UFOS: MORE ENGINE EFFECTS

by
James McCampbell

DIESELS, TOO?

UFO interference with automotive engines is well recognized and thoroughly documented. Catalogs of such events have been compiled in Australia, England, Germany, and the United States. In 1981, the Center for UFO Studies released summaries and statistical analyses of 441 cases including 268 in which engines not only ran roughly and lost power but completely stalled.[1] Only one case in that catalog pertained to the failure of a diesel engine that coincided with loss of headlights along with many other details that will be reviewed later.[2]

Although not intended to be comprehensive, a rather extensive search of the literature for the present study uncovered only four additional cases that occurred after the CUFOS publication or whose original documentation may have been unavailable. A review of eight known events may shed some light upon this perplexing and apparently neglected subject.

A very famous case in Forli, Italy on November 14, 1954, (Case 1). Two tractors were being driven side-by-side down a road when a UFO was encountered. One of them, operating on gasoline with electrical ignition, failed but the other one, a diesel-powered machine, did not.[3]

ELECTRICAL INTERFERENCE

As many hundreds of UFO sightings have involved electrical interferences of wide variety, it was natural and probably correct for most people to attribute the failure of gasoline engines to some sort of electromagnetic phenomenon. However, that conclusion may have spawned a subtle and pervasive notion that diesels are immune to interference by UFOs.

Another highly publicized example that demonstrates the resistance of diesels took place in the early morning hours of November 6, 1967, in England (Case 2). While driving a diesel truck, the witness saw a strange, egg-shaped object above some trees about ¼ mile away. The lights and radio went out but the engine continued to run as the object landed on the road only 15 yards away. A flexible tube came from the bottom of the UFO with a box on the end. Connected to the box were four short hoses that sucked up grass, gravel, and dead leaves from both shoulders of the road. Then a Jaguar that drove up to the landed UFO on the opposite side lost both its headlights and engine.[4] So again under comparable circumstances, a diesel engine continued to run while a presumably, spark-ignited engine failed.

That diesel engines can be disrupted was probably first observed on a fishing boat plying Hawk Inlet, Alaska on December 16, 1958 (Case 3). The UFO had been seen the previous day floating on the water about ¼ mile away. When it appeared about 70 ft. above the mast, the fisherman radioed the Coast Guard. About 5 minutes later, the "boat's power" failed and the radio went dead. An auxiliary diesel generator was barely running but it came back to normal as the UFO flew away.[5]

The description of this case is less than explicit but the language would ordinarily be taken to mean that the boat's propulsion system failed. It would be rare, indeed, for a boat with a diesel generator to be powered by other than a diesel engine thereby requiring the storage of two different kinds of fuel. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the diesel generator malfunctioned, a detail that will be seen in other cases.

Robert Gomez was driving a "vacuum" truck west of Alice, Texas in the early afternoon of June 12, 1981 when he encountered a hovering, disc-shaped, and brightly-glowing object (Case 4). As his truck slowed down, he depressed the the accelerator to maintain speed and reported that the exhaust stacks were blowing smoke. The truck seemed to be about 1 ft. above the road. His AM radio failed but he was able to report to his dispatcher on a CB. The AM came back on when the UFO disappeared into some clouds.[6]

Gomez was carrying 165 gallons of water under no pressure at the time of the sighting but the tank was later found to be pressurized to 55 psi. Upon attempting to drain the tank, no water came out. Only steam. From thermodynamic relations it can be established that the temperature of the water and vapor in the tank had been increased to about 303°F. Upon opening the drain, he reduced the pressure at the exit to 14.7 psi, one atmosphere. As the vapor pressure of the hot water was 69.7 psi absolute, it would suddenly flash to steam and that process would continue until the tank was empty. Further information in this case is being sought so that a detailed, quantitative analysis can be done.

On March 21, 1974, 21-year-old Maximiliano Iglesias Sanchez had two remarkable and complex encounters with several UFOs and their occupants (Case 5). While driving a diesel truck at 2:30 a.m., he approached to within 200 meters of a UFO standing on the highway and spanning the breadth of the pavement. His lights and engine failed. Another UFO was seen nearby and two, tall human-like creatures. At 11:15 p.m. the same day, he saw three UFOs at the same location with one sitting on the road. Again, the engine failed. He panicked as four "beings" approached him and then hid in a ditch 2 kilometers away to escape their pursuit. Later, upon driving away and yielding to curiosity, he returned to the

(continued next page)

site on foot and observed four beings working on an embankment with strange tools.[7]

TRAIN STALLS

A diesel train of 14 cars was stalled on March 10, 1983, by a huge UFO near Ventilla, Bolivia, (Case 6). First seen as an enormous, blinding cloud of light over the city, it then flew toward the train changing color from bright white to glowing orange. Seventy passengers on board were awakened and screamed in terror. A yellow ray of light struck the locomotive and stalled the engine. Engineer Sixto Churaz said that "I tried to start up the engine, but it was dead. Fifteen minutes later the engine suddenly came to life again as the object began to move away from the train." The locomotive had just been through an overhaul and was found to be in perfect condition. Experts from the University of Oruro, railroad officials, and local police confirmed that a UFO had paralyzed the train and that it was not a mechanical breakdown. On three previous nights, nearby villagers being harassed by UFOs tried to frighten them off with gunfire.[8] This episode introduces the extremely challenging element of the engine starting by itself as the UFO departed, a circumstance that has been reported on 27 other occasions for spark-ignited engines.[9]

A truly impressive event took place in Nha Trang, Vietnam at 9:45 p.m. on June 19, 1966 (Case 7). A brightly glowing UFO was seen flying at an estimated altitude of 25,000 ft. over a large, U.S. military base. It dropped down to hover at 300 to 500 ft. above an outdoor movie, appearing to be about 50 ft. in diameter and illuminating the whole area as bright as day. The diesel generator for the movie projector was knocked out. Just outside the base, 8 huge bulldozers (D9s) were working in the dark on missile sites. All their lights went out and their engines failed. At an airfield about ½ mile away, six independently-operating, diesel generators failed. Also, two Skyraider fighter planes were revving engines on the runway that failed. They were single-seat, combat aircraft with powerful, reciprocating, radial engines that burned aviation gasoline. Finally, a Shell Oil Company tanker that was anchored offshore experienced a complete blackout.[10]

Eight UFOs were sighted between November 9 and December 14, 1978, in the vicinity of an oil-gathering center near Kuwait City, Kuwait (Case 8). The government appointed a committee of experts from the Kuwait Institute For Scientific Research to investigate. An Institude representative, Ratib Abu Id, told U.S. embassy officials that they had rejected the idea of espionage devices and did not know enough about the subject to rule out spaceships. In addition to the events above, a senior official of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) reported to the embassy that the UFO "...which first appeared over the northern oil fields seemingly did strange things to KOC's automatic pumping equipment. This equipment is designed to shut itself down when there is some failure which may seriously damage the petroleum gathering and transmission system and it can only be restarted manually. At the time of the UFO's appearance the pumping station automatically shut itself down and when the UFO vanished the system started itself up again."[11]

It would be helpful to learn exactly what kind of engine failed and self-started. So a letter of enquiry and a package of information were sent to Mr. Id via the State Department and the Kuwait Embassy. After a two month delay and a follow-up letter, no response has been received. Similarly, the Kuwait Oil Company remains silent regarding details about the event and the subject engine.

Isolated instances of strange effects from UFOs can be easily set aside. The information is not consciously rejected but its acceptance as fact would force an uncomfortable effort to fit it somewhere into one's mental construct or perception of the UFO phenomenon. So it is with diesel interference. Only when sufficient evidence is assembled does it become compelling to try to understand what is happening.

The above cases suggest that diesels are, indeed, subject to disruption by UFOs. They include the various patterns so typical of spark-ignited engines, namely, a) a rough running and power loss, b) stalling, c) failure to restart, and d) self-starting. Cases involving both types of engines indicate that diesels are more resistant than spark-ignited engines and that a different mechanism is responsible.

Four basic factors are required by an operating engine, namely,

1) mechanical structure and parts (timing),
2) suitable fuel,
3) oxygen, and
4) ignition (spark or compression).

All previous efforts to analyse interference with automotive engines have been focused upon the electrical, ignition system. But failure of ordinary diesel engines cannot be attributed to a system that is not present. Rarely, if ever, is mechanical damage reported that would necessarily persist after a UFO event. Neither does it appear that changes take place in the fuel supply making it unsuitable. One is left with a strong suspicion that diesel interference must somehow be related to the oxygen supply. While that notion may appear to be unreasonable, there is scientific justification to examine the possibility, a task beyond the scope of this paper.

Self-starting of the Kuwait pumping station is a real puzzler! The analysis of 27 known cases of spark-ignited engines that started by themselves showed that they all occurred as the UFO flew away.[12] That pattern was faithfully repeated in Kuwait. But the only proposed mechanism for self-starting is based upon a sustained arc discharge across the breaker points while the UFO is present. It's collapse upon departure of the UFO would ignite a cylinder with a fresh charge that had come to rest past top-dead-center. Engine cranking would be vigorous. But large, fixed engines are usually diesels and there is the rub.

DIESELS

The notably higher efficiency of diesel engines over gasoline engines is achieved by using a higher compression

(continued on next page)

ration. The compression ratio in gasoline engines is limited to about 7 or 8 to 1 to avoid explosive pre-ignition of the fuel-air mixture. Ratios of 14 to 1, however, are possible with diesels because they compress only air. A metered amount of fuel under high pressure is sprayed into the cylinder at the critical time. With the air temperature in the cylinder at about 500°F, the fuel is immediately ignited so spark plugs are not required.

When reliable supplies of natural gas are available, such as in petroleum fields and along gas pipelines, it can be used as a fuel in stationary engines. Older types of these engines compressed a mixture of gas and air but were limited to low compression ratios typical of gasoline engines. This problem was circumvented by designs that utilized very lean mixtures of gas and air, yielding compression ratios that were comparable to diesels. Ignition in them was produced by a pilot injection of fuel oil supplying only about 5% of the BTUs. Even that small amount of refined oil can represent a significant logistics problem and expense, so in later developments, manufacturers introduced models that *replaced the diesel oil injectors with spark plugs!* These engines, known as "high-compression, spark-ignited gas engines" are produced in great variety by several manufacturers in the range of about 1500 to 4500 horsepower. They are "....the ideal choice for compression stations on gas pipelines."[13]

Because of the higher pressure of gases in the spark gap, these engines require much more powerful electrical systems in accordance with Paschen's Law. Secondary circuits operate at about 25,000 volts. So they would be uniquely sensitive to interference by any source of ionization in the atmosphere that would reduce the breakdown potential and permit shorting the high-voltage surges to ground rather than allowing delivery to the spark plugs. While there are many variation in design of the electrical systems, they have breaker points.[14]

Consequently, collapse of an arc across the points could cause this type of diesel to self-start in complete analogy to automobile engines. It is hoped that complete descriptions may eventually become available for both the engine in the Bolivian train (Case 6) and the one in the Kuwait pumping station (Case 8).

REFERENCES

1. Rodeghier, Mark, UFO Reports Involving Vehicle Interference, A Catalogue and Analysis, edited by Mimi Hynek and Sanna Hans Longden, Center for UFO Studies, October, 1981.

2. Rodeghier, ibid., pp 61 and 78.

3. Lorenzen, Coral and Jim, UFOs, The Whole Story, p 145. Signet, 1945.

4. Lorenzen, Coral and Jim, Encounters With UFO Occupants, p 16, Berkley, 1976.

5. Summary in Falla, Geoffrey, "Vehicle Interference Project," p 49, The British UFO Research Association, publication date unknown but later than July 1978. Original source was APRO Bulletin, May/June, p 6, 1969.

6. Hill, James M., "South Texas Vehicle Effect Cases," MUFON UFO Journal, p 8, January 1982.

7. Olmos, Vicente-Juan Ballester, A Catalogue of 200 Type-I UFO Events in Spain and Portugal, p 44, Center for UFO Studies, 1976. First hand investigation by Olmos. Detailed accounts and translations from Stendek are available in Skylook, Vol 83 p 5, October 1974, Vol 85, p 3-7, December 1974, and Vol 88, p 5, March 1975, Mutual UFO Network.

8. Richman, Gary, Stunned Passengers Watch In Terror As UFO Stops Train Cold, National Enquirer, July 26, 1983. Kindly supplied by Lucius Farish.

9. McCampbell, James M., UFO Interference With Vehicles And Self-Starting Engines, in UFOS: A Scientific Challenge, MUFON 1983 UFO Symposium Proceedings, p 46, Pasadena, California, July 1, 2, & 3, 1983.

10. Fowler, Raymond E., UFOs: Interplanetary Visitors, p 102, Exposition Press, 1974. Also Stringfield, Leonard H., Situation Red, The UFO Siegel, p 197, Doubleday, 1977.

11. Cable No. 79 Kuwait 486, January 29, 1979 and Cable No. 80 Kuwait 3223, July 8, 1980 from the American embassy in Kuwait to the Secretary of State in Washington. The cables, the latter having been previously classified Confidential, were released under the Freedom of Information Act to Peter Gersten et al who kindly furnished copies to the author. This case was briefly mentioned by Gersten in "What The Government Would Know About UFOs If They Read Their Own Documents," in UFOs....the Hidden Evidence, 1981 MUFON UFO Symposium Proceedings, p 26, M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass., July 25 & 26, 1981. It is extremely interesting to note in the cables how widely UFO information is dispersed throughout the government. Copies were sent to the American embassies in Abu Dhabi, Dora (Iraq), London, Al Manamah (Bahrain) and Muscat. The U.S. Commander in Chief (Europe) duly received his copy. Distribution in Washington included the Secretary of Defense, National Aeronatics and Space Administration, National Security Council, National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Central Intelligence Agency and about a dozen other agencies that cannot be positively identified.

12. McCampbell, op. cit., 1983.

13. Kates, Edgar J., Diesel and High Compression Gas Engine Fundamentals, Chapter 18, High-Compression Gas-Burning Engines, American Technical Society, 2d Edition, 7th Printing, 1965.

14. Kates, ibid., p 404.