

How Oregon MUFON Investigates UFOs

An Oregon MUFON Presentation

by

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July 13, 2010

Introduction

- General UFO investigation facts.
- What constitutes a UFO report?
- MUFON and Oregon MUFON.
- Purpose of UFO investigation.
- What is proof?
- Case disposition and Vallee classification.
- Identification candidates.
- OM's investigative process.
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General UFO Investigation Facts

- In the U.S., no official, establishment organizations affiliated with governments, universities, businesses, religious institutions, etc., accept or investigate UFO reports.
- Only police and sheriff's departments *may* do any investigation if activity in a region is really, really pronounced and of real concern to local citizens. This *may* result in police reports and be written up in local newspapers at times.
- No one but private, citizen-run, non-profit organizations are interested in UFO reports and do routine investigation.
- Of MUFON, NUFORC, CUFOS, NARCAP, and all the little UFO enthusiast sites, only MUFON has a staff of trained field investigators who can actively work with witnesses to find out what was actually seen/experienced.

What is a UFO Report?

- Someone, somewhere sees/experiences an unusual (to them) stimulus in the night or daytime sky. Often, the experience includes strange lights, maneuvers, or craft-like structure.
- Because of the cultural understanding of “UFOs,” they eventually find their way to an Internet UFO reporting site.
- The primary ones are NUFORC and MUFON. But there are other “less official” reporting sites like UFOs Northwest, CUFOS, NARCAP, and many others.
- The witness fills out a form that becomes a UFO report.
- This report is the foundation (ideally) of a field investigation including face-to-face interviews and on-site investigation.

What is MUFON?

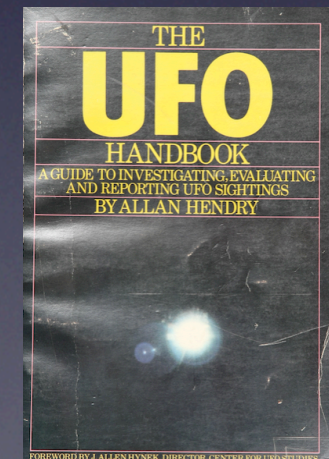
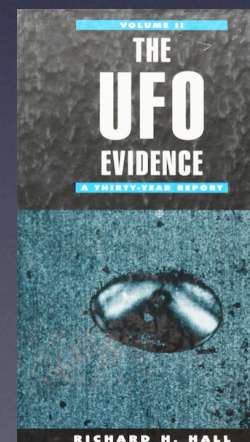
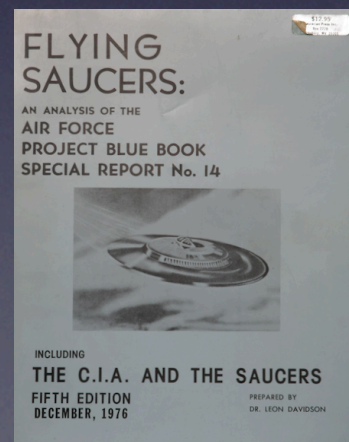
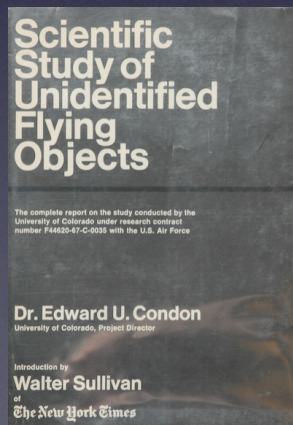
- MUFON (Mutual UFO Network) was founded in 1967 to do *field investigation* of UFO reports. Older field investigation organizations (APRO and NICAP) were beginning to fade.
- Today, MUFON has about 3000 members, who pay annual dues and receive the *MUFON UFO Journal*. MUFON stages a UFO symposium annually and publishes a symposium proceedings.
- MUFON actively seeks field investigators for each of its state chapters, such as Oregon MUFON. MUFON requires that investigators pass a test with a “B” grade based on its *MUFON Field Investigator’s Manual*.
- MUFON has about 500 active field investigators. Oregon MUFON currently has five active field investigators.

Purpose of UFO Investigation I

- All UFO reports are descriptions of some stimulus that the witness believes is unusual.
- Investigation answers the question: ***Just how unusual was the stimulus of a report?*** This has three basic answers.
 1. It was unusual only because the witness lacked knowledge of how to interpret the stimulus, e.g., the witness didn't know enough astronomy to recognize Venus.
 2. It was unusual because a well-educated, knowledgeable person saw something known to human knowledge under unusual circumstances but made a mistake in identification.
 3. It was unusual because the witness, regardless of educational background, saw something unknown to human knowledge and, therefore, could not interpret it as known.

Purpose of UFO Investigation 2

- Answers 1 and 2 lead to UFO report identifications that end up in the various categories of natural or human-made objects or effects.
- Answer 3 leads to “identifications” that end up as true unknowns. Many of these unknowns fit well into the traditional category of what is known as the UFO phenomenon.
- “Genuine” UFO descriptions are presented in the many books describing the UFO phenomenon by scientists, scholars, journalists, compilers of government studies (the Condon report, Blue Book Special Report #14, the French GEPAN reports, etc.), citizen UFO organizations, etc.



Concepts of Proof I

- Concepts of proof vary. The primary kinds are mathematical, scientific, statistical, scholarly, historical, and legal. UFOs occur in the real world, so mathematical proof does not apply.
- Properly, UFOs should be studied by establishment science, but they are not publicly today. This is a tragedy for society, but true. To crack the UFO enigma, lots of money is needed because the UFO is a world wide phenomenon. MUFON and other citizen-based organizations do not have this money. So, systematic scientific proof is not feasible today.
- Statistical proof has been carried out in minor studies such as Blue Book Report #14, the Condon report, Jacques Vallee's work, Allan Hendry's *The UFO Handbook*, some of Richard Haines' work, various other UFO authors, and some MUFON-sponsored work. This work is good but needs validation from the science establishment.
- Scholarly and historical evidence for UFOs (tending toward proof) exists in the many scholarly and historical works of ufologists. (See the oregonmufon.com bibliography.)

Concepts of Proof 2

- Legal proof remains and this is where individual UFO cases have their proof. UFO investigation is like forensic investigation. Scientific, scholarly, and other rational methods of evidence gathering and evaluation are used. MUFON and OM use these methods as an ideal.
- The evidence gathered in a UFO case may tend to prove the case as if in a court of law using the following standards of proof.
- Proof to the level of (1) *preponderance of the evidence*, (2) *clear and convincing evidence*, or (3) *beyond a reasonable doubt*.
- These levels can be thought of as (1) minimum of 51% convinced, (2) 85% convinced, and (3) 95% to 100% convinced.
- OM requires the level of *preponderance of the evidence* and strongly urges FI's to be convinced of proof either at *clear and convincing evidence*, or hopefully, of proof at a level of *beyond a reasonable doubt*. (Remember, in a court of law, *beyond a reasonable doubt* means life in prison or execution.)

MUFON's Case Dispositions

- MUFON has developed four possible resolution categories for UFO cases. These are called case dispositions.
- *IFO*. An “Identified Flying Object” is a planet, star, airplane, bird, insect, secret government aircraft, satellites, prank balloons, etc.
- *Hoax*. A report of false and misleading information intended to deceive discovered by an FI.
- *Insufficient Data*. Not enough information to rise to the proof level of at least preponderance of the evidence. Usually, witness unreliability or non-cooperation.
- *Unknown*. These can be “UAV” or “Other.” UAV (Unknown Aerial Vehicle) means the UFO sort of, but doesn't(!) resemble and behave like a conventional aircraft of some type. The stereotypical flying saucer fits here. “Other” means various anomalous objects or effects, such as a “luminescent, maneuvering, shape-changing” object.

Vallee Classification of UFOs I

Vallee Classification System					
Class Type	1 Sighting	2 Physical Effect	3 Beings	4 Reality Transformation	5 Injury or Death
AN Anomaly	Amorphous lights, mystery explosions	Poltergeist, materialized objects, areas of flattened grass (i.e. crop circles)	Anomalies with entities (ghosts, yetis, cryptozoological beings, elves, spirits)	Near Death Experience (NDE), religious visions and miracles, Out Of Body Experience (OOBE) Witness sense of reality change (such as landscape alteration, telepathy, etc)	Anomalous injuries or death, including spontaneous combustion and unexplained wounds
FB Flyby	Continuous trajectory	With physical evidence	Beings observed	Witness sense of reality change (such as landscape alteration, telepathy, etc)	Result of fly-by is injury or death
MA Manuvers	Discontinuous trajectory	With physical evidence	Beings observed	Witness sense of reality change (such as landscape alteration, telepathy, etc)	Result of maneuver is injury or death
CE Close Encounter	Close approach (within 500 ft)	With physical evidence	Beings observed	Abduction	Injury or death

- Jacques Vallee, veteran UFO researcher, developed a classification scheme for virtually all UFO experiences. The horizontal axis describes how deeply an experience affects a witness. The vertical axis describes how “active” the UFO is. The system is used for UFO case prioritizing.

Vallee Classification of UFOs 2

- Vallee was a close associate of J.Allen Hynek. Hynek created the familiar UFO classification scheme of Night Light, Daylight Disk, Radar-Visual, Close Encounters I, II, and III. Vallee realized that some UFO type experiences didn't really fit, so he developed his more general UFO experience classification scheme.
- The Vallee Classification is used to determine the priority of UFO investigation when a lot of reports arrive in a short amount of time.
- Category 1 is the lowest priority. Vallee AN1, FB1, and MA1 fit here. Three day initial response is fine and no in-person interview is required.
- Category 2 is the middle priority. Vallee AN2, FB2, MA2, and CE1 fit here. Two day initial response is fine and an in-person interview is urged.
- Category 3 is the highest priority. Vallee AN3,AN4,AN5, FB3, FB4, FB5, MA3, MA4, MA5, CE2, CE3, CE4, and CE5 fit here. One day initial response is required and an in-person interview is required.

Identification Candidates List

- Oregon MUFON encourages FI's to develop and think in terms of a list of identification candidates.
- This is a list of possible identifications of UFO stimuli as known human-made or natural world objects or effects.
- As investigation of a UFO case is pursued, the FI develops this list.
- When investigation is complete, the FI formally tries to confirm or disconfirm each identification candidate. If none are confirmed, the UFO case receives the MUFON “Unknown” case disposition.

CONCLUSION

At this point you have all the evidence that I did when I figured out the identification beyond a reasonable doubt according to all the evidence presented so far. If you guessed some type of balloon, then you were on the right track. But my solution to this UFO mystery is that the UFO display is entirely consistent with Chinese sky lanterns, which are a recent fad in the U.S. and U.K. in the 1990s and especially the 2000s. The Chinese sky lanterns that Joe and Jane saw were probably released by just a few people who launched their lanterns one at a time. Thus, they formed a line in the sky from Joe's and Jane's vantage points as the lanterns drifted along with the 12 mph north wind at 70 PM.

Take a look at a Chinese sky lantern display shortly after launch in Figure 4, Chinese Sky Lanterns in the Night Sky. You'll probably agree that this identification fits just about all the evidence presented earlier in this report. The UFO identification occurred to me when I checked the weather on the day in question and found that the wind speed and direction were right for balloon-type behavior. I then remembered that Chinese sky lanterns were mentioned in many U.K. UFO incidents in 2009 and 2010.



Figure 4. Chinese Sky Lanterns in the Night Sky

Joe and Jane saw only about 10 to 12 sky lanterns total. But you get the idea here. Note the standard color of reddish orange. Note the somewhat spherical shape, which both Joe and Jane were in agreement on, though Jane was closer, but still a couple thousand feet away. In the right sky they would look as Joe and Jane described them.

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Identification Candidates

The candidates for identification for this slow-moving train of reddish-orange lights are the following:

- **Aircraft.** No conventional aircraft, military or civilian, fits the witness' descriptions. Neither talked about any kind of sound associated with the UFO display—even Jane who was much closer. Also, there were too many of the UFOs to be airplanes. Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.
- **Helicopter.** This candidate is no different from aircraft. Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.
- **Unlit.** Prominently lit unlitights might possibly be an identification, but no noise was noted; they don't really look like the simple cube shapes that was observed, and there were too many. Also, this hobby craft being operated at night over a major metropolitan area would constitute a danger to the public and is probably illegal. Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.
- **Remotely-controlled model aircraft.** Specially lit RC models would be somewhat similar to unlitights, though possibly more plausible. But they would be a public hazard and there were too many observed for this to be plausible. Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.
- **Glowing Balloons.** These do exist and could be the true identity of the UFOs, but they are far rarer than Chinese sky lanterns. Thus, this identification candidate is rejected.
- **Chinese Sky Lanterns.** Bingo! This fits at least 95% of everything Joe and Jane said about their UFO display. Thus, this identification candidate is **accepted**.

Since the identification candidate of Chinese sky lanterns fits virtually all the observed and described characteristics, this UFO is classified as an UFO.

Reporting a UFO to MUFON

- MUFON has developed and maintains a UFO reporting system as part of mufon.com. Anyone can report a UFO.
- Oregon MUFON prefers you use mufon.com to report sightings.



The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying the MUFON UFO Sighting Report Form. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://mufon.com/reportufo.htm>. The page features a header with the MUFON logo and the text "Mutual UFO Network". The main content area is titled "EVENT" and contains several form fields and options:

- Date of Event:** A date picker (month/day/year) and radio buttons for "Exact" and "Approximate Date".
- Country:** A dropdown menu currently set to "UNITED STATES".
- State (USA):** A dropdown menu.
- Province (Canada):** A dropdown menu.
- County:** A dropdown menu.
- (Nearest) City:** A text input field.
- Time of Event (Local Time):** A time picker (hour/minute) and a dropdown for "TIMEZONE", with radio buttons for "Exact" and "Approximate Time".
- Duration of Event:** Three time input fields for "HRS", "MINS", and "SECS".
- Shape of Object(s):** A list of checkboxes for various shapes: Blimp, Boomerang, Bullet/Missile, Cigar, Cone, Chevron, Circle, Cross, Cylinder, Diamond, Disc, Egg, Fireball, Flash, Oval, Saturn-like, Sphere, Square/Rectangular, Star-like, Teardrop, Triangle, Other, and Unknown.
- Short Description of UFO Event (25 words or less):** A text input field.
- Detailed Description of the UFO Event:** A large text area with the instruction: "Please tell us your story. Start from the beginning and describe everything exactly as it happened from beginning to end. Be as detailed as you".

OM's Investigative Process I

1. Oregon MUFON (OM) automatically receives an Oregon UFO report via email from MUFON's online UFO report collection facility (CMS). The emailed CMS UFO report includes nearly all the information the witness fills out on mufon.com including contact information.
2. The State Director (SD), Assistant State Director (ASD), or Chief Investigator (CI) assigns the case to a field investigator (FI).
3. Based on the importance of the case, the FI decides how to conduct the witness interview: email, phone, or face-to-face, or some combination.
4. The FI analyzes the CMS report and starts formulating questions to clarify case facts with an eye to confirming or disconfirming an identification candidate.
5. The FI contacts the witness via phone, email, or letter to see if the witness will consent to an investigation. If no consent, the case is completed.

OM's Investigative Process 2

6. If consent, the FI works with the witness till the FI is satisfied at least to a “preponderance of the evidence” certainty of a case disposition.
7. If there is possible or actual physical evidence (photos, videos, environmental traces, medical evidence, etc.), the FI gathers this according to MUFON protocols.
8. The FI completes all feasible evidence collection and builds a list of identification candidates.
9. The FI writes a formal report in Oregon MUFON Case Studies format, or more likely writes a short report online in the "back end" of MUFON's CMS. The formal report may include an Analysis section where questions about UFO size, distance, physical characteristics, etc., are presented.
10. In the formal report conclusion, the FI lists the identification candidates and confirms or disconfirms the reasoning for each. If all candidates are disconfirmed, the UFO is given an "unknown" case disposition.

Conclusion

- UFO reporting and investigation is a hit and miss affair—mostly miss. No official agencies investigate UFOs in the U.S. or in almost all other countries.
- American universities in cooperation with the U.S. government should be doing UFO investigation and research.
- But because they are not, citizen-run groups do it. MUFON is by far the largest and best organized in the U.S.
- MUFON does the best scientific and scholarly job it can consistent with its time, money, and expertise constraints.
- Oregon MUFON is understaffed for the number of UFO reports it receives, yet Oregon MUFON publishes more UFO case studies than almost every other MUFON chapter.

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