

Roswell — Anatomy of a Myth¹

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Abstract — The alleged recovery of a crashed flying saucer and alien bodies by the U.S. military near Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947, has become not only the most famous and publicized UFO case of all time, but also an American icon. Unfortunately, with regard to serious UFO research, it has become in effect a “red herring,” diverting time and resources away from the study of the actual UFO phenomenon. Compelling new evidence is examined, including recently released 1948 military documents, a hypnotic session with the most important living Roswell witness by a renowned expert in the use of regression hypnosis for forensic purposes, and statements by former members of the 509th Bomb Group and former officers from the Foreign Technology Division at Wright Patterson Air Force Base. Although the results of this research are a disappointment to many, it should now become patently obvious to anyone willing to look open-mindedly and objectively at the facts that the Roswell debris was not of extraterrestrial origin.

Keywords: UFOs — aliens — Roswell — extraterrestrial

Introduction

Almost one hundred years ago, a very concerned eight-year-old girl from New York City, Virginia O’Hanlon, wrote the Question and Answer Department of her family’s evening newspaper, *The New York Sun*, requesting to know the truth about Santa Claus. Virginia had been a firm believer, but her young friends had started to sow the seeds of doubt. On September 21, 1897, Virginia’s answer finally came. Francis Pharcellus Church, a former Civil War correspondent and an aging writer for the *Sun*, replied to Virginia’s letter in one of the most eloquent and enduring editorial responses in the history of journalism. Church transcended the cold hard facts of reality and avoided shaking Virginia’s childlike faith by subtly alluding to Santa Claus as a metaphor for that which is good and noble in life — “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give your life its highest beauty and joy....”

Recently, the *International Roswell Initiative* (IRI) received an inquiry from a young girl, Lauren M., living in a small town in New Jersey, that is in many ways reminiscent of Virginia O’Hanlon’s 1897 letter to the *New York*

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Sun. While the IRI is primarily a grass roots effort to declassify whatever information the government might have on UFOs or extraterrestrial intelligence, it has received numerous inquiries over the last three years about the actual Roswell event, many from children.

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Dear International Roswell Initiative:

I am a 6th grade student who is studying all kinds of interesting information about UFOs.... I believe that there are really aliens who have landed and crashed (such as Roswell), but the government tried to cover it up...If you have any information that can help me prove that there are UFOs and aliens, please send me that information. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lauren M.

Mrs. Nielsen's 6th grade

Having been extensively involved over the last few years with both the investigation of the Roswell case and the effort to get the matter declassified, I would love to be able to answer Lauren M.'s letter in the affirmative. Unfortunately, in clear conscience, I cannot — either directly or metaphorically.

Unlike a fanciful story from Western folklore created to appeal to the imaginations of children, the 1947 Roswell case involves real people and an actual event. Additionally, with all the publicity the Roswell event and its alleged cover-up have received, along with the accompanying implications of conspiracy and deceit on the part of the U.S. government, Roswell represents a controversy that extends far beyond the relatively narrow confines of the so-called UFO community. As such, Roswell demands an objective, straightforward, and, if possible, definitive answer.

During the last year, compelling new evidence has come to the fore that now makes such a definitive answer possible. Unfortunately, it is not the answer that those of us familiar with the Roswell case have wanted to hear. Declassified 1948 military documents, new testimony from retired military men from both Roswell and the Foreign Technology Division at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, and a thorough reexamination of how the crashed-disk story got started in the first place, make it unequivocally clear that the material recovered northwest of Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947 was not of extraterrestrial origin. In other words, NO UFO CRASHED AT ROSWELL — WITH OR WITHOUT ALIENS. IT DID NOT HAPPEN. PERIOD. For those willing to look objectively and rationally at all the evidence, this contention should

become resoundingly clear, not just beyond a reasonable doubt, but beyond *all* doubt.

Disinformation Agent or Defector?

As soon as word got out that I, coordinator of the IRI and author of the *Roswell Declaration*, had reversed my opinion on Roswell, accusations such as “he is an agent for the government” or “they finally got to him” immediately appeared on Internet postings and elsewhere. While it is generally not prudent to risk giving such silliness even an inkling of respectability by publicly acknowledging it, I will address the issue here, nonetheless, because the accusations seem to be so widespread.

First of all, no individual or agency has ever attempted to influence or pressure me in any way, shape, or form — with regard to Roswell or anything else. Furthermore, if Roswell had really happened and if there had been any kind of attempt to intimidate me, such an action would have been the biggest mistake possible. Being somewhat rebellious by nature, I would have then pursued the matter with a vengeance, spurred on by the knowledge that I was really on to something.

Secondly, I am not employed by the government in any capacity whatsoever. My sole occupation for the past 26 years has been that of airline pilot. I am employed by a major U.S. carrier and presently fly international routes, primarily to Europe. Although I have never seen a UFO, I have had a long-term interest in the phenomenon. My interest in Roswell came about in part because my father, Arthur Jeffrey, a retired Air Force colonel, knew and worked in the early sixties with one of the key Roswell figures, General William Blanchard.

While I did feel for a long time that there was a “significant” chance that Roswell involved a crashed UFO, I never at any time believed it to be the case with absolute certainty. However, even if I had only felt that there was a “slight” chance that Roswell involved the crash of an alien spaceship, I still would have pursued the matter vigorously, because, if true, it would have been the story of the millennium.

The International Roswell Initiative

There are apparently those who also feel that by reversing my position on Roswell, I am dropping the ball and letting down the twenty thousand plus individuals who have signed the *Roswell Declaration*. That is anything but the case.

First, with regard to reversing my stance, it is important to remember that the objective of the *Roswell Initiative* has been to find the truth, not define it. Unfortunately, the truth turned out to be different from what I thought it might be, or hoped it would be. However, now that I am absolutely certain that the debris recovered from Roswell was not that from an extraterrestrial craft, I feel

an obligation to get that information out as well. Not to do so would be less than forthright and less than honest.

Secondly, as for the Roswell Declarations, the plan was to deliver them to the White House, along with a cover letter to the President, during the week of the 50th anniversary of the Roswell event in July of 1997. Whether or not the government has any substantive information on UFOs, from a public relations standpoint, the situation has not been handled well. The government's quasi-official policy over the last few decades of ignoring the UFO issue has led to a definite suspicion on the part of its citizenry. A 1996 Gallup pole revealed that 71 percent of the American public believes that "the U.S. Government knows more about UFOs than they are telling us."

Although the Roswell Declaration was inspired by the 1947 Roswell event, it is by no means tied to it. The Declaration requests "an Executive Order declassifying any information regarding the existence of UFOs or extraterrestrial intelligence." Such an assurance would still be timely, appropriate, and beneficial to both the U.S. government and its people.

As is stated in the Declaration, if no information is being withheld, such an action would, nonetheless, have the positive effect of setting the record straight and clearing up years of suspicion and controversy. On the other hand, if information is actually being withheld, it would represent knowledge of profound importance to which we are all entitled, and its release would be acknowledged as an historic act of honesty and goodwill.

Misleading Information

Many of the books and documentaries about *Roswell* imply that it is highly probable, if not certain, that the recovered debris was from a crashed flying saucer. Some of that information, however, is misleading or incorrect. It ranges from fabricated stories on the part of seemingly credible witnesses to exaggeration and selective presentation of fact.

In some instances, it is probably more a case of overzealousness on the part of authors than intentional deception. In other instances, credibility is stretched beyond limits. For example, after the conclusion of the story in the movie *Roswell*, statements of purported fact just prior to the credits inform us that Jesse Marcel, Sr., died in 1986 and that "since then over 350 witnesses to the event have agreed to talk." In actuality, because so few people ever saw the debris, it is doubtful whether even one tenth that number of witnesses could ever be produced.

In retrospect, there is much about Roswell that I wish I had questioned more thoroughly, early on. For example, I received a very interesting letter, dated March 20, 1993, written on the stationery of a respected major UFO organization. The author of the letter, in addition to being a board member of that organization, was a well-known Roswell researcher and the co-author of a leading book on the subject. I had no reason to question his credibility.

In part the letter read:

...a very important trip to New Mexico where we secured another first-hand witness to the bodies. This brings our total to EIGHT (emphasis in the original) with yet additional prospects.

My immediate thought was that if these (secret and primarily military, I was told) witnesses could be convinced to come forward, we would be able to break the Roswell case wide open. The letter represented a major turning point in my support for and involvement with the Roswell crashed-UFO investigation.

I subsequently retained, at my personal expense, a major Washington, D.C., law firm to offer counsel to the eight witnesses in the hope of encouraging them to come forward. In September, 1993, I arranged for two of the attorneys from the firm to travel to New Mexico, where they were to be put in touch with three of the supposed eight secret witnesses. Once the attorneys arrived in Roswell, however, they were put in contact with only one such witness. I would later learn that this particular so-called secret witness was already known to other researchers and that his story was considered outlandish and unbelievable — an assessment with which I now fully agree.

Sending the two attorneys to New Mexico was a tremendously expensive waste of time and resources. The researcher and author who wrote the March 20, 1993, letter telling of the eight witnesses was, himself, eventually discredited. Although a very personable individual, he proved to be less than honest. He was subsequently removed from the board of the UFO organization with which he was affiliated and his co-author, still a respected researcher, disavowed any association with him. As for the other seven “secret” witnesses, nothing has ever been heard from or about them since.

UFO Crashes

Even before the advent of recent negative developments in the Roswell case, I have always felt that a UFO would never crash. However, because of the impressive witness testimony about which I was told, I suspended judgment and allowed for the possibility that Roswell might be an exception — some kind of one-in-a-quintillion fluke. That was, in retrospect, a mistake.

The problem with the concept of a UFO crashing is that as technology advances, so does reliability. Be it with cars, airplanes, televisions, or wrist-watches, the reliability of today’s technology far exceeds that of the technology of just a few decades ago. For example, because of the high reliability of their engines, long-range, twin-engine commercial jetliners are now authorized to fly nonstop across the North Atlantic. A few decades ago, that would have been unthinkable. (The positive correlation between advancing technology and reliability applies to “proven” technology, not experimental

state-of-the art machines still in the developmental phase, such as experimental aircraft or space vehicles.)

With today's industry-average engine-failure rate of less than one failure per 100,000 flight hours, the chances of both engines of a two-engine jetliner failing during a given hour of flight are less than one out of 10 billion. Figuring 50,000 aircraft-ocean crossings per year, and factoring in such variables as average time over the water and average distance from land, the odds are less than fifty-fifty of a double-engine failure and consequent ditching in the North Atlantic of even one such aircraft over the next 10,000 years.

This incredible degree of reliability is found with a technology that would be primitive compared with a UFO. Even with today's relatively "primitive" technology, our commercial aircraft have very efficient collision avoidance systems, as well as excellent radar systems for avoiding thunderstorms and their associated hail and lightning (phenomena, incidentally, that are surely not unique to this planet).

If we assume that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft and that some of the many reported UFO sightings are genuine UFOs, we are dealing with machines apparently capable of high-speed right-angle turns, incredible accelerations and speeds, and wingless flight — not to mention of traveling light-years through the void of empty space in, presumably, a relatively short period of time. Such capability would require a technology totally beyond our present understanding of physics — a technology the sophistication of which we cannot even begin to imagine.

Because of the positive correlation between technology and reliability, such incredibly advanced technology would most certainly mean a correspondingly high degree of reliability. Common sense dictates that the chances of such machines crashing, breaking down, or colliding would be all but zero. It certainly would be many orders of magnitude less than the already infinitesimally small chance of one of today's twin-engine jetliners having a double-engine failure.

The 1948 Military Documents

For me, the beginning of the end for the Roswell UFO case came last spring, when I first saw one of a number of previously classified military documents dealing with unidentified flying objects. The 289-page document was released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in March 1996 in response to a FOIA request by researcher William LaParl. It contained the minutes of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board Conference at the Pentagon on March 17 and 18, 1948. Buried in the document is a very interesting statement by a Colonel Howard McCoy which referred to a number of unpublished UFO reports. The last sentence of McCoy's statement, however, is devastating to the Roswell case.

We have a new project — Project SIGN — which may surprise you as a development from the so-called mass hysteria of the past Summer when we had all the unidentified

flying objects or discs. This can't be laughed off. We have over 300 reports which haven't been publicized in the papers from very competent personnel, in many instances — men as capable as Dr. K. D. Wood, and practically all Air Force, Airline people with broad experience. We are running down every report. I can't even tell you how much we would give to have one of those crash in an area so that we could recover whatever they are.

My first reaction to this statement was one of disbelief. Thoughts came to mind like "This can't be correct, there must be some mistake, this guy didn't know," *etc.* We are probably all somewhat prone to such initial reactions of denial when confronted with facts that conflict with our preconceived notions of reality or our established beliefs. Most of the time, however, common sense, logic, and rationality prevail. On the other hand, there is sometimes an invariable refusal to give up a particular contention or belief, no matter how strong the evidence to the contrary. The result of such refusal is often illogical speculation and far-fetched scenarios, concocted in an effort to rationalize away the facts. It is a pitfall into which even credible researchers sometimes tumble.

The statement at the Scientific Advisory Board Conference lamenting the fact that the Air Force did not have a crashed UFO was made by Colonel Howard McCoy, the Chief of Intelligence for Air Materiel Command at Wright-Patterson AFB. Wright Patterson is where the Air Force's technical and intelligence experts are concentrated, even today. It is where recovered wreckage from a foreign craft of any kind with the potential for invading our skies would be taken for technical analysis — be it a MIG 29 or a Klingon battle cruiser. If there had been a crashed flying saucer recovered outside of Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947, this is where it would have been taken. As Chief of Intelligence, Colonel Howard McCoy would have known about it.

In addition to the minutes of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board meeting, there are other military documents indicating just as unequivocally that the Air Force was not in possession of any physical evidence with regard to UFOs. Among these documents is a series of communiqués dealing with "flying object incidents in the United States" between Colonel McCoy at Wright Patterson and Major General C. P. Cabell, the Director of Intelligence for the Air Force at the Pentagon. In one of these communiqués, a letter dated November 8, 1948, McCoy made three separate references to the fact that there was no physical or tangible evidence from a flying saucer crash. Cabell used the information from McCoy's letter for preparation of a memorandum dated November 30, 1948, for Secretary of Defense James Forrestal.

The lack of physical evidence is also mentioned in a September 23, 1947, letter from Lieutenant General Nathan Twining, Commander of the Air Materiel Command at Wright Field, to Brigadier General George Schulgen, a top intelligence official at the Pentagon. The Twining letter was written less than three months after the Roswell incident. The letter is also significant because it makes reference to the cooperation between the Engineering Division and the Intelligence Division at the Wright Patterson complex. This cooperation is

mentioned specifically in regard to assessing the nature of the mysterious “flying objects” about which there had been so many credible reports.

The cooperation between the intelligence and engineering branches at Wright Patterson is further corroborated by a “top secret” memorandum for the Chief, Air Intelligence Division, dated October 11, 1948, signed by a Colonel Brooke Allen, Chief, of the Air Estimates Branch at Wright Patterson. The stated subject of the memorandum is “Analysis of Flying Object Incidents in the U.S.”

This memorandum is important because, along with the Twining letter, it confirms what is dictated by common sense — that if the engineering department possessed a crashed saucer, the intelligence department would not only be aware of it, they would also be integrally involved with its analysis and the assessment of any potential threat posed to national security.

The 1947 and 1948 military documents are definitive. They can not be simply or smugly characterized as “absence of evidence.” They are evidence. They state definitively that there was no crashed saucer.

If instead of the above documents, researchers had uncovered definitive and authentic documentation indicating the existence of a crashed saucer, such documentation would have undoubtedly been acknowledged by all and characterized as a “smoking gun.” Victory would have been declared, and congressional investigations would have been all but certain.

Predictably, some in the UFO field are reacting to the 1947 and 1948 military documents with an attitude reminiscent of the platitude, “don’t bother me with the facts, my mind’s made up.” Ironically, this is the same type of mentality of which they are so quick to accuse their detractors. Narrow-mindedness, however, can exist on either side of the fence. The facts are now clear. We can’t simply refuse to acknowledge them because we don’t like them. The Roswell crash didn’t happen. It is time to face the music, and the band isn’t playing our tune.

The Men of the 509th

The 509th Bomb Group was based at Roswell in 1947. In September 1996, I had the privilege of attending the reunion of the 509th Bomb Group in Tucson, Arizona, as a guest of General Bob Scott and his wife Terry. I have known the Scotts for a couple of years. By coincidence, Bob’s son is a pilot for the same airline for which I work.

At the time of the 509th reunion, I had not yet seen all the pertinent 1948 military documents and still held an inkling of hope that there might be something to the Roswell event. Prior to the reunion, I had sent out over 700 mailings to members of the reunion group in the hope of finding additional witnesses to the mysterious debris. The result was a disappointment — only two calls, neither of which was of any real help. Both of the men who called were former 509th flight engineers. One had had a very interesting UFO sighting from the ramp at Kirtland Air Force Base. The other recalled seeing a lot of

extra activity around one of the hangers at Roswell near the time of the 1947 incident.

At the reunion in Tucson, I was introduced to several of the pilots who were at Roswell in 1947 and who promptly told me, in no uncertain terms, that the crashed saucer event never occurred, period. I did not get the impression at the time, nor have I ever since, that any of these men are engaged in some kind of incredible 50-year-long massive cover-up or that they were putting on an act or facade to throw me off track. Anyone who believes that to be the case is out of touch with the reality of this issue. Like every other person with whom I have ever discussed this subject, these men were in total agreement that anything as important and profound as the knowledge of other intelligent life in the universe is information that should not be censored or suppressed and to which everyone should be entitled. These men risked their lives in World War II to save the world from the kind of totalitarian governments that, among their many other crimes against humanity, unjustifiably suppressed information from their people.

The men who were at Roswell during July 1947 feel very strongly that absolutely nothing out of the ordinary happened and that the whole matter is patently ridiculous. The 509th was the only atomic bomb group in the world in 1947 and was composed of a very elite group of individuals, most of whom still feel a definite sense of pride in their former outfit. To them, the crashed-saucer nonsense, along with all the hullabaloo and conspiracy theories surrounding it, makes a mockery of and is an insult to the 509th Bomb Group and its men.

One of the 509th pilots I met at the reunion, Jack Ingham, has since become a friend and has helped me considerably in contacting additional members of the group who were stationed at Roswell during the time of the incident. When I first met Jack in Tucson, he spared no punches in letting me know exactly what he thought about the crashed-flying saucer matter. Others at the reunion told me that if something like the crash of a UFO had really happened at Roswell, Jack Ingham would have known. Jack spent a total of 16 years with the 509th Bomb Group — February 1946 to July 1962. He retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in January 1971.

Since last September, I have spoken with a total of fifteen B-29 pilots and two B-29 navigators, all of whom were stationed at Roswell Army Air Field in July 1947. Most of them heard nothing about the supposed crashed-saucer incident until years later, after all the publicity started. The few men who did recall hearing something about the incident at the time of its occurrence said that the inside word was that the debris was from a downed balloon of some kind and that there was no more than “one wheelbarrow full.” Not one single man had any direct knowledge of a crashed saucer or of any kind of unusual material. Even more significantly, in all of their collective years with the 509th Bomb Group, not one of these men had ever encountered any other individual who had such knowledge.

As Jack Ingham and others pointed out, the 509th was a very close-knit group and there was no way an event as spectacular as the recovery of a crashed-alien spaceship from another world could have happened at their base without their having known about it. Despite the fact that they, individually, may not have been directly involved with the recovery operation, and despite the pervasiveness of the “need to know” philosophy in the military, these men maintained that there was absolutely no way that something of such magnitude and so earthshaking would not have been communicated among the members of the group — especially within the inner circle of the upper echelon of B-29 pilots and navigators — all of whom had top-secret security clearances. Furthermore, unlike the atomic weapons secrets with which they were all entrusted, the existence of a crashed alien spaceship would have been much more of a social and scientific issue than a national security issue. Additionally, word was already out — the story had been published in afternoon newspapers all over the Western United States.

Most of the men of the 509th Bomb Group were primarily WWII veterans in their mid- to late twenties. (Colonel Blanchard, the commander of the group, was, himself, only 31.) Military regulations notwithstanding, human nature and common sense have to be factored into the equation. Such an occurrence — the most significant and dramatic event in recorded history — would surely have been discussed by these men, at least among themselves.

Memory, Communication, and Perception

A few words about the potential pitfalls of human memory, communication, and perception might shed light on how the “myth” surrounding the Roswell event evolved. The following observations are strictly from the standpoint of common sense and real-world experience, not from some abstract or esoteric psychological theory.

Faulty memory is obviously one of the biggest detriments to accurately reconstructing past events, especially if a great deal of time has elapsed. While memory generally serves us well, it is unlike the playback of a digital tape — it is far from precise or absolute. With the passage of time, images from different events can be inadvertently blended together. Also, mental images of things only imagined can be inadvertently blended or confused with memories of things actually observed or events actually experienced.

If memory were perfect, everyone of us would have consistently accomplished perfect scores in our comprehensive exams throughout high school and college. We would remember with perfect accuracy every name, face, scene, place, and event that we had ever heard, seen, or experienced. Obviously, human memory doesn’t work this way. Interestingly, however, in the case of witness testimony, there often seems to be an unrealistic assumption that it does.

Like faulty memory, inaccurate communication can also be a detriment to accurately reconstructing past events. Miscommunication is definitely a factor

with secondhand testimony. Perhaps, that is part of the reason secondhand testimony is not admissible in a court of law. There is a game sometimes played by children that amply illustrates the problem of miscommunication, and consequently also secondhand testimony. A group stands in a circle and a message is whispered from one person to the next. After being passed around a few times, the original message is usually completely unrecognizable. It doesn't take much imagination to realize how much the problem would be exacerbated if there was a gap of several years each time the message was passed on. Interestingly, in the Roswell case, much of the secondhand testimony, upon which so much importance is placed, comes from information passed on many years back.

Errors in perception are probably more frequent than most people realize. Perception is often influenced by expectation. We have probably all noticed this phenomenon on a micro scale when trying to proofread something. Similar to a form of computer enhancement, the brain tends to automatically compensate for missing letters or words which are supposed to be there. In other words, it tends to automatically "fill in the blanks."

The problem of expectation influencing perception is exacerbated when recalling past events. Memory seems to somehow have the ability to distort an observation retroactively to make it better match expectation. This phenomenon can be a real problem with eyewitness accounts to traffic accidents, and even more so to aviation accidents — even accounts from experienced observers. For example, in August 1987, a Northwest Airlines MD-88 took off from Detroit Metro airport. The crew, however, had failed to lower the flaps to the takeoff position (15 degrees). Under most circumstances, this error would not have been a fatal mistake. Unfortunately, due to other contributing factors (short runway, hot day, fully loaded aircraft, *etc.*), they didn't make it. During the investigation of the accident, the crew of the aircraft in line for takeoff immediately behind the Northwest airplane testified that its flaps were definitely lowered to the takeoff position. Analysis of the wreckage and flight-data recorder, however, showed otherwise. The testimony of the crew of the second aircraft was wrong. What they remembered was what they thought they should have seen rather than what they actually saw.

A Trip to Washington

The central focus of the Roswell story has been the recovery of the unusual debris from the Foster Ranch in July, 1947. This is where it all started. The most important living witness to that debris is Jesse Marcel, Jr., MD, the son of Major Jesse Marcel, Sr., the intelligence officer of the 509th Bomb Group. After being out at the site, Major Marcel stopped by his house on the way back to the base and laid the debris out on his kitchen floor to show his wife and son. As a result, Jesse Marcel, Jr., got a good look at the unusual material. Potentially, the key to the whole Roswell UFO case lies in Jesse Marcel, Jr.'s memory. He saw the debris. Either it was extraterrestrial or it was not.

Despite the recent overwhelmingly negative developments in the Roswell case, I did not want to leave any stone unturned. I therefore arranged to have Jesse Marcel, Jr. fly to Washington, D.C., for a thorough debriefing session to see if we could get a better picture of the exact nature of the unusual debris that precipitated the Roswell story.

Being fully aware of the pitfalls in the use of hypnosis for memory retrieval, I decided that it still might be an avenue worth pursuing. In addition to its (controversial) use in retrieving repressed subconscious memories, hypnosis can be an effective tool in enhancing conscious memory. Law enforcement agencies sometimes use hypnosis in this manner to help a witness better remember a face or a license plate number, for example.

Because I considered our effort such an important endeavor, I wanted to find the best in the field. I also wanted someone who had maximum credibility and who was not associated with the UFO community. There was a reason for this. In the event that anything significantly positive came out of the hypnotic session, there would be a greater chance of it being taken seriously by the mainstream public.

My search led me to Neil Hibler, PhD, a clinical psychologist with an office in the Washington, D.C. area. Dr. Hibler is one of the world's leading experts in the use of hypnotic regression for forensic purposes. Law enforcement agencies all over the world have retained him for important cases. Among the agencies that have called on him are the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the intelligence agencies of all three armed services. Dr. Hibler has worked with subjects from all walks of life, including diplomats and generals.

On the evening of January 10, 1997, four of us met in Dr. Hibler's office for the first of three sessions. The other two sessions took place over the next two days. Jesse Marcel, Jr., who is one of the most honest and sincere persons I have ever met, cooperated completely, despite the potential controversy of any significant outcome. Dr. Hibler had suggested that everything be recorded on videotape. This was done by Denise Marcel, Jesse, Jr.'s 33-year-old daughter, who flew in from Los Angeles. Denise was especially interested in our endeavor because she has studied hypnosis formally and is a licensed hypnotherapist in California. A professional illustrator from the Washington, D.C., area, Kimberly Moeller, was also present during the second and third sessions.

Dr. Hibler's approach was to have Jesse go through the entire story twice, without the aid of hypnosis. Hypnosis was then administered for each subsequent recounting of the story. According to Denise, her father is not an easy hypnotic subject, but was definitely in a mild to medium trance by the end of the last session. The hypnosis did not, however, bring out anything new that was of significance. For that reason, confabulation (false memory syndrome) was definitely not a concern. In Jesse's words, the hypnosis simply helped "fine tune" his conscious memory. For example, by the end of the last session, he was able to recall several details about which he had previously been uncer-

tain — the debris' already having been laid out on the floor when he first saw it, the fact that his father was in uniform, and his accompanying his father out to the car, where he saw additional debris in the trunk.

The most significant thing about the sessions in Washington is not so much what came out of them, but what didn't come out of them. There were no descriptions or memories of any kind of exotic debris or wreckage. There is a very good reason for that — there simply was no such exotic debris or wreckage for Jesse to remember. If there had been, in all probability, he would have remembered it consciously. Nonetheless, because of the extreme importance of the debris to the Roswell case, the effort was worth a try — just in case. There was no risk of a negative effect on what Jesse remembered. Hypnosis can elicit memories of things that didn't happen, but it can't take away memories of things that did happen.

Unfortunately, instead of providing any renewed hope or encouragement, the outcome of the hypnosis sessions in Washington, D.C., was, for me, the final nail in the coffin of the Roswell crashed-saucer scenario. The sessions made it absolutely clear that the material recovered from the Foster ranch northwest of Roswell in 1947 was anything but unique or exotic. As it turned out, it was extremely mundane.

According to Jesse's best recollection, the material laid out on his kitchen floor, which was representative of that at the site, consisted primarily of pieces of metallic foil, a short beam or "stick," and a few pieces of a plastic or Bakelite-like substance. Certainly, such mundane debris would not constitute the wreckage from any kind of sophisticated vehicle or craft, much less one capable of interstellar travel.

There was nothing to indicate form or structure. There was nothing to indicate some kind of ultra-advanced technology. There were no technological artifacts of any type — no remnants of anything resembling motors, servos, electronic components, instruments, a guidance system, a control system, a propulsion system, *etc.* — nothing. The crash of a Sopwith Camel would have left more complex and sophisticated debris. Even the debris from a two-thousand-year-old Roman chariot would have been more interesting and varied than the debris that was laid out on the Marcel kitchen floor. At least with the chariot there would have been some technological remnants such as parts of the axles and wheels.

While we have no idea what the debris from a crashed spaceship would look like, it is reasonable to assume that it would reflect a level of complexity and technological advancement beyond imagination. Postulating that a few pieces of foil, plastic-like material, and short beams constitute the remains of a machine of such capability and complexity is more than just a quantum leap, it is completely baseless and totally illogical.

An Amazing Coincidence

In addition to being mundane, the material recovered from the Foster ranch is definitely reconcilable with the debris from an ML-307 radar reflector — the length and cross-sectional size of the beams or sticks, the pieces of foil, and the plastic-like material (now thought to be part of one of the plastic ballast cases that contained sand). Even the color of the symbols that Jesse, Jr., remembers is almost identical to the color of the flower patterns on the balsa stick that Irving Newton remembers seeing in Ramey's office.

The crashed saucer scenario requires an implausible occurrence. A flying saucer crashes northwest of Roswell, New Mexico, and leaves debris in the form of *small pieces of foil, short beams that have a maximum length of about three feet, and pieces of Bakelite-like material*. Amazingly, by incredible coincidence, a balloon array that disappeared in the same general area four weeks earlier carried three radar reflectors constructed from *reflective foil, short beams that have a maximum length of about three feet, and pieces of Bakelite-like material*.

Obviously, the idea of any such coincidence ever happening is absurd. The debris recovered from the Foster ranch was that of an ML-307 radar reflector.

It is not hard to imagine how the apparent misidentification probably came about. During the previous two weeks, there had been a wave of sightings of flying saucers or “disks” throughout the United States and Canada. The sightings were something that were in the news daily and were on almost everyone's mind — an “unknown” in the sky. At the same time, balloon arrays under a secret project known as “Mogul” were being launched from the Alamogordo area, just under 100 miles to the west of Roswell. These balloon arrays carried ML-307 radar reflectors, which would have been totally unfamiliar to Butch Blanchard, Jesse Marcel, and the other men at Roswell AAF. The debris from one of these reflectors scattered over the desert would likewise have been something unfamiliar to them — an “unknown” on the ground.

It is understandable that the unknown debris found northwest of Roswell would have been assumed to be related to the unknown objects that had been so frequently reported flying around in the sky, the flying “disks.” Such a connection, although with the benefit of hindsight, incorrect, would have been very logical and understandable for the men at Roswell to make. This is almost certainly how the Roswell story began.

The Missing Tape

In the last few months, as part of my effort to reconstruct what happened at Roswell, I have had a number of conversations with Irving Newton, the weather officer at Fort Worth Army Air Field who was called in by General Ramey to identify the unusual debris. The debris was already suspected to be part of some type of balloon device. Newton told me that he immediately recognized it as being from an ML-307 radar reflector. An ML-307 was a box kite-like de-

vice covered with a tough, paper-backed foil that was suspended below balloons or balloon arrays to facilitate radar tracking. According to Newton, most weather officers, much less the men at Roswell or Fort Worth, would not have been familiar with such a device. Newton had worked with the reflectors a couple of years earlier during the invasion of Okinawa in the Pacific. The devices were suspended below balloons, released to gather wind data for use in helping direct heavy naval artillery fire.

In one of my conversations with Newton, quite by chance, a new and important revelation came to light. He was describing the color of the symbols on one of the balsa sticks and mentioned how it was faint and had somewhat of a mottled appearance because of “the way that the dye had bled through onto the surface of the stick.” This was a very important piece of information. The symbols that Newton saw on the debris in Ramey’s office were on the surface of the stick, not on tape! The tape had apparently peeled away, probably because of several weeks’ exposure to sunlight while it lay out in the desert. This serendipitous revelation immediately cleared up one of the biggest questions in my mind about the Roswell case — how could Jesse Marcel, Sr., or Jesse Marcel, Jr., for that matter, not have recognized flower patterns on tape? The answer is now crystal clear. The symbols they saw were not on tape. What they saw were images of the original symbols from the dye that had bled through before the tape had peeled away. Jesse, Jr.’s testimony about the symbols definitely not being on tape was absolutely correct.

A Remarkable Resemblance

During the sessions in Washington, D.C., the professional illustrator who was present drew a very accurate depiction of what Jesse, Jr., remembered — the “I-beam-like” member with the symbols on it. After learning what a good recollection of the symbols Newton had, I arranged for him to work with the same illustrator so that we might have side-by-side sketches from the same perspective for comparison.

As it turned out, the resemblance between the two sketches was remarkable (See Figures 1 and 2). Even the artist commented that “it sure seemed like these two men were describing the same thing.” Probably most amazing was the closeness of the color that the two men remembered. Other than Newton’s color being more faded, the colors are nearly identical.

The most significant discrepancy was the way the slight ridges on the upper and lower edges gave Jesse’s beam the appearance of an I-beam-like cross section. This was probably due to a slight error in Jesse’s recollection. His father, for example, remembered the small members as having a rectangular cross section. In a 1979 interview with journalist Bob Pratt, Jesse Marcel, Sr., stated, “...it was a solid member, rectangular members, just like you get with a square stick.” It is entirely possible, however, that the particular member that Jesse, Jr., held, could have had a ridge on its edges for some unknown reason.

The only other really significant discrepancy was in the color of the

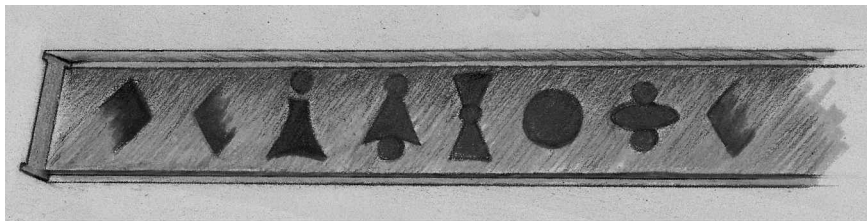


Fig. 1. I-Beam and patterns remembered by Jesse Marcel, Jr. Under hypnosis. Drawing by Kimberly Moeller.

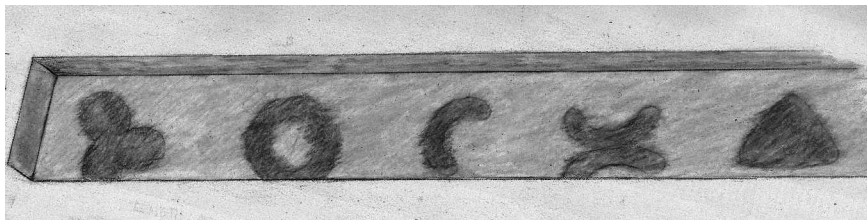


Fig. 2. Strut and tape patterns as remembered by Irving Newton. Drawing by Kimberly Moeller.

member. Jesse remembered it being about the same color as that of the foil-like material, while Irving Newton remembered it being almost white. Judging from the pictures taken in Ramey's office, however, the white that Newton recalled was probably accurate. According to Charles Moore, the project engineer for "Project Mogul," the sticks were covered with glue or glue-like substance. This would probably have given them a different color than that of raw wood, as well as a different feel or texture — probably to the degree that someone who didn't know what they were, might not recognize them as wood. The only other discrepancies were minor, such as differences in the size and spacing of the symbols.

For anyone who suspects that Irving Newton is participating in a 50-year cover-up and making up the story about the symbols or flower patterns, all he needs to do is check out the July 9, 1947, *Roswell Daily Record*. Rancher Mac Brazel is quoted as talking about sticks, foil, and tape with flower patterns on it.

The Alleged Substitution

Most of us have seen the now-famous pictures of the debris from Roswell taken in General Roger Ramey's office at Fort Worth Army Air Field. General Ramey, Colonel Thomas Dubose, Major Jesse Marcel, and Warrant Officer Irving Newton appear in the pictures, posing with the debris. The debris is clearly visible in all seven existing pictures. There is absolutely no question that this is the debris from an ML-307 radar reflector. If this is the same debris

that was recovered from the Foster ranch, then the Roswell case is closed, period. It's over, end of subject.

In the January 1991 issue of the *MUFON UFO Journal*, there is an article by Jaime Shandera titled "New Revelations About the Roswell Wreckage: a General Speaks Up." The article included an extensive two-part interview with General Thomas Dubose, who was a colonel and General Ramey's chief of staff in 1947. Dubose met the plane carrying the material picked up outside of Roswell and personally took it to Ramey's office. During the first of the two interviews, Shandera realized that General Dubose was not familiar with and had not seen the pictures taken of the debris in Ramey's office. Shandera then sent Dubose a set of the pictures, prior to conducting the second interview.

Throughout the two interviews, Shandera questioned Dubose with the doggedness of a district attorney, asking him nine times in nine different ways whether the debris had been switched. Nine times, General Dubose made it emphatically clear that the debris had not been switched. Among Dubose's responses were "We never switched anything... We were West Pointers — we would never have done that... I have damn good eyesight... I had charge of that material, and it was never switched." When shown the pictures from Ramey's office and asked if he recognized the material, he replied, "Oh yes. That's the material that Marcel brought in to Ft. Worth from Roswell."

In William Moore's book *The Roswell Incident*, Jesse Marcel, Sr., was interviewed about the debris. His responses were somewhat puzzling in that he indicated that the photos of him were of the actual debris, but that the later photos (without him) contained substituted material. Later photos with substituted debris (even if they existed) wouldn't really matter. If the debris in the photo with Major Marcel was the actual material, it was from an ML-307 radar reflector. Again, end of story.

Among Marcel's responses were "They took one picture of me on the floor holding up some of the less-interesting metallic debris.... The stuff in that one photo was pieces of the actual stuff we had found. It was not a staged photo."

During one of my interviews with Irving Newton, he mentioned how in Ramey's office, Marcel had pointed out the symbols and indicated that he (Marcel) thought they might be some form of alien writing. When I asked him if he was sure that it was Marcel who did that, Newton was emphatic that it was the man who "had collected the debris from the ranch." This is, of course, one further indication that the debris in Ramey's office was the debris from the Foster ranch. There was no substitution. The debris in the pictures was the same debris collected by Major Marcel at the Foster Ranch. It was the debris from an ML-307 radar reflector.

There is also an interesting quote in Moore's book from Marcel about the so-called indestructibility of the material. It sounds like this now-legendary indestructibility was actually more the kind of indestructibility that you would find in material from something like a tough, paper-backed foil. Marcel stated, "It was possible to flex this stuff back and forth, even wrinkle it, but you could

not put a crease in it that would stay, nor could you dent it at all. I would almost have to describe it as metal with plastic properties.”

One could also lay tough, paper-backed foil on the ground and pound away with a sledge hammer and quite possibly not dent it. Interestingly, the sledgehammer test was only hearsay, anyway. One of the airmen allegedly performed the test and told Marcel about it afterwards. This is possibly a good example of how rumors and myth begin. Besides, if this material was so indestructible, why did it break up into hundreds or thousands of little pieces? The real answer is, of course, that it was not so indestructible because it was from an ML-307 radar reflector that was apparently dragged across the ground as the balloon array descended.

The Witnesses

The testimony of the late Jesse Marcel, Sr., is probably the most important, as well as the most controversial, of the whole Roswell story. In essence, it forms the foundation around which the rest of the case is built. However, because the debris he recovered was not extraterrestrial, it could not have been what he said it was. That does not mean, however, that he did not believe it was extraterrestrial. In my opinion, it is very possible, if not highly probable, that he sincerely believed until the day he died that the material was something, as he once put it, “not of this earth.” A less-than-perfect memory of events so long ago, in combination with the suspicion on his part of a cover-up above his level of security or outside his need to know, makes such a scenario entirely plausible.

Unfortunately, because of minor, almost trivial, inconsistencies in some of the things Jesse Marcel, Sr., said, or is believed to have said, some have made caustic personal attacks against a man no longer around to defend himself — and who was, in all probability, telling the truth as he recalled it. I have now spoken with a number of men from the 509th Bomb Group who knew Major Marcel. All had nothing but the highest regard and respect for him.

Some of these attacks have been extended to Jesse Marcel, Jr., which I find astounding. As I have already mentioned, he is as sincere and honest as anyone I have ever known. Like his father before him, he served his country during time of war. Few people know it, but he was seriously injured during the Vietnam War when his helicopter was shot down, killing everyone else on board. Like all of us, Jesse might not have 100 percent perfect recall of every past event, but I would never question his word.

In a way, because the debris recovered outside of Roswell in 1947 was not extraterrestrial, none of the other witness testimony really matters. If the story of a highly unusual and totally unprecedented event is killed at the source, subsequent corroborating testimony goes out the window. For example, in the summer of 1993, a man from Seattle, Washington, made the unprecedented claim that he had found a hypodermic syringe inside a sealed can of Pepsi Cola. The story was picked up by the media, and within days there were copy-

cat claims against the Pepsi Cola Corporation all over the country. Unfortunately for those who jumped on the bandwagon, the original claim turned out to be false. Where did that leave the subsequent claimants? Out on a limb that had been cut off, and, in this particular case, facing up to \$250,000 in fines and five years in jail.

The testimony of some of the other Roswell witnesses has been all but validated in the public eye because of repeated media coverage. For this reason I will address a couple of cases.

Former mortician Glenn Dennis and the elusive nurse, Naomi Self, who supposedly witnessed alien autopsies at the base hospital is one of the best-known elements of the 1947 Roswell event. Although I know and like Glenn Dennis on a personal level, I have to say that his story has lost all credibility. Glenn, incidentally, has been fully aware of the fact that researchers have been spending time and resources in an effort to locate a “Naomi Self.”

There was already significant circumstantial evidence to indicate that no such nurse ever existed, when a diligent young researcher from Arizona, Vic Golubic, all but confirmed the fact. He located the records of the Cadet Nurse Corps, where all nurses for the military were trained during the mid-1940s. When Golubic checked with Dennis about the correct spelling of “Self” and informed him about the Cadet Nurse Corps records, Dennis changed his story, telling Golubic that Self was not really the correct last name after all. Dennis, without giving a good reason for not doing so, also refused to tell Golubic the “real” last name. Sorry, Glenn, end of story.

Both my father and I got to know Frank Kaufman very well and consider him a friend. However, as with Dennis, I have to say that in view of what we now know, there is no way that Kaufman’s fantastic tale of a crashed spaceship with alien bodies could have any basis in reality. According to Kaufman’s story, he was one of nine military men at the top-secret recovery operation 35 miles north of town. Other than Kaufman, the only other living member of the “original nine” was a General Robert Thomas.

The last time my father and I were in Roswell, Kaufman showed us some of his pictures, including one with him standing next to a brigadier general. My father asked Kaufman if that was Thomas, to which Kaufman replied in the affirmative. Unfortunately, my father, who spent 30 years in the Air Force, was unable to recognize the general. I later checked at the Air Force records center and learned that not only was there no living General Robert Thomas, but there never was a General Robert Thomas. On being confronted with this, Kaufman informed me that Thomas was really just a “code name.”

The final witness testimony that I will address is that concerning Oliver W. (Pappy) Henderson. Millions have seen the “Unsolved Mystery” broadcast about Roswell with the scene of Pappy Henderson in his flight suit, leaning over and inspecting one of several alien bodies laid out on a hangar floor just prior to their being flown to Wright Patterson. Henderson, who died in 1986, on seeing a tabloid headline and story about Roswell, apparently told his wife

that the story was true and that he had flown the wreckage and bodies to Wright Patterson. My best guess is that the testimony of Henderson's family years later was a case of memories of things read, or possibly seen in tabloid pictures, being blended or confused with memories of what Henderson may have actually said.

During my extensive conversations with pilots from the 509th, I spoke with several who knew Henderson and remembered his having discussed the incident. Apparently Henderson, a C-54 transport pilot at the time, did fly some of the debris out of Roswell, possibly to Wright Patterson. Jesse Mitchell, one of the 509th pilots at the time and a retired lieutenant colonel, told me that Henderson told him that he never saw the debris and he had no idea what it was. Mitchell was a good friend of Henderson's and almost decided to go into the roofing business with him in Roswell after Henderson left the service. Another former member of the 509th, Sam McIlhaney, also a retired lieutenant colonel who knew Henderson well, told me that they used to talk about the incident occasionally while sitting around in the hangar. According to McIlhaney, Henderson considered the whole matter a big joke and used to kid about it.

The Guardians of the Hangar

Researching Roswell is somewhat akin to prospecting, in that most of the time you spend countless hours and come up with nothing. Occasionally, however, you might hit pay dirt and come up with a real find. That happened with me during my polling of the pilots and navigators of the 509th, when I contacted Walter Klinikowski.

Klinikowski is one of the most interesting individuals with whom I have spoken during this entire Roswell endeavor. After my first conversation with Klinikowski, I soon learned from other members of the 509th Bomb Group that his piano playing was almost legendary. He told me that while in high school at age 15, unbeknown to his parents, he took his first professional job. The musician's union set him up in the pit band of a local burlesque theater, where he soon became acquainted with none other than the famous Gypsy Rose Lee.

As if his piano talent was not enough, Klinikowski later was sponsored by the Philadelphia Athletic Club as a potential member of the 1940 U.S. Olympic team. The war came along, however, and the games were never held. During World War II, he was a navigator on a B-17 — one of the highest risk jobs in the war. Following the war, after a couple of years of civilian life, Klinikowski was recalled to the service, where he joined the 509th Bomb Group at Roswell in May 1947. He stayed with the 509th until February 1953.

What makes Walter Klinikowski so important to the investigation of the Roswell case is not his time with the 509th, but what he did afterward. For 14 years, from 1960 until 1974, when he retired from the Air Force as a colonel, Walter Klinikowski was with the Foreign Technology Division (FTD) of the Air Materiel Command (AMC), based out of Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

(The FTD is now called the National Aerospace Intelligence Center.) From 1960 to 1964, he was “Deputy Director of Intelligence Collections,” and then later, after spending some time abroad as a liaison officer for the FTD, he returned to Wright Patterson as “Director of Foreign Activities” from 1970 until 1974.

The fact that wreckage of a crashed UFO would have been taken to the Foreign Technology Division of AMC at Wright Patterson Air Force Base for analysis is disputed by no one, to my knowledge. If that had been the case, Klinikowsky would have known about it, but he didn’t. Walter unequivocally assured me that there was no wreckage of a crashed flying saucer from Roswell or anywhere else at Wright Patterson. The rumors of the secret hangar and alien bodies are just that — rumors.

Klinikowski was kind enough to put me in touch with his former boss at the Foreign Technology Division, Walter Vitunac. Vitunac, who had actually been stationed at Roswell in the late 1940s, was the Director of Intelligence Collections at the Foreign Technology Division from 1957 until 1962. (The FTD was called the Air Technical Intelligence Center prior to 1961.) Like Klinikowsky, Vitunac found the matter of alien bodies and a crashed spaceship very humorous and was incredulous that so many people actually believe it.

After my conversations with Klinikowsky and Vitunac, Harry Cordes, a former 509th pilot and a retired brigadier general, suggested I call a former acquaintance of his, George Weinbrenner, who had also been at the FTD. I contacted Weinbrenner, who was more than accommodating, especially when he found out that I knew Walter Klinikowsky. Weinbrenner told me pretty much what I had already learned from Klinikowsky and Vitunac, but it was interesting talking to him, nonetheless. With respect to the crashed UFO subject, he also found it humorous and stated that “if something like that had happened, I would have known about it.” He certainly would have. George Weinbrenner was the *commander* of the Foreign Technology Division for six years (1968 until 1974).

I cannot state strongly enough that I have absolutely no doubt that these three men were telling me the truth. I repeat, no doubt. Those who want to rationalize away the facts by suggesting that these men are still participating in some super-long-term, massive cover-up might give some thought to the following. If there had been a crashed UFO, and for some reason it was still being kept secret, why on earth would these men waste inordinate amounts of their own time playing a ridiculous game of charades with me? They wouldn’t. There would be absolutely no reason for doing so. All they would have had to do, would have been to politely tell me they didn’t know anything, and leave it at that.

Klinikowsky, Vitunac, and Weinbrenner are all retired colonels. They all held important positions at the Foreign Technology Division at Wright Patterson. As such, they represent the ultimate source of information with regard to the crashed UFO question. This is the word “right from the horse’s

mouth,” the incontrovertible, irrefutable truth, the final confirmation — no alien bodies, no secret hangar, and no UFO crash at Roswell. Case closed.

A Red Herring

In essence, the 1947 Roswell case has turned out to be a red herring, diverting time and resources away from research into the real UFO phenomenon. Despite overwhelming facts to the contrary, there are those, however, who will fight to keep the myth alive at all cost. Roswell is a sacred cow for some, and a cash cow for others. Inevitably, there will be fierce opposition to much of what has been said in this article. I would be the last, however, to discourage rational and thoughtful response, for healthy debate and a free exchange of ideas are part of what makes our democratic system work.

Any complete and reasonable response by those who still contend that a UFO crashed at Roswell in 1947 will need to directly address the points below, each of which would have to be a true statement if such a crash occurred:

- A machine with unimaginable technological sophistication and consequent incredible reliability would have simply broken down and crashed.
- The only known wreckage from this sophisticated vehicle, capable of interstellar travel, would have consisted solely of a few short beams, pieces of foil-like material, and small pieces of thin plastic-like material.
- By incredible coincidence, the material from the crashed spaceship would have very closely resembled the material left by the radar reflectors from a balloon array that went down in the same general area a few weeks earlier.
- Despite the fact that this would have been the most spectacular event in recorded history, and despite the fact that word was already out that something had happened (because of Lt. Haut’s press release), there was absolutely no contemporary discussion or talk about such an earthshaking event among the pilots and navigators of the close-knit 509th Bomb Group.
- West Point graduate and retired general Thomas Dubose, would have to have lied nine times in an interview when he stated that the debris (definitely that from an ML-307 radar reflector) shown in the pictures in Ramey’s office was not substituted material and was the “real debris” recovered from the ranch northwest of Roswell.
- Major General C. P. Cabell, Director of Intelligence for the Air Force at the Pentagon, who prepared a report on the unidentified flying object situation for the Secretary of Defense, astoundingly, would have been preparing the report totally ignorant of the fact that the Air Force was in possession of a crashed flying saucer.

- Three retired Air Force colonels, all former top officials at the Foreign Technology Division at Wright Patterson Air Force base would have been lying to me — unnecessarily wasting inordinate amounts of their own personal time in a protracted game of charades.

We have now gotten to the heart of the story and established that the debris recovered from the Foster ranch and laid out on the Marcel kitchen floor was, except for some unusual symbols, of a very mundane nature. The following should then be asked of those still arguing the issue: How do you get a crashed alien spaceship out of such ordinary debris? What basis is there now for postulating the existence of a crashed UFO?

The Future

At the beginning of this article, I included a letter from a 6th-grade student, Lauren M., asking about Roswell and about information to help her prove that there are UFOs and aliens. My response to Lauren with respect to Roswell has already been made patently clear throughout this article. With respect to aliens, I would tell Lauren that probably only the most narrow-minded of people consider the earth as being the only place where there is intelligent life in the universe. The earth is but a small speck in a vast universe that is, according to current scientific thinking, most likely teeming with life — some of it probably far more intelligent than we are.

Incredibly, *New York Sun* editorial writer and former civil war correspondent Francis Pharcellus Church seemed to have a grasp on all of this a hundred years ago. In his timeless editorial to Virginia O'Hanlon he wrote "In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge."

UFOs or alien spacecraft, however, are another matter. While we don't yet have tangible evidence that alien spacecraft exist, there have been many intriguing sightings by credible people that seem to defy conventional explanation. Like the few brief tantalizing signals that have been picked up by the SETI program, the evidence for UFOs has not yet qualified as solid proof in the eyes of the scientific community. Perhaps that might come in Lauren's lifetime.

If such confirmation does come, it would represent one of the most remarkable events in human history. The long-contemplated philosophical and scientific question of whether we are alone in the universe would be answered once and for all with absolute finality. Perhaps most important of all, the knowledge that it is possible for a civilization to survive the growing pains of becoming technologically advanced, without completely destroying itself and its environment in the process, would provide a renewed hope for the future of life here on earth.