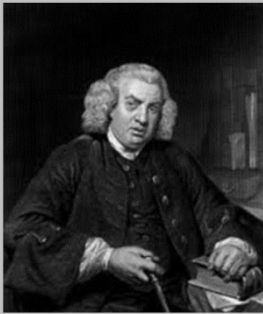


Ben Mezrich, author of  
*The 37<sup>th</sup> Parallel: The Secret Truth behind America's UFO Highway*  
Atria Books, Simon and Schuster, 2016



We opened last week with interviews; we're starting this week with another one. Our son found this on the Ted Talk website.

Ben Mezrich wrote *The 37<sup>th</sup> Parallel: The Secret Truth Behind America's UFO Highway*, in 2016. I have a copy and have read it: I didn't include it in our curriculum because our reading list was already overloaded: but here he is at a recent Ted Talk and he can tell you about it himself.



“Human Experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth.”

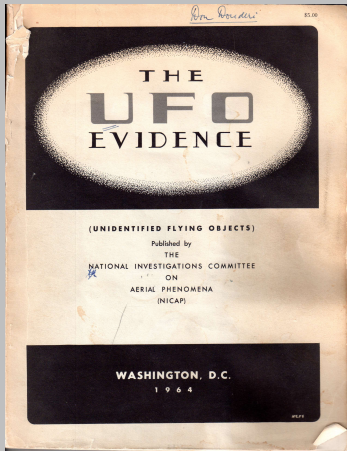
Samuel Johnson, MA, DCL (Oxon)



“Credible observers of relatively incredible things.”

Major General John Samford  
Chief of Intelligence  
United States Air Force, March 1953  
(Later, Director of the National Security Agency)

We will talk about the scientific method later, but Samuel Johnson summed up the empirical approach of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century science clearly with this one pithy quote (Boswell’s life of Johnson, Modern Library, p. 274). And the Chief of USAF Intelligence used the same thought process to describe the early UFO sightings in a controversial 1952 press conference during the so-called “Washington Flap” (Swords, 2012, p. 160).



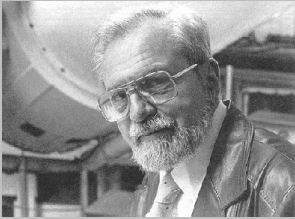
Amazon.com

The UFO Evidence (Unidentified Flying Objects)  
(Paperback)  
by Richard H. Hall (Editor)  
4.6 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews  
\$16.99 plus shipping

The UFO Evidence (Unidentified Flying Objects)  
National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP)  
Richard H Hall  
Washington, DC, May 964

This resource is a classic, but it is not available in the McGill library system. I have excerpted early cases from it for the following examples.

J. Allen Hynek (1910-1986)



From *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry*  
(Regenery, 1972)

NL: Nocturnal light

DD: Daylight disc

RV: Radar-visual observation

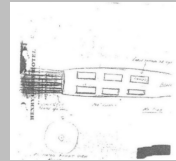
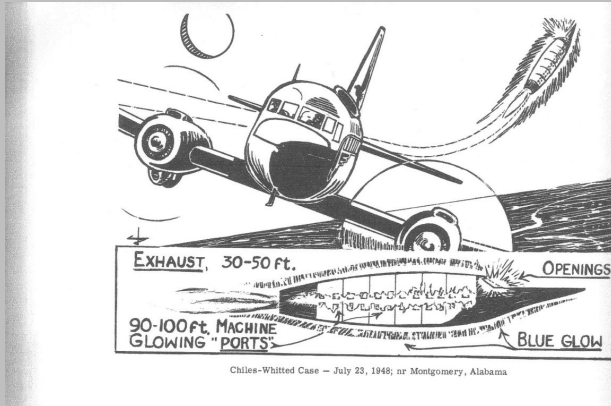
CE1: Close encounter of the first kind (~ 500 meters)

CE2: Close encounter of the second kind (physical evidence)

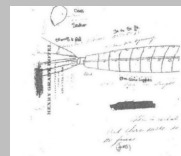
CE3: Close encounter of the third kind (occupants)

From one of the books in the stacks: an early classic. Hynek began to systematize the study of UFOs and was deeply involved, with the USAF, from the very beginning.

July 23, 1948 near Montgomery, Ala. Captain C. S. Chiles,  
First Officer J. B. Whitted, Eastern Airlines



Whitted's drawing

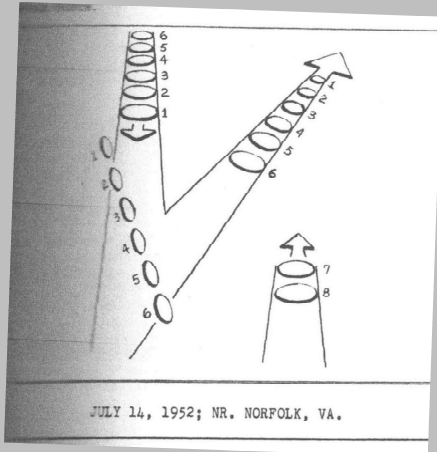


Chiles' drawing

One example of many reports from airline pilots that have persisted to the present day. Pilots are now loath to report any visual sightings, because they are mildly harassed when they make such reports.

The last direct account like this that I heard was from a retired airline pilot who, at a talk I gave in 2012, told me he had flown “wingtip to wingtip” with a UFO across the central US for 20 minutes.

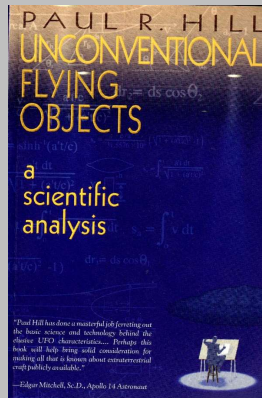
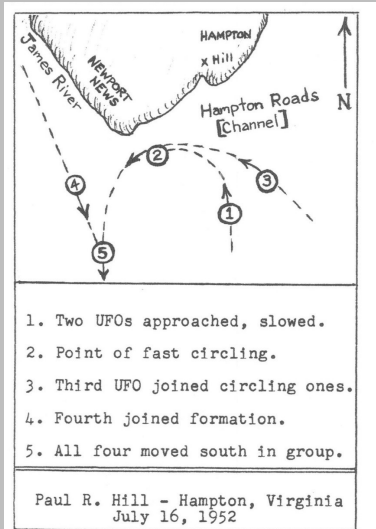
July 14, 1952, near Norfolk, VA, William Nash, pilot  
and William Fortenberry, co-pilot, Pan American Airlines



Calculated speed of about 12,000 mph.  
Multiple witnesses on the ground.

Another well-known early airline pilot sighting case. There were ground witnesses as well.

Paul R. Hill, Hampton, VA, July 16, 1952



Amazon.com

*Unconventional Flying Objects:  
A Scientific Analysis*

Paperback – December 1, 1995  
by Paul R. Hill (Author), Robert M. Wood  
(Foreword)  
4.8 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

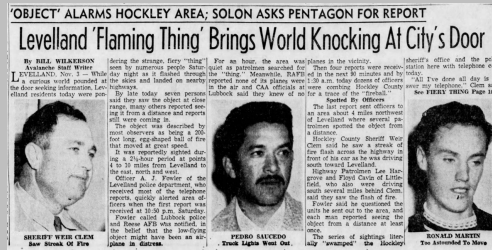
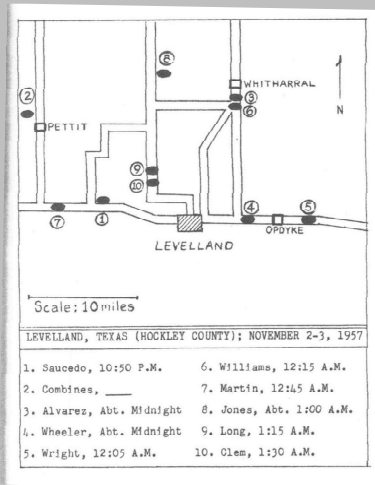
Hill was an aeronautical engineer who worked for NASA and its WWII Predecessor, NACA. *Unconventional Flying Objects: A Scientific Analysis* was published posthumously in 1995.

Paul R. Hill's brilliant book is also not available at McGill. He was a NASA aeronautical engineer, who designed the fuselage of the very successful P-47 fighter-bomber used by the US Army Air Force during the latter part of WWII. He also had a UFO sighting and reported it. NASA policy prohibited publication of his book until he retired; as a matter of fact it was published posthumously and has now been reprinted by the original publisher. I wrote part of the introduction to the

second printing.



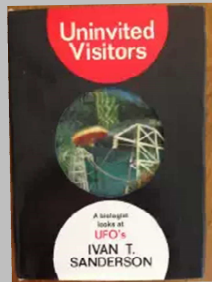
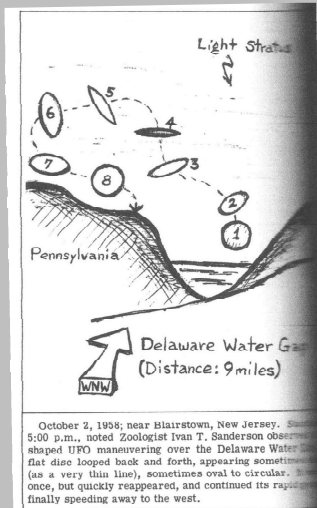
Levelland, TX, November 2-3, 1957.  
Multiple witnesses including law enforcement officers



“The object was described by most observers as being a 200 – foot – long egg-shaped ball of fire that moved at great speed. It was reportedly sighted during a 2 ½ hour period at points 4 to 10 miles from Levelland to the east, north and west.”

Multiple-witness to multiple landings, at night, of a single UFO or several UFOs, in the vicinity of Levelland, TX in 1957. All of the reports were “close encounters”: landed UFOs within a few hundred meters of a vehicle that was disabled (lights dimmed, engine failed) by the proximity of the UFO. When the UFO took off, the vehicle functioned normally.

Ivan T. Sanderson, biologist and TV science popularizer,  
October 2, 1958 near Blairstown, NJ.



Uninvited visitors;: A biologist looks at UFO's, Hardcover  
– 1967

by Ivan Terence Sanderson (Author)

5 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

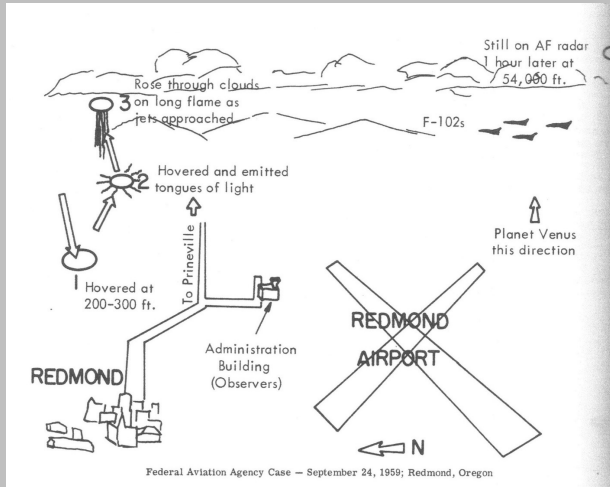
from \$25.00

“The flat disc looped back and forth, appearing sometimes edge on (as a very thin line), sometimes oval to circular. It vanished once, but quickly reappeared, and continued its rapid gyrations, finally speeding away to the west.”

A 1958 report by a well-known biologist. A single observer, but one with a public reputation as a naturalist. I have not read his book on the subject.

Redmond, OR, September 14, 1959.

Police officer, FAA report, radar, fighter jet scramble



“ Hovered at 200 – 300 ft.

Hovered and emitted tongues of light.

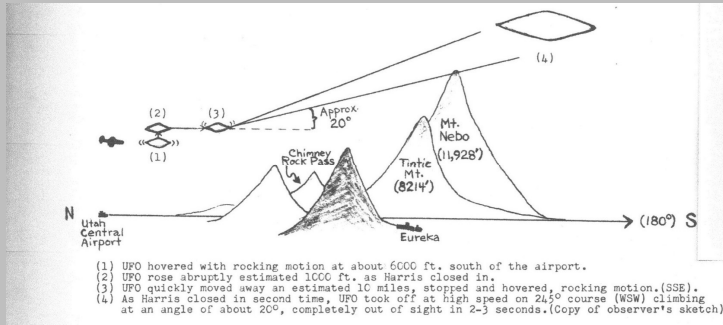
Rose through clouds on long flame as jets  
Approached.

F-102s

Still on AF radar 1 hour later at 54,000 ft.  
Radar continued to show the UFO  
south of Redmond for about two hours.”

Another report summarized in The UFO Evidence. Multiple witnesses, a radar-visual account, and jets scrambled to intercept the intruder. The case was assembled from multiple documents.

## Waldo J. Harris (pilot), Salt Lake City, UT airport, October 2, 1961

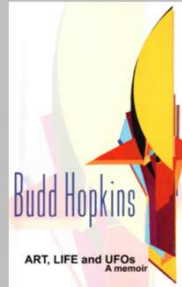
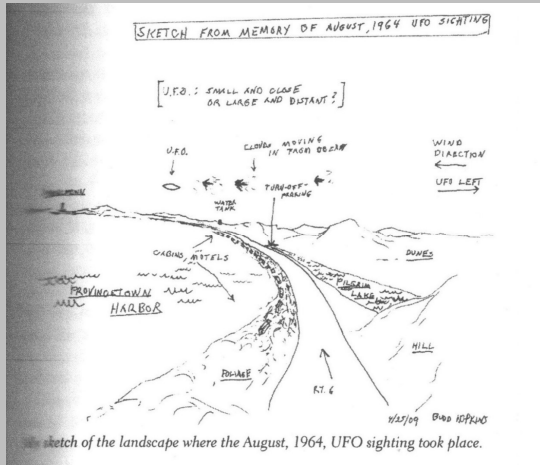


“As I drew nearer I could see that the object had no wings nor tail nor any other exterior control surfaces protruding from what appeared to be the fuselage. It seemed to be hovering with a little rocking motion...I could see that

it was a disc-shaped object. I would guess the diameter at about 50 To 55 feet, the thickness in the middle at about 8 to 10 feet. It had the appearance of sand- blasted aluminum. “

Utah, 1961. Private pilot account.

## Budd Hopkins: August 1964, Truro, MA (Cape Cod)



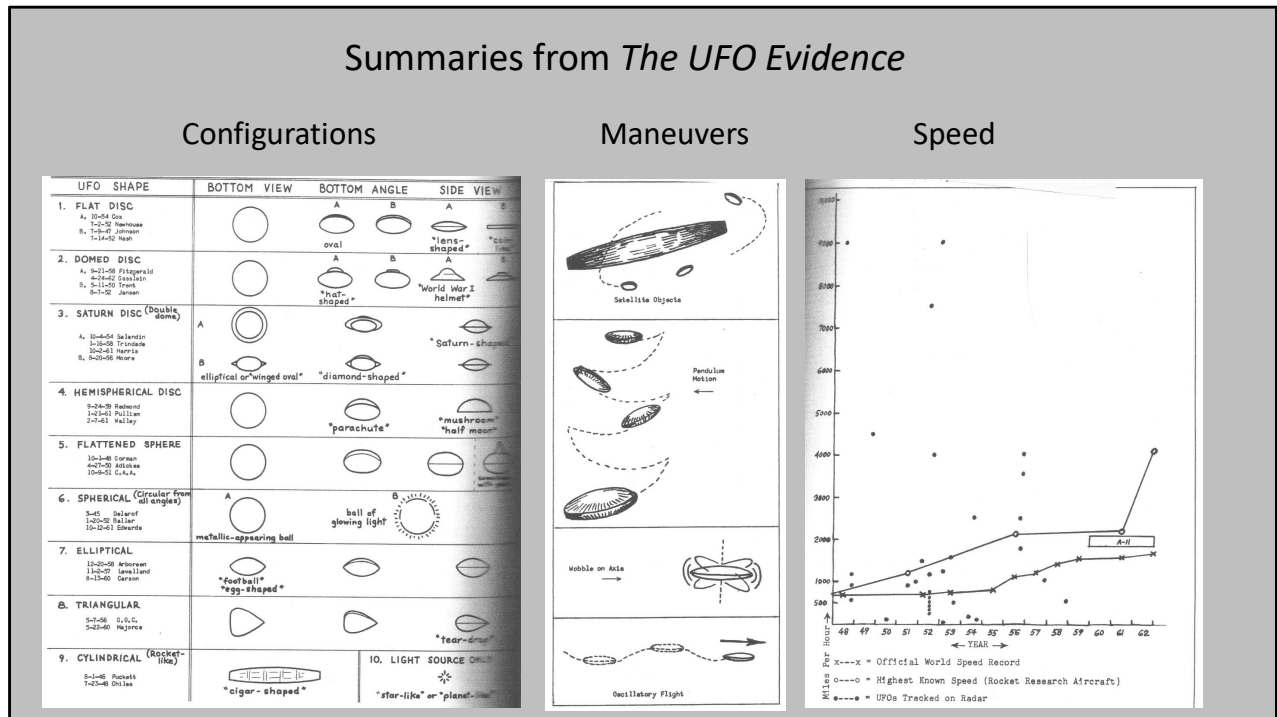
Amazon.com

ART, LIFE and UFOs Paperback –  
June 24, 2009 by Budd Hopkins (Author)  
4.5 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

“From below, viewing it from a steeper. More nearly vertical angle, it appeared to be circular and utterly without details – no lights, wings, doors, windows or protuberances of any kind.”

Budd Hopkins’ UFO encounter that turned him from a skeptic (re the public reaction to the Orson Welles broadcast) into a student of the subject. From his 2009 memoir, *Art, Life and UFOs*.

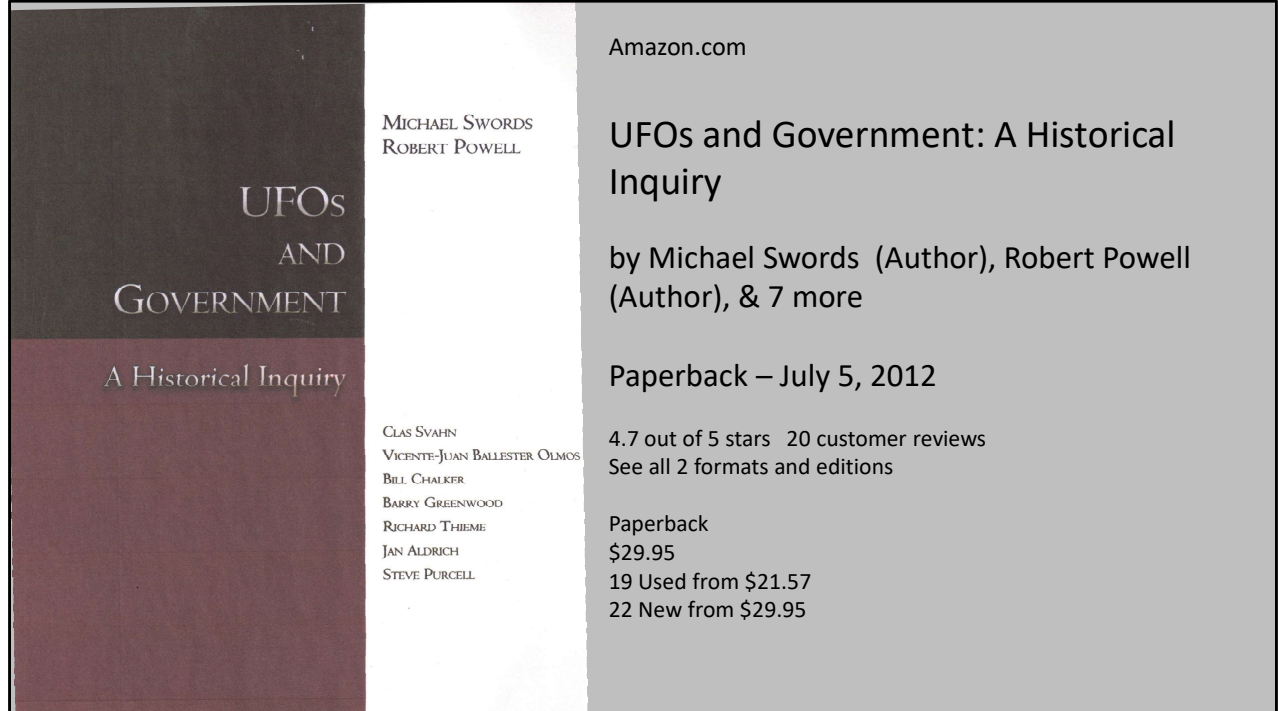
## Summaries from *The UFO Evidence*



Richard H. Hall's summing up in *The UFO Evidence*:

Tables showing observed configurations, observed maneuvers, and observed speeds.

Neither circa 1964 nor circa 2016 could these artifacts be manufactured with known human technology.



Another classic that is now on the McGill shelves. (I bought it for the University). This is a history of US and other western government's involvement with UFO inquiries and the conflicted attitude they have held towards the phenomena and the people – inside and outside the public service – who study them.

## Phases of American government involvement with the UFO phenomenon

1. Foo-Fighters
2. Ghost Rockets
3. 1947: Arnold, Roswell, Air Material Command at Wright-Patterson AFB
4. Project Sign
5. Project Grudge
6. Washington flap 1952
7. Project Blue Book
8. Robertson Panel 1953
9. Congressional Hearings 1968
10. Condon Commission 1966-1969

The stages of government involvement, starting during the last years of WWII and continuing until the 1970s, as documented in *UFOs and Government*. That is not to say that government involvement ended in the 1970s; it certainly did not, but the institutions and controversies that came to public attention culminated in the so-called “Condon Commission” report of 1969, and further government involvement has not been visible to the public.



## Foo-fighters: UFOs seen in the air during the Second World War

### **New Nazi Weapon Is Noticed at Front**

Paris, Dec. 13.—(AP) — As Allied armies ground out new gains on the western front to-day, the Germans were disclosed to have thrown a new "device" into the war—mysterious silvery balls which float in the air.

Pilots report seeing these objects, both individually and in clusters, during forays over Germany.

The purpose of the floaters was not immediately evident. It is possible that they represent a new anti-aircraft defence instrument or weapon.

“Foo-fighters” were balls of light seen in the sky at night, or small spheres or discs seen in daylight, that were seen by allied as well as German or Japanese pilots towards the end of the second world war. They were investigated by US Air Force intelligence, but never satisfactorily explained or explained away.

## Swedish Ghost Rockets: widespread visual observations and close encounters, 1946 – 1947



American civilian and military officials went to Sweden to learn what was happening.

Then came the Swedish “ghost rockets” – unidentified objects that flew through Swedish airspace in 1946 - 1947, that sometimes crashed into Swedish lakes, but that were never explained nor dredged out of the lakes where they were supposed to have crashed. The US and the British sent military missions to consult with the Swedes, and no one could come up with an answer.

Montreal Gazette: Associated Press Story printed on June 26, 1947



### ***Pilot Sees 'Saucer-like Objects' Flying at 1,200 m.p.h. in Oregon***

Pendleton, Ore., June 25.—(AP)—Nine bright, saucer-like objects flying at "incredible" speed at 10,000 feet altitude were reported here today by Kenneth Arnold, Boise, Idaho, pilot, who said he could not hazard a guess as to what they were.

Arnold, a United States Forest Service employee, engaged in searching for a missing plane, said he sighted the mystery objects Tuesday at 3 p.m. They were flying between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams, in Washington State, he said, and appeared to weave in and out of formation. Arnold said he clocked them and estimated their speed at 1,200 miles an hour.

He added he talked today with an unidentified man from Utah, south of here, who said he had seen similar objects over the mountains near Utah Tuesday.

"It seems impossible," Arnold said, "but there it is."

Arnold said he clocked the objects from Mount Rainier to Mount Adams, and estimated their speed at 1,200 miles an hour. He said they appeared to fly almost as if fastened together—if one dipped, the others did, too.

After the incident, he said, he talked to other pilots when he landed at Yakima, Wash., but none of them had seen anything similar. Oregon is perhaps more concerned than many areas over reports of mysterious objects because of the

wind-borne balloons launched from Japan during the war. One of the bomb-laden balloons fell near Lakeview, Ore., in May, 1945, killing six persons.

At Portland, Ore., Edward Leach, senior C.A.A. Aeronautical Inspector, said he could offer no explanation of the fast-flying objects reported by Arnold.

"If they were actually as described," Leach said, "I don't know what they could be. I rather doubt that anything would be traveling that fast."

Leach said he was not sure whether objects traveling at 1,200 miles an hour could be seen clearly enough to tell that they were weaving in formation, as reported.

In Washington, the War Department said it had no information on the Oregon sky mystery.

An Army spokesman expressed interest in any object which would fly at the estimated speed of 1,200 m.p.h., declaring:

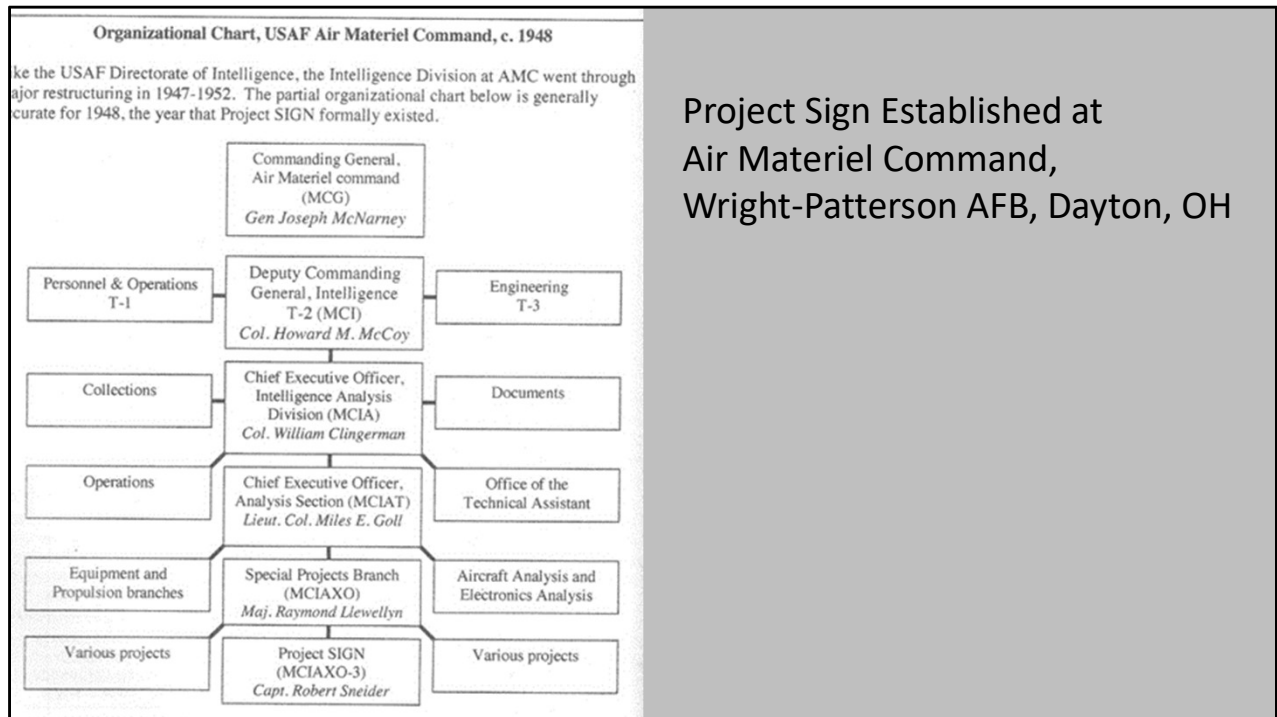
"As far as we know, nothing flies that fast except a V-2 rocket, which travels at about 3,500 miles and hour — and that's too fast to be seen."

Moreover, the V-2s, unlike the saucer-shaped objects seen in Oregon, are cigar-shaped.

The spokesman said it was safe to say that the Army is not conducting any high-speed experimental tests in the area mentioned and is certainly "not shooting" in populated regions.

1947 Flap: US inundated with observations, starting with Kenneth Arnold (June 24, 1947)

The Kenneth Arnold sighting was the "index case" for the American UFO observations. It was immediately followed by many more observations (visual and radar-visual) during the succeeding months, and this "flap" of sightings was the beginning of UFO awareness throughout the US, and around the world.



Project Sign Established at  
Air Materiel Command,  
Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH

The USAF responded by establishing “Project Sign” at the Air Materiel Command in 1948, to collect and analyze UFO reports. It was run by a Captain, a low position on the military totem pole. It also hired the young astronomer, J. Allen Hynek, to find the conventional explanations for the observations that were sent to Project Sign.

War of attitudes within USAF and at the Pentagon

Scientists consulted by the Air Force were skeptical

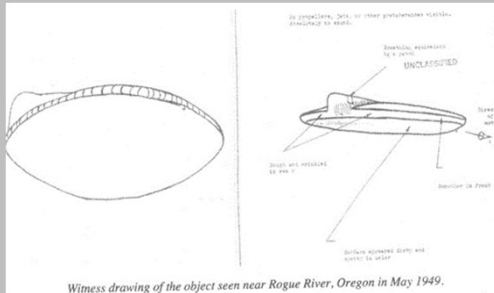
Irwin Langmuir – “Pathological Science”

J. Allen Hynek got involved in Project Sign as a young and junior astronomer. His job was to find the conventional explanation for whatever cases the project had collected.

There was a clash of opinions within the Pentagon’s military hierarchy. Project Sign submitted an intelligence “Estimate of the Situation” that left room for “extraterrestrial” as one possible explanation. This was too much for some higher-ups and their scientific advisers, who agitated to shut down (and shut up) the low-level supporters of a possible “extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH)”. They succeeded. Project Sign was replaced by Project Grudge. The name

explains it all.

End of 1948: Project Sign is shut down:  
The Pentagon war has been won by the debunkers



Witness drawing of the object seen near Rogue River, Oregon in May 1949.

But: this object was seen by NACA (predecessor to NASA ) witnesses  
and other independent witnesses.

The debunkers won within the Pentagon, but the  
sightings kept coming anyway.

## Project Grudge

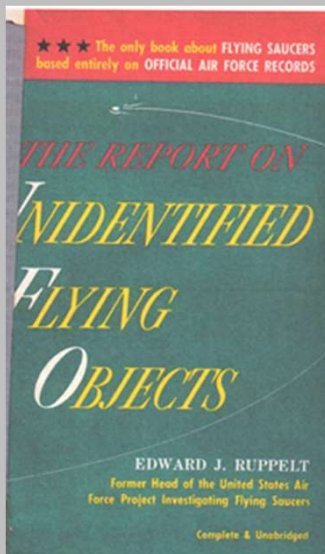
“This headquarters believes that the release of details of analysis and evaluation of incidents is inadvisable, and desires that, in lieu thereof, releases conform to the policy and the spirit of the following:

‘We have investigated and evaluated \_\_\_\_\_ incident and have found nothing of value and nothing which would Change our previous estimates on this subject.’”

(Pentagon to Wright-Patterson Air Material Command)

Project Grudge was a PR exercise to get the public off the back of the military when it came to UFOs. That was made explicit to project personnel through orders conveyed down to the low-level people running the project from their superiors in the Pentagon.





1950 – 1951: The Korean War

The Fort Monmouth, NJ Radar-Visual sighting, The Pentagon's reaction, and Grudge is replaced by Project Blue Book.

Edward Ruppelt is called back to service. He takes over Project Blue Book. It lasts through 1970. (Ruppelt is out by 1953).

But the Korean War started, and a lot of military reservists were called back to active service. Not only that, but a well-publicized case that started with a radar-visual sighting and exploded into the “Washington (DC) Flap” of 1952 brought Project Grudge into disgrace, and led to the reorganization of the UFO investigation into “Project Blue Book”, still at Wright-Patterson field in Dayton, and, for the first year-and-a-half, under the supervision of recalled reservist Capt.

Edward J. Ruppelt who wrote a book about his experiences.



The 'Washington Flap' of 1952 galvanized the US and frustrated the Pentagon generals who were trying to control the public reaction to the UFO phenomenon.

Ruppelt was asked by the President's military adviser to explain what was happening. He couldn't. The President asked the CIA to evaluate the situation. They did. The CIA's 'Robertson Panel,' chaired by physicist Howard Robertson, decided that public interest in UFOs was a threat to national security, and that the government should publicly debunk them. Project Blue Book, along with private scientists who worked with the government, proceeded to do just that.

After the widely publicized "Washington Flap" of 1952 (sightings included that of Paul R. Hill, mentioned earlier) President Truman asked the CIA for advice. They convened a panel that recommended that the military and other government agencies actively debunk the UFO phenomenon, because it was interfering with observers' effectiveness in searching for incoming soviet bombers, and it was bad for public morale. That policy was adopted, and is in place today.

## Ruppelt's two endings

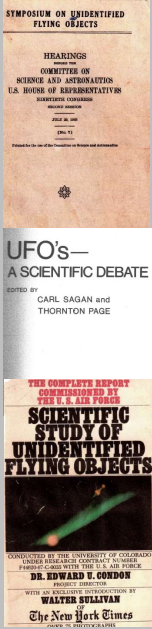
"Maybe the earth is being visited by interplanetary spaceships.  
Only time will tell."

2nd printing

"No responsible scientists will argue that other solar systems may be and that some day we may meet those people. But it hasn't happened yet and until that day comes we're stuck with our Space Age myth: the UFO."

Ruppelt was soon released from active duty and went back to private life. There were two printings of his book. The last sentence in the two printings differs, as shown above. Ruppelt died young, of a heart attack. He never explained his change of position. The book is full of excellent, well-reported cases, and a full description of the confusion about UFOs that prevailed in the upper reaches of the Pentagon where *Captain* Ruppelt was briefing colonels and generals about what he

knew.



Many flaps between 1951 and 1966 led to the House of Representatives hearing (1968),

the AAAS symposium (1968)

and the Condon Commission Inquiry (1966- 1969)

Close encounters, radar-visual sightings, jets scrambling to intercept UFOs, and many other manifestations of the UFO phenomenon continued during the 'fifties and 'sixties, culminating in a Congressional Hearing (1968) and an investigation (of sorts) paid for by the Air Force and run by the University of Colorado, called the "Condon Commission" which issued a completely negative report in 1969. This took the US Air Force (and the US Government) out of the UFO business, and publicly at least, they have never returned. The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) ran a public UFO forum in 1968, But did not change the effect of the Condon report.