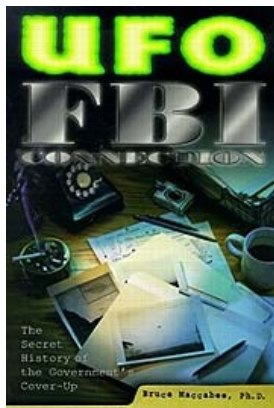




## The UFO/FBI Connection by U. S. Navy Physicist, Bruce S. Maccabee - Part 3

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**June 20, 2000 Sabillasville, Maryland** - Part 3 of the interview with Bruce S. Maccabee, Ph. D., Research Physicist at the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) in Dahlgren, Virginia begins with the clash between the FBI and USAF over UFO investigations. On May 1, 2000, his book *The UFO/FBI Connection*, was released detailing his research since 1976 into FBI documents and knowledge about the UFO mystery.

### Interview:

**Bruce S. Maccabee, Ph.D., Research Physicist, Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC), Dahlgren, Virginia:**

#### FBI and USAF Clash Over UFO Investigations

**"IT MAY BE THAT THOSE MEN DOING THOSE REAL X-FILES INVESTIGATIONS FOR THE FBI WERE THE ORIGINAL MEN IN BLACK?"**

I suppose, but no one thought of them as Men In Black in those days. They introduced themselves. They probably didn't wear black. I'm sure they wore ordinary business suits. There aren't any stories of MIBs until the late 1950s. The FBI definitely went to talk to people and there are reports of their interviews in the FBI file, about two dozen. Then there was a bit of a scandal that took place when an Air Force Colonel smuggled to one of the FBI agents a document written by one of the Air Force Generals that said the FBI had been brought in to handle all the cases of ash can covers and toilet seats that might be found, indicating the FBI was to be given all the hoaxed trash cases and the Air Force would go after the good stuff.

When this came to Hoover's attention, he said the FBI couldn't have its people doing that so stop investigating. If you get any information, immediately turn it

over to the Air Force. We're talking about late 1947 now and that did end the FBI involvement for about a year.

From the fall of 1947 onward, the Air Force Intelligence investigated sightings. There were two intelligence groups, as I make clear in my book. There was an Air Force intelligence group at the Pentagon and the technical intelligence group at Wright-Patterson AFB which subsequently became Air Technical Intelligence. That's where Project SIGN was headquartered. And these two intelligence groups were certainly aware of each other, but they tended to work independently.

Anybody who has studied the UFO subject in the past thirty years is probably aware of General Twining's September 23, 1947 letter recommending that a special project be set up. It's his letter that starts off saying, "It's our opinion (ATIC) that these saucers are something real and not visionary" and they have certain characteristics. It also says there is no hard evidence. That was written to a General George Schulgen at the Pentagon. The Pentagon Air Force Intelligence people had their own study going on and arrived at the same conclusion: that there really was something going on that was worthy of study. So, it was a combination of the letter from Twining which represented the opinion of the Air Technical Intelligence guys and the group at the Pentagon. Those two reports were added together and caused General Craigie to set up his research in Project SIGN. And that's how the U. S. Air Force got into Project SIGN and we're all familiar with the history that comes out of Ruppelt that in the summer of 1948 with the Chiles-Whitted encounter being the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back."

Howe's Note: One of the most dramatic 1948 events was in Montgomery, Alabama on July 24th when Captain Clarence Chiles and John Whitted were flying an Eastern Airlines DC-3 at about 2:45 AM and saw a large red light headed toward them. As the aircraft veered to avoid collision, the UFO seemed to react intelligently and passed to the right of the DC-3 and pulled up with a burst of flame and disappeared upward into the clouds. The pilots said the object was shaped like a cigar, about 100 feet long and 30 feet in diameter. The men could see a pointed protrusion resembling a radar antenna on the nose of the cigar-shaped UFO. The pilots also described two rows of rectangular windows that glowed a bright white like burning magnesium. The bottom of the object glowed a phosphorescent blue. An orange-red flame extended about fifty feet from the rear. That same night, a cigar-shaped object with flames coming from the rear was also reported by another pilot and observers at Robbins Air Force Base in Georgia.

#### GENERAL HOYT S. VANDENBERG EXCLUDES ANY POSSIBLE 'INTERPLANETARY' EXPLANATION

"The people at the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) wrote a document called "The Estimate of the Situation" where they estimated that this was interplanetary and that some time in early October that made it up to the USAF's Chief of Staff General Hoyt S. Vandenberg and he shot it down.

In my book, I make it clear that that was a watershed event in the history of the subject. Why did that General shoot it down, I can't say. I can only make some guesses. But in effect, these people at the Air Technical Intelligence Center were the experts in aeronautics back engineering aircraft of other countries, primarily the Soviet Union. Also, they were doing their own research. And it is interesting to note, by the way, that a guy by the name of Alfred Loedding who was one of the people at Project SIGN was building pancake or pumpkin seed airfoil shapes and testing them. He was already into the disk-shaped aircraft mode and when flying saucer sightings started, you can imagine - I can't prove it - but you can imagine he probably said, "Wow, somebody has already done it!" Taken his design and flown it.

That justifies his being avidly interested in the flying saucer phenomenon right from the beginning which he apparently was. He was one of the first people to be involved in this Project SIGN that branched out into Project GRUDGE, Project BLUE BOOK and so on.

We're learning more about what happened years ago then they knew years ago. And this book could not have been written twenty years ago or ten years ago because it involves information that has only been recently released.

Anyway, Project SIGN in 1948 concluded the aerial objects were interplanetary. This was a conclusion by the experts in the subject based on all the information they could get hold of. And General Vandenberg essentially told them, 'Sorry, wrong answer.'

When you use all your best logic and arrive at an answer and somebody else tells you with the authority to make it stick, 'That's the wrong answer.' Then what do you do?

For one thing, it could be a morale buster. But, that meant Vandenberg had removed 'interplanetary' from the list of allowed potential explanations for UFO sightings.

### **IT WAS POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE.**

Why he did it, we can only guess. I point out in the book that the Roswell case had happened by that time and if there really was a Roswell case (of extraterrestrial crash and retrieval), he might want to keep the people from knowing. He did NOT want to establish a policy that interplanetary was an allowable explanation. Or you might say, he wanted to establish a policy that interplanetary was *not* allowed.

### **AFTER THAT IT SET THE TONE FOR THE U. S. GOVERNMENT'S DENIAL.**

That's right. Up to that point, there were the following possible explanations: hoaxes, delusions and misidentifications covered most of the stuff. Misidentifications of normal or natural phenomena or man-made phenomena such as misidentified stars, airplanes, balloons or whatever.

Our secret project, which was definitely in the mix back in those days, "their secret projects, what were the Soviets doing was the really scary part, and something that was totally out of this world. So you had six possible explanations: hoax, delusion, misidentification, ours, theirs, or from way out. And Vandenberg removed the way out possible explanation.

Now, when you read my book you will see how the U. S. Air Force went through gyrations and contortions to try to argue: 'Well, it was Soviet, but we don't believe it was Soviet really because we don't think they had a big enough jump ahead of us.'

There is a document in the FBI files which specifically states the search of all the research projects by the Air Force failed to turn up any project that would cause flying saucer sightings. And, by the way, people over and over have asked me, 'Couldn't this be our own secret project?' And I can refer them back again to the August 1947 document from General George Schulgen in which he said, 'We have thoroughly investigated our own research. There is nothing there that could cause flying saucer sightings.' And this was a document written TO the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover did not want to have his agents investigating our own secret projects which would make no sense.

So, there is a document from Schulgen that rules out our secret projects. And yet, you find over and over again in the Air Force documents, 'Gee, could this be

something that we don't know about?'

But the Air Force tied themselves into contortions trying to decide whether it was ours, or theirs and finally they ultimately, by 1951 or 1952, had said that it's not ours and it's not theirs. That meant it had to be a hoax, a delusion or a misidentification. Those were the classifications of all sightings that Project BLUE BOOK used all the way up to 1969. They did have unidentified sightings, but they always said, 'Well, these are unidentified, but if we had had more information we could have identified them.'"

**BECAUSE THE 1947 STATEMENT BY GENERAL VANDENBERG SAYING, 'NO, IT CANNOT BE INTERPLANETARY,' WAS STILL IN EFFECT.**

Yes. By tradition. We've known about that ever since Ruppelt's book. But it's not until you put the whole history together in the way I have here that you see just how important that is. Because what you see are the contortions of the U. S. Air Force people trying to explain sightings when interplanetary is removed from the available list of candidate explanations.

**THAT THEY WILL GET IN TROUBLE AND THEIR JOBS COULD BE IN JEOPARDY IF THEY EVEN TRIED TO INTRODUCE THE IDEA.**

Well, that may be. Certainly, Ruppelt said that. Ruppelt said that anyone who proposed anything other than a conventional type of explanation - well, there were NO feathers in the caps for 'unexplained sightings.'

And we know that Project GRUDGE, and that's something else I put in the book. The Project SIGN report was publicly released in April of 1949. And if you go back and get the Project SIGN report, which I presume is on the web, you will see that it does leave open the possibility that some things have not been explained. They say at the end that there are some cases that have not been explained and 'it's our job to put the dot the i's and cross the t's on all these sightings that we've studied.' They had studied about 180 to 200 by that time. So, Project SIGN left open the possibility that there was something unexplained.

And you'll remember that in December 1949 was Keyhoe's article in TRUE Magazine, 'Flying Saucers Are Real.' And a few days after that came out, the Air Force publicized the results of their Project GRUDGE which was the follow on to Project SIGN. And it turns out that in the latter part of 1949, the people at Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) had exerted all possible force to explain every sighting. So, GRUDGE claimed at the very beginning of the report that all sightings had been explained. And then you could go to the Appendix of the report and could see in particular that they concentrated on 57 sightings that had not been explained to that point.

And sure enough, every one of them had an explanation! And Ruppelt points out in his book that one of the most egregious examples of a typical explanation was where a pilot had been chasing a light at night and people on the ground had seen it moving along and he had chased it for some number of miles in a straight line, couldn't possibly be a balloon. But nevertheless, in the GRUDGE Report, it is identified as a balloon. You can get the GRUDGE Report from the Fund for UFO Research, the whole thing.

**HOW DID THE CIA PLAY ITS ROLE IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE FBI AND THE AIR FORCE FROM ITS CREATION IN 1947 ON?**

We have a couple of documents that are in 1948 or 1949. The CIA file was released in December 1978 only a year and a half after the FBI file. And the one or two documents in the CIA file in 1949 indicate there was only minimal interest in what was going on. They assumed the Air Force was handling the problem as the Air Force claimed in public to have all the explanations. CIA

agents could read the same newspapers as everybody else. The Air Force was saying there was nothing to this, there was no threat to the United States and all the cases can be explained by natural phenomena.

The CIA didn't get deeply involved in the subject until 1952 during the big flap over Washington, D. C."

**Next:** Green Fireballs, the FBI and the Soviet Threat in Part 4, June 21, 2000.

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## **More Information:**

*The UFO /FBI Connection*

by Bruce S. Maccabee

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## **Websites:**

<http://foia.fbi.gov/>

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