

BACKGROUND ON THE NASA FRAGOLOGY FILES

The NASA FRAGOLOGY Files -- Destroyed or Missing? Did NASA File Contain Information on Kecksburg?

Even though informants told me that they have seen the military recovery report on the Kecksburg object, no such documents have ever surfaced. But many other documents that concern Project MOONDUST have been released by various agencies. Project MOONDUST involved the government functions that dealt with the recovery of space objects that survived re-entry through the Earth's atmosphere. A 1973 State Department document released to New Mexico researcher Clifford Stone states that "The designator MOONDUST is used in cases involving the examination of non-US space objects or objects of unknown origin."

Various State Department documents show that NASA played a role in the recovery and examination of space object debris. So far, no NASA documents have been located concerning the Kecksburg event, even though I have received information that a NASA representative was sent to the site of the crash and interviewed some witnesses about the incident.

In October of 1994, a FOIA request was made to NASA Headquarters for information that concerned the operational guidelines that NASA personnel followed when involved with cases that dealt with the recovery and examination of space material. I also requested copies of all reports that would have involved NASA in these types of events from 1960 through 1970. This search was to include any such event that would have occurred within the United States or worldwide.

In April of 1995, I received a response to this request. While I did not receive the particular material that I had requested, another document was sent that was quite interesting, to say the least. The document, a records transmittal and receipt form, released by NASA's History office, discusses "NASA Fragology Files consisting of reports of space objects recovery, analysis of fragments to determine national ownership and vehicle origin." The single page paper was marked "highest classification CONFIDENTIAL, to be released only upon authorization of NASA." The single page contained a hand-written notation that stated "Still at Fed. Records Center 9/29/94."

The document indicates that the reports for the Fragology Files were made between 1962 and 1967. Reports contained within the document are marked such as "F33-Venezuela Object" and "Moon Dust - KATOTO Estate." The list of records begins with F1 and ends with F48. Interestingly, there are gaps in the sequencing of the reports listed in the document.

Upon receipt of this document, I quickly sent a FOIA request to NASA Headquarters for a copy of each report listed in the Fragology Files. In May, 1995, NASA responded that I had to send an advanced payment to begin fulfilling this search request from the Federal

Records Center. I submitted the check and when many months went by with no response, I left a message at NASA Headquarters in January of 1996. Within a few days I received a response. A letter dated January 22, 1996 states "We received your check ... for the retrieval of the two boxes that may have contained documents you were seeking from the Federal Records Center. I have been informed by the program office that the Records Center informed them that those boxes were destroyed prior to their request."

I was disturbed to learn of the destruction of this information. Even if no information on Kecksburg existed in these files, other important historical records related to the American and Soviet space program may have also been lost. I requested that an investigation be conducted into the destruction of the NASA Fragology File records. In an April 15, 1996 letter, NASA explained to me how its FOIA process worked. As part of this process, the FOIA office asked the program office to have the documents retrieved from the Washington National Records Center. "It was at this point in the process of your request that the program office was informed that the records had been destroyed," the letter stated.

According to the letter, after I had asked for an inquiry into the reported destruction of the records, the Washington National Records Center attempted again to locate the records. But after searching they still were not able to locate the files. The letter stated "They (the National Records Center) do not know if the records were destroyed or have just been misplaced." A letter from the Washington National Records Center to the NASA Headquarters Records Manager dated March 28, 1996 stated "our records indicate that the boxes were identified as missing in 1987 and have not been located since that date."

NASA had no explanation for the notation on the document stating that the records were still at the Washington National Records Center in 1994. In other correspondence, NASA indicated that it could only "surmise this notation was in error." Since then, searches have been conducted at numerous NASA installations for records concerning the NASA Fragology Files. No other references to the files have surfaced so far.

This appears to be a new terminology that other researchers and I had not encountered before. How the NASA Fragology Files relate to Project MOONDUST and possibly to reported UFO crashes is open for speculation. It may be only coincidence, but it is interesting to note that 1987 was the year that both the first Kecksburg eyewitness who reported seeing the object on the ground came forward, and therefore public interest in the case dramatically increased. This is also the year the files reportedly disappeared.

The question remains today: where are the NASA Fragology Files and what important information might they contain?

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