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Monday, January 14,
2013

UFO Sightings During Nuclear Testing in the Pacific

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By Robert Hastings
www.ufohastings.com
1-13-13

Robert Hastings says: "I am now a regular contributor for the *MUFON UFO Journal* with a column titled '*UFOs and Nukes*'. The organization's management has given me permission to post past articles here at *The UFO Chronicles*, in the spirit of 'spreading the word' about the UFO phenomenon's well-documented link to nuclear weapons. Here is my latest offering."

In his 1956 book, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*, former U. S. Air Force Captain and Project Blue Book chief Edward J. Ruppelt wrote:

"...in November or December [1952] the U. S. was going to [test] the first H-bomb during [Operation] Ivy...Some people in the Pentagon had the idea that

there were beings, earthly or otherwise, who might be interested in our activities in the Pacific...Navy and Air Force security forces who [went] out to the tests were thoroughly briefed to look for UFOs... Nothing that fell into the UFO category was seen during the entire Ivy series of atomic shots."

The Pentagon's concern undoubtedly resulted from numerous nukes-related UFO incidents which had occurred during the previous four years, as confirmed by documents declassified via the Freedom of Information Act. Two of those, pertaining to ongoing sightings at the Los Alamos and Sandia atomic laboratories, in New Mexico, may be found at www.ufohastings.com/documents.

Although Ruppelt wrote that there were no UFO sightings during Operation Ivy—at least none had been reported to Blue Book—I have interviewed two former sailors, serving on two different ships during the operation, who say otherwise.

Tom Kramer served as a radioman seaman aboard the *U.S.S. Curtiss AV-4* during Ivy. He reports seeing a UFO a few days before the first megaton-yield hydrogen device,

code-named "Mike", was detonated.

Kramer said that on the night in question a movie had been shown on the ship's fantail and was attended by many of the crew. After it ended, and almost everyone had gone below, Kramer and some two-to-three dozen other crewmen were ordered to stow the mess benches used for the screening. Suddenly, he saw a strange object in the sky. Kramer said that it was round, bright white, and made no sound. He said that while he couldn't estimate its actual size, the UFO appeared to him as somewhat smaller than a dime held at arm's length.

"The object was almost motionless when I first saw it," Kramer said, "then it zigged one way for a very short distance, zagged another short distance, then took off like a bat out of hell." He estimated that the entire sighting had lasted less than ten seconds. Kramer told me that no one had debriefed him or anyone else he knew after the incident, even though there had been open discussion of the sighting among at least some of the crew.

In 2007, another former U. S. Navy sailor, Abelardo "Abe" Marquez, posted a message at the Atomic Veterans History Project website, saying that he had seen a UFO in the fall of 1952, while serving aboard the *U.S.S. Fletcher DD-445* during Operation Ivy. I contacted Marquez and asked if I might interview him. He readily agreed and told me,

"At the time of the sighting, I was a seaman

apprentice. That particular night, I was a lookout. My duty started at 3:45 a.m. I was on my way to the bridge when I noticed that the ship was going really fast. Full speed, it seemed like. When I walked up the deck on the port side, I saw two people standing there. So I asked them, 'What's going on? Why are we going really fast? Did we pick up a sonar contact?' But these two guys said, 'No, it's that light up in the sky,' and they started pointing at it.

At first, I couldn't see it, but then it got larger. It was like a bright star, but it wasn't twinkling like a star. I watched it for a little while. It looked like a little white round ball coming straight down, vertical.

I went up on the bridge and went on duty. When I relieved the watch, someone told me to keep an eye on the light. It was still coming down, getting bigger and bigger. You know, just a round white light. But it was bright, real bright! All of a sudden, it stopped. That got my attention! It was just hanging there."

I interrupted Marquez and asked about the apparent size of the object. I said, "Would it have been the size of a dime held at arm's-length?" Marquez paused for a few seconds then replied, "Yeah, I think it was about that size, or a little larger. Not the size of a full moon, but pretty close."

Then he continued, "Captain Rawlings was already there on the bridge. The door to the pilot house was maybe six-feet, eight-feet from the lookout's position. I could hear the captain and the

other officers through the doorway. They were talking among themselves about the light. They didn't know what it was. I heard someone say that there was no radar contact.

I was looking at the light. It was still hanging there in the sky, still off the port side. By that time I had those big binoculars that are kept on the bridge. It was just a round white light. It had no tail lights, no [jet engine] flame, no nothing. I didn't see a metal craft, just a round light. I don't know how far it was from the ship, maybe a half-mile or a mile. Then, after about four or five minutes, all of a sudden it took off, straight up, at about the same speed it had descended. Pretty soon it was so small you couldn't see it anymore."

I asked Marquez to estimate the date of the UFO incident, relative to the detonation of the Mike device. He replied, "Oh, I would say it was five to seven days before Mike. Something like that." I asked Marquez if he or anyone else was debriefed about the incident. He replied, "I don't know if the officers on the bridge were debriefed, but my buddy on lookout with me wasn't and I wasn't."

Because neither Abe Marquez nor Tom Kramer can remember the exact date of their respective sightings during Operation Ivy, it's not possible to say that they observed the same object on the same night. However, each witness described a round white object, silent and capable of hovering, and each estimated that their sighting had occurred about a week before the all-important Mike shot.

Operation Castle

Operation Castle—a series of six, mostly high-yield thermonuclear weapon tests—took place at the Pacific Proving Ground between March 1st and May 14th, 1954. Two researchers, Patricia Broudy and Daniel Wilson, independently discovered a reference to a dramatic UFO sighting which had occurred during the tests, embedded in a military report containing over five hundred pages of material relating to operational maneuvers and logistics.

The record of the incident originally appeared in a transcribed ship's deck log—within a Defense Nuclear Agency report titled *CASTLE SERIES, 1954, DNA 6035F, United States Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests*—which was declassified in 1982. Interestingly, following Dan Wilson's posts about the deck log at various blogs, the page referencing it, and some 50 others, disappeared from the version now available at U.S. Department of Energy document archives.

Therefore, it would seem that someone at DOE had done additional, post-declassification censoring of the Operation Castle document, at some point after Wilson and Broudy had accessed it. Fortunately, Wilson, Broudy and I possess copies of the original report.

The UFO sighting incident occurred on April 7, 1954, and involved U.S. Navy sailors and Marines aboard the *U.S.S. Curtiss AV-4*, which served as the Atomic Energy Commission's flagship.

Consequently, also aboard were a number of nuclear scientists from the Los Alamos and Sandia Laboratories. The vessel had performed a crucial role in the tests, transporting the "special devices"—the hydrogen bombs—to the Marshall Islands test area, arriving at Eniwetok Atoll on January 24th.

The deck log for that date reads: "...at 0408 on station in operating area BH 35-40-L; Steamed independently in operating area BG 28-36-L; At 1138 anchored berth N-6, Bikini; at 1948 left berth en route to Enewetak; at 2305 an unidentified luminous object passed over ship from bow to stern, yellowish-orange in color, traveling at a high rate of speed and a low altitude."

Dan Wilson and I interviewed several individuals who were aboard the *Curtiss* during Operation Castle. One of them, Joe Stallings, had been a Marine corporal at the time and held a high-security, nuclear weapons-related "Q" clearance. Stallings told me that he hadn't seen the UFO himself but had heard about the sighting the following morning when it was "the talk of the ship."

He said that he had been approached by several sailors and marines who had seen the UFO, all of whom told him that it was oval-shaped, bright orange, silent, and had "buzzed" the ship from bow to stern. In short, the eyewitness accounts matched, almost exactly, the information about the sighting as recorded in the *U.S.S. Curtiss'* deck log.

However, Stallings also

mentioned another important fact: the eyewitnesses had all said that the UFO, once it was clear of the ship astern, had suddenly performed an unspecified number of zigzag maneuvers before racing away at high speed. For some reason, this important detail was not recorded in the log.

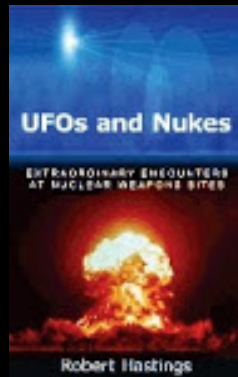
It will be recalled that another *Curtiss* crewman, Tom Kramer, has reported that he observed another UFO above the ship—some 18 months earlier, during Operation Ivy—which also executed high-speed, zigzag maneuvers.

I have also been made aware of another UFO sighting during Operation Castle, which was published in 1956, in *The UFO Annual*, edited by astronomer and UFO researcher Morris K. Jessup. It reads:

"Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, April 1954. Two male witnesses saw a round object, uniform brightness all over, vivid white, with sharply defined edges high in the sky at 2:00 P.M. Seen with 7X50 binoculars. A cone shape mist appeared on the leeward side of the object. The object then went straight up. The object was still for ten minutes—discounting a balloon explanation."

The report was signed by J. C. Howard, who was presumably one of the witnesses, although the brief entry does not explicitly state as much. As far as I am aware, this report was the first published reference to a UFO being sighted at one of the operational sites utilized by the United States during nuclear testing on atolls in the

Pacific Ocean. The island of Kwajalein served as a base of operations for many of the Air Force sorties associated with the Castle shots and other tests.



In conclusion, UFO activity was reported on several occasions—my book *UFOs and Nukes* details still other incidents—during the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific during the 1950s and '60s. Other sightings from that era took place in the midst of atomic tests at the Nevada Test Site and will be discussed in a future column. [\[Click on book image to order\]](#) ⇒ ⇒ ⇒

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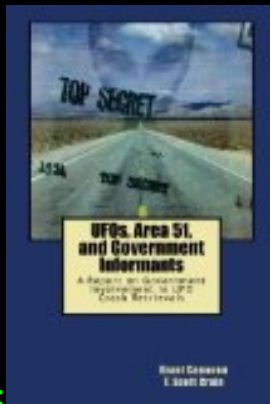
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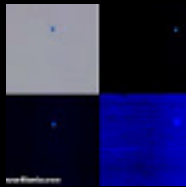
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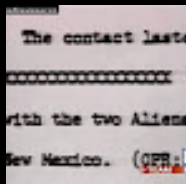
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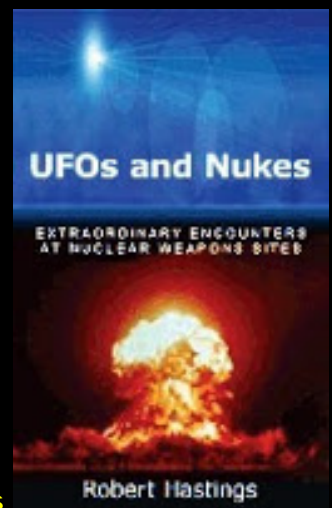
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