



SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78

The LTC Frank J. Dallas Chapter

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2021



OPERATION GENIE

UFOs — The Facts

Graduation

Special Forces Qualification Students

Graduate Course, Don Green Berets

Co A/5/19th SFG

Reflagging Ceremony



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VOLUME 12, ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2021

From the Editor



How Miller
Sentinel Editor

In last month's issue we highlighted a fellow paratrooper who, among other things, on 6 January, 2021 taunted part of the attacking mob and led them away from the Senate chambers. The Senate voted to award Eugene Goodman the Congressional Gold Medal by unanimous consent.

Kenn Miller writes that while Special Forces exploits are often seen to be stealthy or kinetic, there is another part of the mission that is largely overlooked. Going back to the

OSS in World War II, PSYOPS has always been an integral part of the mission. My A team in Vietnam, for example, had a third officer, a 2LT, who was assigned to PSYOPS.

MAJ (R) Raymond P. Ambrozak was such a standout in the field that he was inducted to the USSOCOM Special Operations Hall of Fame, heavily influenced by his work in PSYOPS. Chapter 78 Member, MAJ (R) Hammond "Ham" Salley worked for "Ray" in Vietnam for several months in the fall of 1967. Ham invited Ray to share an interesting story about PSYOPS. The result is the story "Operation Genie" which we hope you will enjoy. Ham is also a current board of director's member of Psychological Operations Veterans Association (POVA).

Another subject of interest to me stems from 4 October, 1957 when the USSR launched Sputnik, two months shy of my tenth birthday. It was the starting gun of the space race which culminated in the Apollo moon landings. Ever since, I have been a "space case", constantly devouring scientific knowledge ranging from Quarks to the Big Bang Theory. Interwoven into searching for answers to where we came from was the question as to whether humans are the only sentient beings in the universe, and if not, are others visiting us.

Former Green Beret, COL (R) John Alexander, besides all his military and scientific accolades and writings, has been close to some of the people who have the best knowledge of what we as humans do know about the possibilities of being visited. He has interviewed people who were involved in some of the most thoroughly reported cases and has even written a book about it, *UFOs: Myths, Conspiracies and Realities*. His article includes references to the most recent highly publicized cases released by the US military.

Chapter 78 member Kenn Miller has written another cogent review on the book *Shadowmaster*, by Mike Guardia about former Green Beret Donald D. Blackburn, a personal favorite of his.

And wayward Chapter 78 member, John "Tilt" Stryker Meyer, has written about being involved in our Chapter's continued outreach to current and future Green Berets.

With Covid-19 vaccinations finally beginning to be administered, dropping rates of infection, and Washington D.C. largely calmed down, maybe we will see happier times in the near future.

Here's hoping. ♦

How Miller, *Sentinel* Editor

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FRONT COVER: Brig. Gen. Sean P. Mulholland, commander of Special Operations Command South located at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla., pins the Lancero badge on Capt. Richard Franko during a Lancero graduation ceremony at the Escuela de Lanceros located at the Colombian military's National Training Center in Tolimaida. (US Army Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea, Special Operations Command South Public Affairs)



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From the Vice President | March 2021



Don Gonneville
Chapter 78
Vice-President

In spite of the current situation, Editor **How Miller** has put together another great edition of the *Sentinel*, and Debra Holm of Dinwiddie Holm Graphics has packaged it to perfection. Thanks to you both, and to the contributing authors for your inspiring and entertaining articles.

For the next few months, we are going to focus on membership. Chapter 78 has a proud history, engaging members, and interesting activities. But there remain a large number of eligible SF Association members in our area who may not be aware of the many advantages of Association and Chapter membership.

We are going to actively reach out to as many of these former SF members as we can locate and encourage them to visit us at meetings and consider becoming active members.

As an added and very generous bonus, our treasurer **Richard Simonian** is offering 20 SF Association Life Memberships to eligible personnel who express an interest in becoming actively involved in our Chapter.

It's often been stated that there is strength in numbers, and that concept applies to our organization as well. A greater number of active members will lead to more frequent and interesting activities, will attract a wider variety of guest speakers, and will contribute to the overall benefit of Chapter and Association membership. Each of us will be asked to invite all known eligible colleagues.

As the Covid situation improves and attendance at meetings increases, we will have an impressive lineup of guest speakers; this in turn will serve as an incentive for members to attend meetings.

A welcome boost to our membership is the involvement of the members of Co C/I/19th SFG. We anticipate that more of their members will join us going forward. They bring fresh ideas to the Chapter, and they provide a most welcome insight into current events.

For those of us who take an interest in maintaining and improving our marksmanship abilities, **Jim Duffy** has organized a pistol shoot at Prado Range on April 15th from 9 AM to 1 PM. This activity will not replace our normal monthly meeting. More information will follow.

As we go to press, President **Bruce Long** is undergoing a period of rehabilitation and therapy following a difficult medical ordeal. We look forward to having him back among us. ♦

De Oppresso Liber
Don Gonneville
Vice President, SFA Chapter 78



Chapter 78 Meetings

March 20, 2021

April 10, 2021

May 15, 2021

Planning to attend our next Chapter meeting?

If so please e-mail **VP Don Gonneville** at:

don@gonneville.com

no later than Thursday March 18th, midnight.

We need an exact headcount.

TIME:

Breakfast – 0800 • Meeting – 0830

LOCATION:

The Pub at Fiddlers Green

ADDRESS:

[4745 Yorktown Ave Bldg 19](#)

[Los Alamitos, CA 90720-5176](#)

(Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos)

OPERATION GENIE



MAJ (Ret.)
Raymond Ambrozak

By MAJ (Ret.) Raymond P. Ambrozak

In 1961 I was a member of a PSYOP team that was deployed to support Operation White Star in Laos. The team was organized on a voluntary basis and established a six week training program to prepare for the mission. The most impactful training was provided by Special Forces soldiers just returning from a tour. One of those soldiers was a Col. "Bull" Simons who we peppered with questions for two hours. Training took place in an abandoned WWII building in a remote area of Ft. Bragg, in order to maintain as much secrecy as possible. Our first departure date was postponed due to a coup d'état in country. After another six weeks of training, we finally had wheels up. When we arrived in Bangkok, we had two days of briefings before departing for Vientiane. During the briefings, we learned that the concept for our employment in Laos was not as we had been briefed at Ft. Bragg. Instead of the team operating together from a central location, individual advisors were to locate in each of four military regions. This meant that as a butter bar Lt. I was to be the information consultant with frequent contact to the MR-1 Cmdr. General Bounlut in Luang Prabang. Fortunately, we were in civilian clothes, since foreign military personnel were not allowed in country, so my youth and experience level was not as noticeable.

As it turned out, being assigned to duty in Luang Prabang was like winning the advisor assignment lottery. All of the US personnel were seasoned pros truly devoted to their work as US foreign officers and genuinely interested in assisting the Lao government in their effort to remain non-communist. The US effort was anchored by two individuals who were my closest working team mates. Stewart Methven (Stu) was the CIA case officer and Frank Corrigan was the USIS representative both of whom are on my personal hero list to this day.

There was very little break-in period because there simply wasn't time to take the new guy by the hand and slowly familiarize him with the area. Most of the knowledge of the area was dispensed in jeep rides between villages or in helicopters or STOL aircraft while on leafletting missions. The thing that surprised me most, for which I was grateful, was that I was immediately being accepted as a team member expected to contribute and help carry the load. The other



welcome aspect of our activity was that nothing was undertaken without considering directly or indirectly the psychological impact of a proposal. There was also no limit on how audacious a particular action could be before considered for implementation. You didn't have to worry about thinking outside the box, because we were never in the box to begin with. A good example of this was "Genie" which we managed to make happen about a month after my arrival.



Ray Ambrozak and a Pathet Lao POW taking a break sitting on an antenna. Senior USIS officer Frank Corrigan had promised the king a radio station. Parts were coming in to include an antenna field. After Frank was killed in a plane crash the USIS director asked Ray to run their station in Luang Prabang. (Photo courtesy Ray Ambrozak).

Some of what happened was chronicled by Stu in his book [*Laughter in the Shadows*](#). The following is an excerpt from Stu's book. Some names of Laotian people and places are altered to meet security requirements:

“Operation Genie” was the brainchild of Frank Corrigan. Although USIS was prohibited from engaging in covert activities, Frank wasn't bothered by bureaucratic constraints and liked to skirt these by playing spy. Operation Genie centered around the “Pi,” the mystical spirits revered and feared by the Cham. The Pi were invisible but were believed to be omnipresent in clouds, rain, forests, and the breezes wafting over the rice paddies.

Frank's plan called for collecting all the bottles we could find in Luang Prabang. We would then stuff them with leaflets before air-dropping them over villages known to be under Pathet Cham control. On the way down, the bottles would sound like the Pi making a whistling noise. The would break open and scatter the leaflets when they hit the ground, illustrated leaflets urging the villagers to “break” from the Pathet Cham like the “imprisoned” Pi had done.



At the funeral of King Sisavang Vong, who ruled Luang Phrabang for 50 years — Ray Ambrozak is standing in front of the carrier used to transport the King's body in a gold-leaf encrusted sarcophagus guarded by the naga dragons from the palace to the cremation site. The USIS arranged to make a live broadcast of the event to the entire country via Radio LUANG PRABANG. (Photo courtesy Ray Ambrozak)-

The proprietor of the Palace Hotel supplied us with all the bottles we needed. Since most Cham couldn't read, Frank drew caricatures of fang-toothed Pathet Cham, and Voran ran off the leaflets on his mimeograph machine. I requested a small plane from Viensiang to drop the leaflets.

When the plane arrived, we briefed the pilot, and at dusk, when the villagers would have returned from the rice fields, we took off. Once over a target village, the pilot would throttle back the engine and the plane would glide almost silently as we threw out the bottles. He would then gun the engine and fly on to the next village to repeat the operation.

We dropped bottles over twelve villages before returning to Luang Prabang. It was dark when we returned, but Colonel Nelson's team had set out flares on the airstrip to guide the pilot. We had jettisoned our entire supply of Pi bottles.

“Genie” was a one-shot operation, and its success was hard to gauge. We did get some feedback, however. An itinerant rice merchant told the province chief he had been stopped by a Pathet Cham patrol, which warned him that American planes were dropping poison gas in the area. Another source reported that a village chief had called for a goat sacrifice to appease the wounded Pi that had crashed through his roof. ❖

NOTE: For some background on Operation White Star visit: <https://sofrep.com/news/58394white-star/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Raymond P. Ambrozak was born in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania in 1935. He entered the Army in 1957 after finishing Industrial Engineering courses at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. Commissioned as a 2LT Infantry officer after completing Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1959, his first assignment was to the 1st Leaflet and Loudspeaker (L&L) Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

MAJ Ambrozak's career included over ten years in PSYOP at the unit and theater levels long before either the branch or Regiment were formed. He planned and executed operations which involved extensive interface with foreign counterparts and every U. S. governmental agency operating overseas.

In 1961 he deployed to Laos as part of US Special Forces mission known as OPERATION WHITE STAR, training Royal Lao forces combating the Communist Pathet Lao. He was directly responsible for completion of a radio station dedicated to the King of Laos — airing the country's first nationwide broadcast of a live event and designing and implementing a retraining program for Pathet Lao P.O.W.'s.

MAJ Ambrozak was assigned to the US Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity, Pacific (USABVAPAC), the forerunner of today's 7th Psychological Operations Group (POG) from 1962 to 1965, serving as commander of a mobile radio company and the PSYOP Staff Officer to a Joint Unconventional Warfare

Continued on page 4

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF OPERATION GENIE CONTINUED

Task Force. He trained and assisted Republic of China (ROC) military personnel in Taiwan who engaged in PSYOP directed at the Communist People's Republic of China (PRC).

In 1964 he deployed to Vietnam as part of a PSYOP Detachment assigned to MACVSOG where he played a key role in establishing and putting on the air the Voice of Freedom radio station broadcasting to North Vietnam. He was managing station operations when the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred.

In Vietnam, late 1965, shortly after assuming duties as S-3 6th PSYOP BN, the battalion headquarters housed in a downtown theater was hit by a bomb blast totally destroying the building and causing 11 wounded. Working through the turmoil of two re-locations and maintaining daily operations, MAJ Ambrozak was also directly involved with the activation of the 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG) in Dec. 1967.

From 1967 to 1970 he served as a PSYOP Instructor at Fort Bragg's Special Warfare School teaching PSYOP in every officer and enlisted course. He oversaw development and operation of the first

PSYOP unit officer course and a course for PSYOP staff officers. He represented the Special Warfare Center as a guest speaker at the Marine Corps Staff College and the International Police Academy.

On March 15-16, 1971, as Direct Senior Advisor, Phu Nhon District, Pleiku Province, Republic of Vietnam, MAJ Ambrozak distinguished himself by gallantry in action. The Headquarters came under sustained heavy mortar and rocket fire, combined with a ground attack by a North Vietnamese Battalion. When a satchel charge ignited a soaring fire that threatened to destroy the operation center he ordered an evacuation while enduring unbearable heat, to direct the defense. He later led a counterattack, assaulting successive bunkers, to eject the enemy forces which had penetrated the compound. He continued coordinating defense of the compound with relief forces for five days before they were able to break through the enemy cordon. For this action, MAJ Ambrozak was awarded the Silver Star for heroism.

Professionals like MAJ Ambrozak helped ensure that PSYOP became a core element of today's US Army Special Operations. MAJ Ambrozak retired from the Army in 1978 and worked in Department of the Army civilian assignments at Fort Hood, Texas for 11 years. ♦

Book Review

Shadow Commander: The Epic Story of Donald D. Blackburn— Guerrilla Leader and Special Forces Hero by Mike Guardia



Kenn Miller

Reviewed by Kenn Miller

Are there any readers of the *Sentinel* who don't know the name and some of the history of Donald Blackburn?

Probably not. Maybe when you were young you read the book, *Blackburn's Headhunters*, and maybe you saw the movie version *Surrender — Hell!* Blackburn himself called that one, "the worst movie I've ever seen." Well, if anyone had the standing to pass judgment on those works, it surely must be

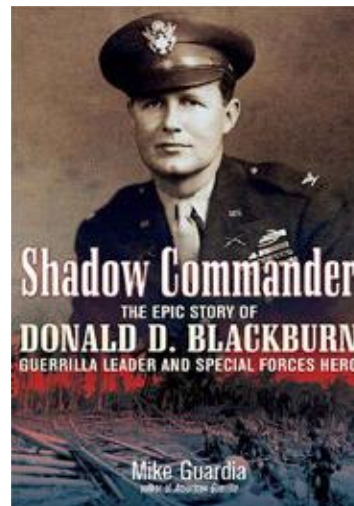
Donald D. Blackburn himself. *Shadow Commander* makes up for any faults in that earlier book and that movie. More than half of *Shadow Commander* is dedicated to the World War Two American and Philippine guerrilla war against the occupying Japanese. You will never read a better, clearer, more detailed, and coherent narrative of extremely arduous and chaotic combat than you'll find in the first eight chapters of this book.

But there is much more in this book than the first eight chapters. You've probably never heard or read about the post-WW2 POW re-orientation classes for soldiers who were either prisoners of war or — like Blackburn — were soldiers who spent the whole war fighting behind enemy lines.

There is much about Blackburn's time as commanding officer of the 77th Special Forces Group, and the early advisor days in Vietnam,

SOG, Son Tay... *Shadow Commander* is an amazing book about an amazing man and an amazing career. And this is certainly one of the best written semi-memoir style (much of the text is from Blackburn's own diaries and reports) military books I've ever read. Mike Guardia has done an excellent job. And there are some photos, too. One of them, is a 1971 picture of a smiling Phillippine first lady, Madame Marcos, pointing at General Blackburn, probably offering to show him her infamous collection of expensive shoes.

Shadow Commander is a book you will surely want to own, and to read more than once. Buy it! ♦



[Shadow Commander: The
Epic Story of Donald D.
Blackburn—Guerrilla Leader
and Special Forces Hero](#)

by Mike Guardia

Casemate Publishers

ISBN-10: 1612000657

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240 pages

In May of 1861, 9-year-old John Lincoln “Johnny” Clem ran away from his home in Newark, Ohio, to join the Union Army, but found the Army was not interested in signing on a 9-year-old boy when the commander of the 3rd Ohio Regiment told him he “wasn’t enlisting infants,” and turned him down. Clem tried the 22nd Michigan Regiment next, and its commander told him the same. Determined, Clem tagged after the regiment, acted out the role of a drummer boy, and was allowed to remain. Though still not regularly enrolled, he performed camp duties and received a soldier’s pay of \$13 a month, a sum collected and donated by the regiment’s officers.

The next April, at Shiloh, Clem’s drum was smashed by an artillery round and he became a minor news item as “Johnny Shiloh, The Smallest Drummer.” A year later, at the Battle Of Chickamauga, he rode an artillery caisson to the front and wielded a musket trimmed to his size. In one of the Union retreats a Confederate officer ran after the cannon Clem rode with, and yelled, “Surrender you damned little Yankee!” Johnny shot him dead. This pluck won for Clem national attention and the name “Drummer Boy of Chickamauga.”

Clem stayed with the Army through the war, served as a courier, and was wounded twice. Between Shiloh and Chickamauga he was regularly enrolled in the service, began receiving his own pay, and was soon-after promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He was only 12 years old. After the Civil War he tried to enter West Point but was turned down because of his slim education. A personal appeal to President Ulysses S. Grant, his commanding general at Shiloh, won him a 2nd Lieutenant’s appointment in the Regular Army on 18 December 1871, and in 1903 he attained the rank of Colonel and served as Assistant Quartermaster General. He retired from the Army as a Major General in 1916, having served an astounding 55 years.

General Clem died in San Antonio, Texas on 13 May 1937, exactly 3 months shy of his 86th birthday, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. ❖



Above, Lance Sergeant John Clem, at age 10. (public domain in the US, published in the US before 1926.)

At right, American Civil War muster records index card for John Lincoln Clem, showing he enlisted named Klem. Born at Newark, Ohio, in 1851 as John Joseph Klem, he changed his name because of his admiration for President Abraham Lincoln. (from the US National Archive)

Left, Major General, US Army John Lincoln Clem, 1922 (Library of Congress)

22	Mich.
John Klem	
Co. 6, 22 Reg't Michigan Infantry.	
Age 13 years.	
Appears on Co. Muster-out Roll, dated	
March 26, 1865.	
Muster-out to date	
Last paid to June 30, 1865.	
Clothing account:	
Leat settled....., 186 ; drawn since \$ 100	
Due soldier \$ 100; due U. S. \$ 100	
Am't for cloth'g in kind or money adv'd \$ 100	
Due U. S. for arms, equipments, &c., \$ 100	
Bounty paid, \$ 100; due \$ 100.	
Remarks Discharged by order of	
Sec. of War. at Atlanta,	
Ga. Sept 19/64.	

UFOs — The Facts



Col. (Ret.) John B. Alexander

By Col. (Ret.) John B. Alexander

UFOs are real. Well, at least some of the sightings reported are hard physical craft. During December, 2017, an article in *The New York Times* brought renewed interest in what they called unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP). That story revealed that the Department of Defense had again been looking into the topic for several years. Shortly thereafter three videos were formally released revealing interaction between US Navy aircraft and the UAP.

This article will provide a very cursory overview of the various studies conducted by US and foreign militaries. Of course, the best known was Project Blue Book which concluded in 1969. Of the thousands of cases reported they ended up with 701 that could not be explained by any traditional means. During the 1980s, I formed an ad hoc interagency group to study UFOs. Participants came from all services, the Intelligence Community, and aerospace industry. All had top-secret/SCI level clearances. To reduce risk of exposure to FOIA requests I called the study Advance Theoretical Physics (ATP). Instructing participants that no notes were to be written, I thought we would be safe from the new legal requirements imposed by FOIA. Years later I learned some participants had cheated and select material made available on the Internet.

From a historical perspective UFOs have been reported for millennia. Alexander the Great reported a UFO incident during his Southwest Asia incursion. In 329 BCE, while crossing the Indus River to engage the Indian army he reported, “gleaming silver shields” swooped down and made several passes over the battle.” However, it was after a series of incidents following World War II that the reports took on increased significance as there was even an incursion over Washington DC which resulted in fighters attempting to intercept the objects. They couldn’t. Sightings continued and there was considerable concern that they might represent a gigantic leap in technology by some foreign competitor like the Soviet Union. Projects Sign, Grudge, and finally Blue Book were conducted by the US Air Force in an attempt to determine whether or not these observations constituted a threat.

In an attempt to rid themselves of this inconvenience, the Air Force

funded the *Colorado Project*, also known as the *Condon Study*. Contrary to popular belief this was not an in-depth study but did come to the conclusion that UFOs were not a threat and therefore did not belong under the Department of Defense. The problem, of course, was that while the official studies were curtailed, the sightings were not; there were several of significant concern.

Possibly of most concern were interactions between UFOs and nuclear weapons and sites. Throughout the 1960s there were a series of sightings of UFOs across the northern United States. These became known as the *northern tier sightings*. The most dramatic interaction occurred on 16 March, 1967 at the missile silos assigned to Malmstrom Air Force Base. A launch control officer at Oscar Flight, then-Captain Bob Salas, received an urgent call from the security guards that were topside. They indicated that they were seeing UFOs in the immediate area. In very short order Salas noticed that the nuclear capable ICBMs began going off-line. Quickly seven of the missiles under their control indicated they were incapable of being launched. Salas immediately notified SAC headquarters and was shocked to learn that Echo Flights had 10 of 10 missiles off-line. That has never happened before or since. The normal MTBF might be two missiles going down in a year. Obviously extensive testing was conducted but no rational explanation was ever determined.

The United States was not alone in such interactions. An event of similar significance happened at the Soviet missile site at Byelokoroviche, Ukraine, 4 October, 1982. On that occasion, a large UFO was seen by several hundred people hovering above the Soviet launch site for several hours. In this instance, rather than going off-line, the missiles began spinning up and preparing to launch. The launch control officer, Lt. Col. Plantovec, attempted to stop the event fearing they were about to start World War III. As suddenly as it began, launch proceedings stopped. As in the American case, extensive research was conducted but no explanation was found. Unlike the US command and control system, Soviet missiles were controlled directly from Moscow and there was no method by which Plantovec could have independently initiated the launch sequence.

Noteworthy are the comments by Colonel General Igor Maltsev in 1990. As Chief of Staff of the Soviet Air Defense Forces, he stated, “Skeptics and believers both can take this as official confirmation of the existence of UFOs.” The comment is even more amazing considering his predecessor had been fired when a young German flew a Cessna into Soviet airspace and landed near Red Square.

Another nuke's related series of incidents occurred during late December, 1980 at Bentwaters, a joint US/UK base with a forward nuclear weapons storage area. This is one of the best documented cases and that there were over 60 witnesses, the majority of which were USAF personnel. The first of several incidents actually occurred in Rendlesham Forest immediately east of the base. During that incident three base security personnel left and entered the forest believing that there might have been a civilian aircraft crash. Two of the personnel, SSG Jim Penniston and Airman John Burroughs, actually came in close contact with an object on the ground. Penniston told me he actually touched the craft which had a fabric like feel to it. He also indicated there were some unique glyphs which he copied down. Being December, the ground was frozen, yet the weight of the object left three indentations. Later, plaster casts were made and it was determined that there was radiation in the area that was well above background.

Two nights later another incident happened. Among things a UFO flew over the base and directed a beam that seem to be interrogating the weapons area. Lieutenant Colonel Charles (Chuck) Halt, then the deputy base commander, was notified and took a survey team into the forest. He reported seeing a red glowing object that was maneuvering through the trees in front of them. As they got close the objects split into five pieces and went zipping off. Proceeding, two of the objects came and hovered directly over them and fired what he believes was a laser beam at their feet before flying off again. Recently it has been confirmed that radar sightings from that night did pick up an unidentified object. Chuck and I have spoken about this at several conferences. He indicated when we first met, he thought since I was from Los Alamos National Laboratory, I was there to debrief him. In reality, I just wanted more information about this extraordinary case.

On 20 May, 1957 USAF Lieutenant Milton Torres was assigned to the 514th Fighter Interceptor Squadron out of RAF Manson near Kent, England. On strip alert that night in his F-86-D Sabre, he and a wingman were scrambled to engage an unknown target. They were informed this was not a drill. The UK defense radars had picked up a large unknown object that was stationary in the area. As he approached, Torres reported seeing an object of the approximate size

of an aircraft carrier hovering in midair over England. As he prepared to salvo his MK4, 2.75-inch Mighty Mouse rockets, the UFO departed accelerating from 0 to over Mach 10 instantaneously. Ground control radar indicated the object covered over 250 miles in less than two seconds. That is far beyond the capability today, let alone in 1957.

Secrecy can have profound psychological consequences. When Torres returned to base, he was directed to go and received a special interrogation. That debriefing took place with unidentified men in civilian clothes. The meeting concluded with him being told to never speak of the incident again. He complied. Leaving the Air Force, he attained a doctorate degree in mechanical engineering and taught at Florida International University. It was not until the UK released the reports of UFO incidents that happened there that this case came to light. UFO researcher and retired MOD civilian, Nick Pope, was reviewing the files about to be released and was stunned to find this case. Doctor Torres was taken by surprise that the case was about to become public. I have seen him discuss the encounter several times. On every occasion, he has broken down crying from the psychological stress of carrying the secret for decades.

UFOs are a global phenomena and other militaries have had encounters. On the night of 19 September, 1976 an extraordinary event happened over Iran. The control tower at Mehrabad Airport near Tehran called upon the Iranian Air Force to respond to reports of the sighting north of them. One of the F4-D's was piloted by Lieutenant Parviz Jafari (later a Lieutenant General following the fall of the Shah) stated the object was so luminous it could be seen from 75 miles away. He was following the lead pilot who reported losing all communication when they came within 25 NM of the object. Jafari continued to close on the object and prepared to fire AIM-9 missiles. When he did so his weapons panel became disabled and he lost all instrumentation and communications capability. As he banked and pulled away the electronics were restored.

For me personally, this is a critical issue as my last military assignment included oversight of all the tactical directed energy systems being developed for the US Army. The point is I know how to turn off adversarial systems, but I don't know how to turn them back on again remotely. Clearly in 1976 that UFO was demonstrating techni-



COL Bob Friend, USAF, Former head of Project Blue Book, COL Bill Coleman, USAF, COL Charles Halt, USAF, Nick Pope, UK MOD, and me at the National Atomic Testing Museum. (Photo courtesy Alejandro Rojas)



COL Chuck Halt, Nick Pope, Former UK MOD officer assigned to UFOs, and me at National Atomic Testing Museum (Photo courtesy Alejandro Rojas)

cal capabilities far beyond anything that was currently understood. Jafari, also reported that two smaller objects were emitted from the large UFO. One came after him and the other headed towards the ground. Both ceased action before there was any impact. The sighting had many other witnesses including people in the desert who had seen the smaller object approach the ground. They anticipated an explosion but that did not happen.

Peruvian Air Force pilot, Captain Oscar Santa Maria Huertas, also reported an amazing armed exchange with a UFO in prohibited airspace. On 11 April, 1980 a large object was spotted hovering over Peru. Initially it was believed to be a balloon. Huertas was flying a Sukhoi-22 fighter and was ordered to intercept the object. The pilot reported firing 64, 30-mm rounds at the target. Although he seemed to engage there was no discernible damage to the UFO which simply appeared to absorb the impact. Huertas described the object as metal circular 30 feet in diameter and devoid of any typical aviation fixtures. The object then maneuvered away from him in a manner he described as, "defying the laws of aerodynamics."

Another important UFO case was reported by my friend, Colonel Bill Coleman, who was retired from the US Air Force when we met. Following World War II, Coleman commanded two squadrons of mixed air craft at Greenville Air Force Base in Mississippi. This particular day he was flying a B-25 Mitchell bomber that had just been overhauled. Accompanying him was a lieutenant who was the principal pilot, and two tech reps who were just along to conserve his available time. On the final leg of the flight from Jacksonville, Florida towards Greenville the unusual encounter occurred. As they were flying and discussing technical issues, about 10 minutes east of Marianna, Florida they noticed an unidentified luminous object above them at about 25,000 feet.

The object descended and all noted it did not look like an airplane since it had no tail, wings or other projections. An experienced combat fighter pilot, Coleman took over controls as the UFO descended

further and he followed until they were below treetop level. Traveling at about 300 knots they were able to close within about ¼ mile of the object. The area they were traveling over were plowed fields. Coleman noticed that there was a shadow being cast by the object that appeared circular in nature. As an old farm boy, he was also struck by the dust trails that were being generated following the craft as it skimmed across the ground. Coleman dove low enough that he was below treetop level and tried to maneuver in behind the object. Instantly, the object disappeared from sight as Coleman quickly ascended. The crew then noted that the object was visible at its original position at 25,000 feet. Interestingly, when he got back to Greenville Air Force Base, he had everyone write up a report and submit it.

A significant point is that COL Coleman was later assigned as the Chief of Public Relations Office for the US Air Force. Due to the sensitivity of that position, he was interviewed by the Secretary of the Air Force. The issue of UFOs was raised and he pointed out that because of this previous incident he was not unbiased. Among Coleman's assigned duties at the Pentagon was to address the public reports of Project Blue Book. Remarkably, when he attempted to locate the reports that he and the crew had submitted, he could not find them within the official reports. It has long been rumored that several such high-quality high-strangeness reports were siphoned off. Following his retirement, Coleman went to work for Jack Webb of *Dragnet* fame, and was involved in the development of their television series on UFOs. He did tell me that he had a stash of over 100 high credibility cases that he planned to write up. As too frequently happens, he took that information to the grave.

While Project Blue Book was the US Air Force's premier UFO study, it was seriously flawed. No case better exemplifies the shortfalls than what took place on 24 October 1968 when a ground technician reported observing a UFO on the ground in proximity to the missile sites near Minot, North Dakota. A B-52 bomber piloted by Captain Brad Runyan was returning from a training mission. The B-52 was contacted and without further explanation directed to fly to the reported coordinates. When Captain Runyan asked what they were looking for, he was told, "you'll know it when you see it."

By now it was reported that the UFO had lifted off the ground and was flying parallel to the radar repairman. He estimated it now was about 1000 feet above the ground. Arriving in the area, the B-52 **flew over** the craft. Runyan reported the object to be approximately 200 feet in diameter and several hundred feet long. He stated the UFO was glowing yellow and he was fairly sure he was "looking at an alien spaceship from another planet." In addition, Runyan reported another object, with a radar return similar to the size of the KC-135 but closing with speeds of an estimated 3000 mph. Wisely, he had a photo taken of the radar screen indicating the relative position of the object as it approached.

Despite 16 highly credible witnesses, and that **the B-52 had flown over the UFO**, Major Hector Quintanilla, then the head of Blue Book, wrote off the incident in a most ridiculous manner. He found the ground sightings were probably the star Sirius, while the aircrew may have observed Vega. He further discounted the radar citing as attributed to plasma-like ball lightning. No wonder many people are skeptical of the USAF on this matter.



Me with COL Bill Coleman at his home in Florida. (Courtesy John Alexander)

Udeniable incidents recorded during November, 2004 created renewed official interest. The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group 11 was operating on pre-deployment training exercises about 100 miles southwest of San Diego. For six days they encountered multiple radar sightings. The initial sighting was of 6 to 10 UFOs traveling at about 28,000 feet around 100 knots. These could not be identified but recorded instantaneously departing at over 24,000 mph. Other radar sightings put the UAPs at 60-80,000 feet, well above commercial airspace. It was noted they could drop very rapidly to just above the surface.

During the maneuvers, the USS Princeton picked up the unknown objects on radar and decision was made to attempt to intercept them. Accordingly, the F-18s that were airborne at the time were directed to the location of the objects. The lead pilot was CDR David Favor, who has since retired and has spoken publicly about the incident. As they approached the pilots reported a Tic Tac-like object maneuvering in the area. They estimated the unknown craft to be about 30 to 46 feet in length. The pilots noted that it had none of the normal aerodynamic features of an aircraft and no visible means of propulsion. Physical confirmation included multiple radars from both USS Princeton and the F-18's as well as IR sensors and visual observation by the pilots. The observers also indicated that the UFO was seen hovering at about 50 feet above the ocean and appeared to be interacting with an unknown object below the surface. The pilots were then instructed to go to their combat air patrol rendezvous point about 60 miles away. To their amazement, when they arrived at that location the UFOs were already there as if waiting for them. Also noted was that the rapid acceleration and sharp turns would produce G-forces no human could survive.

Because of these incidents an independent study called the Advanced Aerial Threat Identification Program (AATIP) was initiated with Congressional support from Senators Harry Reid, Daniel Inouye, and Ted Stevens, who had had a personal sighting. Among the key people was Luis Elizondo, a Department of Defense civilian with personal interest, and was supported by Christopher Mellon, who was serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. For security they changed the acronym from UFOs to UAPs. Using a civilian contractor, the study came to several conclusions.

Here are the official findings of the AATIP study:

- AAV unknown aircraft, not US or of any foreign nation
- AAV had advanced low observable characteristics — radars ineffective
- AAV had advanced aerodynamic performance — no means for lift
- AAV had advanced propulsion capability — with no visible signature
- AAV possible ability to “cloak” — invisible to human eye
- AAV possibly highly advanced, undetectable undersea operation capability

I should point out, that while the investigation added interesting data points, there is nothing in their conclusions that we did not already know from the ATP study I had run over three decades earlier.



"Tic Tac" UFO — one of three US military videos of unidentified aerial phenomenon (UAP) that has been through the official declassification review process of the United States government and approved for public release (<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2165713/statement-by-the-department-of-defense-on-the-release-of-historical-navy-videos/>). It is the only official footage captured by a US navy F/A-18 Super Hornet present at the 2004 Nimitz incident off the coast of San Diego. Visit <https://www.history.com/videos/uss-nimitz-tic-tac-ufo-declassified-video> to view the video.

As has always been the case, sightings continued. One series that raised concern with the Navy ran from 2014 to 2015 and involved Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group 2. Pilots from USS Roosevelt frequently reported observing UAP. Some of these were involved in their pre-deployment cruise off Norfolk, Virginia and soon after as they were sailing east of New York City. They did not stop there. After the carrier strike group arrived in the Persian Gulf Region, the UAP reappeared.

One of the F-18E Super Hornet pilots, Lt. Danny Accoin, said that “when you start to get multiple sensors reading the exact same thing, and then you get to see a display, that solidifies it for me.” Several pilots again note the UAPs engaged in aerial maneuvers so extreme they would not be survivable. The Roosevelt fliers note several new models of UAP. One was dubbed “Gimbal,” as it seemed to pivot on an axis in the air. Another was called “Go-Fast,” as their sensors recorded small objects zipping below them. Other pilots stated they saw cube-like objects coming at them and at close proximity.

Today the search continues and DoD acknowledges they have officially established a group to record and investigate the continuing encounters. Unofficially, we have been told that encounters are occurring on a near-daily basis. Noteworthy, is that included in the new Defense Authorization Act, is a requirement that the DoD must report the information available on UAPs to Congress. That report should be due in late June, 2021.



The “Gimbal” UFO (left) and the “Go-Fast” (right) — both stills are taken from the official US Navy videos of 2015 UFO encounters, taken aboard Navy fighter jets from the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, off the eastern seaboard, near the Florida coast. To view the videos go to <https://www.history.com/videos/uss-roosevelt-gimbal-ufo-declassified-video> and https://www.history.com/videos/uss-roosevelt-gofast-ufo-declassified-video?playlist_slug=ufo-fighter-pilots-video-playlist.

UFOs are not isolated to the military. Rather, these are global phenomena that have been observed by tens of millions of people in all walks of life. Credible witnesses and multisensory data clearly indicate the physical reality of some of the observations. Space does not allow for exploration of the related phenomena of contacts between humans and sentient nonhuman entities. It is worth noting, however, that such interactions have been reported in all cultures throughout the entirety of human history.

Having researched this topic for several decades, I have come to the conclusion that we are observing phenomena (plural) that are at least as complex as cancer. The closing paragraph of my UFO book is as follows: “In the end it is clear that the universe is far more complex than we ever imagined. We are not close to solving the enigmas posed by UFOs, rather we are still on the front end of defining the fundamental issues and boundaries.” ❖

About the Author

John Alexander entered the US Army as a private in 1956 and rose through the ranks to SFC, attended OCS, and was a colonel of Infantry in 1988 when he retired. During his varied career, he held key positions in special operations, intelligence, and research and development. From 1966 through early 1969 he commanded Special Forces “A” Teams in Vietnam and Thailand. His last military assignment was as Director, Advanced Systems Concepts Office, US Army Laboratory Command. After retiring from the Army, Dr. Alexander joined Los Alamos National Laboratory where he was instrumental in developing the concepts of Non-Lethal Warfare (NLW).

Dr. Alexander organized and chaired six major conferences on NLW and served as a US delegate to four NATO studies on the topic. As a member of the Council on Foreign Relations NLW study, he was instrumental in influencing the report that caused the DoD to create the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate in July 1996. He was a member of the National Research Council

Committee for Assessment of Non-Lethal Weapons Science and Technology, later served with the Army Science Board. An advisor to USSOCOM and CIA, in 2003 he served as a mentor to top MOD officials in Kabul, Afghanistan then he became a Senior Fellow of Joint Special Operations University.

In addition to many military awards for valor and service, *Aviation Week & Space Technology* selected him in 1993 as an Aerospace Laureate and in 1997 inducted him into the Hall of Fame at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington. In 1994 he received a Department of Energy Award of Excellence for the Nuclear Weapons Program and is listed in *Who's Who in Science and Engineering*, *American Men and Women of Science*, and in 2001 was named to the OCS Hall of Fame at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

His nonfiction books include, [The Warrior's Edge](#) (Wm. Morrow), [Future War](#) with foreword by Tom Clancy (St. Martin's Press), the sequel, [Winning the War](#) and most recently [Reality Denied](#). ❖

A large, illuminated neon sign that reads "WELCOME TO Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA". The word "WELCOME" is in large, red, circular letters. "TO" is in blue. "Fabulous" is in a blue script font. "LAS VEGAS" is in large, red, block letters. "NEVADA" is in blue, block letters. The sign is set against a blurred background of city lights.

WELCOME TO *Fabulous* LAS VEGAS NEVADA

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION 2021 CONVENTION

The 2021 Special Forces Convention "SFACON" promises to be one of the biggest, SFA Conventions of all time. Las Vegas is the entertainment capital of the world and we promise to throw a lot at you over the course of 4+ days. Our host hotel, The Orleans, has a huge hospitality room which will feature an "open" bar for the entire convention. Don't miss this one!

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- Open Bar all days
- SF Speaker Symposium
- Butler Purple Heart Run
- M Hotel Day Club After Race Party
- Death Valley Motorcycle Ride
- Golf Tournament

Graduation

Special Forces Qualification Students Graduate Course, Don Green Berets



By John Stryker Meyer

On Thursday January 28 222 men donned their Green Berets for the first time during the Special Forces Qualification Course conducted at the USASOC Flight Company Hanger on Pope Air Force Base due to current virus protocols.

John Stryker Meyer Promptly at 1000 hours SFQC Class Number 324 was called to attention and proceedings kicked off. SFA Chapter 6 member and former SFA National President Jack Tobin said the virus eliminated some of the extra highlights such as bagpipers but that didn't diminish the moment when the command was finally given: "Don berets!" Afterwards, I spoke to a few of the graduates, including two medics who began their training in 2017, going through the Prequalification Course before entering the formal SFQC. They were amazing young men, all.

I had the honor of representing SFA Chapter 78 at the event as part of chapter leadership's efforts to become more involved in assisting SFA's national leadership team in recruiting associate members and interesting young men into Special Forces, providing life SFA membership to key graduates and potential SFA members, and supporting events such as catering the pre-graduation lunch on the Tuesday before the graduation.

At the end of the pre-graduation BBQ on Tuesday Jan. 26, held on SFA HQ grounds in Fayetteville, North Carolina, SFA National

President Kevin Harry acknowledged Chapter 78's efforts and sponsorship of the luncheon, which was held in conjunction with SFA Chapter 1-18. One nice aspect of that event was the presence of several family members who had the unique opportunity to mingle with their Green Beret graduate's future SF peers.

Tuesday and Wednesday nights there were unofficial gatherings at the SF pub/restaurant in Fayetteville, Charlie Mikes, where we gathered with national board members, young graduates, and members of current ODAs preparing to deploy and fellow SFA members.

In addition, we had time to visit the new team room for SFA Chapter 1-18 on 55 acres of N. Carolina property a short drive from SFA HQ. Chapter 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson gave us a tour of the team room — the chow was hot and delicious, the beers were cold, and a meeting hall that already had an impressive amount of SF history and folk lore on its walls.

Wednesday January 27, I attended my first SF National Board of Directors meeting at the HQ, where President Kevin Harry again thanked Chapter 78 for its increased support to the association and to helping recruit SFA members and to interest young men to enlist for Special Forces training. There were several presentations, including a detailed report on new social media contacts and improved commo links between chapter-to-chapter and chapter to national HQ. More details will follow in *The Drop*.

The next scheduled SFQC graduation is scheduled for April 22, with finalized plans pending on the latest china virus protocols. ♦



SFA National President Kevin Harry is addressing the new graduates of Class 324 following the barbecue which was sponsored by SFA Chapter 78. Standing behind Kevin, is SFA Chapter 1-18 President Chris Wilkerson, who greeted the graduates and also made a pitch for why the young graduates should consider joining the SFA. (Photo courtesy John S. Meyer)



At left, John Meyer with SFA National Board of Officers President Kevin Harry, at the SFA headquarters grounds during the pre-graduation barbecue luncheon. (Photo courtesy John S. Meyer)

Above right, the SFA HQ in Fayetteville. (Photo courtesy John S. Meyer)



I had the honor of meeting three SF Soldiers who trained the recruits, from left: Jake, Willie, me and Drew moments before the graduation ceremony at Pope Air Force Base, NC. (Photo courtesy John S. Meyer)



Co A/5/19th SFG Reflagging Ceremony

- ❶ Major Bob Ashley, Company Commander addresses the group during the reflagging ceremony on Sunday, February 21, 2021.
- ❷ Chapter 78 Vice President Don Gonneville spoke on behalf of the Chapter during the ceremony.
- ❸ Members of Co A/5/19th in attendance.

❹ Company A colors

❺❻❼❽ The ceremony

❾ Chapter 78 members in attendance at the ceremony: Back row, left to right, Cliff Armas, Don Gonneville, Dennis DeRosia, Tom Turney, Susan Weeks, Mike Jamison, Steve Bric, Mark Miller. At front, left to right, James Light and Bob Crebbs.