

UFO Related Information from the FBI File

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GREEN FIREBALLS

From sources other than the FBI file we know that by the fall of 1947 the Air Force Intelligence had decided that "flying discs" were real objects^{10, 52} (see also the undated, unsigned paper in the FBI file which is reproduced verbatim in the section "The FBI Retreats"). Later, in the summer of 1948 a dominant feeling of the intelligence group working on the UFO reports was that they were extraterrestrial. This caused them to write the "legendary" estimate of the situation mentioned by Ruppelt^{10, 21} in which they argued that the discs were extraterrestrial. When this "estimate" met with disfavor at the hands of Gen. Vandenberg, the intelligence group began to tend toward explaining things away in any manner possible. Also, as a result of the standard military procedure of transferring officers from place to place, and because of natural attrition involving tours of duty, the personnel in the intelligence group began to change considerably. The new personnel were apparently not as impressed with the reports obtained in 1947 and 1948, and so were not as likely to accept new reports as accurate descriptions of real phenomena. Thus they found it easier to explain reports by ignoring certain aspects of the reports and by stretching mundane explanations (e.g., balloons, birds, etc.) to the limit of their credibility. Consequently, by the end of 1948 the idea that disc reports might be a manifestation of a truly new phenomenon was in disfavor, and investigations of such reports were handled in a very low-key manner. However, in December of 1948 green fireballs began "threatening" certain highly restricted areas in the southwestern United States. Reports of these fireballs were made by many credible individuals, so by the end of December, it was clear that a real phenomenon was being observed. The intelligence group that had been investigating flying discs was now given another job: to find out what the green fireballs were and why they seemed to be concentrated over certain areas. Moreover, the FBI was brought back into the picture because of their interest in the protection of vital installations. The story of the fireball investigations (Project Grudge and Project Twinkle) can be found in detail elsewhere^{53, 54, 55, 56}. I will present here information

received by the FBI which indicates how the AF "felt" about these phenomena.⁵⁷

The first document relating to the green fireballs is dated Jan. 31, 1949, and it was filed under the heading "Protection of Vital Installations, Bureau File No. 65-58300". Because it provides a good overview of the green fireball-disc situation through January 1949, I will reproduce it in full:

"At recent Weekly Intelligence Conferences of G-2, OSI, and F.B.I., in the Fourth Army Area, Officers of G-2, Fourth Army have discussed the matter of 'Unidentified Aircraft' or 'Unidentified Aerial Phenomena' otherwise known as 'Flying Discs', 'Flying Saucers' and 'Balls of Fire'. This matter is considered top secret by Intelligence Officers of both the Army and the Air Forces." (This sentence was underlined in the original copy by the FBI agent who wrote it.)

"It is well known that there have been during the past two years reports from the various parts of the country of the sighting of unidentified aerial objects which have been called in newspaper parlance 'flying discs' and 'flying saucers'. The first such reported from Sweden, and it was thought that the objects, the nature of which was unknown, might have originated in Russia."

"In July 1948 an unidentified aircraft was 'seen' by an Eastern Airlines Pilot and Co-Pilot and one or more passengers of the Eastern Airlines plane over Montgomery, Alabama. (note: Chiles-Whitted Case, July 24, 1948) This aircraft was reported to be of unconventional type without wings and resembled generally a 'rocket ship' of the type depicted in comic strips. It was reported to have had windows; to have been larger than the Eastern Airlines plane, and to have been traveling at an estimated speed of 2700 miles an hour. It appeared out of a thunderhead ahead of the Eastern Airlines plane and immediately disappeared in another cloud narrowly missing a collision with the Eastern Airlines plane. No sound or air disturbance was noted in connection with this appearance."

"During the past two months various sightings of unexplained phenomena have been reported in the vicinity of the A.E.C. Installation at Los Alamos, New Mexico, where these phenomena now appear to be concentrated. During December 1948 on the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 20th and 28th sightings of unexplained phenomena were made near Los Alamos by Airline Pilots; Military Pilots, Los Alamos Security Inspectors, and private citizens. On January 6, 1949, another similar object was sighted in the same area."

"Dr. Lincoln La Paz, a Meteorologist (sic) of some note, has been generally in charge of the observations near Los Alamos, attempting to learn characteristics of the unexplained phenomena."

"Up to this time little concrete information has been obtained."