

# Sign Historical Group

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## MINUTES OF MEETING OF CIVILIAN SAUCER INVESTIGATIONS HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 1952, 8:00 PM, IN THE MAYFAIR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

[**SHG Notes 2002:** Corrections of typographical and other errors, and additional information are given in brackets []. ]

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The meeting was opened by the Chairman, E.J. Sullivan, who introduced Col. Kirkland and Lt. Ruppelt, representatives of Air Technical Command. [Air Technical Intelligence Center]

1. Col. Kirkland: When we first heard of your group, we were very eager to get out and meet you and let you know what we are trying to do. The Air Force has gone through a series of attitudes on these gadgets. Lt. Ruppelt and I have not been with it very long; however, we were in the Technical Intelligence Center when

the interest seemed to be renewed in this thing. In surveying the situation at that time, we found that there was a record of around 800 cases. Many of them had not been evaluated. The general effort seemed go [to] be to prove that these things were known objects – planes, balloons, etc. The official attitude of the Air Force is that we would like to know what they are. We don't want to get caught in the trap of the gentleman who came out and said they were all Skyhook balloons. It is obvious that they cover too wide range to be pinned on only one thing.

The effort that we are making now is to get more facts. We don't know what these things are – we haven't the slightest idea. In skimming through the LIFE article, I noticed one conclusion that we had not been able to reach, and that is the indication that these things are made by some intelligence that we do not understand. In the history of this project we have attempted to use specialists in various fields. To date, nothing significant has come out of our investigation. We have felt that we should have available a group of scientists as a sort of panel that we can call on. In other words, when we have a case that might be of interest to a man in a certain area, we can throw it to him. It might be if the green fireballs were given to a scientist and he was turned

loose on the case, the results would be different. We welcome any suggestion as to how we can get more facts. We don't hear of all the cases. There is a report system set up for them, however, and if anyone who sees unidentifiable objects in the air would report to the nearest Air Force Base, the information would get to us. About 15% of the total reports defy explanation. They defy it possibly because we don't have enough facts. But we won't know until we get the facts.

2. Lt. Ruppelt: We are trying to adopt a policy not too influenced by the fact that previous ideas have been that everything is balloons or that everybody is crazy who reports them. We are trying to keep on the straight and narrow. We have never had enough data to say that there was something. There is always one or two factors missing that we have to have. We have never had an altitude measure on anything. I'm very familiar with all reports in the last year. We have never had one on which they could get triangulation from two stations at once. If something is over 5,000 feet and you don't know how big it is, you don't have any idea how high it is. The final key factor is somebody's judgement. We are not saying that these people are not good judges, but we want the facts down in black and white. The first thing we are

going to do is use a diffraction grating to try to determine the composition of these things. If we can get photographs of light sightings, that will give us a spectrum – a good lead. It [If] these lights are not meteors, we can

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go to radar or other devices like that. We have never had a visual sighting and a radar sign [sighting] together. We have had ground sightings and sent fighters up. The fighters get a return but they have never been able to see what they got the return from. We have had two or three in Oak Ridge like that. One good sighting [sighting] we had was in Dayton where some airline pilots reported seeing this object and it turned out that it was a very thin layer of ice clouds. At the same time Venus was very outstanding in that part of the sky. The pilots were seeing Venus and the radar scope was picking up the ice clouds. [March 8, 1950]

We have thought of trying to tie in cameras with the radar sets. Then if we get any image at all on the film we will know that the radar is actually picking up an image. But we haven't got any cases at all where we have concrete facts.

This picture in LIFE of the V-shaped lights is a good finding. We don't see that these people aren't being truthful about these pictures. But we don't have any pictures taken under controlled conditions, and we have to have pictures taken under such conditions so that we know how they were done. We have taken some at White Sands, but it is difficult to tell whether they were meteors. These things may look like meteors and yet they may not be meteors. The only thing we have on night objects is the word of the observer.

There is whole sets of unknowns that come in on a sighting of that type. All we want is good cold facts, and we are open to any suggestions. We are not trying to pull the idea that these things might come from Russia or that they might be interplanetary – we just plain don't know. We need facts to back up the money we have spent on this thing. We have developed a reporting system in the Air Force that has been in force for the last five years. In the

last two years, most of our reports have come from military sources. In many cases, we have been able to pin down these objects as weather balloons.

There has been a lot of controversy on the case where pilots saw this thing in Alabama. Astronomers say they think a lot of the details are imagined. Now I don't know. I'm not going to take a side on that. I talked to one pilot about two months ago who gave the Air Force the very devil for shooting missiles in the airways. I never did convince him that it was not one of our missiles they were test firing over the center of Michigan. This is the impression some pilots get from these things. I would like to be very fair with these things and figure out every angle.

3. Col. Kirkland: One way we have been handling the material is by breaking it down into types and locations, etc. We have in the file all those cases that are definitely explained. Then there is a smaller group definitely unexplained. Then there is a segment that might be explained. Getting into the cost angle, it is awfully difficult when you consider that the chance of seeing one of these things is pretty slim. A radar sighting, unless it is of a known object, means nothing. One way electronics people rule it out, in

addition to getting an actual photograph, is to have two sets on different frequencies picking up the same thing. These are the types of problems that we are running into. It is difficult for us to say that we are convinced the problem is so serious that we have

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got to have every radar set focused on this job. What we are doing now is on a limited basis. But if we find we are not getting any facts, we will go a little bit further.

4. Lt. Ruppelt: We have about 800 reports that have come in since 1947. We are going around the country to all the Government agencies that might have received reports that we have never gotten and filing these in one location. In 1947, more reports came from Washington and Oregon. In 1948, they seemed to move over to the east coast to a certain extent. For the rest of the time, they seemed to spread out over the United States. There

is concentration around Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, White Sands, Dayton and Columbus. There are concentrations to a certain extent around the port areas such as New Orleans, New York, San Francisco. We don't know what that might mean. White Sands and Albuquerque area is the most logical place for us to start putting out our cameras, and that is where we are going to put them.

We have broken these things down according to shape. I think about 27% are this familiar saucer shape or sphere. That type of report has dropped off. We have a certain percentage (35%) that could very well be meteors or bright stars. About 2% could actually be some sort of aircraft like delta-wing. About 5% are groups of lights. About 10% are cigar-shaped or rocket-shaped articles. Any bright light that is moving through the sky will burn an image on your eye and be elongated. About 15% are just miscellaneous – just anything you can imagine. We have attempted to establish some kind of pattern for these, but we have so many shapes that it is a little difficult. Lights at night are very common. We get reports of those all the time.

This green fireball is the only type of sighting that consistently



sets the same pattern all the way along. This is the first thing we are going to put our diffraction grating to work on. They seem to run in cycles. December and January seem to be the big months. I happened to see one like that down in Texas. They are very impressive. In fact they scare you. One idea is that they are something tied in with the aurora. Another suggestion is that it is a new kind of meteor that we have never heard of before, and that is possible. Even well-known astronomers feel that there is enough unknown about these things that we should concentrate on them, and we are going to do that.

The big percentage of the reports fall in the civilian category but a good many have been reported by Air Force pilots. About 5% are by scientists at White Sands, and people in that category. We are sincerely interested in those. We have a few reports from civilian pilots flying across country. We feel that military personnel are fairly reliable observers. When they send in reports through Air Force channels, it eliminates all possibility of a joke. If those military people every [sic] got caught joking through channels...!

A lot of people have been very interested in the 90-degree turns that these things make and a number of G's they pull in making

those turns. The few saucer shapes we have had reported have actually turned out to be balloons. A balloon going up will appear to be flat. But the old standard report of a definite saucer shape has fallen off a lot. We have attempted to go into a little survey and find out whether these reports actually started in 1947 or whether people just became conscious of them and started to report them then. If we can't find a mention anywhere of these things before 1947, it must be that

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they did start to occur in 1947. This book by Charles Fort – we have had a couple of astronomers look that over. They can't disprove that stuff, but they can't prove it in black and white either.

5. Knoll: Are his sources of information authentic?

6. Ruppelt: That we have not yet been able to check. But we thought we would check it.

7. Williams: We have received a few scattered letters of reports seen years ago.

8. Ruppelt: It is possible we will get those too. We threw away a lot of letters we got with similar information. One reason that we didn't want much publicity on this is because of the crackpot letters. It's our policy to answer every letter we get no matter what it says. We do get some reputable letters mixed in with the crackpot letters. We didn't have too many reputable letters with reports dated back before 1947. We had one from a mountaineer in Tennessee sitting before his fireplace and a wheel of fire went through his front room and he got over his arthritis. We get some reports from all over the world. I would say that one of every twenty comes from outside the U.S.

9. Ireman: What is the frequency of sightings now?

10. Ruppelt: There is some semblance of a pattern on the

frequency of these things. We haven't had any luck on pinning them down. We checked with the atomic bomb tests to see if there was any correlation but there wasn't. Incidentally, we are going to start putting this stuff on IBM cards because we have got so much that we can't handle them with the card index that we have now.

11. Kirkland: People have come up with all sorts of ideas on correlations. One fellow we met said he had found that those cases he knew of all occurred at high and low tides. In checking this, we found no correlation. But there are all sorts of ideas.

12. Ruppelt: We have very little data we can go on except these trends in checks. If we plot these things, we have a peak, then a dead spot, then another peak. I don't know why that is. One thing is that in the last three years there has been very little newspaper publicity on this. But reports continue to come in to us at about the same rate. We can't pin down why that is unless it is something that occurs on some definite cycle.

13. Kirkland: We've had several reports a week over the past years. We don't have exact figures. I frequently pick up a paper and see of a sighting that we never hear about. There was

interesting one over Columbus a few weeks ago that was explained by the newspapers. As many of you are aware, airline pilots are rather reluctant to report these things. They feel it might reflect on them in some way. Many of us have talked to various airline pilots we know and we find that they have seen things we couldn't explain but they didn't report them.

14. Nelson: This tone has run through a lot of our letters: "I haven't mentioned this to anyone because they would call me nuts, so I'm writing to you."

15. Ruppelt: The rumor has it that these airline pilots see a lot of things. We are going to try to work with the airlines and work out some kind of system so that the pilot's names will never appear on the reports. In certain instances we have known that a pilot has seen something and we will go and talk to the pilot and he will

deny ever having seen anything.

16. Ireman: Did these things ever go into any final action that fits into a pattern?

17. Kirkland: No, except in specific types such as the green fireballs.

18. Ireman: Was there a pattern of the saucers blowing up?

19. Kirkland: There were cases of these things blowing up, but not many of them.

20. Williams: Did you ever run down the Farmington deal? It occurred two years ago this March for three days overhead. About two-thirds of the total population got out in the streets about noon each day and they saw hundreds of objects overhead. We have never been able to get information from the newspaper editor who reported them. He is still working there and we had actually wondered if he had been shut up by some governmental agency.

21. Ruppelt: We have never to my knowledge, told anybody not to talk about what they saw. We have told people not to go out and make a big deal out of it. And I can say that the FBI is not in on this. We won't call in the FBI because we just don't operate that way.

22. Knoll: Did you ever find how the farmer in Portland who took a picture got his picture?

23. Ruppelt: No. And the one up in Oregon [Washington, Maury Island case] where the guys picked up part of one and were flying back with them and their plane disappeared – that was hoax. The guy dreamed up the whole story. Two guys in a plane were definitely killed, but there was no connection with the flying saucers. It was just one of those things that happened. As a last resort, when somebody dreams up a story like this, we will go and talk to them and say now if you confess to us we will keep it confidential. We have done that in several cases.

Our photographs that we do put some faith in never have enough details that we can tell what they are.

24. Bryson: How did you get your best pictures so far?

25. Ruppelt: I think these Lubbock pictures are the best we have ever received. This kid seemed to be very honest about the whole thing. The only thing that worried me was that his father was with him every time we talked to him. He may have started out as a joke and just been afraid to back out.

26. Sullivan: One interesting thing is that these lights are almost heart-shaped. In some letters we have gotten, the writer has gone to great lengths to draw exactly the same shape.

27. Ruppelt: Are you familiar with the fact that the college professor



says these pictures are fakes?

28. Ireman: How did the intensities compare?

29. Ruppelt: We checked intensities thoroughly. Roughly they compare to a bright planet at night.

30. Ireman: How did you hope to get a spectrum on these objects moving?

31. Kirkland: We have that in the hands of one of the professors who is working on it now. They haven't given it a trial yet - they don't know.

32. Ruppelt: We are going on the basis of these visual reports the people have been comparing in intensities with the full moon. If they get much dimmer, we are out of luck.

33. Ireman: I'm very much impressed with the lack of intensity. Those measurements in the hands of inexperienced people will, I believe, make the program a very tough one to carry out.

34. Kirkland: It is going to be rather interesting to follow it because so far they are pretty encouraging. If we get anything even approaching the light of the moon, we have got something.

35. Knoll: Is the Air Force or any agency concerned with trying to establish positively that there are two asteroids in the orbit of the earth – small bodies that might be ideal as a space station. They might be artificially placed there. If that is true, wouldn't it pay to observe these bodies with first class telescopes?

36. Ruppelt: The Air Force, in another project, does have astronomers working on various things, and I think if that existed they are aware of it and are working on it. That has been given some thought.

37. Knoll: Another hypothesis would be whether the moon has been used as a space station. It would be the first natural stop for somebody coming from outer space.

38. Nelson: Was any correlation made of the frequency of these

sightings with Earth's position to other planets?

39. Ruppelt: That was taken up several years ago. I forget the results but it was nothing outstanding because we would have remembered it. Getting back to your question, Mr. Knoll, I can't answer that.

40. Bryson: Have you ever had any reports from personnel who work on the mountain of Palomar?

41. Ruppelt: No, we haven't. We have never checked there officially, however. We had a report from a very reliable astronomer. Another place we haven't had any reports from are those cosmic ray stations that are spread up and down the Rockies.

42. Ireman: A lot of those people are reluctant to discuss things. Have they been alerted?

43. Ruppelt: No, they have never been officially alerted.

44. Bryson: Could you give us any details on the pictures that were taken from an Arctic station [Newfoundland] of a trail burned through an overcast?

45. Ruppelt: That was looked at by astronomers and they all agree that it was a large fireball.

46. Bryson: Do you mean comet or fireball?

47. Ruppelt: Well, I don't know how we will define that term. A large meteor could leave that trail. Is that the one that was reported in 1948? [July 10, 1947]

48. Knoll: Have you been in touch with the Brown-Townsend Foundation? [T. Townsend Brown] They can demonstrate a saucer, its corona discharge and all.

49. Kirkland: We have heard a great deal of that. That was reported in detail by a gentleman who had spent some time with them, and I understand that he is still interested in it.

50. Ruppelt: Some of our best sightings had this discharge. That is a confusing thing. You don't see a definite object.

51. Dr. Riedel: My personal touch into that Foundation is not a deep one. The Foundation has once contacted North American Aviation but they never showed the experiment, only discussed it, and it came to absolute disinterest on North American's side. Mr. Knoll and I saw two saucers which they showed us. Those corona discharges are very interesting. The diameter of the total unit is nearly the width of this room.

52. Ruppelt: One company found out about this and they hired some physicists to look into it. They came up with the conclusion that there is not enough information either way to allow them to put any more money into it. But they are still watching it.

53. Kirkland: Frequently, companies will come to us and they strongly suspect that it is something we have got that is being seen, and that is how we happened to hear of this one.

54. Knoll: This thing is mounted on about 1/16 plexiglass sheet.

55. Sullivan: We first heard about this in a letter we received in our Post Office box.

56. Bryson: Could you give us an idea about how the Air Force changed its policy regarding saucers.

57. Kirkland: It is very difficult to say the Air Force changed its policy. I arrived at the Center about August 1950. We continued to collect data even after the impression got out that we were clamping up. We still had this group of cases that we could not explain. We have always had them. Within the last year, the top people in the Air Force have become more concerned, possibly because they have become more aware of some of those cases that were not explained. As a result, when the press or someone else came in to talk, they got the story. As far as I am concerned, at my

level there has never been any change in policy. I think the attitude at the top has possibly changed. Our immediate superior in Washington [Brig. Gen. William Garland, Asst. Production, Directorate of Intelligence] has been interested and concerned the same as we have at the working level.

58. Bryson: I mean after four or five years of non-acknowledgement that such

things exist, why have they reversed their decision, for example, with the sightings over Korea? That was the first time that the Air Force ever positively admitted that unexplained objects were flying around.

59. Kirkland: I'm reasonably sure there were a lot of unexplained cases. At our level there has never been any inclination to deny it.

For some reason the project was pretty highly classified. I suppose it was a reluctance to stir up any wave of hysteria. I'm quite sure that the impression got out the Air Force was pulling these things. The Chief of our Center [Col. Harold Watson, former Chief, Intelligence Dept., Air Materiel Command, 1949-51] was quoted as not believing in these things – I mean he really felt that they were explainable. I know Lt. Ruppelt and I, ever since we have been exposed to this thing, had had the feeling that there is the unexplainable in it and we would like to have the facts. There may have been some reasoning on the Air Staff level that I didn't know about that supported this public announcement.

60. Bryson: There was no clear-cut policy at all?

61. Kirkland: To me there never has been.

62. Ireman: How about when Truman popped off, when he said absolutely and positively no?

63. Kirkland: I don't remember this.



64. Williams: One of the most widely published things was Henry J. Taylor's report in the *Reader's Digest*.

65. Ruppelt: I remember that.

66. Williams: My experience has been that that, more than any single factor, has impressed the public that these things must be ours.

67. Kirkland: We still run into that attitude.

68. Bryson: Maybe there is something the Navy has that the Air Force doesn't know about.

69. Ruppelt: It isn't at all impossible that this is something of ours, but if it is, it is a super-Manhattan [project], because we have tried in every way to find out.

70. Bryson: You say there are other projects where numerous astronomers are working for the Air Force. Do you get reports from those projects that would tie in to this one?

71. Ruppelt: Right. But we haven't had many.

72. Kirkland: We feel that it would surely have to be a super deal to be something of our own. Of course we would be foolish if we didn't admit that it is a possibility, but it is not very probable.

73. Bryson: Could you give us any details on the sighting station that was established at Vaughn, New Mexico? [Project TWINKLE]

74. Ruppelt: That is still classified to a certain extent. They had a system for using a diffraction grating on a camera. The thing was set up just about the time the Korean war started, A lot of personnel were lost to the Korean war. They picked up one sighting, that was all

they had. Those people may sit there for about six months and not see anything. One night this thing came along and they missed it.

75. Kirkland: It was rather poorly handled. The idea was good.

76. Bryson: Does Research and Development have projects going after this same thing?

77. Ruppelt: The minute we identify something then it passes out of the field of unidentified objects. Col. Kirkland made a comment about the classification of this thing. At one time they did have a classification as high as Top Secret. Now we are trying to get it down to Restricted so that we can offer this information to anybody who needs it. If it was completely declassified, than anybody in the U.S. would have access to it. That would entail much work. We put out a report once a month that is classified SECRET. The saucer project itself is not SECRET. If you hear that there is [a] classified report coming out on this subject, that is the reason for its classification.

78. Kirkland: We are getting it down now so we can talk to anybody about it. The important thing is that we do occasionally get into a classified project. But that doesn't mean that we can't discuss the case with you.

79. Knoll: Has the Air Force worked out a standard report form or questionnaire?

80. Kirkland: Yes.

81. Knoll: Would that be available for our use?

82. Kirkland: Yes, indeed.

83. Nelson: Would it be possible to get our group cleared to work with classified material?

84. Kirkland: I don't think there would be any problem getting them cleared. There was great reluctance - in a few cases - letting us know what they were all about. But on this I don't think there

would be any problem.

85. Ruppelt: In fact a lot of this stuff we will even knock down below RESTRICTED to give you. We can't give you any background on a person that might reflect on his character, for instance. But we can indicate a lot.

86. Knoll: Have you ever had a report on a sighting either on the ground or near the ground?

87. Ruppelt: We have had a few but they have always come from this type of doubtful character. There was one in Minnesota where a couple of kids saw one land and take off and it actually left a dent in the ground. There again we have no proof. We can't draw any conclusions unless we have actually got something to put our hands on. I've talked to an awful lot of these people, and you can, in your own mind, draw conclusions by just talking to them. Sometimes they are very sincere. You know they saw something, but you're not sure what. We have working with us now a couple of psychologists. They are trying to figure out just how much a person can imagine from seeing a certain object.

When you get into subjects like that, you are working with something very intangible.

On the same day the Lubbock pictures were taken, there were two ladies driving about 60 miles north of there. They saw this pear-shaped thing. They compared it to the size of an oil well. This thing hovered along, then took off all of a sudden. These women aren't trying to feed us a line or anything. But all the information we had was just their story. We couldn't back it up.

88. Bryson: Do your patterns show any activity toward their trying to contact or get near anything of ours? Or any tendency to go away when they are sighted?

89. Kirkland: People have thought they saw patterns like that. You might think that since everyone of our important bases or

areas have had sightings it would be significant, but again you can't pin it down.

90. Bryson: My question was isn't there tendency for them to disappear when there are any of our craft around?

91. Kirkland: There is a tendency.

92. Ruppelt: In other words, you mean has there ever been a report where one has tended to stay around? One up in South Dakota tended to stay around – if there was anything to it at all.

93. Bryson: Take for instance, your Lubbock report. Lubbock comes in the Albuquerque defense zone. Amarillo has a large fighter contingent. Were any reports received by the Air Force? Lubbock has an air base. Did anyone phone the base at the time?

94. Ruppelt: No. At that time things were fouled up and we didn't get that report.

95. Kirkland: I don't know why they didn't call the base in

Lubbock. I strongly suspect that it was done and they just got hold of somebody who didn't make the report. You may have a policy established, but if you aren't following up on it people just forget about it.

96. Bryson: Can't you specify that Air Force officers be told about this?

97. Kirkland: What we intend to do is periodically follow up and make sure that all those people get the word.

98. Bryson: This LIFE article will probably help.

99. Ruppelt: It will spread the word around that we do want these reports. You are all familiar with military channels. Things go half way around the world before they get to the right people. Now we have changed that. Everyone is authorized to come to us directly with these things.

100. Bryson: You would think that radar would pick them up. What's the situation there?



101. Ruppelt: There was no radar at all in the Lubbock area which was on at the time. Now we have to we will fly radar equipment in. Again it is a matter of judgement whether or not it would be worthwhile to do.

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102. Bryson: Some fellow reported that every time they fired a rocket into the stratosphere these little discs would cluster around and that the Air Force had special objects [projects] for tracking them. Do you know about this?

103. Ruppelt: No, I don't think that is right.

104. Bryson: Well, he also said that these little discs clustered around planes frequently – foo fighters.

105. Ruppelt: That is something that I don't know about. I saw those over in the Pacific myself and I'm thoroughly convinced that it was some kind of static electricity discharge.

106. Williams: Speaking of these small discs and lights and so on, there was an excellent report a year or two ago from the Hamilton Control Tower. Do you recall this report?

107. Ruppelt: No, I don't recall this. You will find that there is going to be a block of reports that never were thoroughly investigated. That will be about the time the Air Force cut back and they just didn't have the manpower to check these things. If we could ever get two radar stations on one object at the same time, we would get a lot of information.

108. Sullivan: Have you ever made any sort of contact in the pursuits that have gone up from time to time?

109. Ruppelt: No, not if they have definitely gone up after something.

110. Sullivan: A good possibility came in over our plant out in Downey. But nobody walked out with a camera.

111. Nelson: You can't have cameras in there.

112. Sullivan: It hovered in one spot and then moved over and lay there for fifteen minutes, then waggled and was gone. It was just a luminous spot.

113. Ruppelt: Weather balloons give us a lot of trouble because they reflect the sun. A balloon is launched at definite times during the day. They very seldom stay up for more than an hour from the time they are launched. They are launched every six hours, 4 in the afternoon and 10 at night, Eastern Standard Time. Balloons normally can't be seen above 6,000 or 8,000 feet, but if they pick up the sun just exactly right they can be seen up to 10,000 feet.

114. Bryson: What is the closest a plane has ever approached a saucer that you have gotten a report on?

115. Kirkland: That's a good question because they don't know what size object they are looking at. A Navy man flew over one to see if it was a balloon, but he never was sure what it was.

116. Knoll: Could he guess at the size?

117. Kirkland: Yes, he could because he flew over it and knew his altitude. He said it was a sphere. I'm still convinced that it was a balloon, but it did do some things that we can't explain. He judged it to be 30 feet in diameter. If it was, it would only have been two or three hundred feet high. It was over a densely populated area and somebody else would have seen it if these facts were true.

118. Sullivan: To prove that people don't see very much, there

was a particular corner at the Plant where each morning for a week I laid down a dime, and each evening I picked it up again. I never lost it.

119. Ruppelt: We have thought about that a lot. We have thought of running some experiments on how much we could fly an object without noise or lights and people would not look up.

120. Bryson: Did you have a peak of sightings this January?

121. Ruppelt: Yes, to a certain extent we did. We may still be getting reports of things that were seen in January.

122. Kirkland: The peaks were, as I recall, after and around the holiday season and in the late spring. I have no idea actually how many total sightings we have in the file.

123. Bryson: Do your increased activities at this time come from a harder push from higher level?

124. Kirkland: It is about a combination. In my case, running the

Analysis Division is like running a production line. It is pretty hard for me to see pulling a lot of strength of some other project to put it into something that we can't even feel justified in spending a lot of money for. In fact, this project was operated by one man for a while. The cataloging we have done on our own over the last year and a half. Now I think the greatest thing we are going to get out of the increased interest is coming up with ideas for getting more facts.

125. Bryson: You mean up until this time the Air Defense command had never been brought in?

126. Kirkland: Yes, they get every report that we do. But when it came to the point of getting somebody to take some action, to get more facts, we usually had a selling job. Lt. Ruppelt would frequently go to a base and he had the devil of a time finding the people concerned. They had submitted their story, and they just simply were not interested any more. It's not a normal mission for our organization.

127. Davies: It's not normal for the human race, and somebody has to have imagination about what they are.

128. Kirkland: In our case, we have put as much effort on it as we feel we possibly can. The greatest thing is that we can now go to other agencies and more readily get information that we couldn't get in the past.

129. Bryson: In your capacity as Chief of this project, would you say categorically that in your opinion that there is something in that 15% we don't know anything about?

130. Kirkland: I would say something that we have not been able to define because we lack the facts to do it. Take the green fireballs. They are like no known meteor. Maybe it is some aerial phenomena that we have observed for the first time. It is also possible with some of these things that have been seen, like the lights – I'm sure the people saw something – if we had additional facts they might be explained as something we know, or something we don't know – I can't say. When men like La Paz [LaPaz] say they are positive it is not a meteor, I don't know. We have no direct relationship with La Paz on this project. We have gotten all sorts of reports on him from his colleagues. most of

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boil down to the fact that they think he is a pretty competent meteorologist but a queer sort of duck.

131. Meryman: Did the Air Force try to call him in to go over your material at any time?

132. Ruppelt: No. At one time he did assist the Air Force. He was offered a contract to carry out part of it, but he turned it down due to his work load at school. He does go off on a tangent occasionally. He is very much interested in these green fireballs and he thinks that by making statements he is going to draw public attention to those. He has helped out a lot.



133. Bryson: What about the copper collections in the air in that area?

134. Ruppelt: I don't know. They took a sample. I don't remember anything outstanding in the conclusions. That happened in about 1948 and it is too hazy to remember. It was reviewed by a lot of people but that didn't prove much.

135. Bryson: Did they attach any significance to the high content of copper in the air?

136. Kirkland: As I remember, they didn't.

137. Ruppelt: We had this sample from Lubbock analyzed. It was just a piece of clay.

138. Bryson: Are you able to state Dr. Kaplan's opinions of this?

139. Ruppelt: No, we had rather not quote him on this.

140. Kirkland: He didn't want to be quoted because he actually

doesn't know any more about it than we do.

141. Ruppelt: Actually his speculations are the same that you would make. They really aren't classified.

142. Sullivan: I think there are some things as an organization that we would be very much interested in getting from you. Our group consists of a board of ten people now, but we are going to expand that to fifteen. This will be the directing body. We are going to call in people with specialized knowledge to help us. We find a great deal of interest all over the country – people who have pretty good technical backgrounds, who are very anxious to assist us in communities in which they live. We intend to make use of certain people as direct associates, who could correspond directly with us and who would be available to go out and check cases in their communities. We have a post office box at the main branch in Los Angeles, Box (XXXX) [1971]. We have been very fortunate so far.

TRUE magazine carried a nice little editorial about us. Mr.

Williams is one of the editors of the MIRROR and he carried a

nice big story. We had a two-day story in a Long Beach paper and we are even getting letters now from people who say they heard about us over some ham radio station. The London Daily News called and they are really interested in getting a good story. The organization has taken hold in a fabulous manner and it has grown and grown and grown.

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143. Williams: There seem to be a number of small groups of this nature around. We might have an open meeting at some later date and invite all these groups.

144. Kirkland: If you ever do that, let us know and we will come out.

145. Ruppelt: We first heard about you folks a couple months ago

and we have been trying to get out here.

146. Nelson: Frankly, we are wondering how the hell we are going to get money to make investigations. I was wondering if we could work together, feeding information back and forth, and help to analyze it that way.

147. Kirkland: I don't see why we couldn't. I think that it would be a good idea, if you are interested. We would be happy to give you the results we get, and we would like to include all of your data in our card system. If you ever really get a big increase in volume, you will probably have to use a card system too.

148. Sullivan: Could you give us a rough breakdown of your classifications?

149. Kirkland: We have not designed a card to fit the questionnaire. I think there is quite a bit of work to be done there.

150. Sullivan: We would like to use the same classifications that you use.

151. Kirkland: If we went to IBM cards we could get a lot of things in that we don't have now I think perhaps when you see our questionnaire you will get some idea.

152. Williams: I get back to Dayton about every summer. Perhaps we could see your files.

153 Sullivan: Several of the North American men go back occasionally.

154. Kirkland: We would be happy to show you our file whenever you do come back.

155. Knoll: Are there any Air Force or other governmental agencies in town to whom we could give our communications from outside, have them photo-stated and sent to you?

156. Kirkland: I would rather see direct communication. You people are a focal point.

157. Knoll: Right now we can handle these reports personally.

Later on we might not be able to.

158. Sullivan: Already we are getting letters from people asking if we are doing the same thing that the Air Force is doing. They want to know when we are going to pop with information. There is a feeling that we might put out some sort of bulletin which might even provide the funds for the post office box and other expenses later on. In that case we hope that there might be some information you could give us which we might possibly include.

159. Kirkland: I can't forecast what might come up in the future that would require additional restriction. But right now I know of nothing. The fact that we are here right now talking to you folks is a pretty

good indication that the project is not too classified. I see no reason right now why you couldn't put out a bulletin. I will give you some of the things that people come up with. One thought is that some of these gadgets really could be of Russian origin. Isn't it a wonderful service that we would be providing them by telling them where we are sighting the things? As far as we are concerned now, anything is possible because we don't have the facts to believe otherwise.

160. Knoll: They are too far off their course – even for Russians.

161. Kirkland: But I mean those are the kind of things that we have to consider.

162. Ruppelt: So, in other words, there is a possibility that they may clamp security on the project if we did find out that they are from Russia.

163. Sullivan: This could be a very very interesting association.

164. Ruppelt: Well, we will help you out all we can.

165. Kirkland: And we feel that you could be a great help to us.

166. Williams: Are you interested in current reports only?

167. Kirkland: We are more interested in current ones, but we would like to have the others too. I think they would be of value.

168. Knoll: Do you want a copy of everything we get?

169. Kirkland: Your judgement there would be involved.

170. Nelson: I would like to see us work out some sort of arrangement where our method of evaluation is consistent.

171. Ruppelt: We are not going to fool anybody in the fact that we are really going to stick to hard facts in these things.

172. Sullivan: I would like to appoint a committee to work out the



method of analysis in handling these letters. Dr. Kiedel will be chairman and Messrs. Knoll, Nelson and Dames will work with him.

173. Ruppelt: We can get you as many questionnaires as you want and we can probably use franked envelopes.

174. Sullivan: We have two members who are not cleared. Should we get them cleared?

175. Ruppelt: I'm afraid the only people who can get cleared are those working on an Air Force contract. We will check on this.

176. Nelson: Would it make any difference how we are organized – whether we are a corporation, etc.?

177. Kirkland: It might. I think that is one of the things we will have to check on.

178. Nelson: There has been some feeling that we would not like to get tied up too closely with the services.

179. Kirkland: I see no reason at all why we can't work together. I think it would be very foolish if we didn't. As to how close we are and the

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regular relationship, that is something we can work into.

180. Ruppelt: There is another thing along that line. If you get your stuff by letter, your reports are probably a little old. If you ever get anything real "hot" and want further investigation, you can call us collect and I can go out, or send somebody out right away to check on it. You will find, I'm afraid, that this is going to develop into a full-time job. We are limited in our investigations. We have to have a pretty red hot one before we can go out and check into it. We try to check every angle and it usually takes us about a week, depending upon the sighting, of course.

Operation Service has been in force for a long time now. It is a Directive to all pilots on how to report anything of an intelligence nature.

181. Knoll: The lack of response might be due to the bad publicity that the Air Force had.

182. Ruppelt: I think that is the truth.

183. Sullivan: You might be interested in the fact that Gerald Hurd [Heard] is living in Santa Monica and he is making his entire files available to us. A group of us are going out to see him.

184. Ruppelt: Another interesting point, very very few people have ever reported sound with their sightings.

185. Sullivan: We have heard of a few swishes.

186. Bryson: How many radar sightings have you had?

187. Ruppelt: Say 7½%. Oak Ridge has sent in a lot. Goose Bay, Labrador, has had them. Others have been spread out.

188. Newton: Have these two psychologists been able to make any experiments as to whether the public would repeat a report that started some place?

189. Ruppelt: When we start running tests on the general public, we are getting on thin ice.

190. Newton: Well, what I mean, for instance, was to report a red fireball and see if that would elicit any more red fireballs.

191. Bryson: Was the Arnold report the first one you ever had?

192. Kirkland: It was the first one that we had in our file. But you can pick up any number of books that tell about aerial phenomena away back in history. I know during the war many men in the service saw something that was never completely explained. Personally, I don't look on this thing as starting in

1947, but it was the beginning of this project.

193. Williams: Did you ever get a report of any kind about one having landed in the Gulf of Mexico and some fishermen seeing it?

194. Ruppelt: A kid reported that. He later admitted that he made the story up to create some excitement.

195. Bryson: Did you ever get a report about one being filmed from a transport plane in Africa?

196. Ruppelt: We requested the film but it was one of those cases where we never could locate the guy who filmed it. We never did find the film. There were supposedly some movies made in

Alaska. That turned out to be a hoax too.

197. Bryson: Have you been attempting to get many reports from overseas?

198. Ruppelt: These Directives of ours are worldwide. There was a big out break somewhere in South America not too long ago. They turned out to be hoaxes.

199. Bryson: Where have you had your biggest outbreak overseas?

200. Ruppelt: They are scattered.

201. Dr. Riedel: At a time when the Peenemunde Station was in activity, there were reports of them over Peenemunde. Then they popped up in other places – Turkey, England, Italy.

202. Ruppelt: A peak of reports in the U.S. is usually followed by a peak of reports in other countries.

(Signed on original)

Ruby C. Pryor, Secretary, CSI

(Signed on original)

E.J. Sullivan, Chairman, CSI

THE MINUTES OF THIS MEETING FALL WITHIN THE  
LIMITATIONS OF SECURITY INFORMATION AND AS SUCH  
MUST BE TREATED WITH STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

**Notes:** The above Minutes were retyped for greater legibility  
from the ninth carbon copy in Feb. 1987. The fate of the original  
and other copies is unknown.

The "security statement" above was also put at the heading of  
page one of the original.

Willard D. Nelson  
4831 Foxhall Drive NE  
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Those in attendance:

Col. S. [Sanford] H. Kirkland, Chief, Analytical Section, US Air  
Technical Command [Chief, Technical Analysis Division, Air  
Technical Intelligence Center]

Lt. Edward J. Ruppelt, Analytical Section, US Air Technical  
Command [Chief, Aerial Phenomena Branch, Technical Analysis  
Division, ATIC]



**Felix W. A. Knoll, Aeronautical Consultant, Northrop Aircraft Co.**

**Edward J. Sullivan, Technical Writer, North American Aviation,  
Inc. (NAA).**

**Dr. Walter A. Riedel, Project Engineer, NAA**

**John O. Barnes, Structures Group Leader, NAA**

**Norton H. Nelson, Electrical Group Leader, NAA**

**John J. Newton, Design Engineer, NAA**

**Ruby C. Pryor, Secretary, NAA**

**Invited Guests:**

**Richard W. Williams, Staff Editor, Los Angeles Mirror**

**Homer M. Daview, Jr., Executive, Columbia Motion Picture  
Studios**

**John Bryson, Staff Writer, Life Magazine**

**Vic Meryman, Staff Writer, Life Magazine**

**J. Ireman, Staff Photographer, Life Magazine**

**John Allen, Staff Writer, Time Magazine**

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