

PROJECT 1946: THE "GHOST ROCKET" DOCUMENTS RELEASED BY THE SWEDISH DEFENCE STAFF

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ALMOST exactly one year after the end of World War II a series of remarkable reports concerning unexplained aerial phenomena started to pour in to Swedish editorial offices and to the Defence Staff. During the May-December period of 1946 the Swedish defence headquarters received, according to official statistics, 997 such reports, but that figure is an underrating of the real number of sighting reports from Sweden and the Scandinavian countries during that year.

In about 100 incidents rocket-shaped objects — or luminous phenomena — were seen as they crashed towards the earth's surface. In many instances it seemed as if the phenomena were remote-controlled to crash into lakes and other water surfaces. Despite lengthy and extensive searches of the bottoms of several lakes the defence forces did not succeed in securing any metal, or similar wreckage parts, which with certainty could point to any kind of rocket construction. These new experiences were in sharp contrast to the territorial violations of the immediately preceding war years, when concrete evidence was secured through numerous airplane wreckages and other heaps of metallic scrap in several places.¹

"The ghost rockets" (or "ghost bombs"), as the phenomenon was christened by the media,² has for 40 years been an area of interest to UFO researchers, private citizens who try to investigate and document sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs). Lacking the support of the direct documents and observation data from this era, the phenomenon has been an object of wild speculation in books and magazines, not the least in the USA.

These writings have, of course, their background in a natural interest in what *really* happened over Sweden and Scandinavia in 1946. During 1947 reports of so-called "flying saucers" created an enormous sensation in the American press and finally forced the U.S. Air Force to start a more than 20 years long series of investigation projects. A search through 140 American newspapers has since revealed that the American sighting wave of 1947 had greater proportions than what was generally believed. For the summer months of June and July, alone, there are more than 850 sightings on file in American archives.³

There was a striking resemblance with the Swedish

phenomena a year before, although the two sighting waves described objects of completely different shapes. In both waves thousands of unprepared witnesses saw objects which neither they, nor their governments, could explain sufficiently. In Sweden, as well as in the United States, interest was primarily focussed on the Soviet Union, which was believed to be responsible for the strange occurrences. *Wild speculations on spaceships from other worlds were almost non-existent in those years (1946-48)*. Such theories were introduced during the summer of 1948 within the U.S. Air Force Project Sign and in the public media during 1949/50 through magazine articles and a book by aviation journalist *Donald E. Keyhoe*.

Swedish UFO researchers, who have attempted to locate the primary material from 1946, have been frustrated by statements from the Research Institute of National Defence and the Defence Staff that the documents were "lost" in the bureaucracy.⁴

Strong circumstantial evidence of secret documents

In 1976, thirty years after the incidents, an American researcher succeeded in finding some very interesting documents in the library of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air & Space Museum. Aviation and UFO historian *Don Berliner* was writing an article on the Swedish ghost rockets and made contact with the Museum to check their archives. Two important documents were found: one from the British Air Force Intelligence, the other from the Swedish Defence Staff...⁵

The British document, of five folio pages, is a detailed compilation and analysis of what British Intelligence had learned from Norway and Sweden. The SECRET British document takes a rather sceptical position regarding the phenomena. It was duplicated in at least 150 copies and distributed to British and American defence organisations. The distribution list points to a wide interest in the Swedish incidents. As early as 1958 the SECRET classification was cancelled by the U.S. Air Force, and the document ended up in the Smithsonian's open archives, where it probably remained for many years.⁶

Although the British report is interesting, *the Swedish document* is far more significant. It details the Swedish defence forces' own, direct experiences from

six months of investigations. It also gives clear and direct indications of the existence of a very comprehensive investigative file. The report was drafted within the Air Administration and the Defence Staff in December 1946 and sent as a letter to the Swedish Supreme Commander *Helge Jung* on the day before Christmas Eve. In September 1947 an English translation was made and sent to the USA via the Assistant Military Attaché in Stockholm, Lieutenant Colonel *S. H. Connelly*. The document had a main report of three pages plus seven appendices and also included the Swedish originals.⁷

It is reasonable to assume a connection with the investigations of "flying saucers" which had just started with the Air Material Command (the U.S. equivalent of the Swedish Air Administration) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. It is probable that the Swedish report was communicated to the U.S. after a specific request from AMC and its Project Sign.

The world's first UFO investigation group?

What first becomes apparent from the Swedish document is that *Sweden was, as far as we know, the first country in the world to appoint a special committee — or delegation — to investigate phenomena of a UFO character.* This committee included representatives of the Defence Staff, the Air Administration, the Research Institute of National Defence (FDA), the Defence Radio Institute (FRA) and the Naval Administration. The Air Defence department of the Defence Staff collected all the reports from military and civilian sources. The committee's analytical work was co-ordinated mainly by employees of the Air Administration.

Chairman of the committee was Colonel *Bengt Jacobson*, head of the Material department of the Air Administration and directly subordinate to General *Nils Söderberg*, a legendary builder of the Swedish Air Force during the war years. Secretary and chief investigator was Air Engineer *Eric Malmberg* of the Material department's Equipment Bureau. Another regular participant at the committee meetings was Air Director *Henry Kjellson*, head of the Equipment Bureau, well known for his successful analysis of the remains of a V-2 that crashed in 1944 in south Sweden,¹ an analysis entirely confirmed by the British as they later took over the work. (Kjellson also became well known in UFO & Fortean circles for two of his books where he speculated on the possible use of advanced technologies by ancient civilizations).⁸

The committee was formed on July 10 and started immediately to analyze about 250 reports received concerning an aerial phenomenon at 14.30 hours on the day before. Up to July 8 about thirty other reports had reached the Defence Staff, mainly since a HQ order had been issued by the Staff on June 12 to all military units. Sightings were to be reported immediately according to a special form and sent to head-

quarters.⁹

The first, more substantial, sighting was made only three days after Gösta Carlsson had witnessed a landed disc-shaped object, and its occupants, in a glade near Vegeholm in south Sweden. "The next day I wrote a report to the Defence Staff, but I never sent it off. If I had they would have put me in a mental hospital," Carlsson revealed twenty-seven years later to a Swedish reporter.¹⁰

Without going into details it can be said that the Swedish document, discovered by Berliner, describes the committee's futile attempts to explain the mystery of the ghost rockets. Don Berliner published the document in an American magazine,⁵ despite information from the Swedish embassy in Washington that it was still considered SECRET in Sweden. In the United States, however, the document had only been classified CONFIDENTIAL. This low-rate classification was removed in June 1958. As late as in 1982 American researchers got the message, from Swedish authorities, that "portions of the documents dealing with witness reliability, radar trackings, and geographical plots, are still classified "secret".¹¹

The documents surface...

Berliner's article was cited in a German book and by UFO historian *Loren Gross*.¹¹ In this way the existence of the documents came to my attention. In August 1984 I wrote the Defence Staff. My theory was that 1,000 reports, or more, must be contained in at least 3 or 4 ordinary office files. The single file photographed in the Defence Staff offices in 1965¹² *could not possibly hold all of the rich material that Berliner's Swedish document spoke of!*

The Staff immediately confirmed that four volumes of secret documents concerning "space projectiles" (as the project was coined) had been retrieved. The documents surfaced at the Staff in May 1983, when old documents were re-evaluated for archival purposes.

We — the author, and *Clas Svahn*, a north-Swedish journalist — have now had the opportunity to work with these documents for almost two years. There is still a certain amount of secrecy that surrounds them, but this has been no obstacle to us since I had a previous permission from the Swedish Secretary of War to view similar secret documents on the 1930s ghost-flier phenomena. It has even been possible to make copies of about 1,000 pages.

Archives for UFO Research has been permitted to publish the documents, the secrets of which are of very little *military* significance after 40 years... The intention is first, however, to supplement the Defence Staff archives on a number of points. Some thirty Swedish newspapers have been checked. Witnesses who experienced sightings are contacted and interviewed. Often there are more details to uncover than what is immediately apparent from contemporary military investigations.



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"She says a little girl from Orion gave it to her."

We also attempt to contact those people who took part in the committee's work and in the various military investigations. Our list covers some 50 names, but unfortunately several key persons are dead. In a few years' time we hope it will be possible to publish this unique material in detail, in Swedish first. There is also a great interest, from foreign researchers, to know the true facts about the ghost rocket phenomenon.

Can "the ghost rockets" be explained?

The only theory seriously considered by the Swedish committee — apart from astronomical and known technological solutions to subsets of the sighting data — was the possibility of *Russian rockets or remote-controlled weapons tests*. Through aerial, marine and radio reconnaissance against the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic it was attempted to determine if the Soviet Union — aided by German technicians — was developing V1 guided planes or V2 rockets. Some intelligence measures were of such a kind that first they had to be authorised by the Government. In spite of this, there were no results that could solve the riddle.

In the historical perspective one decisive argument

against the V-weapon theory is that the German weapons, at the end of the War, had an upper range of between 300 and 370 kilometres.¹³ When Allied troops marched through France, Belgium and Holland it was no longer possible to use V-weapons against Britain due to their limited range.

In Sweden clearly metallic "ghost rockets", with spool-shaped bodies and often small fins, were seen on at least 225 different occasions during 1946 (according to statistics from the Defence Staff).⁷ Sometimes they came from the south and dived into northern lakes such as Storsjön and Kölmjärv, at a distance of 1000-1500 kilometres from the north-German coast. Even considering *Esthonia* as their point of origin, well-observed and documented crashes — like the one in Lake Kölmjärv¹⁴ — still means that the Russians, during one single post-war year (when great parts of central and eastern Europe were in ruins...), would have succeeded in increasing the V-weapons range by three times.

It is known that the small number of knowledgeable rocket and aeronautical technicians which the Soviets had recruited, on October 22-23, 1946 were hastily deported from northern Germany to Moscow.¹⁵ In spite of this, "ghost rockets" continued to pass over Sweden, although in smaller numbers

than during the summer. *As far as we know, in the West, the first Soviet launch of a V2-rocket occurred only one year later, on October 30, 1947.*¹⁶

After all, theorizing on *V2 rockets* is really to distort the general sense impressions of the Swedish witnesses. "The ghost rockets" were mainly experienced as relatively slow-moving objects. "Airplane speed" is a standard phrase in the report archives of the Swedish Defence Staff. Witnesses on the shores of the lakes Storsjön, Kölmjärvi and Mjösa had the time to clearly register small, rocket-shaped objects. In contrast to this it is a well-known fact that those V2s that hit London or Antwerp up to March 1945 did so at supersonic speeds. They hit ground at lightning speed, not giving nearby witnesses a chance to see their shape or details of them.

If we go on to speculate on a further development of the V1 missile plane, which in any case is a much more probable solution, we are still in difficulties. The V1s were surely simple and cheap to manufacture (about 1/10 the cost of a V2), but still the very number of Swedish reports is a puzzle. The Soviets — who else? — must have had an immense stock of missiles since reliable sightings of spool-shaped objects — often in full daylight — happened on at least 225 separate occasions, in Sweden alone.

In the report tables from the Defence Staff, used for their statistical analysis, it is only possible to find a chronological and geographical connection between two or more reports in a few cases. The sightings most often occurred *at widely separated spots and within several hours of each other*. This is a well-recognised pattern in UFO phenomena of today.

V1 missiles in such great numbers, sent over Sweden, would undoubtedly have left *at least a handful of scrap-heaps*, mainly in the south of Sweden. According to an official British investigation 8,070 V1s were aimed at London. 7,488 reached the English coast, then anti-aircraft defence and fighters brought down 3,957. Only 2,420 reached their target area. Thus at least 1,500 missiles crashed along the way due to *functional disturbances in the plane*.¹⁷

Walter Dornberger, head of the Peenemünde base where V1 and V2 were developed, reports in his book an even greater rate of failure: 3,300 out of 9,300 V1s didn't even reach the English coast before they crashed.¹⁸

Finally: *Why take the risk of testing an experimental missile (which is implied by the dramatically increased action range) over neutral Sweden*, when the Soviet Union had vast deserted areas which, undoubtedly, would be more suitable? Such a series of tests must have been foolhardy in view of the risk of discovery through scrap on the ground.

The proceedings of the Swedish committee's meetings clearly mirror the bewilderment of these military investigators. Participators in this work were the chemical laboratories of the FDA's section I, led by professor *Gustaf Ljunggren*. *Some 30 fragments and*

other remains were analyzed by them, but nothing was found that even remotely resembled the remains of a metallic rocket or missile. In most cases, instead, the analysis pointed to lumps of slag that were surprisingly similar. It is striking that this slag was found in so many places with parts of vegetation melted into the lumps. This phenomenon made the FDA chemists suspect the lumps had been on the ground for a long time, a theory contradicted by the eyewitnesses' reports. The few minor remains of metallic objects FDA investigated could be given reasonable explanations without taking rockets or missiles into account.

Radio interception and direction-finding was arranged by FRA, the then newborn Defence Radio Institute, from specially equipped B18 bombers flying over the Baltic. Suspicious transmissions were intercepted. In some cases the broadcasts are similar to those that had directed the radio-guided versions of the V1, but it was not often that these transmissions were intercepted simultaneously to reported visual sightings.

Radar stations of the Air Force and coast artillery corps caught clear echoes on a number of occasions. In one case there was a simultaneous visual sighting of a luminous phenomenon. Liaison between radar and fighter airplanes was not very effective in the Swedish Air Force in those days. In the autumn of 1946 there were attempts, however, to create such a defence organisation in the Stockholm area but the rockets never appeared, or were observed when radar and fighters were on non-alert.

Project 1946

The project to collect, analyze and compile data on the 1946 incidents will continue during the coming years, and includes the following sub-projects:

1. *To locate and interview witnesses who had sightings in 1946*. A number of the most interesting cases have already been investigated, but there is still much work to be done. We invite anyone who knows about sightings from 1946, or from the war years 1939-45, to contact us.
2. *Trace and interview members of the "ghost rocket" committee*. Biographies are collected and members who are still alive are contacted for interviews.
3. *Complete the coverage of the press*. Some 30 Swedish newspapers have been combed for reports, articles, editorials. In total there were 230 Swedish dailies in 1946, so there is still a potential for new discoveries particularly concerning local reports that often did not reach the Defence Staff in Stockholm.
4. *Computer catalogue and analysis of as many reports as possible*. In total the primary data now comprise between 1,500 and 2,000 incidents. The reports are catalogued in a report file, SCANCAT. SCANCAT is intended for statistical tests and information retrieval. In the end it is expected that this file will also contain the 1930s ghost flier reports and post-

1946 reports from Sweden and Scandinavia. The file is built in a Victor 15 Mbyte IBM compatible personal computer with dBase III, a standard database program. One of the long-term goals of the project is to facilitate comparisons between different "age sets" of UFO data such as ghost fliers compared to ghost rockets. We also intend to make statistical studies of the flight directions of aerial phenomena in 1946 and during the 1930s era to see whether these data fit the Soviet or German theories of these sighting waves.

5. *Further research in the Swedish archives.* Many chains of events during the military investigations must be clarified through continued research in other files at the War Archives, the National Archives and the FDA archives. For instance, a study of the secret Swedish Air Force file on crashing aircraft has shown that a rumour that an air crash on August 12, 1946 was caused by collision with a "ghost rocket" has no truth to it.

6. *To document the intelligence interest in the ghost rockets.* As stated before, documents from British and American intelligence sources show a certain interest from the main powers. There were high-level contacts between Swedish military and allied intelligence people who, during World War II must have had an intimate knowledge of reports on "foo fighters". *James Forrestal, the American Secretary of the Navy, suddenly arrived in Stockholm to see the Swedish Secretary of War, just one week after the ghost rocket committee was formed. The Defence Staff answered written questions from one of the US attachés. A FBI document makes it clear that the American defence "exerted tremendous pressure on the Air Force Intelligence to conduct research and collect information in an effort to identify these sightings."*¹⁹

A newly released document mentions no less than 44 different documents on the ghost rockets in the archives of the U.S. Air Force. Unfortunately it will not be possible to see these documents since a cross-reference file has been lost while transferring records to the American National Archives.²⁰

7. *To document what happened in Sweden during the war years.* Between 1940 and 1945 Sweden organised the greatest aerial surveillance in its history. From hundreds of places there was a continuous look-out for alien aircraft. About 16,000 intruding aircraft and objects were catalogued in the defence files, but 5,890 objects still remain as "not identified".²¹ Are there any reports with UFO characteristics in this file? In any case we know, from the press, that "ghost rockets" were sighted in the north of Sweden as early as 1939.

There are also clear indications of strange objects violating Swedish territory during the winter 1944/45. In January 1945 there were diplomatic protests in Berlin against the observed overflights of a new kind of weapon, nick-named V3 by Swedish sources.²² Some aspects of these violations

seemingly do not match with modern knowledge of German V-weapon technology.

We are also taking note of all foreign sightings during the 1939-46 period found in the international literature. *For example, on May 27, 1943 the crew of a British bomber watched a cylindrical, silvery object hovering over an allied bomber fleet of 400 planes as they were attacking Essen.*²³

8. *What has been published about "the ghost rockets" since 1946?* The phenomenon is mentioned by each and every UFO-author during the 40 years that have passed. The ghost rockets were used as an argument for possible as well as impossible theories. Through literature studies in the AFU library, one of the most comprehensive UFO libraries in the world, we try to map this aspect. We are also tracing parallel cases to the 1946 incidents, trying to document that these strange missiles are a continuing phenomenon.

If you have any information on the incidents of 1946, and investigations during that year, or the preceding war years, we would appreciate a word from you to:

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- Clas Svahn*, Mjöluddsvägen 97, S-951 57 Luleå, Sweden. Telephone +46920 279 53 (home phone).

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For example the V2 crash at Bäckebo in south Sweden on June 13, 1944. The remains were turned over to the British after a very thorough investigation by Swedish Air Force scientists, who exposed the new German technology before the Allies. (The Swedish scientists and experts who took part in the investigation were the same as those who formed the nucleus of the 1946 ghost rocket committee).
2. In certain works the terms "ghost airplanes" and "ghost fliers" have, unfortunately, been used for the 1946 phenomenon, causing some misunderstandings. The term "ghost flier" should — in our opinion — only be used for airplane-like objects, e.g. those *airplanes* reported from northern Scandinavia during 1933-37 and in the mid-1970s from the county of Värmland in western Sweden. Surely a *small part* of the 1946 phenomena were observed as "ghost planes" (looking like airplanes or birds), but the overall majority of 1946 sightings concerned rocket-, torpedo-, and cigar-shaped objects with little resemblance to conventional airplanes.
3. *Ted Bloecher*: Report on the UFO wave of 1947. The author, 1967. About 200pp. Contains case descriptions from the press, from the U.S. Air Force and from the files of private UFO organisations. A detailed account of 1947 is also found in: *Loren Gross*: UFOs: a history, Vol. 1: July 1947-December 1948. Arcturus Book Service, 1982, about 170 pages.
4. *K.Gösta Rehn*: Nya fakta om de flygande tefaten. Zindermans, 1969, page 50, plus a number of other Swedish books and articles.

5. *Don Berliner*: The ghost rockets of Sweden. Official UFO, October 1976, pp. 30-31 and 60-64. Also correspondence with Berliner, 1985.
6. *A.I.2 (g)*: Paper 271/46: Investigations of missile activity over Scandinavia. 9th September, 1946.
7. Intelligence Report R 63C-47. 24 September 1947, includes "Summary of Letter to Commander in Chief, 23 December 1946".
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12. *Jan Muhr*: Flygande tefat över Kumla! Article in the Swedish weekly Se, issue nr.35, 1965.
13. *Willy Ley*: Rockets, missiles and men in space. The Viking Press, New York, 1968, pp. 207 and 499. *Walter Dornberger*: V2 — Der Schuss ins Weltall, Bechtle Verlag, Gesslingen, 1952, p. 287.
14. *Clas Svahn & Anders Liljegren*: The Kölmjärv ghost rocket crash revisited. AFU Newsletter, 27, Jan-Dec. 1984, pp. 1-5.
15. *Werner von Braun and Frederick Ordway III*: History of rocketry and space travel. Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1975, p. 118. *MorgonTidningen* (Swedish daily), Oct. 23, 1946.
16. *Von Braun & Ordway*, p. 140.
17. *Ley*, p. 216.
18. *Dornberger*, p. 287.
19. *FBI*: Office Memorandum, from E.G. Fitch to D.M. Ladd, Aug. 19, 1947. In a volume of FBI/CIA documents on sale from Fund for UFO Research, P.O. Box 277, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20822, USA.
20. Letter from Lt. Colonel Douglas W. Eisemann, USAF headquarters, to "Project Sign", February 1948. In: U.S. Department of State documents on the Scandinavian ghost rocket phenomenon of 1946, published in 1985 by William L. Moore Publications, 4219 W. Olive St., Suite 247, Burbank, California 91505, USA.
21. Sveriges Militära Beredskap 1939-1945. Militärhistoriska förlaget, Stockholm, 1982, p. 538. (An official documentary on the Swedish military during World War II.)
22. *New York Times*, January 20, 1945.
23. *BUFORA Journal*, vol. 6, no.3, Sept/Oct 1977.

LIFE ON MARS, UFOs, SETI, SETA — AND SCIENTIST CLAIMS THE PARANORMAL IS FOR REAL!

Paul Whitehead, FSR Consultant

"Mars may be inhabited", announced an unexpected headline in a British national newspaper in July, a month which proved exciting in what some scientists had to tell us about extraterrestrials (and the search for extraterrestrial artifacts) and the paranormal.

It looked as if one sector of the scientific fraternity was going overboard in the search for ufonauts and their nuts-and-bolts craft.

The paper in question, *The Guardian* of July 22nd, didn't reveal who or what may inhabit Mars, but it did state the following:—"There may be life on Mars after all," two Americans claimed last night at a conference to mark 10 years of experiments since the first unmanned *Viking* space-craft landed on the planet in July 1976.

The biochemists, Gilbert Levin and Patricia Straat, said that no thesis had yet been able to explain the findings of an experiment which produced a "slightly better than 50-50 sign of living organisms, after radioactive organic chemicals were mixed with a sample of Martian soil to measure its metabolism."

Two days later, the *New Scientist* reported that Mars showed a range of distinctive signs of weathering by water or a similar liquid. Remote sensing of the planet from Earth had picked up features possibly caused by water flows (for example, rivers) and areas where water may have gathered.

The report concluded that there could be a huge volume of water locked up in the planet's crust — extending tens or hundreds of kilometres downwards from the surface area.

UFOs seen by "level-headed people"

A new book that appeared in the bookshops in July was "*A Dictionary of Space*," by physicist Dr Malcolm Smart, (Longman, £7.95). It was revealing in three of its entries.

First was its treatment of UFOs. While most sightings could be explained by natural or man-made phenomena, a number could not, he said. "Inexplicable sightings have been made by experienced and