



it will be a field entirely left to charlatans.”

Expedientes Insolitos is a valuable addition to the collections of serious UFO investigators of any country.

Those of us in the United States can only hope for an English-language edition in the near future. ♦

UFO NEARLY COLLIDES WITH BRITISH AIRLINER

BY DAVID BORAS

A British Airways Boeing 737 had a near mid-air collision with an unidentified flying object, which flew past the airliner's right side from the opposite direction. The incident occurred at 6:48 p.m. on the night of January 6, 1995, while the passenger jet was flying on a northeasterly heading at 4000 feet and at about 8 or 9 nautical miles southeast of the Manchester airport where it was preparing to land. The flight crew, Captain Roger Wills, and his co-pilot, First Officer Mark Stuart, reported the encounter to air traffic controllers, who located no other aircraft in the vicinity of the 737 on their radar. They reported that the unknown object made no sound, caused no turbulence, and never altered its course. Flight 5061 landed safely with its sixty passengers unaware of the event.

While reluctant at first to talk about the incident with friends and associates, the two crew members were so concerned that they filed a formal "airmiss" report. British Airways sent the report along with a detailed log and sketches to the Joint Airmiss Working Group, which is part of the Civil Aviation Authority. The CAA conducted a year-long inquiry into the incident and concluded that it could find no likely explanation. The authority had previously investigated three similar incidents since 1987 and also failed to discover any reasonable explanations for them.

In the airmiss report, Stuart stated that his attention was diverted to something in his peripheral vision. He looked up to see a dark, wedge-shaped object with what might have been a black stripe down the side. Stuart estimated the size as ranging from that of a light aircraft to a Jetstream. He was able to track the object through the right windscreen and side window for only two seconds. Although he was unable to estimate the distance between the 737 and the object, he felt that it was quite close and instinctively ducked as the object flew by.

In telephone conversations with the Joint Airmiss Working Group, both the captain and first officer stated

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their conviction that they had seen a solid object and not a meteorological phenomenon, balloon, or any other kind of familiar aircraft. They also ruled out a Stealth aircraft, which Wills said he was familiar with and believed he could identify. Independently, both had drawn sketches of a similarly-shaped object. The two did have differing opinions regarding the lighting aspects. Stuart thought that the object had been illuminated by the aircraft's landing lights, which were turned on at that point in the approach, while Wills was convinced that the object was self-illuminated and described it as having a number of small lights like a Christmas tree.

Despite an extensive investigation, the Joint Airmiss Working Group report states that the object remains untraced. Although radar tapes show a number of secondary contacts during Flight 5061's approach to Manchester airport, at no time during the final leg of the landing (the time of the incident) was any other radar contact made in the vicinity. An excerpt from flight recordings of conversations between the crew and air traffic controllers at the time of the fly-by follows:

B737 (1848)—"c/s we just had something go down the [right-hand side] just above us very fast."

Manchester—"Well, there's nothing seen on radar. Was it er . . . an [aircraft]?"

B737—"Well, it had lights, it went down the starboard side very quick."

Manchester—"And above you?"

B737—" . . . er, just slightly above us, [yes]."

Manchester—"Keep an eye out for something, er, I can't see anything at all at the moment so, er, must have, er, been very fast or gone down very quickly after it passed you, I think."

B737—"OK. Well, there you go!"

The report noted, however, that a lack of radar contact is not necessarily unusual if weather suppressers are in use on radar, especially if the object generated a poor radar return. Under these conditions, radar can mistake a non-transponding primary target as weather and disregard it.

sighting are enclosed.

The Data Reduction Unit Report on the April sighting reads:

Objects observed following MX776A test of 27 April 1950

1. According to conversation between Col. Baynes and Capt. Bryant, the following information is submitted directly to Lt. Albert.

2. Film from station P10 was read, resulting in azimuth and elevation angles being recorded on four objects. In addition, size of image on film was recorded.

3. From this information, together with a single azimuth angle from station M7, the following conclusions were drawn:

- a. The objects were at an altitude of approximately 150,000 feet.
- b. The objects were over the Holloman range between the base and Tularosa Peak.
- c. The objects were approximately 30 feet in diameter.

d. The objects were traveling at an indeterminate, yet high speed.

WILBER L. MITCHELL
Mathematician
Data Reduction Unit

This report clearly shows that Elterman was wrong in stating that "no information was gained." Here we have an explicit altitude (150,000 feet) and an explicit size (30 feet). Of course the measured angles may have been somewhat in error, so these calculated values may not be completely accurate. Probable accuracy would be plus or minus 10 or 20%. But even if they were off by 100% in altitude and size (a factor of two; for example, perhaps the object was only 75,000 feet high and 15 feet in diameter), there would be no natural phenomenon or man-made device which could explain the sighting. It is interesting to note that the 30-foot size calculated by Mitchell is the same as the calculated size of the object seen by Charles B. Moore almost exactly a year earlier, if Moore's object had been at an altitude of 100,000 feet. ♦

REVIEW

Expedientes Insolitos: El fenomeno OVNI y los Archivos de Defensa, by Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos. Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1995. 300p.

Reviewed by Richard F. Haines

Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos is a highly respected and well-known European UFO investigator and author. Indeed, he has written four major and excellently written books about UFOs to date. Unfortunately for English speaking people, all are in Spanish so far. Nevertheless, his research is first-rate and his selection of topics is both interesting and valuable. This is no less true for his latest book whose title in English is *Weird Files: The UFO Phenomenon and the Defense Archives*. Published by the large and prestigious firm of Temas de hoy (Madrid) in April 1995, this 300-page book presents many diagrams, photos, and actual facsimiles of Spanish military documents obtained by the author over the years. I continue to marvel at his longstanding personal dedication to high-quality UFO research and his prolific writing for the benefit of others.

The book's prologue is by noted Spanish journalist Javier Sierra and its epilogue is by Jacques Vallee, a writer and student of the phenomenon who needs no introduction.

The first two chapters include a collection of twelve UFO reports of high strangeness from Spain obtained over the past ten years, followed by several cases about objects and other phenomena which were subsequently identified. The objective? To show that most UFO observations are misidentifications of natural, i.e., explainable events. The

third chapter turns to the important subject of the kinds of research methods one needs in order to study UFO phenomena.

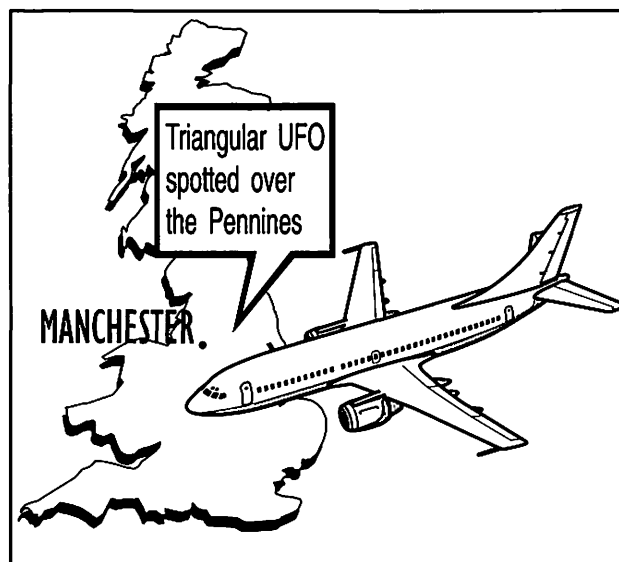
In order to stay as close to the evidence as possible, the author wisely focuses on his own research findings over the past thirty years—landings and trace statistics, human testimony, even cases involving death ("probably caused by UFO radiation") are covered.

The longest (fourth) chapter (83 pages long) is titled "The Air Force Reveals its Secrets." It presents, for the first time, declassified abstracts of this valuable material. Ballester Olmos begins this seminal chapter with how he succeeded, almost single-handedly, in getting formerly closed military files declassified and released. Many American, British, French, German and other investigators would do well to read how he did it. He moves forward to outline some statistics on the 45 air force cases he received (e.g., the frequency of UFO report occurrence continues at a rate of about zero to three cases per year except for 1968 which had 21). The remainder of this chapter presents extended abstracts of 37 selected reports of sightings made by air force personnel and others; they should be translated into English for the benefit of American researchers.

The last two chapters focus on the efforts and accomplishments of numerous so-called first- and second-generation UFO researchers in Spain (chapter 5), and a well-known American UFO investigator (chapter 6), not only to recognize their efforts but to encourage younger enthusiasts to follow in their footsteps. Ballester Olmos states in this regard, ". . . if science does not cover this subject (proving that this enigma is amenable to scientific study),

In its report, the Joint Airmiss Working Group dismissed several possible explanations for the object, such as hang gliders, paragliders, microlights, large model aircraft, or commercially operated remote-controlled craft, as unlikely primarily because of the obvious hazards of flying in the dark, high winds, and the treacherous terrain of the Pennine Chain. It also found no evidence for military activity, but since the 737 was near uncontrolled airspace to the east of Manchester, the possibility of unknown military or civilian activity in that area cannot be completely discounted. The Group's summary suggests, however, that such activity would probably have been detected because the area is served by several radars.

The Group emphasized that the report from two responsible airline pilots was taken seriously, and its members commended the pilots for their courage in submitting their reports and the airline for its enlightened attitude that made the report possible. The hope was expressed that this example might encourage other pilots who experience unusual sightings to report them without fear of ridicule. From the information available to them, including the pilots's reports, transcripts of the radio communications, a video recording, and reports from the air traffic controllers, the investigators had no doubt that the pilots saw an unusual object. After the normal avenues of investigation had been explored, the object remains unknown. The report stated that although speculation about extraterrestrial activity was fascinating, it was not within the Working Group's



jurisdiction and would have to be left to those with an interest in such matters. The summary pointed out that almost all UFO sightings can be explained by a wide range of well-known natural phenomena. No concurrent reports were made by ground observers.

The Joint Airmiss Working Group concluded that in the absence of any solid evidence that could identify or explain the object, it could not assess either the cause or the risk by any of the normal criteria applicable to airmiss reports, so the incident remains unresolved. ♦

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LETTERS

NO PROBLEM

To the editor:

In response to the informative article "The 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron and UFOs," which discusses the 4602d HQ Report of 1954 by Capt. Joseph A. Cybulski (*IUR*, Winter 1995), I offer the following from the 4602d Semiannual History, January–June 1956, Classified SECRET:

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT PROGRAM. Considering the nationwide press release, by the Secretary of the Air Force, the "UFOB Summary and Study" and the statement that "the Air Force has ended its Project Blue Book," one would judge that the UFOB problem had fulfilled its goal. This was especially true if one considered that the primary purpose of the program was to allay hysteria by systematically squelching rumors and illusions. Reassuring the public mind that no tangible evidence existed to support fears of an "invasion from outer space," or that "radical technological advances and developments by the enemy" do not exist, was imperative.

A very good reason to classify any reports that might suggest either problem. The history goes on to state that contrary to the notion of Blue Book's ending, the project would continue. For one thing, there still remained individuals who were subject to "illusions caused by fears," in spite of the public reassurance. For another, it was necessary to retain a system against such cases "as a preventative measure against public hysteria. It was for this reason that UFOB statistical reviews will be unclassified and distributed by Air Force Public Information Offices."

In other words, the Air Force did not want to keep the public informed about a UFO problem. Rather, it wanted to make sure citizens believed no problem existed. And a third reason was that the system was an asset to the defense of the nation including an analysis of incidents which "could conceivably be instigated by enemy action." The overall public-relations attitude is quite clear.

A final observation on the 4602d report of 1954: While telling in detail how to handle data, photographs, and so on, it has this to say: "Material: In case of any physical evidence of UFOB, you're to safeguard it and notify us. We will tell you what to do with that."

What the hell is *that* supposed to mean?

Brian Parks
Torrance, California

WHITE SANDS UFOs

To the editor:

Writing about UFOs over the White Sands Proving Ground during the spring and summer of 1949 (*IUR*, Winter 1995), Kevin D. Randle recounts several reports which were

leaked and published in the *Los Angeles Times* that August.

The leakage, says Randle, was attributed to a (my emphasis) "Commander Douglas C. McLaughlin, U.S.N.," though, in Randle's words, McLaughlin "denied the details reported" by the press.

My files show that *True* magazine (March 1950) carried an article by a Cmdr. Robert B. McLaughlin titled "Navy Officer Tells How Scientists Tracked a Flying Saucer." In it McLaughlin details three sightings, one each in April, May, and June. Though McLaughlin personally witnessed only the May sighting, he felt all three were sufficiently reliable to be covered in his article. He noted that the report on the April sighting (the one that so interested Randle) "went to 'Project Saucer' at Wright-Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio." McLaughlin does not say if any other sightings were reported to the USAF but concludes his piece by speculating that the saucers use a "radiation-pressure motor" and probably come from Mars.

George W. Earley
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VIDEO REVIEW—continued from page 12

who was stationed there with the American Air Force. His account of an alleged UFO landing witnessed by dozens of military personnel, while vivid, is not corroborated in this documentary by any other witnesses. Even the famous Colonel Halt audiotope describing an unusual red light fails to convince us that the extraordinary events reported by Warren actually happened. Comments by Lord Peter Hill-Norton stating his belief that something physical actually occurred, which caused base personnel to become concerned, and his position that no one has ever provided him with a satisfactory explanation for that event leaves us intrigued, but still feeling left out of the loop.

The Roswell segment presents old videotaped interviews with several well-known witnesses, including Jesse Marcel and Glenn Dennis. We also hear Congressman Steven Schiff explain how the Pentagon gave his office the runaround about Roswell documentation. Stephen Aftergood of the American Federation of Scientists debunks the Roswell mystery as a product of UFO beliefs reinforced by excessive Cold War secrecy.

Certainly, Cold War secrecy played a role in adding to the aura of mystery surrounding UFOs, but there is no evidence that this is the complete answer. Only complete openness about the government's involvement with the UFO question will result in a thoroughly honest understanding of UFO events like Roswell and Woodridge-Bentwater. And this will only begin to happen when serious investigative journalists and documentary filmmakers probe more deeply into the better UFO accounts. Until then the best UFO stories will remain untold. *UFO: The Untold Stories*, then, is an entertaining but lightweight look at UFOs, sure to be enjoyed by buffs, but leaving those of you seeking more thorough information unsatisfied. ♦

1995: over Manchester, UK

CEI/A

GLOBE & MAIL, Toronto, Ontario, Canada - Feb. 3, 1996 CR: G. Conway

Close encounter of the weird kind baffles British aviation authority

Year-long inquiry finds no explanation of UFO that buzzed airliner

BY DAVID WALLEN
Special to The Globe and Mail

LONDON — After a year-long formal inquiry, British aviation experts admit they are baffled by a close encounter between a passenger jet and an unidentified flying object on an approach to Manchester Airport.

The Civil Aviation Authority said yesterday it can find no logical explanation for the UFO, which apparently buzzed the British Airways Boeing 737 with 60 people on board last January

at the 4,000-foot level of its descent on a flight from Milan.

Captain Roger Wills, 35, said a wedge-shaped UFO, emblazoned with small white lights, came so close to his jet that co-pilot Mark Stuart ducked.

The object also was spotted from the ground, yet never appeared on radar screens. It made no attempt to deviate and passed very quickly down the right side of the aircraft. It made no sound and created no wind turbulence.

The incident happened at 6:48 p.m.

on Jan. 6, 1995, with the aircraft just above the clouds and visibility at least 16 kilometres.

Air traffic controllers had the following conversation with Flight 5061:

B737: "We just had something go down the right-hand side, just above us, very fast."

Manchester ATC: "Well there's nothing seen on radar. Was it an aircraft?"

B737: "Well it had lights, it went down the starboard side very quick."

Both the captain and co-pilot were convinced the object was not a balloon, model aircraft, kite or even a stealth aircraft. Captain Wills said he had seen a stealth before and thought he would have recognized it.

Suggestions that the object might have been a reflection from a cloud or even a secret U.S. spy craft also have been discounted.

The CAA's Joint Airmiss Working Group said in its report, published yesterday, that it cannot explain the incident, confirming there was nothing else on the radar screens apart from the jet in that position at that time. It concluded that it was "not possible to suggest either the cause or the risk" of the incident. "The reported object remains untraced."

The report praised the crew for telling their story in the face of possible derision from colleagues.

"It's all a bit of a mystery," a Civil Aviation Authority spokesman said. "There was a similar case about three years ago involving Alitalia and it was not possible to explain that one, either."

On the ground, Mark Lloyd was near the airport and says he saw the object, too.

"There was like a glint in the sky and, as I looked, I could see this triangular-shaped object hovering quite high up and it had depth to it," he said. "It was rounded off at the back end and appeared to have something like back burners." He described a black line down the side and a triangular-shaped window.

When Mr. Lloyd told his girlfriend what he had seen, she said he was "talking a load of codswallop."

Later, he telephoned the airport and was put through to the control tower.

Mr. Lloyd said yesterday he was relieved that the official report backed his version with the words of the air crew.

While the incident has baffled aviation experts, it has delighted UFO enthusiasts. The word of pilots, they said, might give some credibility to their favourite subject.

"Now that the CAA have actually come out with a statement saying it was unidentified, we shall go straight back to them and try and get them to say more," said Eric Morrison, one of Britain's leading exponents of UFOs and extraterrestrials.

One of the best authenticated UFO sightings was made by the crew of one of the Apollo space missions, when an object tracked the spacecraft for some minutes before moving off at high speed. The astronauts told Houston they were being tailed, adding: "We'll assume it's friendly."