

PREFACE

The official government agency charged with investigating and evaluating reports of sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects has been, since July 1947, the United States Air Force. The first code name for this investigation was "Project Sign," which was set up on January 22, 1948. On February 11, 1949, it was renamed "Project Grudge." A formal report by Grudge was written at the end of that year (dated December 27, 1949), and the Air Force also issued, on that date, a press release headlined "Project Saucer Discontinued" (Project "Saucer" was the name used for press purposes to designate both Sign and Grudge).

This press release, widely published, allowed the public to believe that the Air Force, having explained most UFO sightings to its own satisfaction, was no longer interested in collecting and evaluating reports. In actual fact, however, Project Grudge was still in operation, permitted to exist in a kind of limbo of skepticism. As a result of several significant sightings in September 1951, however, a "new Grudge" was established the following month, and in March 1952 the project received its third and now familiar name, Project Blue Book.

From September 1951 through September 1953 the project was headed by Captain Edward J. Ruppelt. His well-known book, The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, published in 1956, presents a great deal of important background information and recounts the history of some of the most important investigations undertaken by Blue Book during his tenure, a period which included the great UFO sighting wave of summer 1952.

From November 1951 through September 1953 the project staff prepared one Special Report and twelve "Status Reports." The Status Reports were written at the end of each month, with a few time lapses, as shown in the Table of Contents. The security classification of "Confidential" was given to Special Report No. 1 and Status Reports Nos. 1, 2, 3, 8 & 9. Status Reports Nos. 4 - 7 and 10 - 12 were "Secret."

There seems to have been no Report No. 13, but a lengthy document released in 1955 was well-publicized: "Project Blue Book Report No. 14." This 315-page document, dated May 5 and released in October, had been prepared by an outside organization, under an Air Force contract with its own code name, Project Stork. It tabulated and analyzed the UFO sighting reports made during the six-year period 1947 - 1952 which had been reported to the Air Force. The report was an imposing production, but even without its 240 tables it was far too long to be studied and digested by newspapermen, and the Air Force issued a press release that described the report and emphasized the points that the Air Force considered most important. Classified "For Official