



U.F.O. HISTORICAL REVUE

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Early Electromagnetic Report Unearthed

Sometimes the most interesting information comes from completely unexpected sources. In a search for other old UFO reports, a story appeared in the September 5, 1951 edition of the Amarillo (TX) Daily News alongside another account of a sighting. Titled, "Magnetic Rays Suggested When Autos Go Dead," an eyebrow went up. Reports of stalling cars in the proximity of UFO incidents became rather widely known in November 1957 but in 1951, this was very uncommon.

Mrs. J. T. Pamplin, 800 Madison in Amarillo reported that her car had "unexplainably stalled" at a railroad crossing at East Third and Grand. A car in front of her had also stopped at the same time. According to the account: "The two cars stalled at the tracks at a time when crossing warning lights were inactive". They were restarted after some difficulty and both drivers declared that their windshield wipers acted erratically, despite being turned off during the period the engines were stalled." This all occurred during the evening of the 4th.

Worldwide speculation had been rampant for years before that somehow "magnetic rays" were responsible for autos shutting down while in progress. Reporters from the Daily News went out to the sight to see for themselves if such rays were continuing to affect cars. Only one vehicle was seen to be stopped once past the tracks but the driver had deliberately shut off his car, "waiting," as he explained to the reporter.

A short time before the cars were stalled, Clarence Alward of 509 South Grand was in his garden two blocks south of the railroad intersection. He said he had spotted a "softball-sized, yellowish light" brighter than a star. He said it soared low overhead and travelled north. It quickly disappeared after passing over. If Alward were south of the railroad intersection and the object was travelling north, it should have passed in the vicinity of the stalled cars. There was no report of the intersection witnesses spotting the object. It may or may not be a coincidence that less than a week earlier witnesses spotted a strange V-shaped formation of lights over Lubbock, Texas, some 200 kilometers south of Amarillo. These objects have become more commonly known as the "Lubbock

Lights. Some of the witnesses reported that the lights had a slight yellow tinge to them, much like Clarence Alward's report days later.

Foo Fighter Archive Donated to UHR

A large holding of records relating to the Foo Fighter phenomenon of World War II has been passed on to us by author Keith Chester. Chester had spent about ten years researching at the National Archives for his book, "Strange Company," unearthing many old files of Army Air Force bombing reports, flak studies, histories and intelligence assessments to determine the extent of reporting of this strange aerial oddity of the war years. Chester estimates that he made over one hundred visits to the Archives, meticulously noting on each page from which file groups those documents came. It all comes in at about two shelf-feet of files with Chester estimating that he used only about a quarter of the records for inclusion in the book. This represents a tremendous effort requiring hundreds of hours of dedicated attention, saving researchers a great deal of time in making all this available for study.

The records are variable in quality, being close to 70 years old in most cases, and can be difficult to read. This will require no small effort to photo enhance many of the papers to bring out the text. We were fortunate the last time I discussed Foo Fighters (Just Cause, June and September 1992) in that decent originals found at the National Archives allowed good reproductions. Despite this, it was evident that papers from that era are now brittle and must be handled very carefully or else watch them turn to dust.

One of the significant finds by Chester was gaining access to particular records of General "Hap" Arnold, one of the top commanders of World War II. Within those records are contained the papers of one of his aides, Lt. Colonel Jo Chamberlin. Some of you might remember this name from an article in "American Legion" magazine (December 1945), an early discussion of Foo Fighter reports from pilots with the 415th Night Fighter Squadron flying missions over central Europe. In the aforementioned June 1992 "Just Cause," microfilm located at the National Archives uncovered the first Foo Fighter records, mainly from the 415th. They were among the records that were used by Chamberlin to create his magazine piece. There was also further Foo Fighter information collected by Chamberlin, and located by Chester, within General Arnold's archive.

From these we learn that Chamberlin was paid \$400 for the article, a tidy sum for 1945. While much boiler plate press coverage was given to Foo Fighter incidents in early 1945, the Chamberlin article was the first major national magazine discussion of the phenomenon. Prior to this, a few relatively short comments had appeared in news magazines of the time, along with speculation by the press that Foo Fighters were related to "Will O' the Wisp" and ball lightning, not an unreasonable notion just based upon the abbreviated accounts available to the public. One pilot, Harold Augspurger, wrote to Chamberlin after being sent a draft of the article for later publication, offered his view. "I enjoyed the article very much and would very much like to see it in print. After going over it we had no corrections to make." (Augspurger to Chamberlin, September 20, 1945.

ALEXANDER GARDINER • ONE PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

Sept. 21, 1945

Dear Col. Chamberlin;

I like the Foo piece. May we
have it for four hundred dollars? If
of may, I'll plan to use it in the
December issue, on which we've
started work.

Sincerely,

Alexander Gardiner
Editor, A. L. M.

Published in American Legion Magazine,
December, 1945 or 1946.

Letter to Jo Chamberlin by the editor of American Legion.

Chamberlin assembled assorted notes on his Foo Fighter work, which apparently had the blessing of his commander, General Arnold. There is nothing explicit in this regard but it is highly unlikely that he would lurch off into an unapproved investigation, including travel expenses, while serving as an aide to Arnold. One of the collections of notes was an undated "History of the 415th," which had a curious subtitle, "Where There's Foo, There's Fire." This was a reference to a popular comic strip of that time, "Smokey Stover," about a fireman in various comic situations. "Foo" was a term used frequently in the strip, probably a twist on the French word "Feu." In the history, Chamberlin observed, "The first indication of scientific phenomena observed by the 415th was the 'Bucket of Blood' which was a huge red light which seemed to ooze red stuff over the sides seen in the distance. This was reported by other fighters too, and may have been some kind of flak that the Germans were using." The comment is undated but contextually with the rest of the general history of the squadron was sometime after August 15, 1944.

The notes continued. Sgt. Ed Clark, a writer for "Stars and Stripes" newspaper, flew on a night fighter mission on Christmas Eve, 1944, along with its pilot, a Lt. Schrock. The Foo Fighter reports were well known by this time and Clark was trying to spot these odd objects. No word on whether or not he did but Chamberlin said that Clark went on missions for a further six straight nights. He saw no Foo Fighters.

The squadron was said to be "sore" that scientists, after studying the reports, concluded that they had seen St. Elmo's "Light," and felt "brownd off." To put it politely, they were annoyed. One said, "Well, let the sons of bitches come over and fly a mission with us." Another observed, "One night...the lights seemed to follow these planes, so the pilots decided to follow the lights, and they did, to find themselves in a concentrated flak area, so they did not follow the lights anymore."

One crew in February turned directly into the lights seen and fired a gun burst. "There was a terrific explosion, but no flash." The ship was buffeted and the radio man received a few bumps from the turbulence. In the same area at another time, the 10th Squadron of the 50th Fighter Group saw "pink matchboxes flowing in the airfoil over the wings of their P-47s." Thinking was perhaps of a new kind of chaff. Sightings were reported from Strasbourg and beyond Karlsruhe. Chamberlin said the Foo Fighters were observed in different sizes and numbers. In some cases, they were in pairs. One event had a cluster seen, amber in color, with no further detail.

When press reports began to appear, the War Department sent a Secret message to SHAEF Main for G-2: "Press reports red balls of fire accompanying planes in flight termed 'Foo Fighters' by air personnel. Desire explanation if available." (SHAEF Incoming Message, January 4, 1945)

After the initial publication of the existence of Foo Fighters in early January 1945, the 415th reports continued on. A summary of incidents was prepared by Captain F. B. Ringwald, Intelligence Officer with Headquarters 12 of the Tactical Air Command to advise S-2 of the "Night Phenomenon" encountered by the pilots and dated January 30, 1945. When I prepared the original articles in Just Cause in 1992, we reproduced a selection of incidents from the hard copy and microfilm available then. Ringwald's summary contained many other reports beyond the first releases, along with more information on the ones I did reproduce.

My notes / J.C. 41572
Night
Fighter
Squadron

The lights alarmed the men at first, but then took them in their stride as unexplainable, hence a cause for general concern in squadron.

First sighting - Schleuter Meiers (pilot) - took off from Dijon at 10 p.m. At times they saw clouds they were on west side of Rhine - hills - stratus cumulus clouds quarter moon - latter part of November.

Reignald at first saw lights 8000 ft - hard to say - Reignald saw lights and thought they were in hills at first, then realized that there were no hills - 8000 ft lights in steps only spaced. At first Schleuter suggested stars etc. R. thought lights were off left wing. Ground control later informed said there was no one in the sky. There were 4 - perhaps five moments. The plane went on and attached moving locomotives in country + marshalling yards at Mainzheim + Ludwigshafen, 6 locomotives destroyed, others damaged. 8000 ft B-24 fighter

Pilot - keeping eye on horizon absolute altitude at 1000 to 1500 ft or lower

Radar observer - Meyers check rear for enemy aircraft
Navigation main thing on intruder missions
by Radar observer.

R. was standing immediately behind pilot - as military observer.

Meiers worked as salesman for a machine shop near Chicago - pleasant, interested in clothes, Meiers was going to shoot at them with Tommy gun - took it along intending to take a blast at them through plexiglass.

When turned into - lights would dive say a great

"Night of 14-15 December 1944 - In the vicinity of Erstein (V-9381) flying at 1000 ft. observed large red light at 2000 ft. going East at 18:40 hrs. Travelling at approximately 200 MPH."

"Night of 16-17 December 1944 - 20 miles north of Breisach (V-0173) at 800 ft. observed 5 or 6 flashing red and green lights in "T" shape. Thought they were flak. About 10 minutes later saw the same lights much closer and behind us. We turned port and Starboard and the lights followed. They closed in to about 8 O'clock and 1000 ft. and remained in that position for several minutes and then disappeared."

"Night of 22-23 December 1944 - Patrolling at Angles 10 from Sarrebourg to Strasbourg North and South of highway. At 06:00 hrs. saw two lights coming towards A/C from the ground. Upon reaching altitude of plane, they leveled off and stayed on my tail for approximately 2 minutes. Lights appeared to be a large orange glow. After staying with A/C for approximately 2 minutes, they would peel off and turn away, fly along level for a few minutes and then go out. They appeared to be under perfect control at all times. Lights were seen somewhere in vicinity of Hagenau."

It is noteworthy to point out that these pilots made a distinction between the usual flak bursts sent up by anti-aircraft fire and what they were seeing in these incidents. One might expect that due to technical advances during the war, eventually one side may develop a new sort of anti-aircraft weapon that could behave in an intelligent manner in pursuit of enemy planes. The problem with this here is that there are no known reports of "Foo Fighters" bringing down aircraft of either side. The objects that seemed to be "under perfect control at all times" didn't seem to do damage but merely accompany planes on their respective missions without interference.

The reports continued:

"Night of 23-24 December 1944 - Observed reddish colored flame at considerable distance and at approximately 10,000 ft.

"Night of 23-24 December 1944 - Approximately 10 miles South of Point T (Q- 6745) noticed to NE approximately 5 miles a glowing red object shooting straight up. Changed suddenly to plane view of A/C doing a wing over and going into a dive and disappeared."

"Night of 26-27 December 1944 - At 01:45 hrs. saw two yellow streaks of flame flying at same level at approximately 3000 ft. off port side. We also saw red balls of fire that stayed up for 10 seconds approximately 45 miles away. After seeing the yellow streaks, made starboard vector lost altitude and streaks disappeared from view. Called GCI Blunder and asked if any E/A were in vicinity. They Answered no. Instructed to return to Angles 10. We felt what was thought to be prop wash; very distinct. Noticed several groups of lights off port while patrolling in vicinity of Q-9050 and R-1556 Lights made distinct lines somewhat like arrows."

"Night of 26-27 December 1944 - While on Vector 090 near V-7050 during patrol we observed airborne white lights. They were staggered evenly vertically and we could see

from 1 to 4 swing at once. They appeared stationary at 10,000 ft."

"Night of 26-27 December 1944 - Observed light at same altitude while in vicinity of Worms. Observer saw light come within 100 ft. Peeled off and took evasive action but light continued to followed for 5 minutes. Light then pulled up rapidly and went out of sight." (a hand-written insert by Chamberlin into Ringwald's report noted: "Flying at 1000 ft. They were looking for trains and motor transports. Lights at first were some distance off - a single yellow glow came closer and light forced plane in a dive. One night Photo Recon outfit, the 155th with 9th Air Force, saw orange blob. Cpt. Edward Sentcher, operations officer, told Schlueter about orange blobs.")

"Night of 27-28 December 1944 - Eight miles NE of Luneville at 19:10 hrs. saw three sets of three lights (red and white) one on starboard and one on port from 1000 ft. to 2000 ft. to rear and closing in at Angels 10. Pulled up to Angels 8 and lights went out. Called Churchman to see if there was anything in area. Received a negative reply."

"Night of 30-31 December 1944 - Saw a group of lights flying through the air 30 Or 40 miles East of base while flying at Angels 9-10."

"Night of 1-2 January 1945 - "Saw a group of lights 'Foofighters' North of Strasbourg and North of Saverne."

"Night of 14-15 January 1945 - "Observed a large orange glow in sky approx. 5 ft. in diameter in vicinity of Ingweiler at 6000 ft. at 20:00 hrs."

"Night of 29-30 January 1945 - At about 00:10 hrs. sighted a Foofighter about half way between Weisenbourg and Landau. Foofighter was off to the starboard and rear at Angels 2. Lights were amber and one was 20-50 ft. above the other and of about 30 seconds duration. Foofighter was about 1000 ft. away and following. The lights were about a foot in diameter. Lights disappeared when Travel 34 turned into them."

The description of the encounter on December 27/28 is curious because while Ringwald said three sets of three red and white lights were seen, the mission report of the mission report of the 415th said only two sets of three lights were seen. It added detail to the Ringwald account that as the lights were closing in, the pilot peeled off from 10,000 feet to 8000 feet and the lights went out. The pilot was later (1930/2230 hrs.) told to investigate a bogey and saw lights suspended in the air, "singly and in pairs moving very slowly." This was observed several times.

To end the summary, Ringwald said that in each case where the pilot called GCI control to ask if "Bogey A/C" were in the area, he received a negative answer. It was also noted, perhaps more of interest to modern audiences, that these objects were called "Foofighters." One word only, which should we call it? Chamberlin added his own written footnote for another sighting on February 28: "Returning, 45 miles East of Base (Loral Ochey) sighted foo fighters to rear starboard. Orange red in color. Turned to have a look and it disappeared. Near Luneville, SECRET north of Strasbourg. Lt. Buscio & Krasner RO."

DATE: 19 March 1945

358th Group

25

TOTAL NO. SORTIES: 206

1 D/B -- 16
2 A/C -- 16
22 A/C & A/R -- 174

Type	Destroyed	Damaged
Locomotives	0	3
B/E Cars	2	8
Motor Transport	328	150
Buildings	31	61
Armored Vehicles	5	3
H/D Vehicles	5	6
Staff Cars	12	7
Tanks	2	6
Guns	3	12
Motorcycles	4	0
Dumps	2	0
(ammo Q-6772, fuel Q-7075)		
Bicycles	5	0
Radar Station	0	1
Road Blocks - 4 (R-3366, Q-793848, R-1090, -R-0786).		
Rail Cuts - 1 (Q-9480).		

LOSSES:

7 P-47s Cat-1, flak. Pilots safe.
3 P-47s Cat-2, flak. Pilots safe.
1 P-47 Dest, cause unknown. Pilots MIA.

2 Jet a/c vicinity Hagenau at 18,000 ft going east at 1325 hrs.
No contact.
2 Jet A/c at 15,000 ft in Saargumines area, going northeast at
1330 hrs. No contact.

104 x 500# GP bombs	--	26.00 Tons
550 x 260# Frag bombs	--	71.50 Tons
61 x 250# GP bombs	--	7.625 Tons
24 x 750# Napalm bombs	--	9.00 Tons
23 x 100# WP bombs	--	1.15 Tons
8 x 90# Frag bombs	--	.36 Tons

TOTAL: -- 115.635 Tons

168 Rockets

The above is a sample document discussing the sighting of apparent jet aircraft, sometimes confusing attempts to analyze Foo Fighter reports. This is typical of condition issue of older records, this one here only partly digitally cleaned to illustrate legibility problems. Most of the text was immersed in the background noise of poor copy.

Foo Fighter-Type Reports Classified As "Phenomena"

It is interesting to note that in the days prior to the influx of flying saucer reports beginning in 1947, the Army Air Force of World War II managed to slot peculiar aerial reports into their own official category: "Phenomena." How do we know this? Attached to some of the mission reports during evening activities were brief sheets making particular mention of unusual features arising from those missions. Those reports went into special files as noted on the sheets for further study. Some samples:

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NND 745015
Authority
By C/NARA Date 12/5/02

SECRET

6535 (R) Phenomena

GERMANY

Southwest of St. Quentin three silver objects about 30 ft. long were seen 1,000 ft. below and 600 yds astern of the observers. They were described as resembling Zeppelins and, although moving in unison independently of the wind, were apparently not interconnected. Similar phenomena were described in Consolidated FLO report No. 205 and although on this occasion a closer view was obtained there is no explanation at present of the purpose they may serve.

SOURCE: MA London - 66474 - 9 Mar 1944 - filed 9815 Spec. Binder.

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NND 745015
Authority
By C/NARA Date 12/5/02

SECRET

6535 (R) Phenomena

GERMANY

A short distance from the target the phenomena previously described in Consolidated FLO Report No. 201 as "a swarm of bees" was again observed. It was reported to be about the size of a barrel, red-brown in colour and apparently motionless. There is as yet no explanation of this occurrence.

SOURCE: MA London -66518 - 13 Mar '44 - filed 9815 Spec Binder.

"Phenomena" Sheet Samples

SECRET

6535 (R) Phenomena

GERMANY

RE: Unusual Phenomena observed by aircrews.

SOURCE: MA London 66372 - 7 Mar 1944 - filed 9815 spec. binder

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NND ² Authority 745015
By <i>CO</i> NARA Date 10/5/02

SECRET

6535 (R) Phenomena

GERMANY

Phenomena. Reference Consolidated F.L.O. Report No. 192 page 1, last para.

Investigation by technical authorities suggests that the object described as "about the size of a Thunderbolt aircraft" was probably a jet-propelled fighter.

Erratum. Reference Consolidated F.L.O. report No. 201. Phenomena, para 2.

It has now been determined after further interrogation of aircrew that the "pale blue streamers, 40 ft. in length" had no connection with the "two particularly large bursts". The latter are thought to have been possibly "scarecrow" flares, while the "streamers", which were seen a considerable time later, may have been smoke trails from ground fired "rockets".

SOURCE: MA London - 66205 - 2 March 1944 - filed 9815 Spec. Binder.

More "Phenomena" Samples

Foo Fighters, Death Rays and Electromagnetism

The notion of "Death Rays," futuristic beam weapons having an initial basis in science fiction literature, began to take on a serious tone in the 1920s. With the advent of radio broadcasting and experiments on wireless energy transmission by Nikola Tesla and a host of others, it was thought that the military could take a dramatic technological leap forward in both offensive and defensive capabilities if a beam, or ray, of energy could be used to exert overwhelming power. In 1925, Edwin Scott was said to have a functioning death ray, developed in California (Medicine Hat ALB Daily News, 7-31-25). The U.S. Department of Commerce was tipped by trade operatives in Europe as to the existence of a beam weapon in Germany (Seattle WA Daily Times, 5-12-25). Even earlier, British inventor, Dr. T. F. Wall, claimed a discovery of "diabolic" rays similar to that of another inventor, Harry Grindell Matthews (Dallas TX Morning News, 6-3-24). "Death Dealing Ray Able To Wreck Cities" said the Canton OH Repository (8-2-28) of the find of German inventor Erich Graichens. The ebb and flow of interest in death rays continued into the 1930s with a suggestion that the catastrophe of the German airship Hindenberg in New Jersey was due to a beam weapon (Montreal QUE Gazette, 5-8-1937), not to mention the prominence of death beams fired by the Martians in the radio broadcast variant of H. G. Welles' "War of the Worlds" on Halloween 1938 that panicked America. The influence on culture was such that a large number of science fiction Hollywood films included ray guns, beam weapons or death rays of some fashion in their alien encounter/invasion plots.

An odd report was sent by the U.S. Military Attache (M/A) in Portugal through the M/A in Madrid, Spain (Report #3158, March 5, 1944). Subject heading was "Death Rays." It seems that Assistant Attache, Captain Lee Thomas, took note of a newspaper article in the February 22, 1944 edition of the Lisbon paper "Novidades" about the discovery of an "effective mortal ray" by the Germans. Supposed assessment by the French General Staff, among others, determined that a diversity of such a creation existed, including:

- 1) Lenard Rays, which could "annihilate great masses of adversaries," invented by Filipe Lenard of the University of Heidelberg.**
- 2) Explosive Rays, which could set fires at a distance to explosive stockpiles.**
- 3) Electromagnetic Rays, which would paralyze motors.**
- 4) Luminous Rays, which would blind the enemy.**
- 5) Sonorous Rays, which would burst eardrums.**

A Spanish scientist is brought into the discussion at this point. Dr. Antonio Langoria, who it is alleged invented a mysterious ray of his own that, could kill through metal and concrete. However, water seemed to deter the effects. His experiments on the ray were carried out between 1921 and 1923 on animals and were said to be successful. In one experiment, after shooting a guinea pig with his ray, the animal fell dead and upon an autopsy Langoria discovered that it's blood "lost its color." He also claimed to have used his ray on foxes he had let loose from four miles away. Again, the animals were struck down.

Captain Thomas' report added that "although this information seems to be of the nature of Sunday Supplement material, it is thought that it may be of possible interest to the Ordinance Department, or whatever department is in charge of such matters." This is all wild speculation but people in high places in government were nevertheless paying attention.

So what does this have to do with UFO reports, with which UHR normally deals?

One of the documents in the paperwork assembled by Keith Chester in his years of research was an "EEI" (Essential Elements of Information) report summarizing a letter from Col. A. J. P. Le Bel of the British military to Col. H. A. Kenyon dated March 11, 1944, and relayed to the U. S. government (remember the U. S. didn't have a large presence in fortress Europe during WWII until the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944). It was classified "Secret" and discussed "Notable Incidents":

"a.) On November 19, on the outskirts of Lens at 5:30 P.M. a British plane was downed with no apparent struggle. The plane was flying normally when all of a sudden, it pitched to the ground and was crushed."

Comment: Accidents happen all the time. The plane developed a mechanical flaw and went down, but....

"b.) English pilots, interned in Switzerland, have declared that as they flew over the Eastern part of France their apparatus had been deranged - also - reports have pointed to the fact that centers for the transmission of these rays have been installed at Ardenes." (Ed. "these rays?")

"These two facts lead us to surmise that the Germans have experimented with their secret weapon and that these rays or waves are capable of hampering Electric parts of plane motors and to disturb the apparatus on board."

There is a bit of context missing here but at least this early in the war the existence of some kind of death ray was strongly suspected by the British flying missions over Europe. From this vague bit of information, it can hardly be said to be compelling evidence in that direction but it does show that what was thought to be "Sunday Supplement" story telling had more substance to it not only in U.S. military circles but within the British military as well.

Does not this small collection of information remind one of later reports of vehicle interference in the proximity of UFO reports, Levelland, Texas in 1957 for example? And the 1951 report mentioned as the lead to this UHR? A recently compiled catalog of examples of close encounters of the 2nd kind (physical effects) by Jan Aldrich of Project 1947 revealed about two dozen such incidents prior to 1947 (see "Project 1947 - EM Effects, Part 1, 1908 - 1965). A handful of those dealt with WW2 reports. One dated July 9, 1945 told of an aircraft over Presque Isle, Maine stalled by electrical effects of a storm in the area.

So how far did this early WWII information go beyond the fragments mentioned here? To Be Continued...