

Roswell: The whole story Time for the truth about Roswell

By Kent Jeffrey

Forty-seven years ago, an incident occurred in the southwestern desert of the United States that could have significant implications for all mankind. The incident was announced by the U.S. military, subsequently denied by the U.S. military, and has remained veiled in government secrecy ever since. Although it is in a category fraught with false claims and hoaxes, it is not a hoax or false claim, but rather a known event that is thoroughly documented. It is the objective here to summarize the details of that event, affirm the right of all people throughout the world to know the truth about what occurred, and propose a course of action that will allow that truth to emerge.

The event took place during the first week of July 1947 and involved the recovery of wreckage by the military from a remote ranch northwest of Roswell, New Mexico. There is now considerable testimony from former members of the military known to have been involved, including two brigadier generals, that the recovered material was not of terrestrial origin. Admittedly, such a claim taxes the limits of credibility for discerning and rational individuals. It also tends to evoke a response of immediate dismissal. The preponderance of evidence, however, indicates the event occurred.

On January 12, 1994, United States Congressman Steven Schiff of Albuquerque, New Mexico, stated to the press that he had been stonewalled by the Defense Department when requesting information regarding the 1947 Roswell event on behalf of constituents and witnesses. Indicating he was seeking further investigation into the matter, Congressman Schiff called the Defense Department's lack of response "astounding" and concluded it was apparently "another government coverup."

Most people are not aware that there exists an event of this nature so well substantiated. In the next year public awareness of the Roswell incident should grow. A new hardcover book has been released, a television movie will premiere, and a serious documentary is forthcoming. Questions, controversy, and a general distrust of U.S. government policy in this area are bound to increase.

Detailed information on the recovery of the wreckage at Roswell and of related events is extensive. Some years ago investigators were able to obtain a copy of the 1947 Roswell Army Air Field yearbook. This enabled them to locate witnesses throughout the country. Newspaper accounts show that during late June and early July 1947, there was a wave of reports of "flying disks" (UFOs) throughout the United States and Canada. Many of those reports came from credible witnesses, including pilots and other trained observers.

Sometime during the first week of July 1947, a local New Mexico rancher, Mac Brazel, while riding out in the morning to check his sheep after a night of intense thunderstorms, discovered a considerable amount of unusual debris. It had created a shallow gouge several hundred feet long and was scattered over a large area. Some of the debris had strange physical properties. After taking a few pieces to

show his neighbors, Floyd and Loretta Proctor, Brazel drove into Roswell and contacted the sheriff, George Wilcox. Sheriff Wilcox notified authorities at Roswell Army Air Field and with the assistance of his deputies, proceeded to investigate the matter. Shortly after becoming involved, the military closed off the area for a number of days and retrieved the wreckage. It was initially taken to Roswell Army Air Field and eventually flown by B-29 and C-54 aircraft to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio.

Roswell Army Air Field was the home of the 509th Bomb Group, which was an elite outfit--the only atomic group in the world. On the morning of July 8, 1947, Colonel William Blanchard, Commander of the 509th Bomb Group, issued a press release stating that the wreckage of a "crashed disk" (UFO) had been recovered. The press release was transmitted over the wire services in time to make headlines in over thirty U.S. afternoon newspapers that same day.

Within hours, a second press release was issued from the office of General Roger Ramey, Commander of the Eighth Air Force at Fort Worth Army Air Field in Texas, 400 miles from the crash site. It rescinded the first press release and, in effect, claimed that Colonel Blanchard and the officers of the 509th Bomb Group at Roswell had made an unbelievably foolish mistake and somehow incorrectly identified a weather balloon and its radar reflector as the wreckage of a "crashed disk."

One of those two press releases had to be untrue. There is now solid testimony from numerous credible military and civilian witnesses who were directly involved, that the "crashed disk" press release issued by Colonel William Blanchard of the 509th Bomb Group from Roswell was true and that the subsequent "weather balloon" press release from Eighth Air Force Headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, was a hastily contrived cover story.

Those who knew and worked with William Blanchard say he was a solid, no-nonsense, businesslike individual, and not someone who would make a fool of himself and the Air Force by ordering a press release about something as out of the ordinary and dramatic as the event at Roswell without being certain he was correct. In other words, if Blanchard issued a press release saying there was a crashed disk, there was a crashed disk. Colonel William Blanchard would later go on to become a four-star general and Vice Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force.

The first witness located by investigators who was willing to testify and allow his name to be used was retired Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Marcel, the intelligence officer of the 509th Bomb Group at Roswell. He was a highly competent individual and one of the first two military officers at the actual crash site. In a 1979 videotaped interview, Jesse Marcel stated, ". . . it was no! a weather balloon, nor was it an airplane or a missile." As to the exotic properties of some of the material, he stated, "It would not burn . . . that stuff weighs nothing, it's so thin, it isn't any thicker than the tinfoil in a pack of cigarettes. So, I tried to bend the stuff. It wouldn't bend. We even tried making a dent in it with a sixteen-pound sledge hammer. And there was still no dent in it."

It is inconceivable that a man of Jesse Marcel's qualifications and experience, the intelligence officer of the only atomic-bomb group in the world, would have mistaken any kind of conventional wreckage, much less the remains of a weather balloon and its radar reflector, for that of a craft or vehicle that in his words was

"not of this earth. " Even if he had initially made such a gross misidentification, he would certainly have been able to see his mistake later after it had been brought to his attention. When returning to the base, he stopped by his house with a few pieces of the unusual wreckage to show his wife and eleven-year-old son. One piece, a small section of I-beam, had strange hieroglyphic like symbols on its surface. His son, Dr. Jesse Marcel, Jr., now a practicing medical doctor and qualified National Guard helicopter pilot and flight surgeon, remembers the incident well. He has been able to produce detailed drawings of some of the symbols. During his career, Jesse Marcel Sr., went on to other important assignments, including the preparation of a report on the first Soviet nuclear detonation, which went directly to President Truman.

The late General Thomas DuBose was a colonel and General Ramey's chief of staff at Eighth Air Force Headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1947. Before his death in 1992, General DuBose testified that he himself had taken the telephone call from General Clements McMullen at Andrews Army Air Field in Washington, D.C., ordering the coverup. The instructions were for General Ramey to concoct a "cover story" to "get the press off our backs."

Retired General Arthur E. Exon was stationed at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, as a lieutenant colonel in July of 1947 during the time the wreckage from Roswell was brought in. In a 1990 interview, General Exon said of the testing, "Everything from chemical analysis, stress tests, compression tests, flexing. It was brought into our material evaluation labs. (Some of it) could be easily ripped or changed . . . there were other parts of it that were very thin but awfully strong and couldn't be dented with heavy hammers. . . ." Of the men that did the testing, he said, ". . . the overall consensus was that the pieces were from space."

The testimony of Mr. Glenn Dennis leaves little doubt about the nature of what was recovered in 1947. Glenn Dennis still lives in the Roswell, New Mexico, area and is a respected businessman and member of the community. He is down-to-earth and straightforward. In 1947 Glenn Dennis was a young mortician working for the Ballard Funeral Home, which had a contract to provide mortuary and ambulance services for Roswell Army Air Field.

Prior to learning about the recovery of the unusual wreckage at Roswell, he received several telephone calls one afternoon from the mortuary officer at the air field. He was asked about the availability of small, hermetically sealed caskets and questioned about how to preserve bodies that had been exposed to the elements for several days. There was concern about possibly altering the chemical composition of the tissue.

Later that evening, as a result of unrelated events, he made a trip to the base hospital. Outside the back entrance, he observed two military ambulances with open rear doors, from which large pieces of wreckage protruded, including one with a row of unusual symbols on its surface. Once inside, he encountered a young nurse whom he knew. At that same instant, he was noticed by military police, who physically threatened him and forcibly escorted him from the building.

He met with the nurse the next day, and she explained what had been going on at the hospital. She was a very religious person and was upset to the point of being in a state of shock. She described how she had been called in to assist two doctors

who were doing autopsies on several small nonhuman bodies. She described the terrible smell, how one body was in good shape and the others mangled, and the differences between their anatomy and human anatomy. She also drew a diagram on a napkin showing an outline of their features. That meeting was to be their last-- she was transferred to England a few days later.

The main part of the craft apparently came down some distance from the "debris field" at the Brazel ranch. Researchers were only recently able to confirm this second site because few people knew about it. According to witness testimony, this is also the site where the bodies were found. Most of the witnesses to this site have not, in fear of government reprisal, allowed their names to be used. A prestigious law firm has recently been retained to provide legal counsel to any such witnesses who might consider going public with their testimony. Attorneys from the firm have already met with several Roswell witnesses.

In addition to Glenn Dennis, other witnesses were physically threatened or intimidated. According to members of Sheriff Wilcox's family, he was told by the military, in the presence of his wife, that he and his entire family would be killed if he ever spoke about what he had seen. The rancher who originally discovered the wreckage, Mac Brazel, was sequestered by the military for almost a week and sworn to secrecy. He never spoke about the incident again, even to his family. In the months following the incident, his son, Bill Brazel, found and collected a few "scraps" of material, which he kept in a cigar box. The material was eventually confiscated by the military.

Despite the fact that there has been publicity about the Roswell case since 1980, no witness involved in the recovery has ever come forward to corroborate the "weather balloon" story or to provide some other explanation for the wreckage, such as a V2 missile or experimental aircraft. (Both possibilities have been thoroughly checked out and eliminated.) If there had been a more mundane explanation for the unusual debris, it seems certain someone would have come forward with it by now.

While it is possible that the Roswell witnesses, who live in diverse parts of the country, have been engaged in a perfectly orchestrated, long-term hoax with no clear motive, it is unlikely. It is true there are a few minor gaps and inconsistencies in some of the accounts, but that is to be expected. There were many individuals involved and it has been a long period of time. Human memory is not perfect. For those familiar with the Roswell evidence, however, it would be hard to imagine a scenario in which the core event is not true.

With Roswell so well documented, the question that arises is why the mainstream media has not pursued the story. Two factors stand out. The first is that of a negative mindset. There is a tendency in human nature to resist anything that challenges our preconceived perceptions of reality. In most cases, such an attitude serves us well and manifests itself as a healthy skepticism. In other instances, it may result in a close-minded refusal by otherwise intelligent people to consider compelling evidence--especially when that evidence seems to defy common sense or prevailing scientific theory. Many past revelations of science, for example, have met such resistance--a round earth, evolution, relativity, continental drift, quantum theory, an expanding universe--to name a few.

The second and most damaging factor is ridicule. Unfortunately, UFOs have long

been associated with tabloid stories, hoaxes, and the "lunatic fringe." In addition, people tend to put UFOs in the same category as ghosts, mysticism, magic, and other forms of the occult or the supernatural. As a result, anything even remotely related to the area of UFOs is a difficult subject to broach without risking a loss of credibility. Consequently, members of the mainstream media rarely approach the subject, much less treat it with any degree of seriousness or depth. No one wants to make himself an easy target for cynicism or ridicule.

Moreover, it is not necessary to resort to the supernatural to explain UFOs any more than it is necessary to resort to the supernatural to explain the Space Shuttle. UFOs could probably best be looked upon as an extrapolation of where our own technology might be thousands of years from now. A television, jet aircraft, or nuclear bomb would have seemed magical or supernatural to a person from the Middle Ages. Similarly, by virtue of the fact that they apparently violate the laws of known physics, UFOs are perceived by us as an aberration of reality. They are, however, probably quite explainable under laws of science we aren't even close to discovering yet.

Further exacerbating the credibility problem has been the extreme negative position taken by the U.S. government. Almost everyone has heard pronouncements from government officials claiming there is no evidence to support the existence of UFOs or extraterrestrial intelligence. Ironically, no matter how high their rank or position, those touting this line may be uninformed, yet telling the truth as they know it. With the U.S. government's high degree of compartmentalization and need-to-know philosophy, chances are that few agencies or individuals would be briefed on or have access to such information.

Agencies in which something might be known, such as the CIA, have refused to cooperate with investigators. When seeking Roswell or UFO-related documents through the Freedom of Information Act, researchers have been repeatedly stonewalled. Claims are made that documents don't exist or can't be released for national security reasons. The few documents that have been released have often been so blacked out that they are rendered meaningless.

By way of contrast, in 1991 the Belgian Ministry of Defense released radar tapes from two Belgian Air Force F-16s that had been scrambled to pursue a UFO detected by four ground-based radar stations and seen by numerous citizens and by police. The tape was impressive--showing digital readouts of incredible altitude and speed changes made by the UFO. Under present government policy, it is hard to imagine such a scenario ever taking place in the United States. Perhaps the world's greatest democracy could learn a few things about a free and open society from its small NATO ally.

There was actually hope at one time that U.S. policy might change. It came when Jimmy Carter was elected President in 1976. In October 1969 while Governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter had reported a UFO sighting. Later, in 1976 as a presidential candidate, he pledged: "If I become president, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFOs available to the public and the scientists." He then somewhat mystifyingly never said one more word about it publicly after taking office. If he found there was no information to release, why did he not announce it? Doing so would have been a natural and easy way to honor his commitment.

Why the U.S. government defiantly maintains there is nothing to the UFO phenomenon and why it would want to withhold evidence of extraterrestrial intelligence remain a matter of speculation. Three possible reasons have been suggested: fear of mass panic, perceived national security problems, and concern about offending religious groups. Whether arguments in any of these areas have merit is questionable. Most would agree, however, that whatever reasons there may be for withholding such information, they are far outweighed by those for releasing it.

The classic argument for government withholding of information on extraterrestrial intelligence from the public is that it might cause a response similar to that of the famous 1938 Orson Welles "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast. (The program featured a simulated news broadcast announcing an attack by Martians on Grover's Mill, New Jersey, which panicked a small number of listeners who had tuned in late.) The argument, however, is flawed and the comparison is invalid. It is not realistic to compare a simulated emergency news broadcast graphically describing a devastating, ongoing attack or invasion to a low-key, formal announcement confirming that other intelligent life exists in the universe and occasionally visits earth.

Furthermore, we are nearly 35 years into the Space Age and at the brink of the 21st century. This is a generation that until recently lived for years under the threat of nuclear destruction and that now must deal with such threats as AIDS, rising rates of violent crime, international terrorism, etc. The possibility that the confirmation of extraterrestrial intelligence would cause mass panic in this day and age is so remote that it hardly merits mention.

The arguments for maintaining secrecy based on national security are just as specious as those based on mass panic. Assuming the wreckage the military retrieved from Roswell was that of an extraterrestrial craft, it would be understandable that the U.S. Government would want to reverse-engineer the technology. It would be reasonable that the government would want to keep certain details of that technology secret. As with any technology with the potential for misuse, such precaution would be prudent and justified. However, the very existence of such a craft would have profound implications. The mere knowledge by the public of that existence would not pose any kind of threat. Denying the public such knowledge would not be justified and would be an abuse of the power entrusted to those who oversee the country's national security.

When the Carter campaign pledge was not carried out, it was speculated that concern about offending certain religious groups was the reason. If true, it would represent a violation of the principle of separation of church and state. It would also be placing the interests of a small minority above those of the majority.

Like the discoveries of Darwin and Copernicus, the Roswell evidence could have implications that challenge certain religious doctrines. Darwin's theory that there could be fossil evidence linking modern man and other present-day higher primates to a common primate ancestor conflicted with the creationist view on the exalted position of man with respect to other forms of life. Likewise, the Roswell evidence, which would imply the existence of a superior nonhuman intelligence, could be seen as equally threatening to the creationist viewpoint. It could be interpreted as implying that on a scale comparing the evolutionary development of different

advanced species throughout the universe, human beings may not rate very high. Such a humbling realization might bother some people, but probably not most.

Copernicus' finding that the earth along with the other planets circled the sun contradicted the teachings of the time that the earth was the center of creation. That notion persists today in that many perceive the earth to be the center of intelligent life in the universe. The Roswell evidence could dispel such an ethnocentric view by confirming that the human race is just one single member in a large community of other intelligent races in the universe. Specific effects, if any, that such a revelation might have on society would be purely a matter of speculation. Generally, however, when knowledge replaces ignorance, the long-term result is positive. There is no reason to think that that would not be the case here. If nothing else, 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 in a sense provide a renewed hope for the future of man and his environment.

Despite the media's inattention to the matter, and contrary to what some in the U.S. government would like people to think, Roswell is not a figment of someone's imagination or the product of modern folklore. It involves real people and a real event. The man who issued the press release announcing that event, Colonel William Blanchard, was not someone prone to making mistakes, much less monumental blunders. He would go on to achieve the highest peacetime rank attainable in the U.S. military, four-star general. Credible witnesses, including retired generals, have testified that the original press release issued by Blanchard was correct and that the Roswell wreckage was of extraterrestrial origin. A United States Congressman was recently stonewalled by the Defense Department on the matter and has expressed his belief that there is a coverup. Yet the U.S. government steadfastly maintains it has no evidence indicating extraterrestrial intelligence. Something does not ring true. There is a gross inconsistency here, and it involves an issue of great magnitude, an issue that should transcend domestic politics and that demands an explanation. It is time to lay the cards on the table so that this matter can be resolved, one way or the other.

History has shown that unsubstantiated official assurances or denials by government are often meaningless. Nevertheless, there is a logical and straightforward way to ensure that the truth about Roswell will emerge: an Executive Order declassifying any information regarding the existence of UFOs or extraterrestrial intelligence. Because this is a unique issue of universal concern, such an action would be appropriate and warranted. It is essentially what presidential candidate Jimmy Carter promised and then failed to deliver to the American people eighteen years ago in 1976. Additionally, it would cost nothing, offend no one, and be applauded by all.

To provide positive assurance for all potential witnesses, the Order would need to be clearly stated and written into law. Security-clearance violations can bring heavy fines and long prison sentences. In addition to the original witnesses from 1947, there are most certainly individuals involved with the Roswell material today who would be affected by such a declassification. Undoubtedly, many of them, along with the original witnesses, would want to see this information shared with others--be they friends, family, grandchildren, or all mankind.

If, as is officially claimed, no information on Roswell, UFOs, or extraterrestrial intelligence is being withheld, a declassification order would be a mere formality, as there would be nothing for anyone to disclose. What legitimate concern could there be about declassifying "nonexistent" information? If, however, information is being withheld, there could be significant resistance to officially disclosing it. This resistance could range from contriving excuses as to why an Executive Order should not be issued, to ignoring the matter altogether.

In the end, however, whether information is being suppressed or whether it is not, the effect of an Executive Order declassifying it would be positive. If nothing is being withheld, the result of such an Order would be to set the record straight once and for all. Years of controversy and suspicion would be ended, both in the eyes of the United States' own citizens and in the eyes of the world.

If, on the other hand, the Roswell witnesses are telling the truth and information on extraterrestrial intelligence does exist, it is not something to which a privileged few in the United States government should have exclusive rights. It is knowledge of profound importance to which all people throughout the world should have an inalienable right. Its release would unquestionably be universally acknowledged as an historic act of honesty and goodwill.

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