

Mr. Mackrell confirmed the accuracy of his wife's account and said that his own reaction had rather been one of extreme excitement, "with the adrenalin pumping". He had been actively engaged in manoeuvring the car and had been too busy to feel anything other than a desire to see what was happening. There had been no question of any "missing time" and the couple arrived home as expected.

They had felt that the happening was of importance and ought to be reported. They phoned the Police, who told them to ring "the UFO department at Gatwick airport". (There is no such department, and this was a Constabulary joke.) They did phone Gatwick, and they think they were told also that there would have been no normal traffic in the area concerned at the time in question.

The UFO seen by them seemed to fill the entire length of the field above which it hovered, and was presumably of the "carrier" or "mother

ship" type sometimes described.*

I felt that the witnesses were honest and sincere in their accounts of what they had seen, and I was moreover impressed by their sudden and belated recollection of the "cone of silence" phenomenon, of which of course they had never heard. Despite their obvious involvement at the time and their original interview with Omar Fowler, they had not taken any steps to find out more about UFO phenomena, though they had often talked about it together and in the family.

They asked about a good introductory book to read, and I suggested Timothy Good's "Above Top Secret", which was now available in paperback.

*** NOTE BY EDITOR, FSR.**

This case at Westcott is particularly reminiscent of the two huge things observed in Romania in 1990. (See FSR 37/1, pp.7-10) ■

THE SPANISH AIR FORCE UFO FILES *By Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos (C.E.I. Spain, & FSR Consultant) ©*

Since 1988 I have been engaged in a research project with my colleague Joan Plana dealing with (a) the history of the involvement of the Ministry of Defence and other state institutions in Spain with the UFO problem and (b) the collection and analysis of UFO experiences reported by military personnel, Civil Guard, and police.

An essential objective in this work has been to establish good contacts with the authorities, especially the Air Force, Army, Navy, Civil Aviation, and other bodies, in order to identify the UFO cases they might have in their archives, attempt to have them publicly disclosed, and offer a consultant role in their relationship with the UFO phenomenon.

The Air Force, of course, holds responsibility for control of the nation's air space, and it receives UFO reports from aircraft pilots, ground radar stations, and like sources. In Spain UFO reports of official origin were classified as "reserved matter" — secret, in other words — since March 1979. Until then UFO information was graded as confidential.

Official UFO files were known to exist in the Air Safety/Air Space Section, Air Force Headquarters, Madrid.



Opening Up

In 1990 I started to visit and correspond with officials in such headquarters, mainly the Public Relations Office and the Air Safety Section, bringing to the attention of the Chief of the Air Force Staff memoranda, reports, and arguments proving that (1) UFOs pose no threat to the national security and (2) UFOs represent a legitimate scientific problem, not a military one. In consequence, I argued, existing UFO documents should be declassified and the corresponding material should enter the public domain.

Over two years I developed multiple and close contacts with the Air Force at various levels, through personal meetings, mail, fax, and telephone. I provided a great deal of documentation showing that reliable, scientific treatments of UFO data existed beyond journalistic and popular coverage.

Finally, in May 1991, the colonel in charge of the Air Safety Section prepared an internal memo to the General, Division of Operations. The memo

mentioned my contacts with the Air Force, my role as a UFO researcher, and my requests. It summarized the procedures applied by the Air Force to the UFO subject, included a list of the 55 files that comprised the archives under his control, and explicitly concluded that the UFO files should be declassified and made public to interested parties.

This Informative Note started a declassification process which has been under my close scrutiny and surveillance since. In January 1992 responsibility for handling the UFO question by the Air Force was transferred (along with actual files) to the Mando Operativo Aereo (MOA — Aerial Operative Command in English). The MOA has prepared undated procedures on reporting and investigating UFO events witnessed by military personnel. In March the Joint Chiefs of the Staffs (Air Force, Army, and Navy top staff generals) decided to down-grade the UFO subject from secret to "internal reserve," a minor reserve level similar to Confidential, for which the Air Force Chief of the Staff has the power to declassify fully. Previously nothing could have been declassified without the prior approval of the JUJEM, Junta de Jefes de Estado Mayor (Joint Chiefs of the Staffs).

The August/September 1992 issue of *Revista de Aeronautica y Astronautica* (*Journal of Aeronautics and Astronautics*), the official magazine of the Spanish Air Force, carried an article, "The Air Force and the UFOs," by Col. Angel Bastida, Intelligence Section, MOA. It recounted the history of the Air Force's involvement and presented statistics for 66 files for the period 1962 to 1991. (This higher number was a result of action on my 1991 recommendation that all Air Force regions submit to headquarters any UFO reports for centralization purposes before the declassification process was initiated.) The paper related that the declassification process was in effect and that once every individual report was reviewed, in chronological order, it would be proposed for actual declassification and disclosure.

This historical article made one reference to civilian ufology. The book *Los OVNIS y la Ciencia* (*UFOs and Science*), by Miguel Guasp and me, was used to compare statistics from a national catalogue of 3500 UFO sightings developed by us with the

yearly distribution of UFO sightings officially reported to the Air Force.

One of the mandated tasks of the MOA was to review each of the available UFO files and submit to the Air Force Staff Chief a proposal for declassification, where witness names, military investigators, names, and other sensitive information would be eliminated. The first official UFO reports were declassified in October 1992. The only censored information was the names — understandably. The files were disclosed in their entirety, including internal correspondence, radar trackings, transcriptions of pilot-ground control conversations, and more.

At this writing (January 15) eight files have been declassified already, covering UFO events up to September 1968 and totalling over 100 pages. The 66 pages may represent some 100 independent sightings, inasmuch as one file sometimes groups a number of reports that took place around the same time period.

Recent actions by MOA, with our encouragement, may yet unearth additional reports from various official sources (radar sites and air bases, for example). Progress in this area is underway.

We have established cooperation from some major defence establishments. We are living in an exciting time, and as I remarked to Walt Andrus recently, I feel as if I were in the eye of a hurricane. I see parallels in this opening-up process with Spain's transition from authoritarianism to democracy beginning in 1975. The way the Spanish military has handled this whole process is a model for others to follow.

As a result of the Ballester-Olmos and Plana civil investigation project, we have been able to gather over 300 UFO cases from military and police (only a small fraction were officially reported). Around 50 percent have been explained satisfactorily. The rest remain unidentified.

This general topic will be the subject of my lecture at the forthcoming MUFON UFO symposium, Richmond, Virginia, July 3-4. There I will detail the Spanish Air Force's UFO involvement and exhibit files, memos, procedures, and other military documents. ■

"LITTLE BLUE MEN" NAB RADIO HAMS

The Times of March 21, 1993, carried the following delightful little item:-

Police trying to trap a group of radio eavesdroppers came up with a plan that was out of this world.

Officers in Warrington,* Cheshire, fed up with people listening in to their messages, broadcast that a flying saucer had crash-landed in a field — and gave details of where to find it.

Radio messages about a huge glowing spacecraft were broadcast with the warning: "Do not approach. It may be radioactive". The warning was followed by directions to the field in Appleton. The eavesdroppers arrived at the field within

minutes, expecting to see little green men. They were arrested instead.

Police said five people had been reported to the Crown Prosecution Service for telecommunication offences. Scanning devices which can pick up police radio messages are widely available, but using them to listen to police transmissions is an offence. * * * * *

(It occurs to us that Warrington is perilously near to the Mecca of all ufological research on this planet. Our fervent prayers have been offered in the hope that none of the Followers of the Prophet were among the victims of this dastardly action of the Fascist British "Cossack Police". Ed. FSR)

VIDEO FILM OF A UFO OVER CANBERRA (FEBRUARY 17, 1990)

By Gordon Creighton

Mr. Zoran Ivanisevic, aged 45, a resident of Kambah, a southern suburb of the Australian Federal Capital, Canberra, was suffering from a neck injury and was unable to sleep. So, at about 5.15 a.m. on Saturday, February 17 1990, he decided to get up and go out into the garden and smoke a cigarette.

Arriving in the garden, he glimpsed what at first sight he took to be an unusual star, in the East. *"At first I thought it was a star. But I'd never seen one like that before! It was about ten times bigger than a star... like a type of disc."*

He called to his wife, Ljubica, to bring out their VHF video camera and film the object. (She had to do the filming, owing to his neck injury.) They filmed it for about 1 minutes, and went back into the house to play the tape. And they found that the video, with its automatic focus and aperture, provided a much clearer picture even than their visual sighting. Said Mr. Ivanisevic: "I realized that it was not a star. It was a bright circle, and in the middle there was a black hole".

The tape indeed shows a bright round light with small indentations on two opposite sides.

After watching the tape, Ivanisevic went back into the garden. But the object was gone.

He estimated that the thing was at a height of about 1500 m., possibly above the Queanbeyan district. He said it appeared to be hovering, and was "projecting its light primarily sideways, parallel with the horizon". He lost no time in giving details of the matter to an official of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), and said that he would be handing over a copy of the tape for examination by the RAAF. Summing up, he said: "I've read about UFOs, and seen people on television talking about them. I always had a little bit of doubt about those people. But now I am changing my mind".

For our knowledge of this case we are indebted to FSR reader Mr Brian Richards of Murdoch University, Western Australia, who at once sent us the relevant press reports. Mr. Richards was able to provide many further details,



including the fact that the video picture of the UFO had been relayed nation-wide throughout Australia on Terry Willessee's "Coast To Coast" programme (Channel 9). This went out at 11.00 p.m., most probably on the night of Saturday, February 17. Mr. Richards confirms that viewers who saw the programme were much impressed by the great clarity of the image. He also confirmed that what the witness had lent to the RAAF was merely a *copy* of the video. (As we all know, Australia has a peculiarly "bad record" owing to the considerable number of cases in which Australian officialdom has expressed an interest in films or photographs of UFOs and then obstinately refused to return them to their owners, sometimes even denying that they had ever received them!)

In due course Mr Brian Richards was able to telephone Mr Ivanisevic at his home in Canberra, and acquire various further precise details, so we are not dependent here on third-hand accounts or media stories only. In the twenty-minute 'phone interview, Mr Ivanisevic said that the UFO, at an angle of about 60° and, as he felt, possibly at an altitude of around 1500 metres, was, at arm's length, of the apparent size of a hand-span wide. He described the UFO as seeming to have "four indentations" on its under-side, plus a central "hole".

Mr Richards informs us that on the night of Sunday, February 18, the Australian TV Station 2CC ran a feature on the case, *in the course of which they also interviewed other witnesses of the same UFO*. When he wrote to the TV station enquiring whether copies of transcripts or tapes were available, their general manager replied negatively. *"Our Station's policy is to only release broadcast material in cases of legal intervention."* (From Mr. Richards' letter dated March 20, 1990, to FSR) (Thanks and credit to FSR readers Brian Richards and H.F. Bradley)

Press sources seen:-

Canberra Times, Canberra, 18/2/90

Daily News, Sydney, 19/2/90

The Age, Melbourne, 19/2/90

Daily Mirror, Sydney, 19/2/90. ■