

HISTORY OF PROJECT

Following the Kenneth Arnold sighting on 24 June 1947, wide news coverage of public reports of "flying discs or saucers" created sufficient concern at high military echelons to authorize AMC to conduct a preliminary investigation into these reports. Early correspondence indicates that U. S. Military Leaders were concerned that the objects reported were an aircraft configuration more advanced than those possessed by the United States Armed Forces. A letter, 23 September 1947, from Lt. General Twining of AMC to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, expressed the opinion that there was sufficient substance in the reports to warrant a detailed study.

On 30 December 1947, a letter from the Chief of Staff directed AMC to, . . . "set up a project whose purpose was to collect, collate, evaluate and distribute to interested Government Agencies and contractors all information concerning UFO sightings and phenomena in the atmosphere which can be construed to be of concern to the National Security. . ."

The Technical Intelligence Division of AMC issued Hq AMC Technical Instruction No 2185, 11 February 1948, and the project was inaugurated with a code name of "SIGN." The code name "SIGN" was changed to the code name "GRUDGE" on 16 December 1948. A report released in February 1949 covering analysis of the first 273 incidents concluded that, while no definite and conclusive evidence existed, evaluation of reports of unidentified objects was a necessary activity of Military Intelligence Agencies.

After the Project "SIGN" Report, work continued along the same lines and a Project "GRUDGE" Report was published and released in August 1949 by AMC. This report contained analysis of 244 cases and concluded that Unidentified Flying Objects reports resulted from: a) misinterpretation of conventional objects, b) mass hysteria or "War Nerves", c) hoaxes and/or d) Psychopathic persons. Based upon these conclusions AMC recommended that investigation and study of this type of report be reduced in scope. Major portions of this work were performed under contract by Ohio State University, Professor Hynek (Present Consultant to AF on Project Blue Book), The Rand Corporation, Dr. G. Valley, Dr. Paul Fitts, Air Weather Service, 3610th Electronic Section and the U. S. Weather Bureau.

Following publication of the "GRUDGE" Report, the Air Force continued to investigate sightings, inasmuch as it is an Air Force responsibility to identify and analyze Aerial Phenomena that could possibly be a menace to the United States. Much of the Scientific and Technical work during 1950 and 1951 centered around Project "Twinkle" and the Green Fireball studies of Dr. LaPaz in the Southwestern United States. Project "Twinkle" Final Report was completed on 27 December 1951. During December 1951 Colonel Kirkland and Lt. Ruppelt made a visit to Battelle Memorial Institute to discuss the feasibility of a scientific study from the data collected since the program's inception. Thus, Project Blue Book's Special Report #14 came into being.

During the phase in which Special Report #14 was in preparation (1952 - 1954) the project attracted a Public Relations aspect that remains with it today. This came about through a National interest in reported sightings, Science-Fiction publications of alleged contacts with visitors from outer space, formation of pseudo-scientific organizations, hobby clubs, and self-appointed individuals who investigated UFO sightings. The radar sightings in Washington D. C. during July 1952 tended to give substance to UFO reports. News coverage during this period was extremely high and General Samford conducted a press conference on 29 July 1952 to explain the situation.

With the increased volume of reports pouring in, a Scientific Advisory Panel on UFO was established in late 1952. At a meeting held during 14 - 18 January 1953 all available data was examined. Conclusions and recommendations of this panel were published in an unclassified report, and made public. The panel concluded that UFO's did not threaten the National Security of the U. S. and recommended that the Aura of mystery attached to the project be removed.

By 1953 Air Force responsibility for the UFO program had become firmly established. It was now apparent that some directives were necessary in order to standardize investigative procedures and formulate policy. AFR 200-2 was written and the final publication was distributed in August 1954. This regulation states the purpose, investigative procedures and policies relating to release of information. Special Report #14 was completed on 17 March 1954. It concluded that on the basis of the observations reported to the Air Force it was highly improbable that any of these reports represent observations of technological developments outside the range of present day scientific knowledge. In accordance with the recommendations of the Scientific Panel and provisions for release of information outlined in AFR 200-2 the report was declassified and released to the general public on 5 May 1955.

After 1955 the project concerned itself with investigation of sightings, evaluation of the data and release of information to proper news media. This information is given to the public in the form of a news release called the "FACT SHEET". These, or similar releases have been made periodically since 1955. All data collected has been in accordance with the conclusions of the Scientific Panel in January 1953. Still, the "Flying Saucer Myth" had remained in the public eye, and has necessitated many conferences and briefings among Military, Civilian, Scientific, and Congressional members. Among the most significant of these are: a) 4 October 1956, The General Lewis Special Briefing, b) 16 September 1957, Defence Science Board Briefing, c) 31 January 1958, McClellan Sub-Committee Briefing, d) 8 August 1958, McCormack Sub-Committee Briefing, e) February 1959, Washington D. C. Policy Meetings and f) 11 - 15 July 1961, Congressional Briefing (Mr. Robert Smart).

As far back as 1952 recommendations have been made to discontinue the project or transfer it to civilian agencies or contractors. However, continuation of the project under Air Forces auspices is likely. A letter from General Watson on 7 July 1955 to General Samford expressed factors that are still pertinent, ". . . is the fact that complete reliance on a contractor would not reduce the responsibility of and therefore the load carried by the Air Force. . ." Also, various studies have been made to transfer the project to other organizations within the Air Force.

CURRENT SITUATION: Personnel associated with the project are engaged in receipt of UFO reports, investigation and analysis of these reports and maintenance of research and correspondence files. In addition, information is supplied to SAFOI-CC upon which to base a reply to the more than 2,000 letters a year from individuals requesting information on the UFO program. From 1962 - 1965 the files were reviewed and placed in a standard format. Statistics were recomputed on the basis of the actual case files. The fact sheet was revised to provide information most often requested by individuals and to disseminate the yearly statistics. Periodic case summaries on cases of public interest are released. The current AFR 200-2 is under revision. Present Project Officer is Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr.