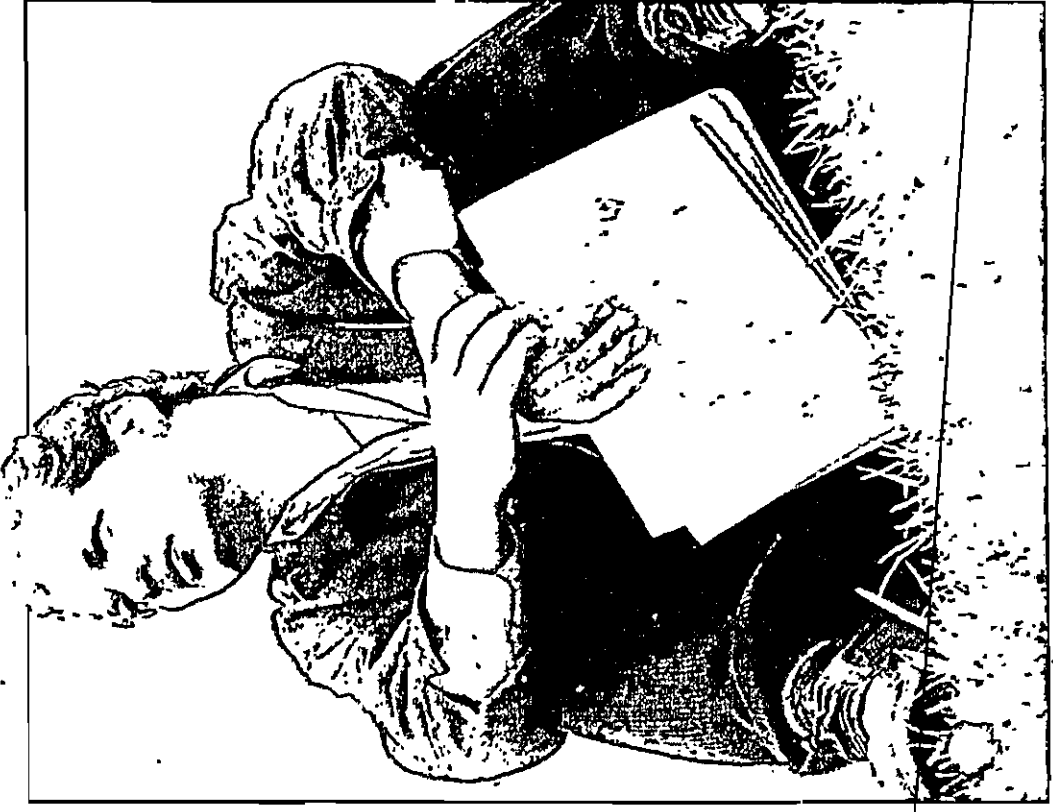


SECRET RECORDS RELEASED OF STRANGE FLYING OBJECTS SEEN

The Whiles - something



COVER-UPS: Dominic McNamara with the files.

Picture: MARK BRAKE

EDITH BEVIN

MISSING footage, lost files and pressure on witnesses to "forget" the UFOs they claim they saw - it sounds like the X-Files but it's happened here in South Australia.

Dubbed the Woomera Files, they detail investigations by the Department of Airforce Intelligence into strange sightings of unidentified flying objects over Woomera in SA from the 1950s until the early 1980s.

Despite being written off by investigators in a variety of ways, the sightings and the investigations into them were marked classified and were deemed to be a matter of national security.

After two years of research, covert meetings with former Woomera range staff and campaigning, the Australian UFO Research Association has managed to have some of the Woomera Files released.

The reports of strange objects and weird lights over the Woomera rocket range came from those in the nearby township and workers on the base itself, including flight personnel and people working on the missiles project.

The files include the obligatory sightings of "dancing lights". However, many detail the path of these unidentified flying objects in military terms - with radar co-ordinates and estimations-of-altitudes.

"When you think about it, for a lot of these people it would have taken a lot to actually come forward and say 'I saw this',

SATURDAY

FOCUS

association investigator Dominic McNamara said. The sightings include:

DANCING LIGHTS

Witnessed by P.G Norman of the Missile Projects group on October 21, 1954.

"Varying between a deep orange (plus halation) and a deep yellow (negative halation)," Norman wrote in his statement.

"Very approximately three times the largest size that Venus has ever been observed by myself. The shape was vaguely 'egg shaped' with the longest dimension always in the horizontal plane."

Norman included a radar map of his sighting. He described the object moving in an anti-clockwise direction around a jagged ellipse and a slow descent followed by a rapid acceleration before it disappeared.

Airforce Intelligence passed the sighting on to the physics school of the University of Adelaide. No finding was made.

FLYING OBJECT

Witnessed by Sydney Baker from the security officer's hut at range R1 and by Senior Sergeant George Trotter on the radar about 4pm on May 5, 1954.

Baker said he was watching the rocket trials through binoculars at the time. "When it got directly over the Canberra it slowed down," Baker stated.

"During this time I found it very hard to believe what I was seeing, so I shut my eyes and then looked again through the binoculars and the object was still stationary over the flight path of the Canberra.

"The object appeared to be travelling about three times as fast as the Canberra.

"It was perfectly circular all the time and a dark grey colour and gave the appearance of being translucent."

Trotter estimated its speed as 6000km/h.

A.G. Pither - Group Captain/ Superintendent LWRE Range - noted Trotter and Baker gave "corroborative accounts of what each observed.

Captain Pither also noted a similar object was observed on May 3, 1954, "by two ladies at Henley Beach".

No finding was made.

UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT

A verbal report from Flight Lieutenant Starke regarding sightings on November 14, 1953, of a "glare".

The report was backed up by the then squadron leader and another member of the public.

Captain Pither said it was "believed to be exhaust of aircraft".

Action taken to identify that aircraft by the Principal Officer Flying was "unsuccessful". One investigation explained another sighting as a U2 spy-plane.

"That causes its own problems," Mr McNamara said.

"I didn't think we had spy

really may be out there

planes in Australia at that time but when we questioned that finding we were told 'yes, spy planes were in Australian then and they were based in Victoria.' So that was pretty interesting!

Mr McNamara said a lot of people thought he was "crazy" and continually compared his work as a UFO investigator to the fictional TV character Fox Mulder of X-Files fame.

But the qualified engineer said there was too much evidence of unexplained activity out there to simply discount it.

Mr McNamara said through his investigations and, particu-

6 A strange object was spotted

larly since he had begun work on the "Woomera Files" he had come across several instances of "cover-ups".

"There was one case at Woomera where a strange object was spotted flying alongside one of the launches," he said.

"It was seen by about 10 different people positioned at different areas of the base.

"The launch was supposed to be filmed, but a memo came out the next day saying you may have heard that a UFO was sighted during yesterday's launch. Those reports are untrue. No footage of yesterday's

launch was taken'. Later that day a second memo came out saying 'actually footage was taken...none of it was exposed'.

'It's odd of all the launches that were filmed there only the footage from this one wasn't exposed. Strange isn't it?'

Mr McNamara said there were about 30 "bona fide" UFO sightings in SA each year.

One of the earliest sightings the Australian UFO Research Association has found was in the early 1900s.

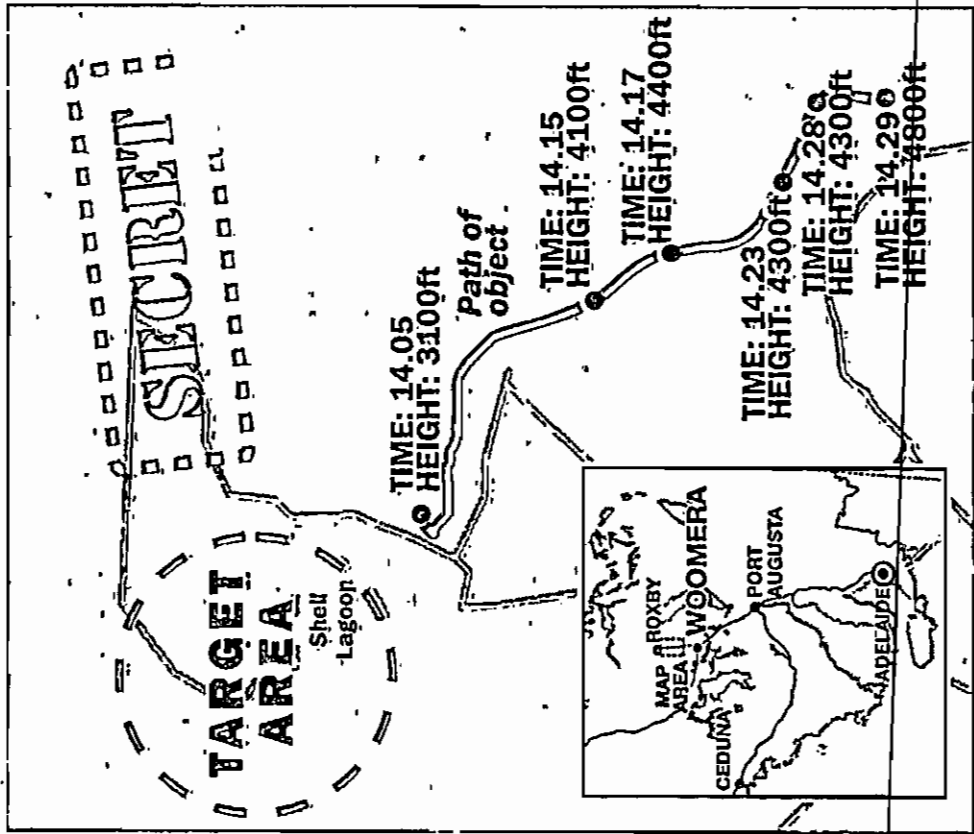
Mr McNamara said it was difficult to investigate such historical sightings because they tended to be described in terms of religious imagery.

The recorded sightings became more frequent from the 1930s onwards, he said.

But he said the association had noticed sightings tended to peak around the time humans extended their push into the skies, with events such as rocket launches or atomic bombs.

"It does seem to coincide with things that Man is doing," Mr McNamara said.

"I think people tend to be so focused on War of the Worlds-type scenarios that they tend to discount the possibility that this may be a curiosity thing by them, the same as we'd probably send out a mission if something unusual or unexpected suddenly appeared in our skies."



A chilling phenomenon

ONE of the most detailed reports of strange goings-on over Woomera was from War-rant Officer G.E. Millard who tracked an invisible object on his radar screen for 24 minutes on October 8, 1952.

"On looking through the telescope on the radar dish (also visual tracker) no target could be seen..." Millard wrote in his statement.

Security officer J.A. McCahey investigated Millard's report, noting "the phenomenon was locked to his radar beam for a period of at least 24 minutes which can in no way be compared to the alleged 'flying saucer' phenomenon of previous reports".

He interviewed other radar operators and decided it was "most probable" a snow cloud "had some connection".

"As it is definite no object was visible there is nothing of security interest," he reported.

McCahey made a further entry to the file on October 27, 1952, saying that after further investigation the phenomenon "is believed to be caused by ice packs at certain altitudes".

Millard's own report stated there was a "light snow fall" at 9am on October 9.

UFO file

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The Australian UFO Research Network UFO Disclosure Project

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DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY AND UFOS 1952-1972

According to the "Agency notes for agency CA 57" on the NAA web site, the Department of Supply came into being on 17 Mar 1950. The Department was responsible for a diverse range of functions including:

- The control of materials used in producing atomic energy (1950-1953)
- Building of merchant ships (1950-1951)
- Promotion and production of liquid fuels
- Manufacture, acquisition, provision and supply of war materials
- Responsibility for operation and management of space tracking stations (from 1959)
- Participation in firing of European Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO) rockets at Woomera (from 1962)
- The operation of the Joint United Kingdom-Australia Weapons Research project
- Operation and management of space tracking stations and certain other facilities on behalf of the Government of the USA.

The Department's Central Office was located in Melbourne between 1950 and 1969, then it moved to Canberra. The Department was abolished on 12 Jun 1974. Most of its functions passed to the Department of Manufacturing Industry.

File search

To date we have found three Department of Supply files dealing with the topic of "flying saucers" or UFOs. Two files were commenced in the year 1952. The earliest file so far located in South Australia is from series D174, control symbol SA5281 titled "Unusual Occurrences Flying Saucer at Woomera" with a date range of 1952-1955. It was originally classified "Secret." It is a 25 page file, located at the Adelaide Office of the NAA and belonged to the Long Range Weapons Establishment (LRWE), Salisbury, South Australia. NAA agency notes for agency 3038 indicate that the LRWE was established in 1947 with the object of building a test range at Woomera, South Australia. The file contained details of a number of interesting observations from this early period. A summary of each report follows.

28 Apr 1952 Woomera West SA 0345hrs 15secs 3wits

Three men waiting for transport, noticed at 45 degrees SE, a light in the sky. This light was moving WNW parallel to the ground, lighting up clouds and the surrounding terrain. It was visible through breaks in the clouds. The bus driver remarked, "They are firing rockets early today." One witness replied: "It was not a rocket." The light had an estimate size of one third that of the full Moon.

27 Sep 1952 Woomera SA ca2050hrs 5 secs 5 wits

Five witnesses were at the Woomera West Open Air Theatre. They sighted an object, variously described as a "cigar," an "airship," and "cylindrical" with an "exhaust" at the rear. It travelled horizontally from west to east, possibly NW to SE. One witness reported "...two portholes with internal lighting." It was moving quickly, with no noise noted.

3 Oct 1952 Woomera SA 1345hrs 44 minutes 1wit 3

While tracking an aircraft, a target was acquired by radar. However, no visual object could be seen by the radar operator. "The signal to noise ratio was at least 5 to 1 which is similar to that obtained from a large aircraft." At one stage between 1345 and 1400hrs the target approached to within one mile. Between 1405 and 1429hrs the operator tracked the invisible target at heights between 1500 and 5600 feet. "At times during the movement of the target smaller targets seemed to detach themselves from the main target and drift away." Weather was fine, 5/8 high cloud; 25000 feet-84 degrees F, north wind at 25-30 mph. Comments by the Security Officer included (note it snowed briefly at 0900hrs the next day): "...it was most probably that the snow cloud had some connection. However, the possibility of a neutron cloud is not ruled out..." (1) A ground plot of the radar target was located on the file.

14 Nov 1953 Woomera SA 0145hrs 1wit
Sighting of a "glare" believed to be an aircraft.

5 May 1954 Woomera SA app1630hrs 5 mins 3 wits
Three relevant documents were found, being statements by the two men involved and a covering letter forwarding the statements, from the Superintendent Long Range Weapons Establishment Range, Woomera, to the "Chief Superintendent". This letter included the statement: "The persons reporting were separated by a distance of approximately three hundred yards and give corroborative accounts of what each observed." (2)

One statement, dated 6 May 1954, read:

Post "R"

RE: UNIDENTIFIED TARGET OBSERVED ON RADAR 5TH MAY, 1954

Sir,

At about 1600 on 5th May, an unidentified Target was observed on radar AA Number 4 Mk. 6. The target appeared on High Beam at a range of about 60,000 yards Brg 355degrees approaching 'R', described a Hyperbols (sic) over 'R' and went out at a bearing of approx. 90 degrees. On its way out it passed behind Spotting Tower, "S2". I timed it over 15,000 yards 10 seconds which would make its speed approximately 3600 M.P.H. Cfn. KEANE observed this occurrence with me. Since the target was followed to 70,000 yards on High Beam the height would be greater than 60,000 feet. See Diagram on next page.

The diagram referred to was not located in the file examined.

The other statement, dated 7 May 1954, which under the man's name had an entry: "Vickers-Armstrong," read:

REPORT ON A FLYING OBJECT SIGHTED ON 5TH MAY, 1954

I was at Range R1 (Post R1), the Radar Post, standing by the Security Officer's Hut, and looking towards the radar Post at approximately 1645 hours, observing one of our trials through binoculars.

This object appeared to be travelling towards me or directly across a path of the approaching Canberra. When it got to the path of the Canberra it turned to my right and was going in the direction from which the Canberra had just come. When it got directly over the Canberra it slowed down. During this time I found it very hard to believe what I was seeing, so I shut my eyes and then looked again through the binoculars and the object was still stationary over the flight path of the Canberra.

Since it appeared to be the same relative size as the Canberra through the binoculars, I thought it would be possible to see it with the naked eye. However, when I looked over the top of the binoculars the object had either gone or I could not see it with the naked eye, and when I looked again through the binoculars I could not pick it up.

The object appeared to be travelling about three times as fast as the Canberra, but of course it is impossible to estimate, since I did not know what height it was. It was perfectly circular all the time and a dark grey colour, and gave the appearance of being translucent. It did not glisten at all when it turned or was it shiny.

21 Oct 1954 Woomera SA 2125hrs 6mins 3wits

Observations of what witnesses described as a "dancing light," from adjacent to launcher apron number 1 range. Azimuth 215 degrees T at approximately 3 degrees elevation. The light's colour varied from deep orange to a deep yellow. Described as three times the size of Venus. The planet Venus was at 238 degrees T 1 degree elevation at the time. The light was seen to move around in a small area. Weather 70F, wind NNE 10 mph. 3/8 cloud at 15000 feet. Scattered ice crystals at 30000 feet. No noise heard from light.

Missing from the first file

There were at least four other 1953-1954 observations from Woomera we are aware of which did not make this file, out which we located on RAAF files.

24 Jul 1953 Woomera. 0145hrs A white oval light detected by Doppler seen by one witness overhead. Moving NW then SE at a speed greater than 80 degrees per minute. Estimated to be 10-12 feet in size. (3)

29 Jul 1953. Woomera. 1030-1530hrs at intervals. White round objects seen through 10x binoculars and said to have been thistles. (4)

22 Nov 1953 SE of Woomera. Green & red lights were reported on four separate occasions. The green lights were travelling north. (5)

5 Oct 1954 Woomera. The Wing Commander Provost Marshal wrote to DAFI on 28 Oct 1954 "Enclosed is a report...observed by...Gnr WILLIS, R J kinetheodolite observer at Woomera...Gnr Willis claims to have photographed the object for approximately three seconds with a kinetheodolite...this photograph has been handed to the Director." (6) The enclosed report form stated that Willis had been at site K5 on range A1 at the time. A 1952 map showing K1 to K5 indicates this placed the observation near "Shell Lagoon." The object had been first sighted overhead while Willis was looking at a Jindivik pilot less aircraft. The object was silver white in colour and of a half Moon shape. No sound had been heard and there had been no vapour trail. The structure less object had travelled from SW to NW in a straight line. The weather at the time was described as very clear.

Second file

The previous file's date range was 1952 to 1955. Our second file had a date range of 1952-1968. File series D250 control symbol 56/483 "Reports on unidentified aircraft, strange occurrences etc" was found in the Sydney office of the NAA and came from the Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) area of Supply. According to NAA agency notes for agency CA3039, the WRE was created in 1955 by the amalgamation of the LRWE and two laboratories. The file is 139 folios in length and contains copies of documents relating to observations dated 28 Apr 52; 27 Sep 52; 8 Oct 52; 14 Nov 53 & 5 May 54. It also contains the tracking plot of the object on 5 May 1954 which was not on file SA5281. An undated Memo from Group Captain Superintendent LRWE Range was sent to the Chief Superintendent with copies of various papers on recent "strange occurrences" at Woomera. The originals were forwarded by the Security organisation to Melbourne for DAFI.

On 29 Jul 1953 a number of unusual objects were reported over the range and were seen by the Range Operations Security Officer himself. At 1400 hrs using binoculars he saw spherical objects moving rapidly across the sky. One earlier observer thought he had seen a round or flattened disc. Elsewhere a round object was mistaken for a bomb being released and a series of photos were taken. The official explanation was "...It is believed that the objects seen were balls of thistle seeds and vegetation..." (7)

Other papers on this file relate to a number of instances where unidentified aircraft had been reported over the Woomera prohibited area. Sometimes identifications were later made, but others remained unknown and were of concern to security staff.

The rest of the file from 1957-1968 consists of reports from the general public of what are regarded on the file as satellites. Any reported UFO observations from Woomera, between 1958 and 1966, were not on this file.

Missing from this second file

At 2130hrs on the 28 Jun 1963 at Sandy Creek, near Gawler, South Australia a man was travelling on the Lyndoch-

Gawler road going to Gawler, when upon rounding a corner, in his vehicle, the anonymous Willaston man came upon a blood-red coloured object extending across the roadway. This was close to the Sandy Creek Hotel. The man applied the vehicle's brakes and was within three metres of the object when it rose suddenly from the road. After rising one hundred meters or so, it turned on its side and sped off, streaming vapour. Described as eight metres across and four high, with a concave top and a flat base, it glowed blood-red when close to the ground and appeared to change to a light red yellow as it gathered speed and flew off towards Two Wells. Hervey (8) (cites the date as during the period 1955-1958) states that the sighting was reported to police and that a CIB Special Branch officer interviewed the witness. The Adelaide Advertiser Newspaper reports "...He later reported the incident to the Weapons Research Establishment which arranged for him to be interviewed by a member of the CIB Special Branch." (9) An inquiry directed to the South Australian Police failed to provide any leads to any such Special Branch report.

The UFO literature provides us with details of a purported photograph of a UFO taken at Woomera on 5 Jun 1964. The English Flying Saucer Review in its Sep/Oct 1964 issue on page 4 shows a photograph taken at the launching of Blue Streak rocket, which shows an oval blob of light near the rocket. This black and white print in the FSR was apparently from a colour movie. There is nothing concerning this photograph on the second file. We made other efforts to track down this picture. On the NAA web site we located "Series notes for series D897 Unknown objects - DSTO WRE{A-K 1948-1957} - Australian Archives." The notes state that the "...series contains approximately 4800 colour and black and white slides. Controlling records for this series (D896) indicate there are some 6220 slides registered between 1947 and 1971. The whereabouts of the missing 1400 slides is currently unknown... There are slides of Skylark launches, Jindivik trials, Blue Streak movements and some unidentified objects..." We located a register for some of these slides in the Adelaide Office of the NAA. NAA staff produced two bound volumes which contained dates, reference numbers and details of the photographs. A close examination of the details of hundreds of pictures listed there revealed none of an unidentified or unknown nature.

Third file

File number SA5644/2/1 is a Department of Supply file "Sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects" registered to the Weapons Research Establishment (WRE), Salisbury with date range of 1966 -1974. This file contains a number of inquiries from the general public and other quarters about unidentified objects in the sky. As an example, the file actually opens in Jul 1966 with an inquiry from a person living in Victor Harbor, South Australia, concerning an object which traversed the sky. Interestingly, the letter commences with "I understand that you have a section on unidentified objects etc..." The WRE response advised that they had a "...satellite tracking section..." but was "...unable to identify the object..." (10) even though they suspected it was a satellite.

Other requests for assistance with identification came from the RAAF. For example, in Oct 1966 RAAF Richmond requested the Department to identify an object seen at Kurrajong NSW on 20 Jul 1966. An internal Departmental Minute headed "UFO Policy" states that inquiries of this nature would be referred directly to S/APD (Superintendent American Projects Division) for reply by the PRO (Public Relations Officer). In this instance the Satellite Tracking Operations Group was "...unable to correlate the sighting reported on folio 4a with transits of the brighter satellites..." (11)

A 23 Jun 1967 Memo from Director WRE M W Woods to the DD/Trials advised Trials that the Director had, through Security channels, learnt that "...kine operators at Woomera sighted an alleged UFO during a Skylark firing on April 27th..." (12) and called for a report. A follow-up telex dated 18 Jul 1967 from Dep. Sec/R & Supply Melbourne asked why no report had yet been forthcoming and stated that the report involved positions K9, K12, K8, site 3, site 4 and X11 and asked "...Have you had the films examined as discussed..." (13) The subsequent investigation revealed two series of observations, the first on 27 Apr 1967 (some forms showed the date as 28 April 1967) and the second on 30 Jun 1967. We document these observations in summary form.

27 April 1967

1. 28 Apr 67 1402hrs About 0.5-1secs K Simmons. Optical tracker. "Object appeared round and white, as large as the Moon and passed to the right of the Skylark at approx +55s in sequence, no elevations angle noted-no further details.
2. 27 Apr 67. 1402hrs 2 secs Position K8 L. Davis. Optical instrument -tracking telescope. Skylark in sky. "Between +55s and 60s a dull white object appeared high in the tracking telescope for approx 2 secs. Being high in the telescope the object was distorted but appeared to be long and wider in the centre than at the ends, the top piece being a slightly darker shade."
3. 28 Apr 67. 1402hrs +60s. 2/5 secs. I J Davis Site 4. Watch Skylark. Trial 23 A3. "85 degree el. The object appeared to be moving very fast, was white in colour and saucer shaped sighted in FOV for approx 2/5 secs. Flying in roughly the opposite direction to the vehicle-object appeared to be twice the size of the vehicle.."
4. 27 Apr 67. Site K12 A2 operator. 3/4 sec at +55 and +60 1402hrs. Using optical instrument watching Skylark. Sky fine, slight wispy cloud. White object passed below vehicle in camera FOV.
5. 27 Apr 67. Site K9. 1402hrs 6mins. Through kinetheodelite. Az 220 degrees el 70 degrees. "Object acquired at +1m30s in sequence and lost at +8 to +9m in sequence. Bright object fell away from dull white object. Two objects kept coming back to larger object and flashing past. " "Large object was fast moving in az when picked up then slowed down in az and gained speed in el. Small objects were fast in az." Larger object dull white. 2 smaller were bright yellowish white.
5. 28 Apr 67. I Fox at site 3. +60s in sequence. 1402hrs. Kinethodelite. Watching sky saw a silver white coloured object.
7. 28 Apr 67. Site 3. 1402hrs. 6 mins. Optical-kine. Object acquired at approx +1m30s in sequence at 90 degrees elevation. Lost at +8m10s to +8m30s at an az of 220.2 and el of 7-10. Moved from 90 degrees el to 7/10 degrees el. And at 15 degrees el was at 220.2 az. Watching Skylark. The object flashed past the Skylark-was dull in colour. Dull round object with two (undecipherable) 2 small shot past and buzzing round elongated. Disappeared 8m10 to 8m30. Round just moved out and others with it and went away 220.2az 15 degrees el when lost 7-10 degrees.

30 Jun 1967

1. "Report on Aerial Object Observed" form. R Hodge Photographer. 3 secs. Overhead. One white round object. 60 to 90 degree very fast NNW to SSE straight line. Lost in mid-air. Blue sky. Target aircraft on dummy run.
2. Harvey. Asst Photog. Approx 1100 till 1200. Tracked at K12. Operator V34 drew attention. White objects. "No definite formation but most appeared to be within 10 degrees az of each other at times." White. "Most were spherical while others were appeared similar to meteorites." Lost. "Mostly due size, distance and haze." L D East. Asst Photog 1100hrs to 1140hrs intermittent. 165 degrees az 45 degrees el. Crossing path of missile in trail EC 23. Overhead. Silver white like aircraft without wings. 45 degrees el slightly arced path. "Did not track long as trial imminent." Clear blue sky.
3. P Howard. Asst Photog. 1135hrs Fraction of a sec. Through 12x tracking scope of Congreves camera from site 6 K35. Travelling across path of a Jindivik aircraft. Ap 40-45 degree el very fast. Northerly direction gaining height. Went out of FOV. Clear blue sky. Object appeared to be closer to K35 than Jindivik.
4. M Randel. Asst Photog. 11 to 1140 Intermittent. 165az 45 degree el at 1100 cross path of missile in trail. Overhead Intercom talk alerted. 45 degree slow to very fast. Went towards range head. Trial EC23.

5. M Wallbanks. Asst Photog. 1100-1145hrs. Site 2. Congreaves K14 kinetheodelite. App in tracking telescope. 40 degrees el. Travelling to 145 degrees az. Path on curve, others circled and disappeared. Disappeared over horizon. Clear blue sky. Jindivick trial.

5. I Neill. Asst Photog. 1100-1130hrs. Site 4. K16. Kinetheodelite. Overhead. Six objects white some appeared to have red others are rocket shaped. First sighted 80 degrees el. Lost over horizon. Jindivick trial,

7. Asst Photog. 1100-1115hrs. 10-15mins. K15. Overhead. Six to 12 objects white. All shaped. Travelled in all directions. Straight path. First sighted 80 degrees el. Faded into distance. Photographed at K15 for approx 5 seconds.

3. 1100-1130hrs. 10-15mins. K15. J Windner. Asst Photog. 6-12 objects in no apparent formation. White. First seen 30 degrees el. Irregular cigar shapes-oblong. Appeared to fade in distance.

9. P Ratcliffe. Assist Photog. 1105-1130hrs. V34 at site 3. Gooney Bird. Approx 55 degree el az 120 degrees. Several white objects through binoculars. Some circular some cylindrical .NW to SE. Went over horizon. Jindivick dummy trial. Tracked three objects to just on horizon. Az 155-165 degrees.

What did "the powers that be" think caused these observations?

Given that the Woomera range was heavily instrumented and "secret", observations of unusual objects at this location should have received critical analysis from some one.

In a Memo dated 17 Jul 67 to Supt Trials from PO/Ranges it is noted that three to four such sightings occur each year usually in late autumn months. "The "objects" are almost certainly wind-borne spider webs...The fact that attempts to photograph these "objects" have always been unsuccessful tend to support the theory that they are in fact extremely tenuous body at no great distance from the observer." (14) A file note of 19 Jul 67 from the D/D Trials to S/TRD add "I wouldn't give the operators very high marks as observers." (15)

A further Memo two days later to the Supt Trials Division from the PO Ranges re the UFO sightings of 27 Apr 67 enclosed the original reports from various operators and concludes that "It is however, quite possible that multiple sightings of wind carried webs could provide reasonable explanation." (16)

Finally, in a teleprinter message of the 25 Jul 67 from Woods Weapons to DS/R&E Supply Melbourne. Re alleged UFO sighting. "No, repeat, no films were exposed." (17) Reports came from kine operators and "...did not correlate with each other except in time." "Sightings of wind carried webs are possible explanations." (18) An amended teleprinter message on the next day from Woods Director Weapons to DS/R&E Supply Melbourne stated "Further to my W8476 about alleged UFO sightings. The sentence in my message saying no films were exposed may be misleading. In fact the normal trial kinetheodelite films were exposed during the trial. These should have shown the UFO crossing the field of view close to Skylark but nothing was recorded." (19)

Project Moon Dust?

As reported in Newsletter Nine, the USAF had a Project called "Moon Dust." A check with the authoritative "The UFO Encyclopaedia" written by US Researcher Jerry Clark, indicated that "In 1961 the U.S. Air Force established the classified Project Moon Dust to "locate, recover and deliver descended foreign space vehicles."" (20)

A Memo on this file, originally from file SA5492/1/1 Part 1 and originally dated 16 Aug 1962 was to the Supt/Woomera from Controller WRE re identification of space vehicle fragments. It reported that a letter received

from the Department of External Affairs relayed that the US Embassy was informally seeking assistance in "...obtaining information which might be used in the identification of space vehicle fragments." (21) It asked for details of sightings of "luminous objects" and "Observations of Impact(s) and/or recovery of fragment(s)." Observations were requested from members of staff.

In a Memo dated 4 Sep 67 the American Projects Division asked the Assistant Sec (Projects) if the 1962 processes regarding the reporting of space vehicle fragments were still needed? This was followed up in a minute from APD to S/APD, reporting that two avenues of reporting UFOs existed. Firstly, one for sightings at the ranges had the steps PO/Ranges to Supt/Trials to DD/Trials to Regional Security Officer Adelaide to Chief Security Officer to Dept of Air Force. The second was for all other sightings. The route was observer to Supt/APD to Head Office to Dept of External Affairs to US Embassy. The Memo was trying to delete input to US Embassy.

A further Memo dated 13 Dec 67 from a/g Supt American Projects Division to Asst Sec Projects again asked for clarification if instructions contained in memo of 8 Aug 62 were still in effect. The 1962 memo stated that the US Embassy "...had informally sought the assistance of the Department of External Affairs in obtaining information which might be used in the identification of space vehicle fragments..." (22) Subsequently, arrangements were made for Woomera staff to report sightings in that area. Reports outside Woomera details were sent to Head Office for transmission through Dept of External Affairs to the US Embassy as per memo of 8 Aug 62. Reports from WRE would go to the RAAF. It suggested changes to refer all reports to RAAF.

Scientific, Technical & Astronomical Research Society (STARS)

The powers that be were upset that the observations of the 27 Apr had been reported using an unofficial report form designed by a Woomera UFO group titled the Scientific, Technical & Astronomical Research Society (STARS). A Memo dated 7 Aug 67 to Director WRE Salisbury and WRE Woomera from the Superintendent about the UFO club, set out conditions under which STARS was officially allowed to operate. STARS created its own report form but the reports system was ordered to be discontinued.

A further Memo dated 10 Aug 67 to Captain F E Irvine (RAN) Supt/Woomera from M W Woods, Director, WRE Salisbury again concerned the UFO club and stated in part "I am glad to hear that the "sighting report" to the STARS organisation have been discontinued. There are obviously security dangers in permitting unofficial reports of this kind." (23)

Finally, a Minute dated 18 Sep 67 to the Director from the Trials Wing HQ., subject: UFO club at Woomera includes the words "I have noted that the activities of the Woomera club have declined markedly in recent months..." (24)

Entries during the period 1968 to 1974 on this file refer to queries about sightings and their possible explanations, although almost all seem to have been satellites. The last active entry was dated 5 Aug 74.

More Department of Supply UFO papers on other Government files

An examination of RAAF files reveals several items which are not on any of the three files we have located and examined. The first four relate to raw reports and are summarised below.

(1) 30 Jul 1965 70mls W of Cook SA 0835hrs 10mins 5Men

A gang of railway workers looking to the south of the railway line reported watching for ten minutes, a hovering silver coloured object apparently reflecting the rays of the Sun. It disappeared with a flash. (25)

(2) 20 Jul 1967 Karoonda SA 1537hrs 1M Seeholm
Object reported falling to earth. Seen travelling E to S. (26)

(3) 28 Oct 1971, Woomera SA 1315hrs 15secs 1M Murphy
Murphy was tracking a pre-launch meteorological balloon through an optical theodolite. Balloon was situated almost due East of range E (? Difficult to read document) at 6900m and bearing 088.4 True and 37.7 deg el. The balloon and its attached target were backgrounded by thin lines of cloud. As the balloon moved slowly to the left side of the lens Murphy noted an object moving away from the balloon to the right of the lens. He initially thought that the target had separated from the balloon. He then tracked this object for 15 seconds. It was moving at a constant speed in a shallow upward curve. It was shaped like a cross. He concluded it was an aircraft. Light bluish grey in colour. Outline was reasonably well defined. Small image size. Image was twice the size of the balloon target and similar in size to the balloon (which was 10-15 feet diameter). Its 'fuselage' and "wings" appeared to be of uniform thickness and length. No evidence of engines or tail. DCA reported there was a BOAC 707 at 37000 feet at 150-200 miles SE of Leigh Creek at the time. (27)

"Further to telephoned advice forwarded herewith is a copy of report 5/126/5 of 8th November 1971, together with attachment, from the ESO Woomera reporting the alleged sighting of an unidentified aircraft over the Woomera Prohibited Area at 1315hrs on 28.10.71 25 minutes prior to the launch of the Black Arrow missile." (28) Range instrumentation at Parakylia Station 20 miles SE of range and Red Lake radar post R38 did not sight or hear an aircraft, nor at Roxby Downs 15 miles East, or Purple Downs (20 miles SE). In respect of R38 any object within 100,000 feet and height of no more than 5-10,000 feet should have been registered. "In spite of all enquiries no confirmation of the alleged sighting has been obtained and the possibility that the object was an bird of the eagle variety, wedge tailed eagles are plentiful at Woomera cannot be entirely discounted without any prejudice to Murphy." (29)

"Two most likely explanations of this incident are:

- (a) A mistaken identification of the object seen by Murphy through his theodolite
- (b) A flight across the prohibited area by an aircraft for which a flight plan had not been submitted to DCA" (30)

A telex dated 21 Dec 71 to DOA SUPDEP Canberra read "For Morrison CSO. Reference your Y10/5/1 dated 20 Dec 70 military aircraft in vicinity of Nurrungar prohibited area within one hour of 200659. DAFI unable to provide any assessment of sighting on 28 Oct 71 at this time." (31)

(4) 20 Dec 71 Woomera 0650hrs 1M Sketcher

A meteorological observer at Woomera reported seeing an aircraft with the naked eye as a tiny silver dot ahead of a vapour trail. It was heading NE, and checks revealed that there were no known aircraft in the area. A Memo dated 7 Jan 72 from the Dept of Supply to DAFI (Ref Y10/5/1. Unidentified Aircraft -Woomera) in part read "This sighting appears to be sufficiently authenticated, yet there is no official knowledge of any military or civil aircraft that could have intruded into the Woomera air space." (32) DAFI responded to the Chief Security Officer, Dept of Supply on 13 Jan 1972 "Although the known facts concerning this incident could lend themselves to speculation regarding the presence of a foreign aircraft in Woomera airspace on the 20th December, the Directorate of Air Force Intelligence considers this most unlikely. The Directorate believes that a more plausible explanation involves the re-entry of space debris into the earth's atmosphere but is unable to confirm this possibility." (33)

(5) In a Memo dated 6 Sep 72 the Defence Standards Laboratories, Dept of Supply, wrote to the Department of Air Force an Unidentified Fallen Object. The Memo stated that a preliminary exam revealed that the object submitted was probably a bit off a satellite. (34)

(6) However, perhaps the most interesting piece of paper in the RAAF files relating to the Department of Supply was a short Memo dated 27 Jul 1971 from DAFI to S/AIR/SS (whoever this is!) which stated in part "You spoke to me

recently on the matter of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) and you mentioned that the Department of Supply may be interested in investigating this subject. This minute provides a brief historical sketch of this subject and my reaction to the proposal." (35) We have so far found no other reference to this interest by the Department of Supply.

What we are missing at the moment

Looking at the Department of Supply file reference numbers we came across, there are some files we have not yet been able to locate (if they still exist). For example we know of relevant correspondence on files numbered Y111/12/ Part 4; Y121/1/1; Y123/3/17; YA26/9/2 and Y10/5/1. Some of these would appear to be Head Office files which have not surfaced on RecordSearch.

References

- (1) National Archives of Australia: D174, SA5281 folio dated 24 Oct 52.
- (2) National Archives of Australia: D174, SA5281 letter dated 20 May 1954.
- (3) National Archives of Australia::A703, 554/1/30 part 1 folio 8c.
- (4) National Archives of Australia: A703, 554/1/30 part 1 folio 8c.
- (5) National Archives of Australia: A703, 554/1/30 folio 8c.
- (6) National Archives of Australia: A703, 114/1/197 folio 96a ref 901/1511/P1 (7a).
- (7) National Archives of Australia: A703, 554/1/30 part 1 folio 8c.
- (8) Hervey, M: 1969 "UFOs Over the Southern Hemisphere." Horwitz. Sydney. p128.
- (9) Adelaide "Advertiser" 10 July 1963.
- (10) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 3.
- (11) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 6.
- (12) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 17.
- (13) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 19.
- (14) National Archives of Australia:: SA5644/2/1 folio 20A.
- (15) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 20.
- (16) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 22.
- (17) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 24.
- (18) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 3.
- (19) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 26.
- (20) Clark, J: 1996. "The UFO Encyclopaedia" Volume 3. Omnigraphics. Detroit p 128.
- (21) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 3.
- (22) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 3.
- (23) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 28.
- (24) National Archives of Australia: SA5644/2/1 folio 33.
- (25) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 part 4, p75 of digital copy Original ref: Department of Supply Y111/12/1 Pt 4 p3 Aug 65. [RAAF explanation was a Meteor]
- (26) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 part 8 pp223-225 of digital copy. Original ref: Dept of Supply Y121/1/1.
- (27) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 Part 16 pp148-149. Internal memo Dept of Supply. 8 Nov 71. To ESO Woomera from Sec Off Admin Woomera.
- (28) National Archives of Australia: A703 Control symbol 580/1/1 Part 16pp145-146. Memo to CSO Canberra from RSO SA 11 Nov 71. Y123/3/17 YA26/9/2.
- (29) National Archives of Australia: A703 Control symbol 580/1/1 Part 16pp145-146. Memo to CSO Canberra from RSO SA 11 Nov 71. Y123/3/17 YA26/9/2.
- (30) National Archives of Australia: A703 Control symbol 580/1/1 Part 16 p144. Memo. 22 Nov 71. CSO Dept of

Supply to DAFI. Attached report re unidentified aircraft passing over Woomera 28 Oct 71.

- 31) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 part 16 p 128.
- 32) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 part 16 p120.
- 33) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 part 16 p 119.
- 34) National Archives of Australia: A703, 580/1/1 part 18, p46.
- 35) National Archives of Australia: A703, 554/1/30 part 2 p164.