



The UFO Researcher

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The U.F.O. Research Organization is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the collection and dissemination of evidence and data relating to U.F.O.s on a local and world-wide basis.

Investigations - Research - Analysis

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UFO'S
OVER
FLA!

THE STRAIGHT DOPE
Guest Editorial

Several members have relayed copies of a letter from the Air Force which refers to the death of Lt. Gorman during his chase of a flying saucer during the early years of the enigma. Knowing this was in error, Mr. Lorenzen [Director of The Aerial Phenomena Research Organization] checked with the Air Force and received the following information in a letter dated October 7, 1968: "Thank you for your letter of September 23, 1968, in which you called our attention to errors we had made in connection with UFO matters. Upon re-check, we found that Lt. Gorman was not, in fact, killed at the time of his encounter with a lighted weather balloon." Unquote. The letter is signed by James H. Aikman, Major USAF, Chief, Civil Branch, Community Relations Division, Office of Information, Department of the Air Force, Washington, D. C.

The fact that an error was made relative to one specific UFO incident (the Gorman chase) is ample indication that the Air Force could also be mistaken in their pronouncement that Gorman had encountered a weather balloon rather than a UFO.

"Midnight" magazine, published in Canada, has been carrying some rather sensational pieces on alleged UFO incidents. One recent article alluded to the alleged "first flying saucer murder" which allegedly took place in Australia. A letter to Mr. Peter Norris, APRO's representative there, yielded the following information which he received in answer to an inquiry to the Criminal Investigation Branch, Coolangatta, Northern Territory:

"Please find enclosed a letter from my Mate in Darwin who is a Detective from the C.I.B. there. It more than explains anything I could write to you about and it is the genuine document. I hope that the story written by the author is exposed as a Blatant Fake as I consider that stories such as these do more harm to the UFO Researchers than enough and SHOULD BE EXPOSED as the Fake it is. I feel very strongly about this.." Unquote.

The enclosed document speaks for itself in the following pertinent parts:

"I personally believe in these saucers and as such went into the matter very thoroughly. The matter is unknown to our entire police force, even to a bloke called White and another called

Owens. There is a Sgt. Owens in Katherine and White is at Kulgara. The author was close with names but otherwise wrong in every detail. Even the part about the sheep farms. These do not exist at Borooloola or anywhere else in the N.T. To cap matters off I had a mate of mine in the office of the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages go through his entire files. Not only were the names given by the author unable to be traced to a death at Borooloola, they were not listed as ever having died anywhere in the N.T."

The letter is signed by Neil Plumb of the Darwin, N.T. Police Station. We hope this clears up another matter involving an imaginative writer and a trumped-up "UFO incident".

(THE A.P.R.O. BULLETIN, September-October 1968, The Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, 3910 E. Kleindale Rd. Tucson, Arizona 85716.)

WHAT FLYING SAUCER?
Guest Editorial

The United States Air Force seems to get some kind of peculiar pleasure in baffling the citizenry.

The Air Force for many years has consistently refused to admit the existence of aerial phenomena that can't be explained in terms of common knowledge.

Yet there have been hundreds of sightings of UFOs which the Air Force has either refused to explain or which it denies any knowledge of.

It now turns out that the Air Force itself was responsible for some UFO sightings locally in recent weeks — sightings which the Air Force easily could have explained but declined to do so presumably for security reasons.

The UFOs, reported in southern parts of Brevard County and in Indian River County, were lighted weather balloons. The balloons, which sparked a series of "flying saucer" reports, were being used in a herbicide testing program. The Air Force admitted this only after persistent investigation by a TODAY reporter.

The project, under the direction of the Tactical Air Warfare Center at Eglin AFB in West Florida, was to test the effect of chemicals on certain types of vegetation. Defoliation experiments have been going on in Vietnam since 1962. The idea is to uncover the jungle hiding places of the enemy and also to ruin food supplies.

An Air Force information officer insisted the chemicals used in the Brevard

and Indian River experiments were "absolutely not dangerous to anything in Florida, including vegetation, man, beast or anything else." Yet Special Forces troops have gone through training exercises in this area of Florida because of its similarity to the vegetation and terrain in some parts of Vietnam.

It may be that the chemicals tested here were not intended for use in Vietnam, but we'll never know. "Military security precludes the release of what kind of herbicide was tested and no additional specifics can be issued," said the officer.

Acknowledging that there may be good security reasons for the secrecy about the testing program, it's hard to see why the Air Force couldn't at least have admitted its responsibility for the "flying saucer" outbreak at the time it occurred.

The Air Force has a unit called Project Blue Book that is devoted exclusively to the investigation of such sightings. It's preposterous to be conducting a presumably serious investigation of unexplained aerial phenomena - while at the same time creating aerial phenomena and pretending ignorance.

(Editorial in TODAY, Cocoa, December 11, 1968*)

WHAT AIR FORCE?

That Is The Question!

By Krakki

The "explanation" in the above Guest Editorial is, by any standards, a new can of worms. I leave the opening thereof to those far more competent. There are some questions, however, that may be posed.

Henceforth, whenever a circular spot of dead grass is discovered following the report of a landed UFO, shall we shrug our shoulders and assume it was nothing more mysterious than the good old USAF testing "absolutely not dangerous" herbicides again? On foreign soil, too?

Didn't the Establishment learn anything from the Utah sheep disaster?

Air Force, I think you are prevaricating - again. I do hope so, anyway.

ST. PETERSBURG BEACH, FLORIDA

August 15, 1968

At about 6:35 A. M. Leonard B. Bartlett stepped outside his home to retrieve the morning paper when he heard a "humming noise" and looked up. He saw a huge "fiery wheel" UFO, with the outside revolving around a "deep blue center". Bartlett estimated the object to be be-

tween 125 and 150 feet in diameter.

As the witness called to his son-in-law and daughter, Rev. and Mrs. Charles Blanck, "the UFO apparently flipped over and went straight up, leaving a vapor ring . . ."

"Then it hung in the sky for a few minutes . . . and simply appeared to 'fuzz out'," Mrs. Blanck said in her report to NICAP, "the outline getting more and more indistinct until it was no longer there."

Reports of fiery-wheel objects date back to antiquity. The Japanese Kama-kura scroll (12th-15th Century) depicts a wheel with eight spokes centered within a fiery ball. Objects with wheels were seen during the great airship mystery of 1896-7 and well into this century.

(UFO INVESTIGATOR, National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, 1536 Connecticut Ave., N. W., Washington, D.C. 20036. September-October 1968.)

PINELLAS PARK, FLORIDA

November 8, 1968

Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Penne, 6827 80th Terr. No., Pinellas Park, and their children, Laura, 12, and Phillip, 18, were at the Mustang Drive-In Theatre at 7301 Park Blvd. No. when they watched an unusual object at about 8:45 P.M., EST.

Here is Mrs. Penne's account:

"The first movie was almost over when my husband, Walter, said, 'What's that?' pointing to the ENE sky. At first I thought it was a plane. The light - reddish - did not blink and there was no green light.

"Counting out the airplane, my next thought was an artificial satellite. The object pulsed while gradually increasing in intensity. Also, the object appeared in the east, moved faster than satellites which I've seen numerous times before, and so this was discounted.

"When the object was just north of being overhead, we all noticed these things dropping from the bottom. I can only describe it as sparks dropping from a welders' torch.

"The object was not a meteor, which I've witnessed countless times. It did not come down toward us but rather moved from ENE to just west and slightly north of us and then went out like a light. (It may have passed behind a cloud but we didn't see the cloud).

"I first saw it through the window of the car but soon we all got out of the

car for a better look and, when the "sparks" began to drop from the bottom, I ran back two rows of cars to bring it to Phil's attention (he had his own car out there). He saw it for approximately 30 seconds before it disappeared.

"The sighting was about two to four minutes long, probably closer to four.

"The object did not reappear after disappearing. An airplane (unknown if military) came up from the southwest a few minutes later and passed just west of where the object disappeared."

Mrs. Penne described the object as appearing solid, self-illuminated and the size of a dime at arm's length at first, increasing to the size of a quarter by the time it disappeared.

The wind was from the east, 5-7 mph. There were a few cirrus-type clouds.

MELBOURNE, FLORIDA

November 26 1968

Four objects, "which looked like footballs," followed two small planes for about 30 miles, according to a Melbourne pilot.

The pilot, L. P. Duplantis, 27, said he watched one of the objects "go down like an elevator" and land in a swampy area about 20 miles west of Melbourne's Cape Kennedy Regional Airport.

He said the object lowered "at least three telescopic legs" before it landed near a restricted U. S. Air Force bombing range.

The sightings occurred about 6 P.M., "just as it was getting dark."

The Federal Aviation Authority control tower at Cape Kennedy Regional Airport referred questions about the alleged sightings to Patrick AFB.

A spokesman there said the command duty post there had not received any reports about UFOs in the area. "We don't know anything about it, so there's nothing we can tell you," he said.

Duplantis, an instructor-pilot for Aerospace Technical Institute, said he was flying a C-150 at about 15,000 at the time of the sighting.

Duplantis and Robert Holder, 26, another ATI instructor-pilot with one student passenger each, were flying from Avon Park to Melbourne at the time of the incident.

Holder, a Navy veteran, said, "I'm really not sure just what I saw. They were moving bright lights."

Duplantis said the objects "just disappeared. They were flying in an ech-

elon about one-quarter of a mile behind us. One was in the lead, the others were stacked to the right.

"I was watching for flight characteristics, but they sure don't fly the way we do."

Mario Zacchini, a student at Florida Air Academy and a passenger in the plane with Duplantis, said he first noticed two of the unidentified objects while over Lake Cypress.

He said he later saw four of them. "They were glowing red, disc shaped, and larger than most cars."

Zacchini said he also watched as one of the four landed. "It didn't seem to have any landing gear," he said. "It just hovered. Then I saw it streak away into the sky."

Zacchini estimated the objects followed the plane for nine miles.

"They'd be there, then they would disappear," he said. "I saw one just as we were going in to land."

Duplantis said, "I wasn't afraid. I was wishing there was some way we could have communicated with them."

(Pat Cullen, Staff Writer, TODAY, Cocoa, 27 November 1968.)

Ever go looking for a UFO - or where one might have landed?

Two pilot-instructors of the Aerospace Technical Institute (ATI) of the Florida Institute of Technology took such a flight Wednesday (11-27).

The SENTINEL-STAR sent along a reporter on the search where late Tuesday afternoon ATI pilot-instructors Lynn Duplantis and Bob Helder "witnessed" the landing.

They also reported that three other UFOs hovered in the air as the fourth landed in an isolated swampy region between Holopaw and Lake Cypress.

"I know what we saw," said Duplantis 27, and a pilot whose record shows more than 4,000 hours in the air. "I don't want the Federal Aviation Administration checking my eyes and my head - but we saw them!"

Duplantis and Helder were on a routine navigational flight 18 miles west of Cape Kennedy Regional Airport or at 265° radial from Kennedy Regional's VOR radio.

The students also confirmed seeing the UFOs.

"They were there, alright," said pilot Helder. "One dropped in elevator fashion and appeared to have landed down there."

Below our plane on Wednesday was the

immense expanse of Florida swamp dissected by U. S. 441 and the small patch of buildings known as Holopaw. The pock-marked region could have been the landing place of a battleship and somehow hidden all evidence of it.

At Kennedy Regional, FAA control tower operator R. Wayne Farrington, 17 years with FAA, said he was in radio contact with Duplantis at the time.

"I heard him radio that a UFO was at four o'clock," said Farrington. "I told him to turn into them."

Duplantis said the UFOs hovered at an altitude of 1,500 feet.

"We blinked our landing lights at them and they made a vertical ascent out of sight. Their maneuver scared the wits out of both of us," said Duplantis. "I didn't dare move too quickly for fear of hitting the other Cessna. I couldn't see Bob at that instant."

Farrington reported a Shawnee pilot saw the dropping of flares at about the time the ATI pilots spotted the UFOs. The flares, Farrington said, are dropped by the Air Tactical Command near the Avon Park bombing area west of Cypress Lake beyond Holopaw.

He wondered about optical tricks.

In response to Farrington's theory, pilot-instructor Duplantis said he had made many freefall jumps with M-18 smoke flares while in service.

"Flares have residue and radiate light, of course, as well as reflect moisture as they drop. The objects we saw produced no such characteristics. The UFO or whatever they were, hung there in the sky and moved horizontally until we scared them off with our blinking lights. The circular objects streaked straight up out of sight."

ATI President Gerald Lauderbaugh said Wednesday he is inclined to believe his pilot-instructors as experienced observers of atmospheric phenomena and optical illusions.

Flight-instructor Carey Snow, who accompanied this reporter with pilots Duplantis and Helder, had views similar to Lauderbaugh.

"I think we're wrong to suppose this planet is the only place in the universe where there's life. I only regret I didn't see them myself," Snow averred.

(George Tomlinson, Staff Writer, in ORLANDO SENTINEL, 28 November 1968.)

Please see second Guest Editorial on Page 2 for the Air Force "explanation"?

VENICE, FLORIDA
November 29, 1968

Flying saucers plummeted back into the news with the report of a sighting early Friday morning by a GONDOLIER reader.

The area resident, who wished to remain anonymous, said he saw a brilliant white object drop straight down out of the night sky at terrific speed - so fast it appeared to be a continuous streak of light.

The reported sighting occurred shortly after 3 A. M. when the householder got up to let the family dog out.

He said he observed the object only momentarily when he happened to glance out a large picture window facing east.

"It was too big to be a falling star," said the observer. "Besides, it dropped straight down." So-called falling stars appear to have a curving trajectory.

Flying saucers, now referred to as unidentified flying objects (UFOs), have not been in the news much in recent months.

Last year, THE GONDOLIER carried several stories of sightings by South Countians. The UFOs seen by area residents seem to appear mostly in the eastern sky.

(Venice GONDOLIER, 2 December 1968.)

ENGLEWOOD-ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA
December 2 1968

Fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico and many St. Petersburg residents on shore gazed at the skies, watching a mysterious red light hover on the horizon.

About 9:40 P. M., the "Vagabond" fishing boat was anchored 15 miles west of Englewood (S. of Sarasota). One of the fishermen, Howard Schmidt of Venice, radioed the U.S. Coast Guard to report an "unidentified flying object" hovering on the horizon.

It illuminated the air and was just stationary before it faded away," he told the Coast Guard.

About five minutes later, the Coast Guard received several telephone calls from St. Petersburg residents who reported seeing an "unidentified flying object, a flying saucer, a weird light".

According to two residents in the neighborhood of 49th St. and 54th Ave. No., the red ball of light, which was "six or seven times as bright as any star and was not an airplane or a flare, hovered brightly for about four or five min-

utes before it slowly moved southeast, then northwest, pulsating and finally disappearing from sight."

(ST. PETERSBURG INDEPENDENT, December 3, 1968.)

[According to our usually reliable sources, this could not have been Venus, or the moon. - Ed.]

MELBOURNE, FLORIDA
December 11 1968

A score of Florida Institute of Technology students, with an F.I.T. computer-science instructor, observed a mysterious light in the sky south of Melbourne. Five persons at Valkaria (eight miles south of Melbourne on U.S. #1) saw it too.

None will say it was a flying saucer but all agree it was "definitely there". It was not an aircraft or weather balloon, nor was it the planet Venus or Jupiter.

The object did not give off the conventional aircraft's blinking lights. It apparently maneuvered at terrific speeds against the constellation, Orion, reported instructor Joseph Richburg.

The F.I.T. instructor, having seen many Cape Kennedy launches from downrange, described the mysterious light as something similar to the second stage brightness of a rocket shot.

"The object's motion could be described as racing against the sky. It appeared to be something skipping along the atmosphere's envelope, demonstrating a fierce brightness and then going dim, the light's brilliance coming sporadically," said Richburg.

At Valkaria a West Virginia tourist-hunter, Bill Rose of Huntington, claimed it was not an aircraft.

"I timed the light. It had a definite path of motion. It appeared to follow more or less a square pattern. It would get bright like a sudden flaring fire and when it would turn to a straight line it seemed to dim," said Rose.

It made a complete course on its path every twelve minutes, Rose said.

He disclosed that four other persons who were with him also observed it. They agree it was not a known object.

"It had to be going thousands of miles an hour to move like it did," he added.

F.I.T. student Darly Crandall of Kennedy, New York, confirmed the observations of computer-science instructor Richburg. He said the brightness was "more or about first magnitude and was

sporadic with an orange tint." Crandall is majoring in electrical engineering.

F.I.T. space technology major Harry McGuinness of New Bradford, Mass., said the object made 90-degree turns.

"It was definitely there. It was there and it moved in a way that wasn't some weather balloon or aircraft as a Patrick AFB sergeant said it was when we called the base," McGuinness said.

Another electrical engineering student, Bob Wanek of Wayne, New Jersey, said the object was first observed by instructor Richburg about 9:30 P. M. and Richburg called Wanek and other students.

"Mr. Richburg wanted to confirm what he was observing and we are ready to admit we saw it, too. We used the constellation Orion as a reference point to determine it's movements. It appeared to burn bright and then become almost invisible," Wanek reported.

Patrick Air Force Base officials dismissed the "sightings" and those of two weeks before as unworthy of investigation. "UFOs are often 'sighted' prior to a major launch at Cape Kennedy."

(George Tomlinson, Staff Writer, in ORLANDO SENTINEL, 13 December 1968.)

NORTH AMERICAN REPORT

The FLYING SAUCER REVIEW announces a new special issue, planned for 72 pages, with contributions by investigators, scientists and writers well known on the American scene. It is due out in Spring of 1969 and the demand is certain to be heavy, so be sure of your copy by ordering now. Send remittance, \$1.50 in the U.S. (by air \$1.30 extra) with your order to:

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Please report any sightings as soon as possible so we can record all details while they are fresh. Telephone:

Bradenton	Sally Remaley	743-0411	Eve
Clearwater	M. Cleaver (WLCY)	525-1111	Day
Palmetto	Sally Remaley	743-0411	Eve
St. Pete	E. R. Sabo	526-6084	Eve
St. Pete	M. Cleaver (WLCY)	525-1111	Day
Sarasota	Ed Owens	958-2406	Eve
Tampa	M. Cleaver (WLCY)	229-7976	Day

We invite any comments or inquiries. Please send clippings or articles to:

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