

UFO FILES Russian Roswell

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The History Channel's *UFO Files* continues with its theme of worldwide 'Roswells', after bringing us *Britain's Roswell*, *Mexico's Roswell* and *Texas' Roswell*. This latest episode tells us all about the *Russian Roswell*.

Kapustin Yar was the former Soviet Union's most sensitive air base, even exceeding America's Area 51 for the levels of secrecy that shrouded it. *UFO Files* claimed that it was to present never-before-seen footage of the base, reconnaissance photos and even a virtual tour of its hidden depths.

Kapustin Yar was created as the site for the development of the Soviet Union's space program after the end of World War II. It lies over 500 miles south of Moscow and about 60 miles east of Volgograd, the former Stalingrad. These days it lies close to the Kazakhstan border, but back in those days, the base was deep inside Soviet territory. It was here that captured V2 rockets and the German scientists that created them

were set to work with not only the single task of getting into space before the Americans, but also designing and testing new aircraft, missiles and other weapons systems. The base was deemed so secret that the nearby town of Zhitkur was emptied of its population and levelled because it was too close.

In 1948, less than a year after the famed Roswell Incident, the base's radar operators picked up an unidentified object. At the same time, a fighter pilot flying close to the base had a visual sighting of a silver, cigar-shaped object. Reporting that he was being blinded by rays from the UFO, the pilot was ordered to engage with it and, after a three minute dogfight, a missile successfully brought down the object. It seems that the UFO fired some sort of energy weapon at the MiG and both craft crashed to the ground.



William J Birnes, publisher of the American *UFO Magazine*, believed that the alien craft fired a particle beam weapon at the Soviet fighter, but a lucky shot with the missile disrupted the UFO's anti-gravity field, causing it to fall from the sky. Soviet recovery teams quickly gathered up

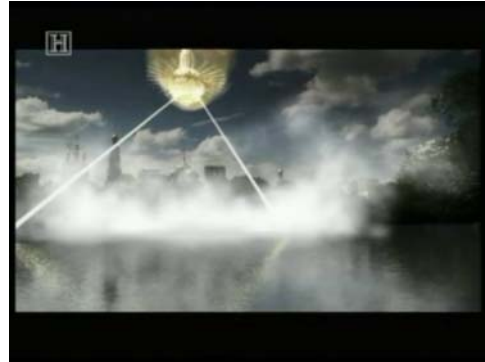
all the wreckage and transported it to the underground facility at Kapustin Yar, which was ironically named Zhitkur, after the former town not far from the base.

Birnes claimed that MiG pilots were ordered to take any measures necessary to bring down extraterrestrial craft because Moscow was desperate to gain any advantage over the United States, whom they believed had made *their* tremendous advances due to recovered flying saucer reverse-engineering.

Russia has a long history of UFO sightings, dating back thousands of years. Russian researcher, Paul Stonehill, co-author with Philip Mantle of *UFO-USSR*, described how in about 950AD, Ahmed Ibn Fadlan, an Arab chronicler, was dispatched by the Caliph of Baghdad to engage in diplomacy with the King of the Bulgars. In the Volga region of Russia, Fadlan described how he and his fellow travellers witnessed 'aerial battles' between 'shapes' that moved through the clouds. Fleets of objects, flying in formations that resembled people and animals, engaged each other, merging and separating for a long period of time. Stonehill described it as being like something from a modern movie.

On 15th August, 1663, a great fiery disc came down from the sky and began shooting beams of light into the Robozero Lake near Belozersk, about 250 miles east of St. Petersburg. It moved from the south to the west, vanished and later reappeared for an hour and a half,

terrifying the local witnesses. Fisherman were said to have been scalded by the light and glowing fish leaped from the water, as if to escape the fireball floating overhead.



In 1892, an object appeared over Moscow and shot a 'pillar of light' down to the ground for 20-25 minutes. It was described as fiery, much like most other Russian UFO reports through the ages.

One Russian event dwarfs any reported anywhere in the world. On June 30th, 1908, a huge fireball raced across the Siberian taiga and exploded over the forest close to the town of Tunguska. Six hundred square miles of tundra was razed to the ground and the shockwave was felt by seismographs around the world.

At first it was thought that a meteor had impacted with the Earth and when the first expeditions arrived twenty years later, they expected to find a huge crater. No crater was found, but the devastation was evident, with trees laid out like matchsticks in a huge, circular swathe from the centre of the blast. From the pattern of the destruction, it soon became apparent that the object had exploded high above the

ground, much like the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945, but much more powerful in terms of magnitude.

Most researchers outside of Russia, including Stanton Friedman, were convinced that this was a natural event and nothing to do with aliens or UFOs, but Russian ufologists, such as Nikolai Subbotin of the Russian UFO Research Station, were not so sure. Subbotin explained how the object apparently changed course twice before exploding, something a natural object such as a meteorite or comet cannot do. Then there were unexplained radiation levels in the region and the fact that plant life appears to have been altered because of this radiation.



Stalin himself seemed convinced that the event was related to some sort of weapon, possibly from extraterrestrials, and he set Sergei Korolev, the father of Soviet rocketry, the task of finding answers. Korolev financed a team to travel to Tunguska in fleets of helicopters. They found radioactive metal fragments and an area that has become known as 'The Devil's Graveyard', an area close to the blast site where no plants will grow and animals tend to die. Although

Korolev is believed to have told Stalin that he thought the blast was caused by an alien spacecraft, his official report put the blame squarely on a meteorite.

As rumours began to filter back to Washington DC about UFO wreckage from Tunguska, the 1948 crash and other incidents being taken to Zhitkur, it became obvious to America's intelligence agencies that they needed to find out what was going on. Their spies informed them that the Soviet Union was building huge rockets that could not only carry large, nuclear payloads, but could also reach space. Indeed, their progress became so rapid, that the Soviets were ahead of their own schedules in terms of advancement.

By the time American U2 spy planes photographed the complex at Kapustin Yar, there were at least four ballistic launch sites, fourteen launch pads, a highly-sophisticated radar tracking facility, three long runways and numerous unidentified areas. There were strange, geometric patterns on the ground. Many UFO researchers believe that these designs are to attract UFOs and are patterned after ancient monuments and cereal glyphs.



What the reconnaissance aircraft could not reveal was the underground Zhitkur facility. *UFO Files* now took us on a virtual guided tour of the base, recreated from descriptions given from Russian ufologist Anton Anfalov. A quarter of a mile beneath the surface, we were led down dark, dank corridors and tunnels, with numerous chambers containing various types of extraterrestrial craft in various stages of disassembly. There were areas where autopsies of aliens would take place and other sections where perhaps engines were being reconstructed. Finally, there are huge hangars containing not aircraft, but large, cigar- or cylindrical-shaped objects.

The advances at Kapustin Yar enabled the Soviets to leap ahead of America in the space race. In 1957, Sputnik I was successfully placed into orbit. A month later, a dog called Laika became the first animal in space. In 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man to orbit the Earth. In 1963, Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to travel into space. In 1965, Alexei Leonov became the first man to 'walk' in space. Russia's cosmonauts also performed the first rendezvous and docking in space. Apart from the Apollo moon shots, the Soviet Union was winning the space race until the space shuttle was first launched in 1981.

One of Russia's most well-known ufologists is Vladimir Azhazha (sometimes spelled Ajaja). He took us on a tour of a site close to Kapustin Yar where he claimed a

UFO crashed. Dowsing with copper rods, he found an elliptical area where he claimed that an alien craft had plummeted to Earth in 1961. He said that animals avoided the area, no cattle will graze there and strange energies affect your pulse rate and breathing.



A local resident, Zoya Shubenkina, corroborated Azhazha's story about the 1961 crash, claiming she had witnessed it for herself. She said a big, fiery, red sphere flew over her house and crashed in the valley by the river.

Azhazha explained how many Soviet fighter pilots engaged in dogfights with UFOs. Former Soviet Air Force colonel and cosmonaut, a hero of the state, Marina Popovich confirmed that she had personally witnessed aerial battles between Soviet jets and UFOs.



One such event she described occurred in 1964. During a training mission, two jets came under attack from a UFO and were forced into a spiral dive. In 1980, Colonel Popovich encountered several unidentified objects while on a top secret mission. She said they were three fireball-like lights and she watched as they moved away.

In the evening of the 7th of August, 1967, Colonel Vyatkin Lev Mikhailovic suddenly encountered an object that was projecting a beam of light downwards. He tried to wrestle his MiG away from the beam, but the left wing touched it and he struggled to regain control. The plane shook and his instruments went haywire. As they flew away, his technician exclaimed that the wing was glowing and after they landed, it continued to glow for a whole week afterwards.

As more and more reports came in from across the Soviet Union, the KGB clamped down, opening up its own file on the phenomenon, known as The Blue File. The Blue File would become the most comprehensive and largest study of UFOs ever commissioned anywhere in the world. It ran from the mid-sixties until the fall of the Soviet Union. One of its latest reports was from 1990, when witnesses close to Kapustin Yar described UFOs in the sky for over an hour.

The new freedoms in Russia enabled the producers of *UFO Files* to obtain 'top secret' footage of a supposed UFOs at Kapustin Yar. On June 3rd, 1960, two alien craft allegedly crashed at Kapustin Yar,

creating an expanding fireball that caused explosions in the vicinity for over an hour. Figures are seen running from the conflagration, smoke pouring from their clothing. One drops to the ground and lies motionless. One of the UFOs was said to have destroyed three rockets on their launch pads, while the other took out a fuel depot. Once the flames had been doused, the remains of the craft were sent to Zhitkur.



To be honest, to suggest that what was shown in the footage was a UFO is stretching credulity somewhat. All we saw was a big fire. It could have been anything, but the story persists and Stanton Friedman said that he had heard those same rumours about UFOs destroying Soviet rockets in an act of retaliation.

Russia is a land of many mysteries, not just ufological in nature. The programme ended with a report from a US journalist, Kim Murphy of the LA Times, talking about her trip to Russia to investigate a lake that had mysteriously vanished. She wasn't sure she believed the stories, but when she got there, she found that it was true. An entire lake had vanished, with eyewitnesses saying

that a huge whirlpool had formed and the water had vanished like water down a plug hole. What that has to do with UFOs, I don't know...

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Getting back on track, we were told that research is still ongoing at Kapustin Yar, with UFO wreckage being brought to Zhitzkur quite regularly and as recently as 1997, when a craft was said to have come down in Poland.

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Russian Roswell was another interesting look at the UFO phenomenon. The Soviet Union obviously had a great deal of interest in the subject and, it seems, was prepared to act in an extremely hostile manner towards unidentified craft in their airspace. Was Moscow's leap into space aided by reverse-engineering alien craft? The evidence would suggest not. Soviet rockets were powered pretty much the same way as American ones i.e. they didn't get up there by using anti-gravity engines from a crashed saucer. Still, it makes you wonder what secrets might lay in all these underground facilities, not just in Russia, but all over the world.