

THE IDENTIFICATION OF UNKNOWN ECHOES DETECTED BY RADAR

*J. Plana Crivillén, (C.E.I., Barcelona), FSR Consultant
(Translation from Spanish)*

LIKE most countries, Spain possesses an Alert & Control Network composed of a series of military radar stations, from which surveillance and control are exercised over the Spanish national air-space and adjacent zones of strategic interest.

The principal task of this radar network is to follow and identify all aircraft moving through the air-space under its control, with a view to preventing penetration by aircraft of unknown or of hostile character. In order to execute this complex task, the air defence system which controls the radar stations is linked to the civilian air traffic control centres, by means of which it has direct access to the flight-plans of all the aircraft that have to pass over the Peninsula.

When a moving echo (called a *trace* – *traza*) of an unknown nature appears on a military radar screen, steps are instantly taken to identify it by means of various systems,¹ namely:-

Electronic:

Using communication by land-air radio, or by the IFF/SIF system (automatic system for identification of friendly/hostile craft.)

Correlation of Flight-Plans:

By comparing the route followed, the altitude, speed, position, and time of detection of the trace, with the data given in the flight-plans of aircraft previously submitted.

Source and Behaviour of the Trace:

Traces originating from within the Spanish national territory are considered to be friendly, as are such traces which, by their course, speed, and altitude, suggest no suspicion of threat. To be suspected are the traces that appear suddenly, or that overfly or approach vital zones of the national territory at low altitude and high speed. To be watched particularly are traces emanating from regions of potential conflict.

Visual:

By the crew of an interceptor – aircraft that is alerted and takes off and that, on sighting the cause of the trace, proceeds to identify it. This is the most costly but also the most reliable system, though it should only be employed in extreme cases.

In a case where a trace or an unknown echo cannot be identified by the normal means, it becomes necessary to alert and dispatch (i.e. "scramble") a fighter aircraft as already stated. In such a situation, the fighter leaves immediately, from the nearest Air Force base to the scene of the incident, with the mission of intercepting and visually identifying the craft that has penetrated into the air-space of interest to Spain. The actions of this type are called "*Missions of Active Air Defence*" (DAA Missions), and we can mention that between September 12, 1977, and May 31, 1983, a total of 285 such missions by fighters of the Spanish Air Force took place,² which gives us an average of four such missions per month over the period in question. These official figures refute the statement made by another military source which said: "The number of alert missions carried out is very small; statistically it is two or three in every six months".³

Generally the causes for these alert missions are commercial aircraft that are not following correctly their established flight-plan; helicopters; sonde balloons; and even military reconnaissance and espionage aircraft from countries near to Spain. *In other cases, the scrambles have been due to UFOs which, after being intercepted and pursued by the Spanish fighter craft, vanish from Spanish air-space without the fighters getting anywhere near them.*

The percentage of the active air defence missions that relates to each of the other possible causes set forth above is unknown, inasmuch as "*any alarm take-off of aircraft is classified, regardless of the nature of the trace*",⁴ for which reason the Air Force is unable to furnish information in that respect.

On other occasions, despite the capture of traces of unknown craft by the radars, the Military Authorities do not order the dispatch of fighter aircraft on alert. It seems that this passive attitude arises from two reasons: a) that they have no interest in verifying the identity or nature of the aircraft in question inasmuch as by the features of its flight it represents no danger to the national security, or, b) that, if the aircraft that has been detected seems by its features to be *an espionage craft* from another country, then by not intercepting it they are furnishing it with no concrete data regarding the scope of the real air-cover provided by the Spanish radar stations or regarding the methods of defensive reaction adopted by the Spanish Air Force.

The author of the present article possesses in his archives details of some fifty air defence missions, representing a tiny number in comparison with the total of those that have occurred, but at any rate they are very representative cases. Approximately one-half of the incidents gathered by the author relate to missions of aircraft dispatched to chase UFOs, the rest being cases where objects identified turned out to be sonde balloons, commercial or military aircraft, foreign experimental missiles or rockets, along with other kind of conventional aerial devices.

Among the documentation that I have on file there are the following: attempted interceptions of sonde balloons over central Spain in 1967 and 1968; exceptional chases of UFOs in April 1977, March and November 1979, May and September 1980, and January 1981; together with other interesting cases in 1971, 1974 1976, 1983, and 1984. Also interceptions in 1984 and 1985 of military spy planes from Lybia and Algeria that were flying over regions very near to Spanish territory.

Notes and References

¹ *Revista de Aeronáutica y Astronáutica (Aeronautical & Astronautical Review)*, published by Spanish Air Force. No. 498 (June 1982).

² Do. No. 527 (November 1984).

³ Newspaper *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona), November 6, 1982.

⁴ Luis Delgado Sánchez-Arjona, Lt.-General in charge of Fighter Air Command and Captain-General for the First Air Region, in letter dated December 16, 1985, to the author.

UFO PULLS PLUG ON COP RADIOS

Baffled cops filed a UFO report after a mystery object had buzzed a beauty spot and left their police car radios dead.

Officers had gone to investigate a green and white glow, after Air Traffic Controllers were unable to explain a "static blob" on their radar.

The officers watched the UFO hovering over the Mow Cop beauty spot, near Kidsgrove, Staffordshire.

Last night Chief Supt. Peter Grocott admitted: "We don't know if it was atmospheric, or somebody from Mars!"

The Civil Aviation Authority blames it on "odd weather conditions".

(Credit and thanks to FSR reader MacEwen, of Ealing.)

MAIL BAG

Circles in the Courgette Fields . . .

Dear Sir, — At 6.00 p.m. on July 12, 1989, Central News South (ITV) carried the following piece of news which will be of interest to you:—

Robert Edwards, a farmer of Bricklehampton, near Evesham, awoke to discover that a perfect, huge, circle had appeared in one of his fields — not a field of corn, *but of courgettes*. He could offer no explanation for this, but told the reporter that strange things had already been going on before he discovered the ring. His doorbell had rung mysteriously, and the lights of an electric wheelchair, which was locked away in an adjacent garage, had been found switched on, on several occasions.

Yours sincerely,
Barry J. Hall,
54 The Paddocks,
Yarnton,
Oxford OX5 1TE.
July 13, 1989.

— All quite typical of Jinns and Poltergeists. — EDITOR

The "Cornfield Circles" explained?

Dear Editor, — With reference to FSR 34/3 (article on the rings in the cornfields), I would point out that, when the people from the Flying Saucers entered my abode, they used neither doors nor windows, but just walked through what we think of as solid objects.

This being the case, one would think their craft, when entering their underground bases on Earth, might possibly leave *marks at the spot* as a result of the force necessary to take them down through the Earth to the caverns which they have used for thousands of years past. (Is it a fact that a chalk* sub-structure seems to be favoured?)

As for Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, it is an interesting and enchanting area — indeed there is a "fey feeling" about all that part of England!

(I am a 68-year-old pensioner and war veteran (World War II — Assam and Burma.)

Yours faithfully,
S.D. Moorman,

Correspondents are asked to keep their letters short and give full name and address (not necessarily for publication). It is not always possible for the Editor to acknowledge every letter personally, and so he takes this opportunity to thank all who write to him.

6 St. John Close,
Cheriton,
Shipston-on-Stour,
Warwickshire.
January 1990.

* I understand that the belt of chalk running right across the part of England where almost all of our cornfield rings have been appearing is between at least 400 and 600 ft. deep. Naturally, and for some years past, people have been writing to FSR along similar lines, and asking whether there might not be "*underground alien bases*" in the chalk? To which our only comment has to be that we have never encountered any evidence either way about such hypothetical matters, but certainly the theory of such bases is very plausible. (My own *personal* guess would be that such alien bases could well exist underneath Britain without our knowing anything whatsoever about it, and that they *do*, in fact, most probably exist.) — EDITOR

Claims of Frank Barnes Demolished

Dear Editor, — I have been reviewing cases of alleged UFO sightings linked to the formation of Cornfield Circles.

One case, which stands out like a sore thumb, is that of Mr Frank Barnes of Winchester (described in FSR 32/6, published November 1987) who said he saw a large metallic "spacecraft" UFO with portholes moving low over the "punchbowl" at Cheesefoot Head in about 1980 (he was unsure of the year). It allegedly emitted a low humming noise and left behind it a Corn Circle. He claimed that two vehicles in the car park suffered engine failure, that several other untraced people saw the event, and that the UFO then rose up and shot off towards Alresford "at tremendous speed". Naturally curious, I went to interview Mr Barnes some months after reading that report. I am sorry to have to say that, *had he been a witness in court, I would have rated his credibility as close to zero.** Not only were there several contradictions in his account (including the fact that it is impossible to see into the "punchbowl" from the car park where he says he was standing) but one got the impression that he lives in a bit of a dreamworld. Clearly, every UFO report must always be assessed on its own merit.

Yours sincerely,
George Wingfield,
Hearne House,
North Wootton,
Shepton Mallet,
Somerset BA4 4HW.
December 29, 1989.

* Supporters of the "UFO/Circles theory" assure me that, with the evidence piling up, they certainly "have no need" for Mr Barnes! — EDITOR

"The Double Deception": Eduard Meier, the "Pleiadians", etc.

Dear Mr Creighton, — If the theory of "DOUBLE DECEPTION" is correct, then Robert Perry Collins is himself contributing to it with his article in FSR 34/2.

Not having known George Adamski, I cannot comment on his experiences. *But I believe I know the Eduard Meier case better than anyone else, having acted as translator for all the American investigators in that case, from Colonel Stevens to Gary Kinder.*

Nobody has ever commented on the *problem of language** confronted by UFO investigators. I believe much is lost in translation, and much material not even looked into. Who has ever read all 2,000 pages of the MEIER SEMJASE REPORT; (In the original German language!)

I have read every page of it, and I admit that it has influenced me and my opinion of this case a lot.

And in my opinion Meier is a hoaxer rather than being deceived by whatever mysterious forces — even though Collins is not the only one with this latter view.

Sincerely yours,
Frank H. Stuckert,
(formerly of Stafa, Switzerland),
P.O. Box 121,
3741 Bright,
Victoria,
Australia.
November 10, 1989

* FSR readers may rest assured that nobody knows all this better than their poor Editor, who regularly translates for this journal, and at sight, straight off the paper, from ten major languages.

As for the Billy Meier Saga, I take this opportunity to state that, around