

UFO INVESTIGATOR

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA
NICAP

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NICAP COMMEMORATES FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Long Effort Has Paid Off; UFOs Now Accepted As Legitimate Scientific Problem

NICAP is 15 years old this month.

The occasion marks NICAP as one of the oldest UFO organizations still in operation.

Commenting on the anniversary, NICAP President John Acuff says the Committee has much to be proud of and much to look forward to.

"NICAP has come a long way in those 15 years," he states, "and a lot of people deserve a lot of credit. As to the future, I think we can expect equally important accomplishments as NICAP continues to develop its research program and improve its business condition. With a decade and a half of determined effort to our credit, we are one of the few agencies able to keep the UFO issue before the public, and seek the facts about these remarkable phenomena."

Acuff adds that NICAP will continue to call for serious debate on the UFO problem, and to urge the scientific community to join in the search for a solution.

In retrospect, the Committee's struggle from a small body of workers to its present status as a world-wide

membership association is a story of intense personal commitment. Untold man-hours have been devoted to winning public acceptance of the UFO problem and opposing government suppression of official UFO records and files. In addition, NICAP has collected sighting reports, conducted field investigations, and disseminated information on a scale unsurpassed by any other group.

NICAP's achievements during its 15-year history span a wealth of activities, including such highly publicized efforts as its role in the University of Colorado study and its engagements with the Air Force. In addition, it has lent support to many scientists, provided extensive assistance to schools and students, and published voluminous material not previously available to the public.

It has also developed a nationwide system of volunteer field units to conduct on-site investigations and promote the organization through public contact. These units, called Subcommittees and Affiliates, have functioned as an integral part of the Committee.

THE MAN—AND THE STORY—THAT HELPED START IT ALL

Navy Admiral Gives Support To Reports of Flying Saucers

WASHINGTON *P*—Retired Rear Adm. Delmer S. Fahrney, once head of the Navy's guided missile program, said Wednesday reliable reports indicate that "there are objects coming into our atmosphere at very high speeds." Fahrney told a news conference that "no agency in this country or Russia is able to duplicate at this time the speeds and accelerations which radar and observers indicate these flying objects are able to achieve."

Fahrney said he never has seen a flying saucer but has talked with a number of scientists and engineers who reported seeing strange flying objects. He added there are signs that "an intelligence" directs such objects "because of the way they fly. They are not entirely actuated by automatic equipment," he said. "The way they change position in formations and override each other would indicate that their motion is directed."

An Air Force spokesman said that service is still investigating all reports but has found absolutely no concrete evidence that there are flying saucers. He said that a majority of the reports are found upon checking to have some logical explanation, but that a percentage remains unexplained.

Fahrney called a news conference following an organizational meeting of a new private group, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, of which he is board chairman.

Fahrney told reporters he has no information or preconceived ideas as to whether the unidentified flying objects are from outer space, but believes they involve "a tremendous amount of technology of which we have no knowledge," and that their development must have taken a long period of time.



On January 16, 1957—the day after NICAP's Board of Governors met for the first time—Board Chairman Delmer S. Fahrney called a press conference. News media all over the country quoted his statements (see Associated Press story at left), identifying him as one of the few "top brass" to speak out in defense of UFOs. Today, although no longer on the NICAP Board, Fahrney remains seriously interested in the UFO subject, and says he stands by what he said 15 years ago. He is shown above during a recent visit to the NICAP offices.

"TOWARD A BROADER UNDERSTANDING..."

The Story of How NICAP Began

In his opening remarks at the 1968 Symposium on UFOs, Congressman Edward Roush recalled the words of John Dewey, who said that "every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination."

Roush was not talking about NICAP when he quoted that statement, but he might well have been. While there may be some doubt whether NICAP has yet brought about an advance in science, there can be little quarrel that the people who founded the organization, and those who helped carry it forward through its early days, acted with audacity of imagination.

If anything is required to put together an organization like NICAP and make it work, it is the audacity to confront unconventional possibilities, and the imagination to recognize them in the first place. In plainer language, it takes guts and an open mind.

As anyone familiar with the history of science knows, new or unexplained phenomena invariably attract attention from fanatics and scoffers, but only rarely from reputable investigators. Certainly, in 1956 when NICAP began, respectability for the subject of UFOs was minimal, despite a great deal of popular curiosity.

It Started at YWCA

*As it happened, UFOs were not fated to succumb to the fanatics and scoffers, thanks in large measure to people like Major Donald Keyhoe, whose third book on UFOs, *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*, appeared in late 1955. The book called attention to the government's policies and cited multiple examples of Pentagon attempts to cool the fires of '52.*

During this time other forces were also at work trying to solve the UFO mystery, among them a scattering of small saucer groups who actively corresponded with each other and held meetings to discuss what was happening.

One theme frequently heard at these conclaves was the need to somehow coordinate the activities of people interested in UFOs, and mount a program to offset the efforts of the Air Force. None of the groups had any firm ideas in this regard, but a lot of talk went on about how a decently funded, large-scale venture might be initiated.

*One of the places the idea surfaced from time to time was a little group in Washington, D.C., called the Flying Saucer Discussion Group. Started in the spring of 1956, the group met on a more-or-less monthly basis at the Y.W.C.A. and invited well-known figures in the UFO field to speak. Its moving power was Mrs. Walton C. John, a 67-year-old widow who sporadically published a mimeographed tract called *The Little Listening Post*. Clara John, as everybody called her, was interested in virtually anything novel or topical. One of her favorite subjects was UFOs.*

For several years she had been corresponding with an Ohio man named Thomas Townsend Brown, who came to Washington from Cleveland in the 1950s to seek government funding for a project he called Winterhaven. Winterhaven was to be a study of "electric space propulsion," based on ideas Brown had been developing for a number of years.

Brown's interest in propulsion derived partly from an interest in space travel, and partly from research he had done on the nature of gravity. Since the subject of flying saucers fitted in this spectrum, he had followed the UFO controversy closely and from time to time pondered its possible implications for his propulsion theories.

As he put it later, "I personally felt that if we could maintain surveillance with a nationwide or worldwide reporting service, we might arrive more quickly at a scientific explanation of (their) method of propulsion, based on light emission and performance patterns."

Idea Grows for New Group

While this idea was germinating Brown sat in on occasional meetings of saucer enthusiasts, and noted the continuing appeal of the UFO subject.

The catalyst in the reaction came in July, when the Flying Saucer Discussion Group arranged for a local UFO expert, author Morris K. Jessup, to address their next meeting. In a note to Brown about the meeting, Mrs. John remarked that "another thing one keeps hearing mentioned is the idea of some central research organization or 'Foundation,' probably located in Washington, for coordinating this whole UFO study. Mr. Jessup is the third man to have mentioned it to me recently."

"Time Has Come to Prepare Humanity"

The meeting of the Flying Saucer Discussion Group, scheduled for 8 p.m., July 20, would be the group's fourth session. Jessup, the slated speaker, thought it might be a good time to consider the question of a new UFO organization, and Clara John put the topic on the agenda.

In her notes for the meeting, she said, "Today there are thousands of little research groups all over the world, as well as people working singly on this thing. The time has come to coordinate their activities into a pattern that will prepare humanity for this startling new event in human existence. Where better than in Washington for this movement to take shape and direction? That is what these meetings are being called for. This, tonight, is our fourth meeting. We (have been) laying the groundwork the last couple of weeks, and you here tonight are perhaps witnessing—and we hope will be participating in—a new step, an unprecedented history-making step..."

If any one event can be regarded as the genesis of NICAP, the July 20 meeting is probably it. Although no records are available on what actually transpired, a consensus was reached that a new Washington-based agency was badly needed to investigate UFOs, and should be undertaken as soon as possible. Brown offered to draft a preliminary proposal in time for the next meeting, and to see what could be done to get legal and financial support. Mrs. John said she would help too, by spreading the word and rounding up people who might be interested in the new "concept."

From this point on, events moved very quickly. Brown got to work on a formal organizational plan and by the first week in August had developed a "Tentative Prospectus" for what he called the "National Committee for the Investigation of Aerial Phenomena." At the same time, he took inventory of the resources available to him and the people he knew who might be persuaded to lend assistance.

Public Interest Was Running High

Public interest in UFOs was running high, despite officialdom's declarations that saucers didn't exist, and Brown figured there would be ample funding from individuals who wanted to see a national organization assume direction of the UFO movement. He also figured that industry and private foundations would eventually share in the effort, in the expectation that new scientific discoveries would be made. As he stated in the prospectus, the purpose of the new group would be "to direct a united scientific investigation of aerial phenomena and to correlate the findings toward a broader



Principal figure in the founding of NICAP was this Ohio-born, ex-Navy lieutenant whose interest in gravity brought him to Washington in search of government research money. Shown here in his younger days when he held a variety of technical jobs, T. Townsend Brown hoped that solution of the UFO problem would lead to new modes of space travel, based on work done through an organization like NICAP. He was 51 years old when he helped the Committee get started, and served as chief NICAP administrator for four and a half months until Major Keyhoe took over in January 1957.

understanding of the possibilities and technical problems of space flight."

On August 16, the Flying Saucer Discussion Group met for the fifth time, and Brown presented his prospectus.

At the meeting, Brown had no trouble convincing his fellow saucer "fans" (as Clara John called them) that the prospectus was the blueprint they had all been waiting for. Everyone endorsed it and vowed their support for the project.

On August 29, less than two weeks after the Flying Saucer Group Discussion had given him their endorsement, Brown filed the necessary papers for incorporation of NICAP in the District of Columbia.

Corporation Papers Filed

On August 30, the day after the incorporation papers were filed, Clara John issued an announcement telling her readers that NICAP had been formed. She described the new organization by saying that the "floodgates" of confusion in the UFO field had "at last found a safe and orderly outlet."

In the early weeks of September, Brown began to pick his staff and set up shop on a regular business basis. He had earlier met a local official with the Federal Housing Administration, Duncan C. Campbell, who had a strong interest in UFOs. Like Clara John and Morris Jessup, Campbell had been one of those discussing the need for a new UFO group, and anticipating the time when such a project could be undertaken. Brown asked Campbell to be NICAP Treasurer.

Since Campbell's regular job involved supervision of financial institutions, Brown felt he was a logical one for the post.

Campbell introduced Brown to a close friend, Dr. Garrett C. Rush, a 71-year-old retired chiropractor who lived in Washington and who, unlike Campbell, was available for full-time work. Rush was well acquainted with the UFO subject, having personally known contactee George Williamson and been a faithful reader of The Little Listening Post for over a year. He had also sat in on some of Clara John's meetings and visited with other saucer clubs.

In the second week of September, Brown appointed Rush Assistant Treasurer of NICAP, and the following week Rush began working at the new office on Connecticut Avenue.

Also about this time, another key person began to put in hours at NICAP, Mrs. Gladys Rose Hackett. Mother of three children and grandmother of five, the 54-year-old widow had recently come to Washington from Baltimore, where she had done editorial work and occasionally put out a

report called *Maryland Saucer Magazine*. She had met Brown through Campbell and agreed to join NICAP as a secretary and office assistant. Overnight, she became a mainstay at the new Committee and was to remain on the staff until September of 1958 when she resigned.

A fourth new face on the scene was that of John A. Kendrick, Washington attorney and presently a professor of law at George Washington University. Brown had gotten to know Kendrick when Kendrick helped him on a private legal matter. When Mrs. King asked to be relieved of her duties as NICAP Secretary, Brown asked Kendrick to take her place. He agreed to do so, taking over in October.

Also in October, Brown made contact with a local public relations specialist named Martin H. Heflin. Heflin, brother of movie actor Van Heflin, had a background in newspapering and promotional work, and had expressed an interest in NICAP. Brown asked him to sign on as Vice Chairman of Public Relations to deal with the news media and help raise money. Heflin did so, and was instrumental in generating publicity for NICAP during a four-month period, beginning in November.

NICAP Becomes a Reality

The same day Heflin's services officially began—October 24, 1956—NICAP legally came into existence. On that day, the D.C. Superintendent of Corporations fixed his seal to NICAP's Certificate of Incorporation and assigned it a permanent number in the Office of Deeds. Brown's dream had finally become a reality.

From this beginning, NICAP still had a long way to go before it achieved its position of preeminence in the field of UFO investigations.

Brown made a good selection of members for the first Board, some of whom were later to play important roles in the work of NICAP. Elected were:

Rev. Albert H. Baller, Congregational minister; Brig. Gen. Thomas B. Catron, retired Army officer; Frank Edwards, radio-TV personality; Col. Robert B. Emerson, physicist; Rear Adm. Delmer S. Fahrney, retired Navy officer and pioneer in missile development; Rev. Leon C. LeVan, Christian minister; Charles A. Maney, physics professor; Abraham M. Sonnabend, hotel executive; and Talbot T. Speer, businessman.

None of the men on the original board still serves as a NICAP Governor, although several retain an active interest in NICAP and continue to have contact with it. The last man to resign was Reverend Baller, who left in May of 1971 to devote more time to his profession.

Townsend Brown was unable to get NICAP funded and operating on the scale he had envisioned for the organization, and in January of 1957, he resigned.

Major Keyhoe Appointed

Major Keyhoe assumed effective day-to-day control of the organization at the direction of the Board, and the rest of NICAP's history is well known among those interested in UFOs.

The organization has hurdled many obstacles on its way to the present. It has withstood internal and external stress and controversy, has made significant contributions to the rational discussion of UFOs and has earned a permanent place for itself among the nation's scientific investigating bodies.

The future for NICAP—as for everything else—is still to be written. But until satisfactory explanations are finally put forth for the scores of sightings as yet unexplained, NICAP will pursue its course of reporting on, and—to the extent possible within its resources—investigating those aerial phenomena which continue to defy explanation within traditional scientific boundaries.

NICAP BOARD OF GOVERNORS 1971

John L. Acuff, Jr. Chairman



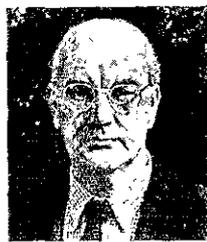
Mr. Acuff was elected President of NICAP in May 1970, the first businessman to serve in that capacity. He came to NICAP while working as Executive Director of the Society of Photographic Scientists and Engineers (SPSE). Last year, he left SPSE to join Data-Medics Corporation of Bethesda, Maryland, where he now serves as Vice President for Plans and Programs. Prior to his tenure with SPSE, he worked in the biomedical field. He is a native of Washington, D.C., a graduate of American University, and, at 39, the youngest member of the NICAP Board.

Col. Joseph Bryan, III (USAF, Ret.)

Colonel Bryan has had dual careers as a military officer and writer. He initially served in the Army and Navy, then received a commission in the Air Force. While in the latter, he served as special assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, and spent considerable time in Europe on the staff of NATO. His writing career includes stints with many well known publications, plus extensive free-lance work and the authoring of five books. He was born in 1904 in Richmond, Virginia, and educated at Princeton University.



Harry C. Cooper



Mr. Cooper is a 61-year-old Virginian who has devoted much of his life to government service. Assigned to Naval communications during World War II, he joined the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1947.

where he remained until retirement in 1966. While there, he served in the Agency's Operations branch, then became special assistant to the Deputy Director for Intelligence. He is the author of a *A Cave With Two Exits* (a novel published in Britain about life in the CIA) and holds a master's degree from the University of Virginia.

Dewey J. Fournet

One of the most famous men on NICAP's Board. Mr. Fournet has played a key role in the UFO story. As an Air Force Major assigned to Air Technical Intelligence in the Pentagon, he worked as liaison with Project



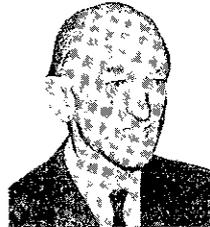
Blue Book for Air Force Headquarters during one of the most dramatic years in UFO history, 1952. By training, he is an aeronautical engineer, having studied and taught engineering at Louisiana State University, and worked for Lockheed Aircraft. He was born in Louisiana 50 years ago and is presently employed there as an executive with the Ethyl Corporation.

Joseph B. Hartranft, Jr.

Mr. Hartranft is President of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the major American organization for general aviation. He is also involved with other aviation groups, including the National Intercollegiate Flying Club (which he founded) and the Bates Foundation for Aeronautical Education. Born in Buffalo, New York, in 1915, he is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and private pilot of 40 years' experience. During World War II, he served in the Air Force, and was instrumental in the founding of the Civil Air Patrol. He presently lives in Bethesda, Maryland, where AOPA is headquartered.



Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe (USMC, Ret.)



Major Keyhoe is probably the world's best known figure in the UFO field. Author of the 1950 *True* magazine article that helped make UFOs a major public issue, he has written four best-selling books on flying

saucers. He served as NICAP Director from 1957 to 1969, guiding the Committee through some of its roughest days and helping to make it a highly respected organization. His military career dates back to 1920, when he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, and includes duty as a Marine Corps pilot. He later worked as chief of aeronautical information for the Commerce Department, and helped manage the American tours of Admiral Richard Byrd and Colonel Charles Lindbergh. At age 73, he now lives in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, where he is writing a fifth book on UFOs. He was born in Iowa.

Charles P. Miller

Mr. Miller, NICAP's Vice President, is a Texas-born journalist. At the end of World War II, he came to Washington to help the State Department organize the United States Information Service (now USIA). He then joined the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and later was named



Vice President for editorial affairs, a post he held until retirement this year. He is a graduate of Simmons College (now Hardin-Simmons University), a resident of Washington, D.C., and currently a consultant to AOPA. He is 65.

Brig. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, III (USAF, Ret.)

General Richardson is one of the few West Point graduates to serve on the NICAP Board. On leaving the Academy in 1939, he attended flight school in Texas and Oklahoma, then took command of a Fighter Group in what was then the Army Air Corps. After World War II, he served in various planning and R & D assignments for NATO, Air Force Systems Command, and Defense Atomic Support Agency. He retired from active service in 1967 and is currently a businessman and security policy consultant in Washington, D.C. He was born in Rockford, Illinois, in 1918.



Dr. Bruce A. Rogers



A native Iowan now living in Arizona, Dr. Rogers is an engineer, physicist, and metallurgist. His last position, before retirement in 1960, was professor of mechanical engineering at Texas A & M University. Prior to that, he taught chemistry at Iowa State College, where he did his undergraduate work. Author of many technical papers and a member of several technical groups, he served in the Army as an engineer officer, then went on to get his master's degree from the University of Chicago, and his doctorate from Harvard. He is 76.

Hon. J. Edward Roush

The only member of Congress to serve on the NICAP Board. Mr. Roush achieved a permanent place in the UFO field when he chaired the Congressional "Symposium on Unidentified Flying Objects," held July 29,



1968, before the House Science and Astronautics Committee. The Symposium served to put on record some of the best opinion currently available on the UFO subject. Mr. Roush, 51, is a Democrat from Indiana, a native of Oklahoma, and a graduate of Huntington College and Indiana University. He is a lawyer by profession, and has had experience as an Army counterintelligence agent. Currently on the Space and Science Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, he is serving his fourth term in Congress.