

UFOs, the AISS, & My Brush With the 1127th

By Francis Ridge



Fran Ridge

In 1963, I was living in Vincennes, Indiana. That September I was contacted by an Air Force reserve captain, the CO for the local 1127th Air Reserve Squadron, requesting a briefing concerning our NICAP team's investigations of UFOs. This briefing was scheduled to be given at the Robert Green Auditorium on the 16th of that month. I was flattered and simply thought that this interest was due to the increased UFO activity in the region, particularly the 1963 UFO concentration or "mini-flap" in southern Illinois. But it now appears there was more to it than that

My briefing covered the UFO subject in general, but highlighted the 1963 mini-flap, especially the part about Blue Book sending a special team from Dayton to investigate the S. Illinois sightings. Preliminary investigations are usually carried out by the UFO officer at a nearby Air Force base. In this case it would have been an intelligence officer from Scott Air Force Base at Belleville, Illinois, near St. Louis. However, this time Blue Book had sent a TEAM of investigators, including no less than the Project Blue Book chief, Lt. Col. Robert J. Friend.

The [front page of the August 12th issue of the Wayne County Press](#) had the photo and caption: "A TEAM OF AIR FORCE PHYSICISTS were in Fairfield over the week end checking last week's light-in-the-sky stories. Here they are reading about it all in the press...Lt. Col. Robert J. Friend (center), Capt. Hector Quintinalla, right and Sgt. Charles R. Sharp." This team TEAM had checked the Austin boy's automobile for radiation in the [Wayne City Car Chase](#) and investigated a few of the 60-70 reported incidents in the area that week.

My briefing covered the key points of the concern about serious UFO reports, including the possibility of accidental war from misinformed air defense radar men mistaking UFOs for Soviet missiles during dangerous alert periods. But many years later, researchers located a document that mentioned a mysterious government project known as Project "Moon Dust" (Just Caus report). They discovered that the retrieval of downed space objects, including UFOs, was the responsibility of a "special unit" at Fort Belvoir, NJ., the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron.



Team of Air Force Physicists in S. Illinois, 1963

I was aware of the 4602d's participation for two reasons: Ruppelt had mentioned it in his book and [Air Force Regulation 200-2](#) had also mentioned it. The latter was an Intelligence regulation titled "Unidentified Flying Objects Reporting". It dealt only with UFO-related questions: "The Air Defense Command has a direct interest in the facts pertaining to UFOB's reported within the ZI and has, in the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron (AISS), the capability to investigate these reports. The 4602d AISS is composed of specialists trained for field collection and investigation of matters of air intelligence interest which occur within the zone of the ZI." I had assumed, however, that the "collection" part probably always referred to just reports and sometimes items that turned out to be IFOs, and that anything else was wishful-thinking. As it turns out, there was more to it.

On January 3, 1953, the [4602d \(AISS\)](#) was created by Air Defense Command regulation 24-4. The designation of the "special unit" at Fort Belvoir changed a number of times. The 4602d became the 1006th AISS in July 1957. In April 1960 it became the 1127th USAF Activities Group. That designation became important when tracking the [Project Moon Dust \(Kevin Randle's full report\)](#) and [Operation Blue Fly](#) documents. Project Moon Dust was set up by the U.S. Air Force to locate, recover, and deliver descended foreign space vehicles (including UFOs). Operation Blue Fly was established to facilitate expeditious delivery to the Foreign Technology Division (FTD) of Moon Dust and other items of great technical intelligence interest (once again including UFOs).

We had always suspected that Project Blue Book (the official AF UFO project) was merely a PR front, and there was evidence that some types of UFO project teams were active even after Blue Book closed down in December of 1969. But now we knew who some of these people were, and we had it from a reliable source: The [Bolender Memo](#) of 20 October 1969. Brigadier General C. H. Bolender wrote, "Moreover; reports of unidentified flying objects which could affect national security are made in accordance with [JANAP 146](#) or [Air Force Manual 55-11](#), and are not part of the Blue Book system." The real responsibility for UFO reports was located in Langley, Virginia and not Dayton, Ohio. This also explained why some important case files were not found in the Blue Book archives.

Kevin Randle:

"On January 3, 1953, the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron (AISS) was created by Air Defense Command regulation 24-4 in what might be considered an amazing coincidence. The Robertson Panel convened about two weeks later. They reviewed the information, suggested answers for the previously listed unidentifieds, and recommended that the myth be taken from the UFO sighting reports. They suggested that the media be used to "educate" the public about flying saucers. They believed that if they could teach the public about the nature of UFOs, then the number of sighting reports would drop off."

Captain Edward J. Ruppelt:

"The panel didn't recommend that the activities of Blue Boot be cut back, and

they didn't recommend that it be dropped. They recommended that it be expanded. Too many of the reports had been made by credible observers, the report said, people who should know what they're looking at—people who think things out carefully. Data that was out of the circumstantial evidence class was badly needed. And the panel must have been at least partially convinced that an expanded effort would prove something interesting because the expansion they recommended would require a considerable sum of money. The investigative force of Project Blue Book should be quadrupled in size, they wrote, and it should be staffed by specially trained experts in the fields of electronics, meteorology, photography, physics, and other fields of science pertinent to UFO investigations."

Kevin Randle:

"Then, just after the conclusion of the Robertson Panel, Blue Book was stripped of its investigative function. Sighting reports were no longer to be sent to Blue Book and ATIC at Wright-Patterson, but to the 4602d at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. A series of new regulations and special units was created that carefully spelled out who had the responsibility for UFO investigation, and it was not Blue Book. Seven months later, on August 26, 1953, the 4602d was tasked with the official investigation of UFOs under Air Force Regulation 200-2. The regulation required that all UFO reports from inside the United States be transmitted to the 4602d before they were sent on to Project Blue....an organization other than Blue Book and ATIC (would) be alerted first in a UFO report. Then the 4602d would determine if it was to be forwarded to ATIC at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Primary responsibility for UFO-related reports was held at Fort Belvoir, Virginia."

Randle continues:

"Project Blue Book was nothing more than a public relations outfit designed to identify objects and to convince the public that something was being done. In November 1961 another policy was established by the air force in a document sent to various air force intelligence functions. It outlined the establishment of the "AFCIN Intelligence Team Personnel." It was more proof that the air force was interested in UFOs and that it has continued its investigation of them. There is a portion of the document deleted, but in paragraph 2, subparagraph c, it says, "In addition to staff duty assignments, intelligence team personnel have peacetime duty functions in support of such Air Force projects as Moondust, Bluefly, and UFO, and other AFCIN directed quick reaction projects which require intelligence team operational capabilities."

One of my experiences that indicated there was somebody in the government officially still in charge of UFO reports occurred in 1983. For some time now we have known that something very strange and important was going on in October and November of 1975. We have proof that there were incidents that, to quote from released documents, "prompted the implementations of a Security Option 3 at our northern tier bases since 27 October." Sightings occurred at Loring AFB, Wurtsmith AFB, and then at Malmstrom AFB. In late 1983, an informant reported to me that there had been a [major incident at NORAD](#) during that same period which prompted a Security Option 5 alert and total "lock down" at "the Mountain" which houses NORAD. And some official UFO team from the Air Force investigated that incident.

The mystery of who they were is probably solved. Although it could have been Air Force OSI agents, the informant told me that the men who interrogated his group were from "the Air Force UFO division", six years after Blue Book shut down. It was very probably some offshoot of the 4602d AISS. But back in 1963 an Air Force reserve squadron which was a descendent of the 4602d was very interested in what we in NICAP knew about UFOs. But more importantly, we found that UFO

investigations continued and in direct proportion to the events which may have, or was determined to have, an effect on national security.

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