. You refuse to look our conclusions without preconception. For you the sceptics try to destroy the ETH.

No we try to find what is behind the UFO observations. For the moment there is no proof that UFO observed are extraterrestrial. This must stay one "HY-POTHESIS" among others.

On page 23 (1), to negate the PSH, you use the argument that the effect of sociological contagion and rumor spreading is patently contradicted.

This argument is false because the rumor theory is enable to account for the real statistical data: the process there **is the impact of the medias.**

Newspapers and TV were constantly calling for "extraordinary engines in our sky". The statistical study presented in VOB 2 , when studied for the impact of the medias, show: 50% of the observations and declarations where done in the four first months. Then the media stopped to speak of ufos and the number falls down. Moreover in VOB1 we can find there was an evident effect of the media because

you write that in February 1990 "at the silence of the medias correspond a silence of our phone"!!! This is evidently an acknowledgement.

It needed 15 supplementary months to arrive at 100 % of the data in VOB 2. The correlation calculated by EXCell table is "+ 0,92" what is a very high positive value showing the evident link between medias and declarations. The detailed study can be found under the title: "A statistical study of the Belgian wave."(2)

If you don't find it I may replace it on euroufo if asked.

You can also find my first answer to the Meessen article on the two sites (3)

To conclude as Carl Sagan stated: "Extraordinary claims requires exceptional evidences to be accepted". But it is to whom claims extraordinary fact to prove them, what you cannot do. You only do "hypothesis" you present as "facts", what they are not.

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(1): "The Belgian wave and the photos of Ramillies »: By A Meessen on www.meessen.net,

(2): "A statistical study of the Belgian wave": by R Paquay on SUNlite 3.1 January-February 2011, and on Euroufo 5 May 2009)

(3): "Answer to "The Belgian wave and the Ramillies picture" by R Paquay. On Sunlite 3.3, may-june 2011 and on euroufo on 18 april 2011.

(4): "The Petit-Rechain picture" by R. Paquay on SUNlite 3.2, March-April 2011

(5): "Analyse et implications physiques de 2 photos de la vague belge" by A Meessen on www.meessen.net

Paquay R.

Physicist

Directeur honoraire.

Unsolved UFO Mysteries Solved

Reading all the UFO reports in MUFON database and NUFORC can be tiring and many of the reports lack so little real information. Many of them appear to be explainable and when something interesting happens in the sky, I always look at the database to see what kind of reports were made.

A research balloon

On the morning of September 18th, MUFON received four reports from Arizona. One of them was from an assistant state director of Arizona MUFON. Some of the descriptions were interesting:

A single bright light. 6 am in the morning. No stars or moon or sun present...I stayed out side for about ten minutes and it never moved...I am 53 years old and I don't spook easily. This thing spooked me.¹

As Assistant State Director for Arizona MUFON, I received a call from a witness in Tucson (170 miles away) at 6:20 in the morning. I then looked outside with binoculars and saw the orb he was talking about. It was stationery and had a red lit-up area on the interior, lower left side. I immediately thought "high altitude balloon" but it was perfectly round, no tear-drop shape like all I've seen before. It started "dropping" small lighted pieces of itself, then larger worm-like, undulating pieces which floated and very slowly descended, all the time twisting and tumbling. I watched 3 of these things fall from it, then they disappeared. After watching the large orb for 30 minutes through binoculars, and after I had come inside the house for 5 minutes, when I went back outside it was MUCH smaller and was moving to the north and slowly descending. After 5 more minutes of watching, it disappeared completely from sight.²

...It was way too big to be a star...It was in the eastern sky slightly to the south of the rising sun. I think it stayed rather stationary as it grew in size until it took off upward. Through binoculars it seemed transparent and then solid. I could see 2 or 3 pinpricks of light on it. These lights may have been moving...It disappeared at about 6:30 to 6:45... It looked like an up-

side down teardrop or diamond.³

This UFO was viewed by my boyfriend on 09/18/2011-that Sunday morning...The entire viewing lasted approximately 44 minutes...He grabbed those binoculars to get a closer look and as he focused, he saw what looked to be a bright, metallic and diamond shaped object...At around 6:44 A.M., the object itself had still not moved, but a smaller object was seen separating from the larger, diamond-shaped object. The separated object was heading in a south-east direction...⁴

NUFORC also had a few reports:

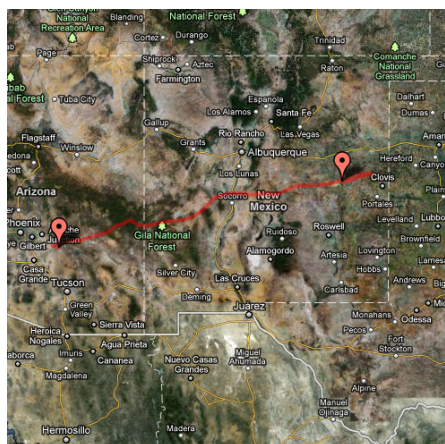
...Using the binoculars I saw a tear dropped shaped object that was approximately 10-20 times the size of a planet when viewed through the same binoculars. The tear drop was orientated with the largest part of the shape towards the zenith and the narrowest point of the shape towards the horizon. The shape wasn't a perfect tear drop. Along right hand side from the mid-point to the bottom there was a slight inward notch on the form... I wanted to rule out any planets being in the area so I went into the house to look up sky charts. After looking at the star charts and ruling out the possibility of any planets being in that position I returned outside. This was approximately 6:40am. At that time the tear drop shaped object was gone and there were two other objects in that area. My assumption is that the tear drop shaped object broke apart into these objects, but without seeing the transition I can't say with certainty.... The event lasted till approximately 6:55am. I have spent some time studying the daytime and nighttime sky, as an amateur astronomer.⁵

At around 6:00 Sunday morning, my husband and I were arriving home after work when we noticed the yellowish-white ball in the sky to the East. It didn't seem to move just hover in the same spot my husband called the Sheriffs Dept. They went out to look and returned to say it was a hot air balloon and the morning sun was reflecting off it. But after watching it for about 40 min. we realized it was no hot air balloon. It would have moved at least a little....⁶

About 6 AM I witnessed a circular object in the eastern sky. With binoculars it appeared to have a tail. It was brighter than the moon and much smaller. At the time the moon was more toward the west. No other stars were visible. After about 30

*minutes it appeared even more round and slightly larger like it was getting closer. It appeared to have small spots.*⁷

The Assistant state director for Arizona MUFON got it right on their initial guess for the object's identity. However, this individual failed to pursue the event by examining the object closely and seeing if a research balloon was in the air at the time. The other witnesses seemed to be hitting near the target at their guesses but chose to file a UFO report with organizations, who seem to do little follow-up. The source of this UFO was a research balloon launched from Fort Sumner, New Mexico (The Cosmic Foreground Explorer - COFE) the day before and it landed near Case Grande Arizona at 1418Z (7:18 MST) on the 18th of September.



Photographer John Kittelsrud saw the UFO and took this image with a telephoto lens. Apparently, he was able to determine what the object was with his camera and did not need to file a UFO report. You can see more of his photography at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/team-droid/>



The lesson here is that these descriptions are consistent with a research balloon and a check of NASA's web site for their Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility would have readily identified the culprit.

Bright fireballs

There were two very bright fireballs in the last two months. The first occurred on September 14th and was widely visible over the southwestern US. NUFORC's Peter Davenport commented,

*Two witnesses in Phoenix reported that the object was almost the apparent size of the Moon, and that it had been visible for an estimated 45-50 seconds. If those time estimates are correct, almost certainly, the object was not a meteor. Meteors typically are traveling at 12-50 statute miles per second, when they first enter the atmosphere, which makes a meteor sighting of that duration quite unlikely.*⁸

Davenport should understand that people often make errors in estimating duration of meteors. Suggesting that this should invalidate the meteor explanation is being naive.

One of NUFORC's reports included comments that a plane was reported to have crashed into the Lake Elsinore and had caused some fires. A helicopter sent to the area saw no crash and no fires. Hmmmm.....this story sounds vaguely familiar!!!

Had Mr Davenport looked at the American Meteor Society's Fireball log, he would have seen over a hundred reports to suggest that these estimates were in error. This fireball was as bright as the full moon and was recorded on video. It is interesting to compare the UFO reports in the NUFORC database and the fireball reports made to the American Meteor Society (AMS). There is a noticeable difference in how the reports are written and which database contains data that can be actually evaluated.

On October 6th, there was another bright fireball (full moon brightness again) visible from the southeastern US. Once again, Peter Davenport missed the obvious clue that the object was probably a meteor because it was visible over a large area. He posted the following headline on the NUFORC web site:

MULTIPLE DRAMATIC SIGHTINGS WITNESSED OVER FLORIDA AND GEORGIA⁹

There was no mention of the source being possibly a meteor. Of course, the American Meteor Society's fireball log listed over fifty fireball reports made at the same time from the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The lesson learned here is that anytime multiple UFO sightings occur over a large area, it is probable that it was a bright meteor or decaying space debris.

Notes and References

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2. MUFON. [UFO sighting database](http://mufoncms.com/cgi-bin/report_handler.pl?req=view_long_desc&id=31881&rnd=). Available WWW: http://mufoncms.com/cgi-bin/report_handler.pl?req=view_long_desc&id=31881&rnd=
3. MUFON. [UFO sighting database](http://mufoncms.com/cgi-bin/report_handler.pl?req=view_long_desc&id=31878&rnd=). Available WWW: http://mufoncms.com/cgi-bin/report_handler.pl?req=view_long_desc&id=31878&rnd=
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Affordable UFO recording equipment

Last issue, I mentioned that the only thing I liked in "UFOs on the record" was Doug Trumball's idea about UFO cameras. It mirrors what I had previously stated in SUNlite. Recently, I noticed that ORION telescopes seems to have a couple of cameras that might be suitable for UFO photography.

The first camera is under \$1,000 and is an all-sky camera that might be worth monitoring the skies for those mile-wide (or larger) low flying triangular craft. It certainly could be used to triangulate the position of a UFO from two or more stations. It is good for low light imagery.



The other camera is \$500 and is a deep space video camera that shoots low light subjects. Attached to a standard camera lens (There appears to be that capability although it is not clearly stated), it can record faint stars and any UFOs that cross the field of view.



Even more amazing is the software "Optic-tracker" which can be used with any Go-To type telescope. Watch the video at <http://www.optictracker.com/Home.html>. In those images, one can see a telescope automatically track and record airplanes in flight. It also works on satellites like the ISS. Wouldn't this work effectively on UFOs at night and day? Imagine no more blurry and erratic UFO videos!

Many in UFOlogy seem to want to focus their efforts on examining the same old cases over and over again. Sixty years of this has demonstrated little is accomplished by this. It is time for UFOlogists to step up to the plate and find ways to get real data that can be analyzed. The technology is available. What is stopping them?

UFOs on the tube

Unidentified Flying Nazis

I watched an episode of Dark Matters: Twisted but true that mentioned the Kecksburg UFO crash. The show made a very weak effort to link the NAZI UFO myth with Kecksburg. One has to wonder why Germany lost the war if they had such advanced technology. It sounds more like a Captain America Comic book story or something from "Castle Wolfenstein".

The segment starts with John Murphy interviewing a "fireman", who supposedly saw the glowing "bell-shaped" object and then had to leave the area when the army threw them out. While the show presents this as factual, Murphy never stated this happen in any recording or written document. It is assumed that he experienced these things based on stories told decades later.

This is followed by another inaccurate claim that plain clothes men came into the studio and confiscated tape recordings Murphy had made. As expected, the show then points toward his death as suspicious.

When the meteor explanation was presented, the producers countered it with "UFO expert" Richard Dolan, who repeated the completely invalid claim made by Ivan Sanderson that the object in the sky was too slow to be a meteor. Mr. Dolan went on to suggest that UFOs had a Nazi connection, which segued into a bizarre story about a Nazi bell that could operate at incredible speeds. This "bell" was said to have operated using anti-gravity. The program implies the object and its creator mysteriously disappeared at the end of the war. Ultimately, creator and bell made it to the United States where, while testing the Nazi bell (over the heavily populated eastern US), it crashed into Kecksburg!

The show asks the viewer to decide if it was a meteor or a crashed Nazi craft but it never gave any support to the meteor explanation. I was disappointed that this program appeared on the "science channel", which really has some good programs. This program was not one of them.

Book Reviews

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

Shockingly close to the truth - James Moseley and Karl Pflock

This book is more an entertaining read than informative. While many UFO books like to go into details about mysterious events in the sky, Moseley concentrates more on the human aspects. His story about his travels across the country early in his UFOlogical career is highly amusing (as were his years in Peru). This book is a time machine into the past that demonstrates that UFOlogy really hasn't changed much over the decades. It should be found on the bookshelves of both skeptics and proponents.

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

Project Blue Book- Brad Steiger

This is an interesting book in that it provides a lot of interesting documents associated with Project Blue Book. Most noteworthy are the Zamora, Mantell, and Arnold sections. Many of these documents can be found on-line, which makes the book somewhat useless. However, at least it puts all of the documents in one location. You may or may not want it in your library but it is a good reference.

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

Flying saucers - serious business - Frank Edwards.

I recall reading this book back in the early 1970s and just blindly accepting most of what was written. Time has changed my opinions about UFOs as well as the conclusions in this book. It is amusing to see some of his claims and predictions and how they did not come to fruition. It appears that Edwards like to work mostly with questionable sources and rumors than actual facts. He would then jump to wild theories based on this "information". I have it on my shelf but it really offers nothing for the reader other than a glimpse into the past.