

FRIENDS OR FOES?: THOSE INVISIBLE SQUADRONS OVERHEAD

IN 1955 or 1956, around the time when *FSR* was established (Spring 1955), a former officer in the Free Polish Armed Forces, who was then working in a Service Intelligence post in Whitehall, informed a consultant of *FSR*, in very strict confidence, that he had learned something extraordinary from a wartime colleague — also Polish — who was currently engaged in secret technical work for the Royal Air Force. This man's story was that RAF radar personnel had been detecting the presence of huge, invisible, seemingly metallic, objects moving about in formation through the skies over London.

Although the matter was said to be considered highly secret, it had in fact already been leaked in one British newspaper, the *Sunday Dispatch* (now defunct), as early as 1954. And in due course the report made its way into the pages of *FSR*, which carried this item in Volume 2, No. 5 (September/October 1956):-

Unanswered questions...the mid-day "U" blips

The London *Sunday Dispatch* on November 17, 1954, had the sensational front-page headline, "STRANGE SIGHTS IN SKY BAFFLE WAR OFFICE". Six times in the previous few weeks a strange pattern of "blips" had appeared on inland radar screens in Britain. Neither the War Office, which controls inland radar, nor the Air Ministry could say what they were.

The "blips" usually appeared about midday from nowhere, *flying at about 12,000 ft.* in an east-to-west direction.

They would first appear in a "U", or badly-shaped hairpin, formation. After a time they converged into parallel lines and then formed into a "Z" formation before disappearing.

The objects were invisible to the human eye, but on the radar screen their "blips" represented between 40 and 50 echoes. They covered a wide area in the sky.

A War Office spokesman said they always followed the same pattern. He said they had checked and found their sets were not faulty. All their sets in the area had picked the objects up.

The *Sunday Dispatch* reporter spoke to one man who had seen them, who affirmed he had been given very high-level orders to keep the utmost secrecy.

"And even if I did know what they are, I am too worried myself to say anything," he said.

The Air Ministry said there are many objects, such as meteorological balloons, experimental aircraft, carrier-pigeons with metal rings on their legs, and

even toy kites, which could form an image on a radar screen.

However, radar operators know all about those things, and none of them causes such similar patterns as were produced on six different days by the "blips" in question.

WHAT WERE THESE UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS? Both the War Office and the Air Ministry have remained strangely silent since these remarkable newspaper disclosures.

This report interested me greatly at the time, since it put me in mind of a very similar account of invisible "blips" in formation, of which I had heard rumours some years previously, due to my own connections with the Far East.

The earlier episode had occurred in June 1945, during the final stage of the Pacific War against Japan.

The aircraft from two American carriers were engaged in attacking the Japanese air-bases on the Nansei-Shoto Islands (Ryuku Islands) in order to pin them down while the main American invasion force stormed ashore at Okinawa. It was a bright day, with clouds scattered at 5,000 ft. In the Combat Information Centres aboard the two carriers the officers could see on their radarscopes all their escorting cruisers and destroyers round about and all their aircraft in the air for a radius of a hundred miles around. All the planes from the two carriers were engaged in the operations against Nansei-Shoto except for twelve (four in the air above the Task Force and four on each of the two carriers' flight-decks.)

Suddenly a huge "blob" appeared on the radarscopes, coming towards the Task Force from the North-East *at a height of 12,000 ft.* and travelling at a speed of almost 700 m.p.h. (which was far more than any terrestrial aircraft could do in 1945).

As it approached, the "blob" resolved itself into what looked like between 200 and 300 "aircraft". The American Intelligence authorities knew that, in June 1945, Japan no longer possessed so many as 200 aircraft *of any sort* that were in any shape to *fly*, at any sort of speed — let alone at supersonic speed like this!

Quickly the Americans put up their eight remaining propellor-driven fighters to take up positions above 12,000 ft., and sat in their ships grimly awaiting the worst.

Registering clearly on the radarscopes, the huge squadron of "bogies" passed silently over the Task Force. Neither the U.S. personnel aboard the ships nor the pilots of their twelve fighters at above 12,000 ft. were able to see a thing.

In U.S. Navy records the case is known as "*The Ghosts of Nansei-Shoto*". A good account of the affair will be found in Major Donald E. Keyhoe's *THE FLYING SAUCER CONSPIRACY* (New York, 1957, Brit-

ish edition by Hutchinsons of London, also in 1957). Much effort and money have been expended on the "debunking" and discrediting of the pioneer investigator Donald Keyhoe. All Keyhoe's books should therefore continue to be consulted by those who desire to know the history of the early years of UFO research, but here in Britain it is likely to be pretty difficult to find his books, as a splendid hatchet-job has been done in so many of the public libraries. — G.C.

MORE ON THE VANCOUVER ISLAND UFO PHOTO

W. K. Allan

As will be recalled, it was Mr W. K. Allan of Kelowna, British Columbia, who sent us the Vancouver Island photograph which we reproduced in *FSR* Vol. 29, No. 2. He has now given us this interesting further report on the background to the case, and on the investigations.

As a piece of advance promotion for their programme on UFOs scheduled for this spring, the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium in Vancouver had sponsored a contest for "UFO Photographs", which made, however, no requirement that they be genuine.

Mrs Hannah McRobert's photo was entered, but was ignored and passed over, as probably a "*Frisbee*".

However, David Powell, one of the Administrators of the Planetarium, questioned that judgement, and sent the negative to me.

He had an enlargement made for me, which I took with me to the MUFON Symposium at Pasadena, California, on July 1-3, 1983. There it was seen by Dr Richard F. Haines. (†)

Dr Haines borrowed the negative, and then visited the McRoberts family and also the site where the photograph had been taken (in a rest area some thirty miles to the north of Kelsey Bay, on the east coast of Vancouver Island, in the first half of October 1981).

Dr Haines' father, a professional surveyor, laid out a 720-foot base-line along highway 19 to determine the distance between the position of the photographer and the mountain peak shown in the picture. This worked out at 7,580 feet slant and 6,910 feet horizontal distance, with an elevation angle of 124.17 degrees on October 8, 1983, the exact anniversary of the photo. (Corrected to October 8, 1981, from the previously published date recollected by Mrs McRoberts as "between October 10 and October 15, 1981".)

As his next step, Dr Haines obtained profiles and surface reflection characteristics of the "*Frisbees*" (registered trademark) available prior to October 8, 1981, and found that they could not reproduce the reflected highlights shown in the photo when the Sun's rays beamed down at 59.7 degrees off vertical.

(At the moment when the photo was taken, Mr McRoberts had been bantering with his wife, implying that she couldn't take the picture simultaneously

straight and in focus, and this may account for their not having noticed the UFO in the sky.)

Dr Haines, who had asked me to convey these important further details to you, has copyrighted his results, which include sophisticated computer analysis of the pixels in a greatly enlarged colour copy. The dome of the UFO becomes almost invisible when printed in blue-green light, so it is transparent to it.

To sum up: the negative passes every test for genuineness that has been applied to it.

(†) A NASA scientist who, as we were happy to announce in our Vol. 28, No. 6, is now one of *FSR*'s Consultants, and who is the author of our lead-story in the present issue. EDITOR.

**DO NOT FAIL TO
SPEAK TO YOUR
FRIENDS AND GET AS
MANY NEW READERS
AS POSSIBLE**

**UFO JOURNALS
ELSEWHERE ARE
GOING UNDER. DO
NOT LET IT HAPPEN
HERE!**