

# SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



*UFOlogists in general have not been as willing as Hynek to retract endorsements of explained cases, and have preferred instead to continually recirculate and embellish the same stories.*

*James Oberg "The failure of the science of UFOlogy"*

Volume 9 Number 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017



Isaac Koi shared Gilles Fernandez's post.  
December 2 at 3:18am ·

Goodbye: I seem to have greatly annoyed Ted Roe about a month ago when I posted a brief comment on Facebook about his new IAUFR group. Without wanting to bother you all with the details, he has subsequently posted on various Facebook pages attacking my use of a pseudonym (referring to me as a "fictional entity," "it" and posting "who the fuck is Isaac Koi and why won't he comply w/ the standards we do?"). The relevant Facebook pages include his own page and the one at the link below (among others):  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/470983769757563/permalink/599085753614030/>

In the context of these posts on various Facebook pages, Ted Roe posted about "my guys" being at the CNES event I attended in Paris a couple of years ago (where I had the pleasure of meeting with Jacques Vallee, Richard Haines and various others - including quite a few members of the EuroUFO email List) and there being "pics". Since the relevant meeting was held on the basis that everyone was entitled to preserve their anonymity if they wished, I had expected that any photos that include me would not be made public - but it looks like I may have been too trusting.

Even more worryingly to me, given my concern not to have clients know about my interest in ufology in case this adversely affects my income, he has now posted today - after various people were kind enough to support me in the relevant discussion on Facebook (including Edoardo Russo, Curt Collins, Rich Hoffman, Paul Dean and others) - called those supporting me "little butt sucking followers" and said "just watch how I make these malcontents famous anytime someone searches their name".

It appears to be implied - although not entirely clear - that Ted intends to cause my interest in ufology to appear in search results anytime someone searches my (real) name. Given that Ted knows people that have met me (with Ted repeatedly referring to Jacques Vallee in the relevant posts), he could be in a position to do this.

I'm not willing to take this risk.

I've been prepared to share resources freely with the UFO community for over a decade without asking anything in return, simply seeking to be allowed to participate using a pseudonym to avoid risking any potential damage to my career. The above issues suggest that I cannot do this.

This means that I now probably have to cease active participation in ufology - with effect from today. I am, frankly, rather upset about this.

It's been (mostly) fun, but any potential harm to my career is more important to me.

## Cruel UFOlogy

On Facebook, Robert Moore referred to the recent behavior in UFO conversations as "the age of cruel UFOlogy". I think that "cruel UFOlogy" always existed and has only come to prominence with social media. Like politics and religion, UFOlogy can bring out the worst in people because their own personal beliefs blind them from seeing any point of view that is not their own. The most recent example of this was when Ted Roe and Erica Lukes chose to use Isaac Koi's anonymity as a reason to reject his work of debunking hoax photographs and videos.

The dust up arose when Chris Rutkowski pointed out that Isaac Koi had debunked a photograph being used by Hal Povenmire in his book. While there seemed to be agreement by those participating in the discussion that it was a fake, one of Povenmire's defenders, Chris Bledsoe, thought differently. At this point, Roe and Lukes implied that Koi's work should not even be considered, or mentioned, because he chooses to use a pseudonym. Apparently, Roe and Lukes think that their version of "scientific" UFOlogy should ignore any source that can not be identified by name even if it is heavily documented and can be checked. Compare this to Ted Roe's NARCAP report of a UAP I discussed in SUNlite 8-4. In that report, the data could not be verified or was missing. Additionally, claims were made in the report that, when checked, turned out to be inaccurate. If Koi's work was that sloppy, Roe might have a point but it isn't. Roe did not even take the time to identify any specific case where Koi's identity was required or his work could not be verified.

Gilles Fernandez seeing that Roe had referred to Koi as a "no-named soul" whose work can not be verified, posted that comment in another forum and classified it as "stupid". Roe followed Gilles into that group and attempted to defend his point. Many disagreed with his portrayal of Koi and his work. Roe's argument then switched to why it was important for Koi to use his real name. He pontificated that he knows people who risk their reputations by writing about UFOs and were standing up for what they believed. The implication was that Koi was a coward and cowards have no place in UFOlogy. Upset with those who chose to oppose him, Roe indicated he was going to conduct a campaign of smearing Koi, and his supporters:

*"..just watch how I make these malcontents famous anytime someone searches their name."*

This sinister tone concerned Koi and it implied that Roe was going to expose his real name. For those unfamiliar with Isaac, he is a barrister in England and chooses to be anonymous because his interest in UFOs might adversely affect his position and financial situation. Roe and Lukes apparently do not care and refused to respect Koi's desire to protect his professional standing.

Sadly, all of this compelled Isaac to leave UFOlogy and he published a detailed statement (complete with footnotes) of why. Cruel UFOlogists, like Roe and Lukes, can celebrate their victory but it is a hollow one. What they may have gained personally was lost in the departure of a thorough researcher, who had done much to help others. UFOlogy has always been a case of "us against the debunkers/skeptics" mentality but, in this "age of cruel UFOlogy", it appears that it is a case of "us against those who we dislike". This close-minded philosophy will continue to lead to poorly researched UFO cases and flawed conclusions. It will be business as usual for UFOlogy.

Front: A photograph of a refueling exercise seen from Hillsborough, NH in twilight. A refueling exercise probably was the source of one of the classic UFO cases found in NICAP's best evidence.

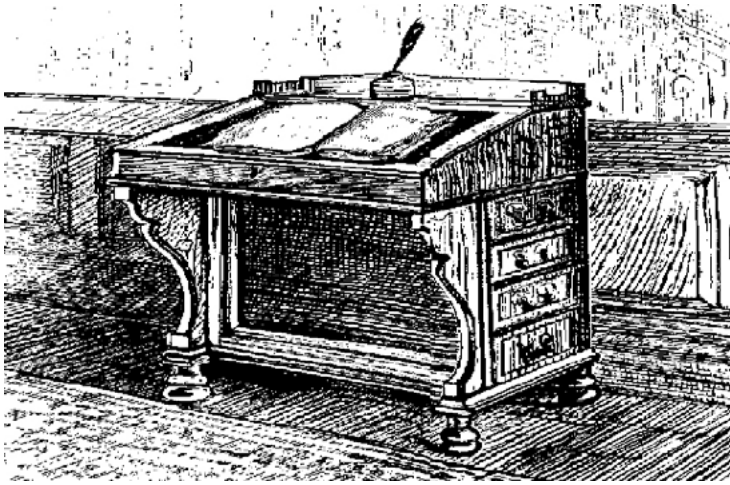
Left: Isaac Koi leaves UFOlogy under the threat of being exposed by "cruel UFOlogists", who appear to view his desire for anonymity as an insult to UFOlogy.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who's blogging UFOs.....	2-3
The Roswell Corner .....	3
Ghost ships over Kwajalein?.....	4-7
Crashology in retreat?.....	8-10
UFO evidence under review: February 24, 1959 - The Killian case.....	11-6
The 701 club: Case 11394 February 20, 1967.....	17-9
Buy it, Borrow it, or Bin it: UFOs and alien abduction phenomena: A scientific analysis by Hal Povenmire...	20-1

# Who's blogging UFOs?

## Hot topics and varied opinions



**The bad astronomer gave us a link to an interesting video showing "jumping sun dogs".** I have never seen this sort of thing before and I bet a lot of people haven't either. It demonstrates that there are rare phenomena, which could produce UFO reports.

**Robert Sheaffer reports that Roswell is having two festivals this year.** One is apparently being hosted by the Roswell Daily Record and the other is sponsored by the UFO museum. The UFO museum has all the major speakers, like Friedman, Schmitt, and Carey, associated with it. Both are trying to capitalize on the 70th anniversary. As usual, it seems to be all about the money.

**Robert Salas is trying to present new Oscar flight witnesses at the National Press Club in March.** He needs the cash first so he is out begging for money. There is no indication if these witnesses are "new" or are the same witnesses mentioned in the past.

As Tim Hebert points out, this was before the election when it looked like Hillary Clinton was going to win. Apparently, Salas hoped Hillary would help in his quest. I doubt Donald Trump cares much about "UFO disclosure", which may put a dent in Salas' plan.

**Scott Brando exposed an orchestrated UFO hoax in Turkey.** When Sharon Hill wrote about it, "cruel UFOlogy" took over and declared that she was a "disinformation agent". Those commenting did not even read the story. They simply saw what they wanted to see. It was a common UFO proponent response to any article that exposes a UFO event as something other than an alien spaceship.

**Steve Longero has appeared as a new Rendlesham witness.** He surfaced recently and his story is that he was at the Nuclear Weapons Storage Area (WSA) on base when something set off all the alarms. He reports seeing lights over the trees and then departed the WSA to go into the woods with Colonel Halt. When I was in the Navy, for a security guard to leave any post, without a proper relief, was grounds for punishment. If such a post involved something as important as nuclear weapons, which would be the case for a WSA post, it was probably grounds for severe punishment. Perhaps Longero is confused or is merging multiple stories together. Evidence for this is him mentioning seeing Warren, Burroughs, Cabansag, and Halt when he went into the woods. While Burroughs may have been with Halt, the others appear to have been elsewhere. There are no record of any "alarms" going off at the WSA and Halt never mentioned them in his memo. Based on the information presented, it appears that Longero's story is a case of him trying to become part of the Rendlesham legend.

**This was an interesting photograph of a green fireball.** As I have pointed out in the past, it is not unusual for meteors to appear green, which makes one wonder about those "green fireballs" seen in the late 1940s over New Mexico.

**Jack Brewer gave us a brief overview of UFOlogical history and many of its empty promises.** It is no surprise he ends his article with the Ted Roe-Isaac Koi confrontation. Will UFOlogists ever learn from the past?

**Kevin Randle had Robert Sheaffer on his podcast and they discussed the Washington DC 1952 sightings.** Robert seemed to be taken off guard by Randle's stories about pilots chasing UFOs because he was not familiar with the stories Kevin brought up. I found his examples a bit confusing as well. Mr. Randle seemed to jumble all sorts of information together and really could not single out a specific case that was rock solid. Rereading his book on the subject, I noticed the Kevin gives credence to a lot of second hand testimony and testimony made by pilots decades after the event. In Phil Klass' SUN #71, he described talking to one of the F-94 pilots, who stated the one light they saw was a surface vehicle's headlight. The Washington DC sightings are mass of inconsistent reports and anomalous propagation. I am sure UFOlogists will disagree but there seems to be little good evidence to indicate that actual "flying saucers" were over Washington DC in July of 1952. The Washington Nationals UFO story seems to have grown to mythical proportions where all sorts of stories have cropped up over the years with the USAF, once again, attempting to cover-up the evidence.

**The Neil Armstrong Planetarium in Altoona, Pennsylvania is holding a 9-week crash course on UFOs and ETs.** One of the guest speakers is John Ventre. From the flyer, we discover that attendees have to pay \$50 for this course. Based on the description it appears to be a rehash of ancient aliens and Hanger one. I was not overly surprised that the planetarium was involved in this kind of farce since planetariums usually try to cater to public interests while ignoring science. However, I was shocked that the Altoona Area High School Astronomy club was involved until I looked a little closer. It turns out that the director of the planetarium is James Krug, who is also the Pennsylvania section director for MUFON and the advisor for the high school astronomy club. A high school astronomy club is usually full of students and not experienced amateur astronomers, who tend to be a bit more knowledgeable about the night sky and how some mysterious events can be explained. Krug seems to be using the planetarium position to pro-

mote his UFO hobby and teach pseudoscience to people who can't tell the difference.

**Jan Harzan sent out a year end message that sounded like they had another impressive UFO case.** This involved some hunters, who saw a huge UFO up close in 2013 but did not report it until February of 2016. The details can be found in the MUFON journal but the rest of us have to read about it through second hand sources. After seeing the video and reading the journal article, I have to admit I was not that impressed. A poor video that is full of electronic interference is not proof it was caused by aliens but this is MUFON, who brought us those ground breaking scientific discoveries on Hanger one. I am not a big fan of witnesses who remain anonymous (not to be confused with Koi's anonymity) when they claim to have seen extraordinary things.

**Cheryl Costa is calling for congressional hearings on UFOs.** She mentioned the Citizens Hearing on Disclosure from 2013. It was a big flop and was nothing more than a publicity stunt. I described it all in SUNlite 5-4 and noted that some of the individuals appeared to be the tellers of tall tales. If this is "best evidence" for Costa, she has set the bar very low. Considering the way real science is being treated these days by congress, I find it hard to believe that UFOs would get any warmer a reception.

**Starre Vartan gave an excellent description of the autokinetic effect.** The attached video gives us some excellent examples of optical illusions with some explanations of why they appear the way they do. It shows that one can not dismiss an astronomical explanation simply because the witness says they saw the UFO dancing about in the sky.

**MUFON must get dozens of these types of photographs..** How many images are taken by photographers, who only see the UFOs after they look at the pictures hours or days later? In this case, the individual had taken a photograph of the sunrise with the sun off to the left of center. To the right of center, was the "UFO". A few measurements revealed that the UFO was nothing more than an internal reflection of the sun.

## The Roswell Corner

### The Roswell debate conspiracy

**M**ark O'Connell, who debated Don Schmitt in the "great Roswell debate" at the Milwaukee paranormal conference, is a little miffed that KGRA is not posting the debate on their web site. Mark states that he feels he won the debate clearly and the implication is that this may be why the debate is not posted.

Kevin Randle tried to get the debate going again on his radio program. This time Mark would be against Schmitt and Carey. Was Carey supposed to be there to hold Schmitt's hand or to promote his own agenda? We will never know because O'Connell decided he did not want to waste any more time on Roswell. Good for him!

### Dr. Rios flails away on Facebook

**D**r. Rios has been busy promoting his story about the Roswell slide showing a non-human body and not the mummified body of a two-year old boy. He has gone as far as trying to comment on one of my astrophotographs I had posted on Facebook. The exchange was as one would expect. Rios claimed I was afraid. I had to wonder who was afraid since he has still yet to put his reputation on the line by filing a paper in a scientific journal. After a brief back and forth, I decided to block him. I have no problem debating Rios but the forum he chose (my personal Facebook page) was not an appropriate one. Instead of "hitting and running", perhaps Rios should go into one of the UFO Groups (like UFO pragmatism or Relatively incredible things), where he could present his evidence to all members of the Roswell Slides Research Group (RSRG), who frequent those locations. He tried that once before but would not, or could not, answer questions about his measurement of the body. He then left the discussion. It seems that Rios is only capable of cutting pasting images of his web page on these on-line debates. One wonders why, after 18 months, he has been unable to convince those, outside of his little group, that it is not a mummy.

## GHOST SHIPS OVER KWAJALEIN?

Last issue, I briefly discussed the "Ghost ship" story promoted by Robert Hastings in his UFOs and nukes film. I did not elaborate very much about the story in my critique but I did find some interesting information regarding the case.

Chicago Tribune June 17, 1974

### Picked up by radar 'Ghost ships' puzzle experts

HUNTSVILLE, Ala., June 16 [Reuters] —Experts at an Army missile base here say they are puzzled about strange "ghost ships" picked up by powerful radar scanners in the Pacific during a tracking exercise last summer.

Scientists, many of whom are reluctant to be named in interviews because of general public scepticism over unidentified flying objects, say privately they have been unable to find any explanation for the "ghost ships."

"WE HAVE NEVER seen anything precisely like this before," said one ballistic missile defense expert who works for an Army agency here and who is familiar with the advanced radar used to test missiles and warheads.

Huntsville houses the Army's Ballistic Missile Defense Systems Command, which analyzes results of missile tests in the Kwajalein Atoll region of the Marshall Island Trust Territory held by the United States.

Last August, the Air Force launched a Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from Vandenberg Air Force Base aimed for the Kwajalein missile range, which is used by the Army, Air Force, and Navy.

WHEN THE ICBM was screaming toward the Pacific test site, it began its descent on a normal, ballistic trajectory, scientists say.

The nose cone had separated from the third stage of the missile and was entering the atmosphere at 22,000 feet per second.

Radar scanners at Kwajalein and Meck Islands were tracking the nose cone routinely.

AT ABOUT 400,000 feet, the radar experts in the Pacific found they were also tracking an unidentified flying object next to the ICBM's nose cone.

Radar picked up an inverted saucer-shaped object to the right and above the descending nose cone and watched it cross the warhead's trajectory to a point which was below and to the left of it before the phantom ship disappeared.


The ghost ship was described as being 10 feet high and 40 feet long.

TWO SEPARATE radar systems saw it at the same time, which may eliminate the probability that there was a malfunction in one of the radar systems.

It was also reported that three other identical objects were seen in the vicinity —the same size, shape, and dimensions.

One scientist said the data indicated that the phantom ship "flew under its own power" but could not explain what sort of power was involved.

So far, none of the experts here believe the ghost ship was a natural phenomenon caused by freak weather conditions or echoes commonly seen on radar screens.



### The story

The story appeared in numerous newspapers across the United States in June and July of 1974<sup>1</sup>. It described experts from Huntsville, Alabama being puzzled by "ghost ships" that were tracked by radar based at Kwajalein. According to the article, "scientists" were puzzled by an object they had tracked during a Minuteman launch in August of 1973. As the Re-entry Vehicle (RV) was coming down to the impact area, radars at Kwajalein and Meck island saw another object near it. It was reportedly an "inverted saucer shape" and was 10 feet tall and 40 feet wide. It crossed the RV's trajectory and then disappeared. One "scientist" stated it appeared to fly under its own power. One has to remember that there was no real data presented to support that something was seen or the measurements described were accurate. We also have unnamed "scientists" as the source of the information. It is possible they were just engineers or technicians, which is why I put quotation marks around the word. We don't know if they were or were not scientists.

### Which launch?

Interested in looking into this case, I first wanted to see if I could narrow it down to the date this event transpired. According to Astronautix, in August of 1973, there were four launches of rockets from Vandenberg towards Kwajalein. Three of these involved

Minutemen launches.<sup>2</sup>

Date	Rocket	Purpose
August 2, 1973	Minuteman II	FOT GT113M
August 9, 1973	Minuteman	SSTTP M2-20 Target mission
August 23, 1973	Minuteman III	Research and development
August 29, 1973	Atlas	BMRS RVTO-3A-2 Re-entry vehicle test flight

The August 2 launch involved a “Glory trip” launch. This was a test launch by an actual missile crew. While the RV(s) involved in this launch could be the source of the test, it is not likely. Meck Island is mentioned in the article, which is where an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) system, called “Safeguard” was being evaluated. It seems unlikely this system would be operating for this launch.

The Minuteman III launch on the 23rd was a test called PVM-3.<sup>3</sup> The purpose was to measure how much water vapor the RV’s passed through on their way to the target. It was quite an involved test and employed high altitude aircraft (WB-57F) sampling the upper atmosphere. According to the records available, this launch had three RVs. Both of these details indicate that this was not the launch in question.

The August 29 launch was an Atlas missile. Unless the writers got their information about the launch dreadfully wrong, it was not the rocket launch in question.

This leaves us with the August 9th launch. I asked Tim Hebert if he knew what SSTTP meant, and he responded that it meant “Safeguard System Test Target Program”.<sup>4</sup> This is very interesting because, as I mentioned previously, the “Safeguard system” was located at Meck Island. This project was associated with the Redstone arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, where the story originated. Based on this information, it is likely that the August 9th launch was the event in question.

The next thing I wanted to do was determine the time of launch. Astronautix does not have any information but the news media did mention it as being launched on August 9th at 6:20 PM PDT.<sup>5</sup> This might be useful in determining if there was anything else in the vicinity of the RV when it was re-entering. The altitude given was 400,000 feet, which is 75 miles. Whatever was tracked would have been above the atmosphere but not in orbit.

## Radar systems

The Meck Island system only had a Missile Site Radar (MSR) and relied on the Kwajalein ALTAIR, ALCOR, and TRADEX radars for target acquisition. These radar systems were very powerful and capable of tracking the RVs of a missile from great distances:

TRADEX - This was the oldest of the radars, which had been modified to S and L band configuration for missile tracking. Its 84 foot antenna has a beam width of about 0.6 degrees. It was capable of detecting re-entry vehicles twelve minutes before they impacted in the Kwajalein area.<sup>6</sup>

ALTAIR - This radar originally was a VHF radar but was modified for SAFEGUARD testing to track in UHF as well. It has a 150 foot radar dish that has a resolution of about one degree in UHF mode.<sup>7</sup>

ALCOR - This system was the most accurate and it was able to resolve the Skylab space station in May of 1973 to evaluate the damage that happened during launch. According to reports, the details of the damage were very accurate and helped with the plan to save the space station. It is important to note that, prior to 1983, the Aerospace Defense Command did not allow such images to be processed at Kwajalein. The data was simply sent to the US, where the images were produced. Because of its resolution capabilities, that data is still classified. The radar dish is 40 feet across and has a beam width of about 0.3 degrees.<sup>8</sup>

## An interesting possibility

As I dug deeper into the Safeguard system operations, I noted that the Department of the Army Historical Summary, FY 1974, stated:

*A number of significant developments marked the ballistic missile defense advanced technology program during the past year. The Fly-Along Infra-Red (FAIR II) sensor vehicle was test-flown in August 1973. The vehicle and sensor performed as specified.<sup>9</sup>*

The FAIR II sensor vehicle sounded interesting and I found more information. The purpose of this vehicle was:

*.. to obtain target and background signature data, study was done on the feasibility of developing nuclear-hardened homing sensors*



*capable of functioning in the outer reaches of the atmosphere, and the possibility of non-nuclear exoatmospheric intercept was investigated.*<sup>10</sup>

With the help of Ted Molczan, I also learned that the original FAIR vehicle flew piggyback with missile launches. One can conclude the FAIR II flew the same way.

*FAIR was piggy-backed aboard other missions from the Western Test range, the first in 1970, and successfully demonstrated long range detection that measured infrared target signatures (Jamieson, 1995) while the five DOT tests were flown between 1975 and 1982.*<sup>11</sup>

Because of the expense of launching missiles from Vandenberg, it would be no surprise that there might be additional payloads on these flights to evaluate the missile's performance.

Apparently, the FAIR II vehicle had thrusters to maneuver in flight. This was probably so it could maneuver sufficiently away from the RV, bus, and missile once the boost phase was complete:

*A test program for small liquid and solid thrusters, such as those proposed for the FAIR II PIE flight program, has been initiated and experimental data for a monopropellant hydrazine thruster are presented and compared with IR radiance predictions.*<sup>12</sup>

At the time of this writing, I have no more information regarding the FAIR-II vehicle. However, I doubt it was 40 feet long or was an inverted saucer shaped object. Based on the limitations of the minuteman rocket, it probably was only a few feet in size. Despite this disagreement, it remains possible that it was the "ghost ship" because the story may have been inaccurate and I doubt that the Meck island radar could resolve such a target to shape and size at that range.

While the ALCOR system could provide the kind of resolution described in the news story, it is unlikely that Bell Labs would have access to this information. It would have been too classified for them to have a "need to know". Based on this information, I suspect that the dimensions and shapes listed in the article are essentially rumor the "scientists" had heard second hand. All we can say is that the "ghost ship" was tracked by radar and followed the RV before departing the trajectory of the RV. This appears to match what the FAIR-II might have been doing but there are other possibilities.

### Missile parts?

While the FAIR-II vehicle is a possible source, I am of the opinion that the unknown target was something not so complex. One of the goals of the M2 program was to evaluate the SAFEGUARD system in "a dense target environment"<sup>13</sup>. Some of the factors involved with such an environment included things like "unresolved-target wake track, cluster track, and track-through-tank break-up".<sup>14</sup> Looking at the history of the ABM program, I found this interesting note in the summary of mission results:

*M2-20, MSR tank-classification error*<sup>15</sup>

The only clarification is that this misclassification is due to a "mission peculiar attribute".<sup>16</sup> What that specifically was is hard to say at this point without more information. However, it seems that whatever it was had to do with the actual mission and not some foreign body that was monitoring the RV.

### Explained?

I would enjoy calling this explained but there is not enough information available to make that claim. That being said, the FAIR-II and part(s) of the Minuteman missile are two likely candidates for the "ghost ship". There is no need to create an alien spaceship interfering with the RV if these possibilities exist. Perhaps, in the future, more information will come to light, which would falsify or confirm these possible explanations. When it does, I will share it here.

### Notes and references

1. "Ghost ships' puzzle experts." Chicago Tribune. Chicago, Illinois. June 17, 1974. P. 6.
2. "1973 Chronology". The Encyclopedia Astronautica. Available WWW: <http://www.astronautix.com/1/1973chronology.html>
3. Metcalf, James I., Arnold A. Barnes Jr., Michael J. Kraus. Final report of PVM-4 and PVM-3 Weather documentation. 19 February 1975.
4. Hebert, Tim. Email to author 12 September 2016.

5. "Daily Record". LOMPAC record. Lompac, California. August 10, 1973. P. 2
6. Meurer Jr. , Glenn W. "The TRADEX Multitarget Tracker". The Lincoln Laboratory Journal. Volume 5 Number 3 1992. P. 317-350. Available WWW: [https://www.ll.mit.edu/publications/journal/pdf/vol05\\_no3/5.3.1.tradextracker.pdf](https://www.ll.mit.edu/publications/journal/pdf/vol05_no3/5.3.1.tradextracker.pdf)
7. Lewis, George. "Space Surveillance Sensors: The ALTAIR Radar". May 11, 2012 Mostly missile defense. Available WWW: <https://mostlymissiledefense.com/2012/05/11/space-surveillance-sensors-the-altair-radar-may-11-2012/>
8. Lewis, George. "Space Surveillance Sensors: The ALCOR Radar". May 17, 2012 Mostly missile defense. Available WWW: <https://mostlymissiledefense.com/2012/05/17/space-surveillance-sensors-alcors-radar-may-17-2012/>
9. Department of the Army Historical Summary, FY 1974 P. 26
10. Department of the Army Historical Summary, FY 1973. P. 171
11. Price, S. D. History of Space-Based Infrared Astronomy and the Air Force Infrared Celestial Backgrounds Program. Air Force Research Laboratory. 18 April 2008. P. 70
12. Plume interference assessment and mitigation Calspan Report No. KC-S134-A-6. June 1973. Page V
13. Bell Laboratories. ABM Research and development at Bell Laboratories Project history. October 1975. page 5-21
14. *ibid.*
15. *ibid.* page 5-32
16. *ibid.*





## CRASHOLOGY IN RETREAT?

Kevin Randle's latest book on Roswell has given the impression to some that he has given up on the Roswell case. It is true that Mr. Randle appears to have acknowledged that the alien spaceship explanation is less appealing to him than before but his writings also suggest that he has not quite given up on Roswell.

### More of the same

If you were expecting new revelations, there aren't any. It was mostly Kevin just rehashing the same old stories and trying to make sense of it all. I was disappointed that he spent little effort trying to reconcile the actual evidence

from 1947 with the stories told decades later. Most important are the Fort Worth photographs and the Brazel interview. Randle tends to bury these in the text with the implication there may have been a substitution for the photographs and that Brazel may have been ordered to tell his story to the press. Like much of the Roswell story, Skeptics have a different perspective regarding this evidence.

### The father of Roswell?

The one chapter in Randle's book I found amusing was his section on Walter Haut. Randle implies that Haut played a major role in creating the modern Roswell myth. I stated over a decade ago that it was clear that Haut had inserted himself into the myth by vouching for individuals like Kaufmann and Dennis. Before he died, he even signed an affidavit that described events he had never mentioned in previous tellings. For some UFOologists, the details surrounding the affidavit, and the story, painted Haut in a different light than before. His reliability now was openly questioned. For once, we appear to agree on something regarding Roswell.

### Randle's conclusions

After recounting most of the usual history of Roswell, Kevin Randle made some statements that indicated he no longer found Roswell to be as compelling as he did for almost three decades. In his discussion of things that can be proven, he states, "...it would appear that the recovery was of a balloon and rawin radar target." With this willingness to admit the photographs included the actual debris, he then backs away and states that it is only the testimony, told decades later, that gives him reason to look elsewhere.

In an apparent Mea Culpa, Randle finally conceded that the actual government documents from the time period indicate that nothing alien fell at Roswell. After decades of declaring a cover-up and using the "need to know" excuse, he had to admit that he was mistaken about these assertions. This resulted in another admission by Randle, "... I find myself drifting towards those who reject the extraterrestrial. At one time I was sure but that was when we had all this robust testimony, much of which is now thoroughly discredited."

<sup>2</sup>Like his acknowledgment that he had been fooled by Frank Kaufmann and Glenn Dennis, Randle must have felt discomfort in writing this. However, he has not completely written off the ET explanation.

After presenting a Sherlock Holmes quote of "when ever you have eliminated the impossible whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."<sup>3</sup>, Kevin Randle states that crashologists appear to have eliminated everything but aliens, which is the improbable solution. However, he laments they just don't have the proof that Aliens were involved.

It seems that Randle was hedging his bets in this book. While he is now leaning towards a non-alien explanation, he rejects the primary explanation offered by skeptics for the initial events reported by Mack Brazel. To explain why MOGUL does not work, Mr. Randle devoted an entire appendix to the subject.<sup>4</sup>

### The failed MOGUL offensive

Kevin Randle's attempt to demonstrate why he believes that it was impossible for a project MOGUL balloon to be the source of the debris is really nothing new. He had promoted these arguments on his blog for the many years modifying them as he went along. In 2013, I had written an article in SUNlite 5-5 with the title of "Crashology's last stand" where I demonstrated that many of his arguments are not as solid as he proclaimed.

Having taken the effort to partially reject the ETH for Roswell, Randle then took aim at the skeptics for not accepting his "proof" that the MOGUL explanation does not work. In his mind, he had proven that the flight #4 explanation was not only improbable, it was impossible.

First of all, I need to remind everyone that skeptics support the flight #4 explanation for many reasons. In my opinion, there are several indisputable facts that give reason to find the flight #4 explanation plausible:

FACT 1 - The NYU team was operating in New Mexico in June of 1947.

FACT 2 - The NYU team had used ML-307 reflectors in some of their flights.

FACT 3 - On July 8, 1947, Mac Brazel reported finding debris on the ranch in mid-June. The types of materials described were a large quantity of rubber and tin foil pieces that appeared to be parts from at least one ML-307 reflector.

FACT 4 - Fragments of at least one ML-307 reflector and balloon material that had been out in the sun for many days/weeks are visible in the Fort Worth photographs, which supposedly show Jesse Marcel posing with some of the debris he recovered from the Foster Ranch.

FACT 5 - An unknown number of balloons, which was described by Dr. Crary as "A cluster of balloons", which had "a regular sono buoy" attached,<sup>5</sup> was launched by the NYU team on June 4 and never recovered. Skeptics have referred to this as NYU flight #4.

All of these facts are the reason skeptics find the flight #4 explanation plausible. Randle seems to ignore these indisputable facts in favor of his own interpretation of selected entries in the NYU record. To summarize his arguments:

1. The cluster of balloons launched on June 4th was not Flight #4 because it was canceled earlier that day.
2. The cluster of balloons launched on June 4th was only a few balloons and a microphone. It had no reflectors and was just a test flight.
3. They never launched balloons at night, which means that the cluster of balloons was launched after sunrise. This would shift the winds and trajectory of the flight away from the Foster Ranch site.
4. They never launched balloons unless the weather was absolutely clear, which means the cluster of balloons were not launched until the afternoon when the sky conditions at Alamogordo were clear.

These arguments have been addressed by me before in SUNlite 5-5. To summarize my rebuttals:

1. It never says the flight was canceled. It only indicates that clouds had prevented the flight from being launched. The very next entry mentions the cluster of balloons being launched, which could be interpreted to mean that the flight had only been delayed by clouds. Randle's argument is based not on an indisputable fact but his interpretation of the entry in a journal.
2. The NYU progress report made after the June flights, described all the flights as "clusters of meteorological balloons".<sup>6</sup> Crary uses the description "cluster of balloons" four times in his journal.<sup>7</sup> Twice they are used to describe full balloon flights. These are actual facts, which imply that the term could mean a complete flight of balloons. Randle's argument here is, once again, based on his interpretation of the entry and ignoring the NYU documentation.
3. They launched flight #8 at night and used radar to track it.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the claim that they never launched balloons at night is false. Again, Randle's argument is based on his interpretation of the records.
4. Photographs of the balloons launched for the canceled flight #9 clearly show clouds in the sky, which means they did launch balloons under conditions that were not clear.<sup>9</sup> Examination of the records of other launches indicate that it is probable that "scattered" clouds was an acceptable sky condition for launching balloons. The 0700 observation on June 4 (the first observation of the day) for Alamogordo indicates "scattered" conditions and observations by three stations within 100 miles of Alamogordo indicated "scattered" or "clear" conditions existed at 3 and 4 AM on June 4.<sup>10</sup>

Feeling there was no need to argue endlessly with Randle over these points on his blog, I pretty much ignored his blog entry until he started to say some things that were false and I felt a need to enter the fray. For instance, he gave us this gem regarding the term "Cluster of balloons":

*The definition of cluster is in the NYU materials. I didn't invent it, just used the documentation. A cluster was used to lift microphones or preform other experiments when other conditions prevented the launch of a full array.<sup>11</sup>*

As stated previously, the NYU reports are full of statements where they call full flights "clusters of balloons" but there is no statement that says that a definition of a cluster is an experimental flight or partial array. I asked Randle to cite his source but he chose not to respond. I can only assume this meant that he had no documents to support his claim and he was making this kind of statement based solely on his opinion.

Having inserted myself into the debate, I tried to present my arguments since Randle never appeared to address them. When I pointed out that his argument that they were not allowed to launch at night was refuted by flight #8's 3AM launch time, he came up with two reasons why flight #8 was an exception to that rule:

- The NYU had been authorized to relax the rules because it was a special circumstance involving recording a launch of a V-2 rocket.<sup>12</sup>

The problem with this argument is that he can not produce a single bit of documentation to support the claim they had permission.

It is speculation dressed up as facts. I then asked the question, "If they were able to obtain such permission, what prevented them from obtaining the same kind of exemption on June 4th?" Randle's response was the second reason he thought they allowed flight #8 to be launched at night but not flight #4.

- Flight #8 was smaller than flight #4, which meant it was not a hazard to air traffic.<sup>13</sup>

This argument has little basis in fact and seems to ignore the whole idea of why there was concern by the CAA for the flights in the northeast. Randle presents no documentation to support this claim and I had to wonder what specific length made a balloon cluster a hazard. The tone of the CAA rules for the northeastern flights indicated any flight, no matter how small or large, was a hazard.<sup>14</sup> I could counter argue that a small balloon flight would create a greater hazard because it would be hard to see but I never got the chance because Mr. Randle shut down any more discussion about MOGUL on his blog.

As I stated in SUNlite 5-5, the more likely explanation for why they were able to launch at night was because they were probably not operating under the strict guidelines set up by the Northeast subcommittee of the CAA because the Southwest subcommittee of the CAA thought the balloons would stay in the area of White Sands. There is some circumstantial evidence to support this interpretation.<sup>15</sup>

With Randle's hasty retreat from discussing MOGUL, we will apparently never know his response to such arguments. I can only assume that he will post another MOGUL offensive in a few months, where skeptics will, once again, attempt to point out that his arguments are not based on facts but on his biased interpretation of the documentation.

### Is it really a retreat?

Kevin Randle's hard stance on the MOGUL explanation, and its proponents, indicates he is not quite willing to admit that there is a conventional explanation for the case or side with the skeptics. It seems that, instead of retreating from his position that a crashed alien spaceship produced the Roswell event, Randle has simply readjusted his lines to concede that the alien explanation can not be proven with the available information. He still considers that the stories told by various individuals about alien spaceships and exotic materials means something. Maybe after another decade, Kevin Randle will reach another epiphany and begin to look at these stories more skeptically. It might lead him down a path where he can write another book about Roswell with a title like, "How I became a Roswell skeptic." Now that would be something worth reading.

### Notes and references

1. Randle, Kevin. Roswell in the 21st Century Kindle edition. Speaking Volumes LLC. Naples, Fla. 2016. location 3043
2. *ibid.* Location 3189
3. *ibid.* Location 3189
4. *ibid.* Location 4517
5. HQ USAF, The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert. Washington D.C.: US Government, 1995 Attachment 32/Appendix 17
6. Schneider, Charles, B. Progress report covering June 1, 1947 to June 30, 1947. Research division, College of engineering, New York University. July 1947. P. 5.
7. HQ USAF, The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert. Washington D.C.: US Government, 1995 Attachment 32/Appendix 17
8. Moore, Charles B., James R. Smith, and Seymour Goldstein. NYU technical report #1 Constant Level Ballooning. Research division, College of engineering, New York University. April 1, 1948. Table VII.
9. HQ USAF, The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert. Washington D.C.: US Government, 1995. Photographs section.
10. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). National Climatic Data Center data access. Available WWW: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/data-access>
11. Randle Kevin. "Skeptics vs. MOGUL". A different perspective. December 18, 2016. Available WWW: <http://kevinrandle.blogspot.com/2016/12/skeptics-vs-mogul.html>
12. *ibid.* Comments section. Available WWW: <http://kevinrandle.blogspot.com/2016/12/skeptics-vs-mogul.html?showComment=1482265316304#c5024263426963207177>
13. *ibid.* Comments section. Available WWW: <http://kevinrandle.blogspot.com/2016/12/skeptics-vs-mogul.html?showComment=1482424681156#c8668479339217247127>
14. Moore, Charles B., James R. Smith, and Seymour Goldstein. NYU technical report #1 Constant Level Ballooning. Research division, College of engineering, New York University. April 1, 1948. p. 38-40
15. *ibid.* p. 43-44.

## February 24, 1959 - The Killian case

NICAP summarizes the case as:

*February 24, 1959--Pennsylvania. American and United Airlines planes paced by three glowing objects. [V, IX]*<sup>1</sup>

NICAP's sections V and IX are very extensive and I am not going to reproduce the entire sections here. However, I can produce a summary of the case, as presented by NICAP, for the reader<sup>2</sup>:

1. On February 24, 1959, at 8:20 PM EST, Pilot Killian reported seeing three bright lights off his port wing during a routine flight from Newark to Detroit.
2. The lights were first seen approximately 13 miles west of Williamsport, PA.
3. The lights were at an angle of elevation of roughly 15 degrees above the plane.
4. The plane was flying at 8500 feet and at a heading of 295 degrees.
5. During the next 45 minutes the lights moved slowly ahead of the DC-6 and then returned to off the port wing.
6. The lights changed intensity becoming "brighter than any star" and then fading away to the point they could not be seen.
7. Colors varied between yellow-orange to blue-white.
8. The rear most light tended to move back and forth relative to the other two lights.
9. Captain Yates, aboard United Airlines flight 321, had seen the objects from 8:40 PM to 9:10 PM between Lockhaven, PA and Youngstown, Ohio. In the vicinity of Warren, Ohio, the objects no longer paced his aircraft and then accelerated toward the northwest.
10. A plane over Lake Erie reported seeing the objects to the south over Cleveland.
11. A plane near Sandusky, Ohio, headed towards Pittsburgh, reported seeing the objects to the southeast.
12. Observers in Akron, Ohio reported seeing the objects heading west around 9:25 PM.

These are the details of the case as presented by NICAP. Blue Book's investigation revealed some more details that would eventually list the case as explained.

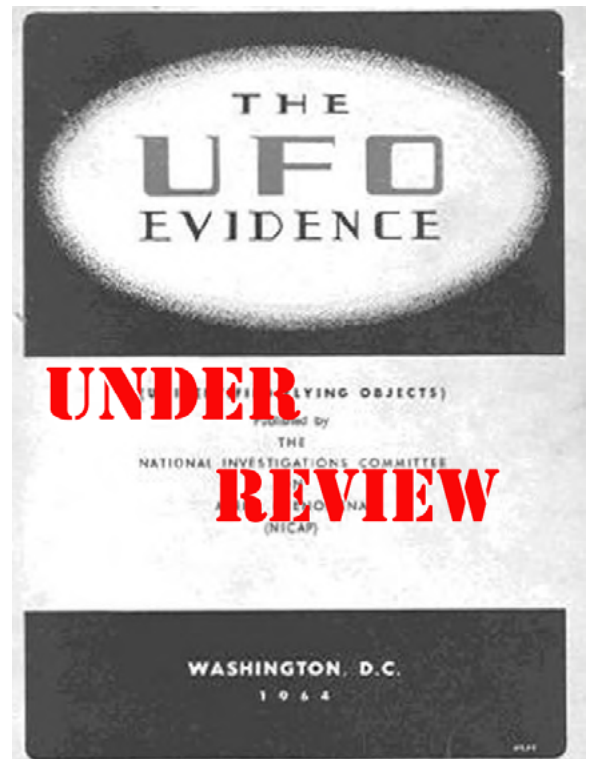
## Blue Book's public responses after the event

On March 3rd, the USAF made a statement that the pilots may have confused the belt of Orion seen through clouds.<sup>3</sup> According to the press account, a military transport flying from Washington to Dayton had seen the stars through broken cloud cover and filed a report similar to those filed by the pilots on the evening of the 24th.

On March 7th, an article appeared in various newspapers describing the USAF efforts investigating UFO reports. UFO groups focused on one statement made by an unnamed USAF official,

*There are always a certain number of cases where they can't remember a thing when they sober up the next day," commented one officer drily.<sup>4</sup>*

Since the Killian case was mentioned in the article, UFO groups appeared to interpret that this meant the USAF considered Killian was drunk. However, this is not correct because the next statement was:



## 'Saucers' May Have Been Stars, Air Force Says

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pilots may have been seeing stars instead of "unidentified flying objects" in a recent flurry of flying saucer reports, the air force said over the weekend.

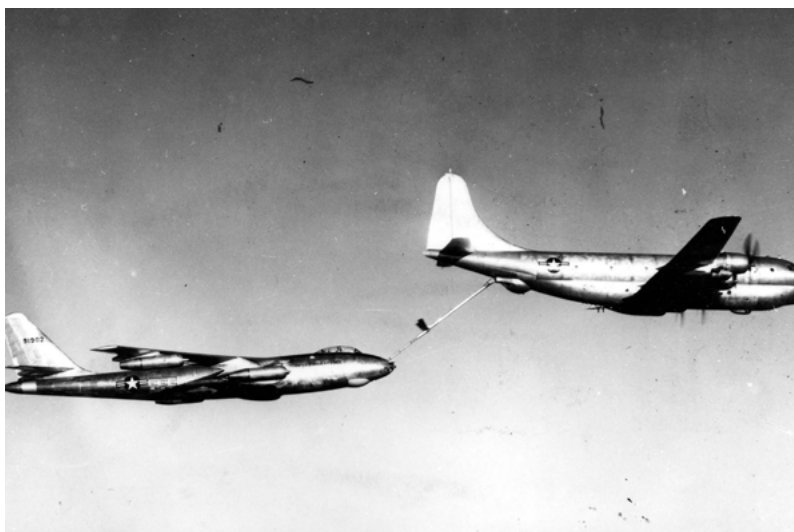
The Air Force technical intelligence agency at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, gave the opinion Saturday. It said the crew of an air force transport flying between Washington and Dayton made a report similar to those by crews of two commercial airliners who reported seeing bright moving objects in the skies Tuesday night in the Pennsylvania-Ohio area.



He admitted, however, that most people who report actually have seen something. The trouble is that they don't have the knowledge to understand what they see.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that at no time did the USAF officer state that all sightings were made by drunks or that Killian had been drunk. They were addressing UFO reports as a whole and probably was made based on experience they had on a few occasions, where the witnesses might have not been completely sober. I am sure modern UFO hot lines have had similar experiences. Despite the obvious context of the statement, some UFO proponents still tried to imply that the AF thought Killian was drinking.

On March 21, 1959, newspapers reported that the USAF revealed the sighting was a refueling operation involving a KC-97 tanker and three B-47 aircraft.<sup>6</sup>



### Chronology of Blue Book's investigation

The Detroit times had contacted the USAF on 25 February asking for a comment.<sup>7</sup> This resulted in Blue Book calling American Airlines on the telephone requesting a statement from Captain Killian. According to hand written notes, the USAF reports that American Airlines had yet to receive a report and that the newspapers had "blown up" what he had stated over the phone.<sup>8</sup> On March 4th, American airlines sent a letter to Blue Book with a statement made by Killian, which was received on March 9th.

Killian's statement had several key points that would refute some later statements he made to UFO organizations and the press.<sup>9</sup>

- *The only possible explanation other than flying saucers could be a jet tanker refueling operation. Never having witnessed refueling operations at night, I am not aware of the lighting of the jet tanker.*
- *I contacted ATC to find out if they had any airplanes on a clearance and no three airplanes were given.*
- *In summary, it was difficult for me to believe they were jets because of low speed and configuration.*

In handwritten notes, it is revealed that the USAF had also talked to one of the United Airlines pilots. They described his sighting in similar terms as Killian.<sup>10</sup>

On 2 March, the USAF had telephoned the 2253rd base group at Greater Pittsburgh airport. They responded with a memo, received on March 6th, stating<sup>11</sup>:

*The tower operators on duty at the time of the sighting reported that the three lights were observed. An immediate check with the 772nd ACW squadron Claysburg, PA, disclosed there were three B-47s in the area at the time on a night refueling mission. The tower operators made no report due to the fact there was nothing unusual to report. Furthermore, no statements were made to the newspapers.*

By the 11th of March, Blue Book had begun to come to the conclusion that the lights were from a refueling operation involving three B-47s.

On March 6, a letter was mailed by the UFO research committee, in Akron, requesting the USAF elaborate on their belt of orion explanation.<sup>12</sup>

### AF VIEWPOINT

## No Proof Of Saucers

By RALPH CHAPMAN  
WASHINGTON. — When an American Airlines pilot, flying a DC-4 enroute from Newark to Detroit, reported last week the sighting of three mysterious objects in the sky, the Air Force didn't exactly jump but there was some of the excitement in the Pentagon that such a report might have engendered 10 years ago.  
The Air Defense Command, charged with the responsibility for investigating all UFO's (the identified flying objects or "flying saucers," has developed techniques to the point where evaluation of such sightings has become almost routine. During the last six months of last year, according to an Air Force spokesman, 76 cases of "mysterious" objects seen in the sky were investigated. Actual objects sighted were discovered in all but two of the reports.  
than ever before. And could war jitters and the recipe for flying saucer sightings is complete.  
Military authorities were themselves jittery. It is now admitted, in the years immediately after World War II. The whole business began on June 24, 1947, when a man named Kenneth Arnold, of Puller, Idaho, reported that, while flying his own plane, he had seen five disk-shaped objects speeding at an estimated 1,500 miles an hour between Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams. He described the objects as "like a saucer skiplane across water."  
A rash of new sightings followed within days. "saucers" were seen over England, South Africa, Australia and China. Only they weren't always saucers. Some were cigar-shaped, others were "blobs," still others looked "like a conventional" etc.

On 19 March, Major Tacker wrote a response stating that the “belt of Orion” explanation was only an initial response with the qualifying statement that all the information had not yet been analyzed. Tacker then revealed the lights were a refueling operation involving B-47s and a KC-97.<sup>13</sup>

The 26th Air Division, which was responsible for the region, read about the case in the newspapers but never received any formal report from Blue Book.<sup>14</sup> They sent out a memo on 8 April, pointing out to Blue Book should send them a copy of the report for their records. The memo implied that the 26th Air Division command was not too happy about the way Blue Book was doing business.

On 27 July, Major Friend’s UFO advisory panel met and discussed recent UFO cases.<sup>15</sup> The Killian case was mentioned and the panel, which included Dr. Hynek, agreed that the refueling exercise explanation was probably correct. However, they felt the investigation was inadequate and requested that Captain Killian, and his co-pilot, be interviewed for the record.

On July 30th, Blue Book sent a message to Mitchell AFB requesting they contact Captain Killian and his co-pilot and obtain any additional information. Mitchell AFB sent a representative to interview Captain Killian. Rather than have Killian write another statement, the interviewer simply asked for additional details. According to Killian, he was flying a direct route from Newark to Detroit. He had sighted the lights at 2045 when he was halfway between the Williamsport OMNI and the Bradford Omni.<sup>16</sup> He also added he was flying along the Victor 116 airway. The rest of the information mirrored what had been stated previously.

### **Blue Book operations**

One must remember that this was 1959. Because there was no Freedom of Information Act in 1959, the memos, letters, and documents would have been written based on a belief that they could speak honestly about their findings and not worry about individuals outside the USAF second guessing them. They also never expected anybody to conduct a peer review of their conclusions. Blue Book accepted the fact that the radar squadron tracked the B-47s and they apparently felt no need to obtain any more information.

At the time of this sighting, the head of Project Blue Book was Major Friend, who was respected by Hynek. He stated in his book, “The UFO Experience”:

*Whatever private views he might have had, he was a total and practical realist, and sitting where he could see the scoreboard, he recognized the limitation of his office but conducted himself with dignity and a total lack of the bombast that characterized several of the other Blue Book heads.<sup>17</sup>*

Hynek also pointed out that the low rank of the Blue Book head made it difficult to obtain information from other commands. Depending on the commander, obtaining pertinent information about operations was sometimes difficult. Requests may or may not be answered.

The evidence gathered by Blue Book does suggest a refueling operation as the cause of the sighting. That being said, the Air Force did not do a very thorough job in accumulating the information regarding the case. Some items that should have been collected were:

1. A message from SAC confirming the refueling operation
2. A map of the refueling route
3. Statement from 772nd ACW Squadron confirming they tracked the B-47s that night.
4. A transcript of any recordings between the pilots and the Air Traffic Controllers.
5. Aerial charts showing the aircraft locations and direction of observation that would demonstrate they were observing a refueling operation.

These should have been collected but one has to keep in mind what Hynek stated about Major Friend’s limited abilities in acquiring such details. In some instances there may have been phone calls to these organizations but they received no response. We don’t know for sure.

The 26th air command’s nasty memo demanding the report for their records was indicative of how Blue Book seemed to be “out on their own”. Apparently, the 26th felt, and rightfully so, they should have been involved in resolving the case. It is important to note that the command did NOT state there were no B-47s present or that refueling operations did NOT occur in Pennsylvania. They just demanded a copy of the report for their records.

If it weren't for the report from the 2253rd base group stating that the lights were seen by tower operators in Pittsburgh and that the 772nd ACW squadron had confirmed they were B-47s on a refueling operation, it would be hard to accept the refueling operation explanation. Since there is no reason to question the report, it appears that the operation is confirmed.

### **Arguments against the refueling hypothesis**

While the B-47 refueling operation appears reasonable for this sighting, UFO groups and proponents still appear to reject the explanation for various reasons. In an effort to examine the case completely, I chose to address a summary of the arguments I have compiled from various sources.

- All of the witnesses reported only three strange lights and not the four lights involved with a KC-97 and three B-47s.<sup>18</sup>

It is possible that the KC-97 was not visible or that the information was incorrect. There may have been only two B-47s and a KC-97. This, by itself, does not falsify the refueling exercise explanation.

- The Air Traffic Controllers contacted by the aircraft were unaware of the refueling operation even though such activities should have been reported to the FAA.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that the knowledge of the refueling operation was not readily available for some reason. The tower personnel at Pittsburgh knew nothing of the refueling operation until they took the effort to check with the local radar squadron. It is possible that the pilots only asked if there was any aircraft in the area and the Air Traffic Controllers only checked to see for scheduled aircraft. We don't know how the refueling operation was conveyed. Knowing the standard procedure used by the USAF today, the notification to the FAA probably just stated the area was going to be used for refueling operations between a certain time frame. In order to determine if there were aircraft using that area at the time, they would need radar information, which is exactly what the tower operators at Pittsburgh did to identify the lights.

- There are no maps showing refueling routes in Pennsylvania.<sup>20</sup>

Examining the Blue Book files reveals that there was a sighting by a KC-97, involved in a refueling operation, near Parkersburg, West Virginia on October 9 1957. Parkersburg is about one hundred miles southwest of Pittsburgh. Even though the tanker was flying towards the southwest, it indicates that there were refueling areas in the region during the late 1950s.

- Since the refueling operation occurred at a speed of 230 knots, Captain Killian would have overtaken the aircraft because he was flying at 290 knots. They would have appeared off his port wing and then fallen behind his aircraft. However, Killian reports seeing the lights move from his 9 O'Clock position to the 11 O'Clock position before slowly falling behind his aircraft.<sup>21</sup>

The initial phase of the refueling operation has the B-47s coming up to the KC-97. The B-47s could have been flying at a higher speed before meeting up with the tanker. Once they had done so, they slowed down. This explains the lights moving ahead of Killian and then, slowly drifting back.

- No paper record exists in the BB file of the refueling operation.<sup>22</sup>

This is true that there was never a record produced but the ACW squadron's report appears to be adequate to confirm that B-47s were in the area. Either this report was a lie or Blue Book figured this was enough and never bothered to pursue getting an actual paper report.

- Major General Fisher wrote a letter to Senator Byrd stating, "The investigation of this incident revealed that an Air Force refueling mission, involving a KC-97 and three B-47 aircraft, was flown in the vicinity of Bradford, Pennsylvania, at the time of the sighting by Capt. Killian." If the refueling aircraft were near Bradford, they would have appeared on the starboard side of Killian's plane and not the port side, as he reported.<sup>23</sup>

Killian had stated he was in the vicinity of Bradford, PA, when he saw the lights. The letter from Major General Fisher appears to have confused the location for Killian's plane with the refueling aircraft.

- Killian's angle of elevation in his report to Blue Book indicated the lights were 30 degrees above his horizon. This indicates the B-47s were only a few miles away and does not explain the observations by the United Airline pilots further to the south.<sup>24</sup>

This is a valid argument but one has to wonder about this estimate. According to the earliest UPI story, Killian stated, "...the lights were not close to the plane, but appeared in the southern sky, a little higher than his plane, which was flying at about 8,500 feet."<sup>25</sup> An elevation of 30 degrees is not "a little higher than the plane". If the elevation angle was 30 degrees, I suspect the co-pilot never could

have seen the lights from his seat. The reference to the lights being only a little higher than the plane indicates it was only a few degrees above the plane's elevation. This puts the lights at distances of about 30 miles or greater.

## Conclusion

While the refueling operation explanation is not as solid as I would like it, there is no good reason to reject it. If one is going to reject the explanation, they have to assume that the tower operators at Pittsburgh/radar operators at Claysburg were lying or there was a refueling operation and UFOs present that night. In either case, one would also have to assume that all Blue Book personnel, including Hynek and Friend, were involved in a conspiracy to cover-up the information. While some might consider this plausible, I tend to think it is highly unlikely. Both Friend and Hynek would have revealed that they were involved in such a conspiracy long ago.

Based on the available information, I would not consider this case to be "best evidence" and it should be removed from that list.

## Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 137
2. *ibid.* P. 42-3, 116-7
3. "Saucers may have been stars, Air Force says". The Progress. Clearfield, Curwensville, Philipsburg, PA. March 3 1959. Page 9.
4. Chapman, Ralph. "AF viewpoint: No proof of saucers". The times. Corpus Christie, Texas. March 7, 1959. P. 4.
5. Russian rocket test is successful". The Coshocton Tribune. Coshocton, Ohio. September 24, 1961. Page 18.
6. "Mysterious lights, bombers refueling, AF reports". Appleton Post Crescent. Appleton, WI. March 21, 1959. P. 9.
7. "Query from Detroit times dated 25 February 1959". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079198>
8. "ATIC handwritten notes for February 24, 1959 case." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079200>
9. "Captain Killian statement from American Airlines". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079212>
10. "ATIC handwritten notes for February 24, 1959 case." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079194>
11. Hostutler, William. "Memo from commanding officer 2253rd Air Base Group Pittsburgh, PA. to ATIC, Wright Patterson AFB." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079211>
12. "Letter to Major Tacker from UFO research committee". 6 March 1959. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079210>
13. Tacker, Lawrence. "Letter to the UFO research committee". 19 March 1959. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079208> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079209>
14. Howe, Everitt. "Memo from commanding officer 26th Air Division Syracuse, NY. to ATIC, Wright Patterson AFB." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079206>
15. "UFO advisory panel meeting note 27 July 1959". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/11884170> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/11884171>
16. Werkmeister, R.F. "Memo from commanding officer 2500th air base wing, Mitchell AFB, NY. to ATIC, Wright Patterson AFB." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079215> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/9079216>
17. Hynek, J. Allen. The UFO Experience A Scientific Inquiry. New York: Marlowe & Company 1972. P. 187
18. Taylor, Herb. E-mail to author. 20 November 2016
19. *ibid*



20. ibid
21. ibid
22. ibid
23. ibid
24. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 116.
25. "Flying Saucer season arrives". The Bakersfield Californian. Bakersfield, California. February 26, 1959. P. 9

## THE 701 CLUB: CASE 11394 FEBRUARY 20, 1967

Don Berliner describes the case as:

*Feb. 20, 1967; Oxford, Wisconsin. 3:10 a.m. Witness: USAF veteran/truck driver Stanton Summer. One orange-red object flew parallel to truck for 2 minutes.<sup>1</sup>*

Looking at Brad Sparks list, we see the same description and nothing more. There seems to be little examination of the case beyond the simple listing of it as “unknown”.

### The Blue Book file

The Blue Book file is not very informative and can be misleading. According to the BB record card and the TELEX, the object approached the truck, paralleled the truck’s travel, and then flew towards the east. However, this is not what the eyewitness report actually states. Details from the report indicate:

- The duration was 2 minutes and 30 seconds<sup>2</sup>
- It was as bright as the waning moon on a hot summer evening.<sup>3</sup>
- The object was fuzzy/blurry and was compared to an oval water tower reflecting sunlight.<sup>4</sup>
- The object was orange with a bright red light on top.<sup>5</sup>
- Sky conditions were clear, a few stars were visible, and there was no moon.<sup>6</sup>
- It disappeared behind some trees<sup>7</sup>
- The truck was driving west.<sup>8</sup>
- The object appeared in the northwest at an elevation of about 60 degrees. It disappeared to the north at angle of elevation of approximately 30 degrees.<sup>9</sup>
- The driver made his oral report from New Lisbon, Wisconsin at a truck stop.<sup>10</sup>
- The report was completed on 4 March 1967<sup>11</sup>

These details disagree with the TELEX, which means that either the communications made over the phone were not clear or the witness altered his report.

### Recreating the conditions

The message states he was located 1-1/2 miles east of Oxford.<sup>12</sup> Exactly how accurate that estimate is, we don’t know. It seems the best one can say is he had not arrived in the town of Oxford yet and was located somewhere on Route 82 between Interstate 39 and downtown Oxford.



Sky conditions are confusing because the witness reported the sky was clear but the TELEX states it was cloudy.<sup>13</sup> A check of weather underground reveals conditions of either light snow or fog depending on the location. Madison, Wisconsin reported clear skies starting at 9AM.<sup>13</sup> At best, the sky conditions were mostly cloudy with a few bright stars being visible.

### Astronomical solution?

In most of these cases, I usually check to see if there were astronomical objects visible that might produce the event. I was surprised to see that the moon was low in the West-northwest at 3:10 AM. At the time of the observation the moon was at an azimuth of 300 degrees and an elevation of 8 degrees. The moon would set around 4AM.



How does the moon move across the sky from northwest to north? It really isn't that hard when one looks at the road the driver was located. After traveling due west on route 82, the road takes a turn towards the west-southwest. If the witness was observing the UFO, he might not have realized the gradual turn in the road and thought he was traveling due west. Since the moon would shift position further to his right by about 20 degrees relative to the front of the vehicle, it would appear the moon had moved towards the north.

The only problem with the moon explanation is the condition of the sky. While conditions indicate an overcast sky, the witness recalled seeing stars during his drive, which implies it was not a complete overcast. Assuming this is true, the setting moon could have become visible for a few minutes. When it went behind the trees, the witness lost sight of it. Once he made it to a clearing where he could see the moon again, it had disappeared behind clouds.

It is important to note the witness compared the brightness of the UFO to the waning moon on a hot summer evening. This indicates it was like the moon under hazy conditions. The "fuzzy" description is also indicative of the moon seen under conditions that were not clear. It might have looked like this image I took of the waxing Gibbous moon on December 11, 2016 a few hours before a winter storm started. Manchester weather observations at the time stated that the skies were "Overcast".



These seem to be the kind of the conditions the witness may have encountered in 1967, which indicates the moon could be the possible source.

### Conclusion

This case has a potential solution but, without a good time machine, we can't positively solve it. That being said, there is still enough information to reclassify it as possibly the moon.

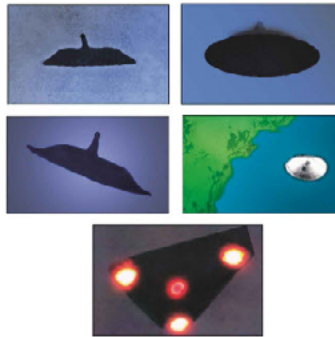
## Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook unknowns". NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 1. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666283>
3. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 2. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666284>
4. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 4. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666286>
5. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 3. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666285>
6. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 2. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666284>
7. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 3. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666285>
8. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 4. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666286>
9. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 5. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666287>
10. "FTD form 164 dated October 1962". Page 7. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666289>
11. *ibid*
12. "Message from Truax field to Air Defense Command dtg 211700Z Feb 67". Page 2. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9666281>
13. *ibid*.
14. "Weather history for Madison, Wisconsin 20 February 1967." Weather Underground. Available WWW: [https://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/KMSN/1967/2/20/DailyHistory.html?req\\_city=Madison&req\\_state=WI&req\\_statename=&reqdb.zip=53701&reqdb.magic=1&reqdb.wmo=99999](https://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/KMSN/1967/2/20/DailyHistory.html?req_city=Madison&req_state=WI&req_statename=&reqdb.zip=53701&reqdb.magic=1&reqdb.wmo=99999)



# **UFO's and Alien Abduction Phenomena**

## **A Scientific Analysis**



**HAROLD POVENMIRE**

**Buy it, Borrow it, or Bin it:**

**UFOs and alien abduction phenomena: A scientific analysis**

**by Hal Povenmire**

It has been a while since I reviewed a UFO book and I was shocked when I saw an old astronomy friend had written a book on the subject. I knew Hal Povenmire in the 1980s when he showed up at star parties and asked meteor observers to watch for his Upsilon Pegasid meteor shower. I lost contact with him around 1997, when I left Florida and eventually moved to New Hampshire. When I saw the book on Amazon, I did a quick glance at the table of contents and was shocked to see the book apparently endorsing some UFO cases that had been either debunked or seriously questioned. Despite my reservations, I spent my \$10 to read his Kindle book hoping that my initial impressions were wrong.

It was clear that Povenmire didn't do his homework when he started his book with a photograph showing an alien gray that was supposedly recovered from the Cape Girardeau crash of 1941. This photograph was debunked by Isaac Koi, who had traced its origins to an April Fool's joke in 1950. It did not get any better, as I read more. When Povenmire gives us a history lesson of government investigations on UFOs, he mentions the "Robinson report". At first I thought it was a typographical error but he refers to it as the Robinson report in the text and then says it was never released to the public. Anybody familiar with the history of UFOs knows it was the Robertson panel and parts of the report were released in the 1950s. If somebody is going to write about UFOs, one would think they could get such details correct.

One of the first individuals in the book's dedication is the "Chris Bledsoe family". It seems that Bledsoe was a primary source for Povenmire's book and he appeared on Facebook defending it. He stated that Povenmire's resume' included him being a rocket scientist, the head of the "press core (sic)" at NASA, and a world famous astronomer. Sadly, this is an overinflated description of Hal. Mr. Povenmire is an experienced amateur astronomer and has done some great work in occultations and meteors. However, to the best of my knowledge he is not a professional astronomer or received a PhD in Astronomy. From what I recall, he did some work at Cape Canaveral but this is a far cry from being a rocket scientist. Hal Povenmire had also written some articles about the space program but he was not the head of the NASA press corps. Either Povenmire has fed Bledsoe a very inflated resume' or Bledsoe has inflated it on his own. One can understand Bledsoe's defense of Hal because Hal decided to give Bledsoe's personal UFO case significant coverage in the book.

When Povenmire decides to list the most compelling videos and photographs, I was left scratching my head. The two that jumped out at me were the "Cape Girardeau" alien photograph and a little known November 26, 2011 video taken in the panhandle of Florida. This video was endorsed by...wait for it.....Chris Bledsoe! Looking at the video, all we can see are three bright lights moving behind some trees. It is unimpressive but Bledsoe appears to have convinced Hal that it was. Povenmire also makes reference to a video of the March 13, 1997 flying triangle over Phoenix. There is only one video of the 8 PM event and it shows only a formation of lights which change position during the video. It appears that Povenmire did not do any homework on any of these. I would hardly consider this a scientific evaluation of the evidence.

I really am not going to go over each case that Povenmire presents as good evidence but there are a few that jumped out at me:

UFO crash in Frieburg Germany, 1936 - Povenmire hints that the Germans were reverse engineering the vehicle. One wonders why they did not win the war with such technology and what happened to it after the war.

Cape Girardeau April 12, 1941 - Many disregard this crash as little more than a myth but Povenmire considers it credible. He seems to think MJ-12, which some UFO proponents consider to be a hoax, is real. This appears to be another case of him blindly accepting something as factual without careful examination.

Roswell - Povenmire's account is a mix of stories from the various books and jumbles the time line all around, which makes it impossible to follow. He found Philip Corso credible, which means he really did not read his book carefully. Povenmire then refers to the 1994 USAF report as "case closed". Unfortunately, that was the title of the 1997 report. The 1994 report was titled "The Roswell Report: Fact vs Fiction in the New Mexico desert". Apparently, Povenmire never read it because it does not appear in the bibliography.

Kecksburg - All I can figure is that Povenmire simply read Stan Gordon's version of events that are used in various UFO programs and did not bother to look beyond that. There is a wealth of evidence from scientific journals that indicate this was a fireball and I was shocked to see Povenmire, who wrote a book on meteors and the problems with reports filed by witnesses, suddenly ignore the work done in 1965 that showed the fireball ended north of Lake Erie in Ontario and not in Pennsylvania. All of the stories about it flying around and reversing direction came years later. They are more myth than fact.

Rendlesham - Povenmire makes no mention of the work of Ian Ridpath and appears to have never read it even though it is freely available on the Internet. As a fellow astronomer, one would think Povenmire might contact Ridpath and discuss the case with him. Povenmire, like many UFOlogists, who do not want to give skeptics credit, does not even mention Ridpath's name.

The Belgium UFO wave - Povenmire only briefly discusses it. He mentions the F-16 chase and quotes General "De Brauwer (sic)" as the radar and visuals that night be extraterrestrial. He obviously never read the report written by Auguste Meessen, which attributed the radar returns to anomalous propagation and the visual sightings to stars.

JAL 1628 flight - Povenmire states the event happened on November 7, 1996. The actual date was November 17, 1986. He could not even get the date right. Is this a scientific analysis?

The March 13, 1997 Arizona UFOs - Povenmire describes a video from a pilot as being marginal but also states it recorded the large craft seen by thousands that night. I am not sure if Terry Proctor is a pilot or not but his video does not show a large craft. It only shows five lights in formation that change position. This changing position proves there was no craft. Did Povenmire even watch this video? Ignored by Povenmire was the amateur astronomer, Mitch Stanley, who tracked the lights with his telescope and saw the lights as a formation of aircraft! Again, he appears to have been spoon fed one version of events and ignored just about everything else. If this is Mr. Povenmire's version of scientifically analyzing the evidence, we have to redefine the word "scientific" and "analysis".

In another section of the book, Povenmire makes mention of the Ancient Aliens television series and states the idea has merit. He never mentions the NOVA television program (The case for ancient astronauts) and the "Ancient Aliens Debunked" video. Both are available on line and thoroughly debunked a lot of the claims. In this case, scientific analysis by real scientists shows that most, if not all of the claims, are bogus. I am not sure what scientific analysis Mr. Povenmire performed on his examination of "Ancient astronauts".

In his closing, Hal Povenmire predicts that science will accept that UFOs are fact by 2025. That is eight years away and UFOlogists have been saying this for decades now. They are no closer today than they were in the 1950s. Exactly what kind of evidence does Povenmire have that this is going to happen? The answer is none.

The book was full of so many mistakes and errors, I could not keep up. After a while, I found myself simply skimming through the paragraphs and shaking my head with disbelief. If you want a book written about UFOs by a UFOlogist, you should read something by Kevin Randle or Jerome Clark. While they have biased opinions, at least they can get most of the details about the case correct. Because of the incredibly poor research done, Povenmire's book is not worth the \$10 I paid. I doubt it would be worth \$1. This is a "bin it" book if there ever was one.