

the General's satisfaction, Cummings and Rosengarten, according to *BLUE BOOK Project Files*, were sent back to ATIC with orders to revitalize Project GRUDGE. The Air Force was once again committed to the quest.

Project BLUE BOOK

With Air Force interest renewed, the UFO activity was again made a separate group within ATIC. In March 1952 it was designated the Aerial Phenomena Group and acquired the code name BLUE BOOK. Business doubled, from about 10 UFO reports per month in December 1951 to 20 per month by April 1952. An article in the 7 April 1952 issue of *Life* magazine also revived the extraterrestrial hypothesis. About this time the first of the amateur UFO study organizations to function on a national scale was formed. The Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) was founded and is still run by Jim and Carol Lorenzen of Tuscon, Arizona. The second major U.S. organization, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), was started in Washington, D.C., several years later by Major Keyhoe, author of the *True* article and several flying saucer books. BLUE BOOK files note nearly 50 private UFO organizations existing in the late 1950s, but it was mainly APRO and NICAP that were to cause the Air Force considerable grief in the years ahead.

For the first time, the U.S. government issued detailed written instructions on UFO investigative procedures. However, these documents themselves provoked controversy. JANAP-146, "Canadian-United States Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings," spells out the procedures to be followed when reporting information of vital interest to the security of the U.S. or Canada. The JANAP-146 controversy stems from its inclusion of UFOs in the same class as the discovery of hostile aircraft and missiles, as examples of occurrences requiring very urgent defensive or investigative action. Some people have interpreted this as a refutation of the Air Force's claim that UFOs pose no threat to national security.

The other government directive to cause considerable controversy was AFR 200-2, "Unidentified Flying Objects." This regulation required Base Commanders to report all UFO sightings by message to Project BLUE BOOK and the Pentagon. Two paragraphs were the culprits. First:

c. Reduction of Percentage of UFO "Unidentifieds." Air Force

activities must reduce the percentage of unidentifieds to the minimum.

A cursory reading of the above paragraph could lead one to conclude that the Air Force was only interesting in explaining away all reports. The second controversial paragraph was:

10. . . Air Force personnel, other than those of the Office of Information, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, will not contact private individuals on UFO cases, nor will they discuss their operations and functions with unauthorized persons unless so directed, and then only on a "need-to-know" basis.

Interpreters critical of the Air Force claimed that this paragraph was outright censorship as well as intimidation of Air Force personnel. The Air Force, on the other hand, stated that it simply was trying to prevent unofficial speculation about UFO reports by its members.

In 1952, Project BLUE BOOK was again elevated on ATIC's organizational chart from a group to a special section. The project was assigned five officers—two airmen and two civilians—and could count on the consulting services of three Stanford Research Institute scientists as well as Dr. J. Allen Hynek, then head of the Ohio State University Astronomy Department. This was the largest UFO organization the Air Force ever had. For most of its existence, the total Air Force effort consisted of one or two officers, one enlisted man, and one secretary. In his recent book, *The UFO Experience*, Dr. Hynek says that BLUE BOOK was popularly regarded as a "full-fledged, serious operation." He says, "The public perhaps envisioned a spacious, well-staffed office with rows of file cabinets, a computer terminal for querying the UFO data bank, and groups of scientists quietly studying reports, attended by a staff of assistants." Actually, Hynek claims, the "situation was unfortunately the opposite." In general, an officer of lesser rank headed the operation and at one time a sergeant with little technical training was evaluating most of the reports. Hynek says that "much of the work in the office was devoted to peripheral matters, all done at a leisurely pace. . . ." He claims that in his many years of association with BLUE BOOK, he cannot recall "even one serious discussion of methodology, of improving the process of data gathering or of techniques of comprehensive interrogation of witnesses."

Project BLUE BOOK personnel should have been extremely busy during the summer of 1952. There were more than 500 UFO sightings reported in July alone—a record high for any month in Air Force annals. Of all the cases reported that

month, none was as spectacular or as well publicized as the Washington National Airport Incident. Because of these puzzling sightings so near the nation's capital, the Air Force held its first—and last—national press conference on UFOs.

Shortly before midnight on 19 July 1952, radar units at National Airport picked up eight UFOs near Andrews AFB, ten miles southeast. To the senior traffic controller on duty, the targets looked like a formation of slow aircraft, until a sudden burst of speed caused two to streak out of radar range. The senior controller called in two more men and all agreed that these were no aircraft.

The mystery intensified when the controller at Andrews also reported unidentified targets on his scope and a Capitol Airlines pilot, having just taken off from National, reported a visual sighting which was verified on radar by the control tower. Shortly after the excitement had begun, a call went out to Dover AFB, Delaware, for Air Force interceptors. For some unexplained reason, it was daylight before one F-94 arrived and by that time the UFOs were gone.

Air Force Intelligence was caught by surprise. In the furor created by the sightings, no one bothered to tell the Pentagon, but word got to the press. When queried, Air Force Headquarters could provide no details and simply said, "No comment," thereby ending Phase I of the National Airport Incident.

Phase II began on 26 July 1952, when at about 10:30 p.m., the same National Airport radar operators who had seen the UFOs the week before picked up similar slow-moving targets. As though it were an instant replay, the radar at Andrews AFB showed the same unknown tracks.

Once again a hurried call went out to Dover AFB, and again the targets disappeared by the time the interceptors arrived. Then, as if they were playing some bizarre game, the UFOs reappeared as soon as the jets left the area. Again the jets roared southward. This time, however, the UFOs remained on the radar scopes as the interceptors approached. The controllers vectored the jets toward the targets, but before they could get close enough to see anything more than lights, the objects sped away. After a futile 20 minute search of the area, the aircraft, running low on fuel, returned to their home base.

Because of the uproar created by the Washington press, the Air Force decided to hold a press conference on 29 July presided over by the Director of Intelligence, Maj. Gen. John Samford. A careful reading of the transcript indicates that Samford made an honest effort to straighten out the Washington National