



Conversations With Kenneth Arnold

UFOs have been around for more than half a century, if not many centuries, but the “Age of Flying Saucers” didn’t start until 1947.

On the afternoon of June 24 that year, an Idaho businessman and private pilot named Kenneth Arnold was flying in his single-engine plane near Mount Rainier in the state of Washington when he saw nine strange objects flying through the sky.

They were at about the same altitude as he was, 9,500 feet, perhaps twenty to twenty-five miles away. Every few seconds, he said, “Two or three of them... would dip or change their course slightly, just enough for the sun to strike them at an angle that reflected brightly on my plane.” It was the flashes of sunlight that caught his attention.

At first, Arnold assumed they were military jets because of their speed, which, judging the distance between two peaks and noting time it took for them to pass from one to the other, he calculated as more than 1,500 miles an hour. But they were weird looking, somewhat like flat pie pans and didn’t seem to have tails. They were so strange that after landing he told some pilot friends about them.

Then he went to an FBI office to report what he’d seen, but the office was closed. So he went to a newspaper office, where he told a reporter what he had seen and reportedly said the objects “flew like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water.”

That phrase was included in a story that was sent out over the wires of the Associated Press, and within two days the nation’s press was talking about “flying saucers” and the Age of Flying Saucers began.



Life was never the same again for Arnold (below). Very soon he began getting phone calls from all over the country. He was ridiculed in the press and was the butt of some bad jokes. However, many people took him seriously, including pilots who had seen similarly unexplained aircraft.

One of those pilots was United Airlines Captain E. J. Smith, who saw similar objects on the evening of July 4, 1947, just ten days after Arnold’s sighting. Smith and his first officer, Ralph Stevens, were flying



a DC-3 airliner from Salt Lake City to Seattle. As they were flying over Emmett, Idaho, they saw five disk-shaped objects in the sky ahead of them. They called a stewardess, Martine (Marty) Morrow, into the cabin and asked her to take a look. She did and, depending on which Internet web site you look at, said, "What are those?" or "Why, there's a formation of those flying discs."

Again depending on which web sites you access, the five objects disappeared and then came back, or were joined by four others. Whichever, the objects were in view for ten to fifteen minutes before disappearing.

The next day Arnold was at the Seattle airport and happened to meet Captain Smith. They talked about their experiences and soon became friends.

I never met Kenneth Arnold and most of what I know about him comes from the Internet. He died in 1984, but there are ufologists still active today who did know him. Still others have analyzed his June 24, 1947 sighting (later on he saw UFOs on several other occasions) in minute detail and this information is available on the Internet. There are more than 11,000 web sites devoted to Kenneth Arnold or mention him in some way.

Although I never met him, I did talk with him by phone several times in February and March 1978. He had sent a letter to the National Enquirer offering to sell the right to re-publish portions of his book, *The Coming of the Saucers*, which was first published in 1952. The letter was passed on to my editor, Bill Dick, who was then in charge of UFO stories, and he asked me to check it out.

[Of the half dozen or so editors I worked for, Bill Dick was the only one who wholeheartedly shared my belief that UFOs are real.]

After my first phone call to Arnold, I submitted a memo to Bill saying:

"Kenneth Arnold's sighting of nine crescent-shaped UFOs on June 24, 1947, is the granddaddy of all flying saucer cases and was the beginning of the 'Modern' phase of the phenomenon. His story has never been told in the Enquirer before but he is now willing to talk to us. Since then he has had six or seven

other sightings and has photographed UFOs on two occasions. He has investigated hundreds of UFO cases over the years and many military and civilian pilots have come to him to tell him their stories. He has many strange stories to tell, including the following.

“Number One, the Marine Corps transport plane’s wreckage that Arnold was searching for the day he saw the nine saucers supposedly had thirty-two Marines aboard, but the head of the three-man search team that climbed up to the crash site on the side of Mount Rainier told Arnold that they found no bodies, no bones, no blood although the fuselage was fairly intact. Everything else, including the luggage of the thirty-two Marines was still on board. Arnold said the Navy first claimed mountain lions dragged the bodies off and later stated that the bodies were never brought down because the wreck occurred in a very inaccessible place.

“Number Two, the Maury Island incident, in which two fishermen claimed pieces of a falling flying saucer rained down on their boat, was not a hoax, as the Air Force claimed.

“Number Three, the director of a Landing Aids Experiment Station regularly picked up UFOs on his radar screen but could never see them visually. He would even route planes into the area where the UFOs were but the planes’ crews never saw them either. Arnold said he mentioned this man’s experiences once on a talk show and the station was shut down without warning or explanation shortly thereafter.

“Number Four, in the early 1950s he received a number of stories from boat captains along the Pacific Coast who told him of seeing mystery submarines surfaced near their boats. They were small, generally no bigger than the boats, usually had windows or portholes on the sides and were often round or disc-shaped. The captains said the mystery crafts would eventually sink back into the ocean or take off into the air.

“Arnold still flies, still investigates sightings. He is still in his sixties and he’s a businessman and his letter to us is an offer to negotiate for the right to publish portions of his book, *The Coming of the Saucers*, published in 1952. I have read portions of it and it is pretty interesting.”

The negotiations with Arnold eventually fell through but I don’t remember why. It may have been because of money. Arnold

estimated he had spent about \$30,000 of his own money on UFOs in the thirty years since his 1947 sighting and he felt that his book was worth at least that much. It is possible that my editors didn't agree, although the Enquirer had sometimes paid much more than that for other stories.

Arnold had also suggested that his book be published in serial form, maybe a chapter a week, and it is also possible that the editors didn't feel his book was worth so much coverage. In those days, brevity was one thing nearly all Enquirer stories had in common. Most of them never ran more than a thousand words [a total that this article passed several paragraphs back].

The deal may have fallen through for some other reason. Arnold had a really strong dislike of most newspapers, magazines and reporters, and he might have felt the Enquirer was jerking him around. At that time, the Enquirer was the only publication of mass circulation paying any attention to UFOs, and Arnold told me he liked the way we treated the subject. For much of the time that he and I talked, my editor Bill Dick was in Russia and no negotiations could be conducted until he returned. Bill was the only other staff member besides me who knew about Arnold's offer. He died some years ago.

Despite Kenneth Arnold's feelings about the press, he was always polite and civil to me. But it was clear that he thought most newspapers and magazines didn't have the courage to tell the public the truth about flying saucers. "It's gotten so goddamned complex that nobody really gives a (bleep) whether it's solved or not," he told me. "They're only interested in making money."

Later, he also said: "There is a bunch of nameless, faceless people that are a lot higher than the government that are saying, 'Look, Chum, you shut up!' And they're talking to your publishers and there isn't a publisher in thirty years that's got the guts goddammit to get out and say what they ought to say. And that's just the way I feel about it." He also believed many newspapers and magazines had distorted his views.

Arnold had no doubt that UFOs were real. "I think this is probably the greatest discovery in the world, or the greatest discovery of consciousness, in the world and there's not going to be an end to it," he said. "It's coming, it's coming all the time. If I can tell by my phone calls and by the stuff that people keep sending me from newspapers all over the world, I know damned

well it's pretty cockeyed important."

Arnold was born on March 29, 1915 in Subeka, Minnesota, grew up in North Dakota, graduated from the University of Minnesota as a chemical engineer and later learned to fly. Eventually he moved to Boise, Idaho, where he owned a business.

For some years he flew in his plane from one town to another in five western states, selling and installing automatic and manual fire fighting equipment. It was on one of these trips that he saw the nine crescent-shaped objects.

That came about because about six months earlier a Marine Corps C-46 transport plane with thirty-two men aboard crashed into the southwest side of Mount Rainier and had not been found. The government had offered a \$5,000 reward for the discovery of the wreckage and recovery of the bodies.



Arnold was a member of the Idaho Search and Rescue team and had participated in aerial searches before. On the afternoon of June 24, 1947, the day of his sighting, he took off from an airport at Chehalis, Washington, and headed for Yakima, Washington, about one hundred miles to the east. En route, he detoured a little to the north to fly over Mount Rainier and look for the crashed plane. Kenneth Arnold was an outspoken man given to salty language.

After his 1947 sighting, hundreds of people contacted him, so much so that his business suffered for a while. Virtually every time he flew into an airport, people were waiting to talk to him, taking time away from his work. Some of the stories that people told him were more bizarre than what he saw on that flight near Mount Rainier. In our conversations, he mentioned those incidents and some of his personal experiences.

Among other things, he talked about the military cutting out forty-two frames of a film he took of two UFOs that flew under his plane and claimed there was nothing on the film, the fact that he believed military and airline pilots had been silenced under threats of fines and imprisonment, that the crew of two airliners going in opposite directions saw seven UFOs between them, and that UFOs might have been able to read his mind.

To better understand some of the incidents and people he talked about, it would help to briefly review them. In addition to the crash on Mount Rainier of a Marine Corps transport plane, there were these:

THE MAURY ISLAND INCIDENT. The military and most ufologists say this was a hoax, but Arnold was convinced it was not. The island is in Puget Sound about twenty miles south of Seattle. Allegedly, on June 21, 1947, several men in a harbor boat near the island saw six UFOs overhead. One seemed to be in trouble and it spewed out chunks of material, which fell and injured a teenage boy on the boat, killed a dog and damaged the wheelhouse.

One of the men reportedly wrote to Ray Palmer, who published pulp magazines, and told him about the incident and saying he had fragments of the material. In July, Palmer, who had once before contacted Arnold and later published his book, asked Arnold to investigate the Maury Island report. Arnold went to Seattle and met with Captain E.J. Smith and the two began checking out the story.

Earlier that month, the two of them had met two Army Air Force intelligence officers, Captain William Davidson and Lieutenant Frank M. Brown, who had requested details of the sightings each man had had. When Arnold and Smith investigated the Maury Island report, very strange things seemed to happen and they decided to call in Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown. The two officers flew in, talked with them, as well as one or two men from the boat and reportedly put the material aboard their plane, a B-25 bomber.

The officers then took off to return to Hamilton Field at San Rafael, California. But not long after taking off, the plane caught fire. Two crewmen aboard parachuted to safety, but Davidson and Brown were both killed in the crash. One of the crewmen who survived reportedly said that when he jumped out of the plane at 11,000 feet he saw something lift off the top of the plane. Some people claim the plane was sabotaged because it was carrying parts of a UFO aboard, but the Air Force denied that and said it was an accident.

THE LANDING AIDS EXPERIMENT STATION: In 1943, the Navy built an auxiliary airfield near Arcata, California, on the Pacific Coast two hundred ninety miles north of San Francisco. Unknown to the Navy, Arcata turned out to be the third foggiest

location in the world, with fog sometimes lasting for weeks.

The Navy was unable to make maximum use of the field. After World War II ended, the Navy, the Army and the Civil Aviation Authority used the base to conduct experiments designed to disperse the fog.

One of the most distinctive methods was FIDO (Fog, Intensity Dispersal Of), in which gasoline was burned along the sides of the runways to lift the fog, something the British sometimes did in England during the war. At the Arcata station, however, it took 20,000 gallons to raise the fog for each landing – at a prohibitive cost of \$ 15,000 per landing. The base was closed in 1950.

Arnold knew the head of the station, who told him he had tracked “ghost UFOs” on radar in the sky above the station but was never able to see anything visually. The objects would sometimes split in two, travel side by side and later join back together. He even asked pilots to fly into the area where radar indicated these things were, but the objects always avoided the planes. Most curious of all is that they seldom moved faster than twenty-five to thirty miles an hour.

[In mid-June 2005, I received emails from a man who identified himself as B. B. Clark. He had just read this page about Kenneth Arnold. Clark said he and Charles Grimes were the two pilots who flew most of the test flights conducted in dense fog at the Arcata station from its inception in 1946 until the facility was closed in the spring of 1950. During that time they made more than 1,500 landings in almost zero visibility fog conditions.

[They were guided by Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) crews using a pair of oscillating radar antennas with narrow “pencil beams,” one scanning side to side (azimuth), the other up and down (elevation), as well as 360-degree rotating radar for surveillance of the entire area.

["I think our GCA crew (probably the sharpest team anyplace) was one of the first to see the objects on the radar screen that were unidentifiable," Clark said. "Grimes and I on many occasions followed radar headings that took us into packs of these so called Gizmos and never saw anything other than a few seabirds."

[Clark was a B-17 pilot and Grimes was a troop carrier pilot in

World War II. After the Arcata experiments, both flew for Eastern Air Lines for more than thirty years. In their careers, each accumulated more than 30,000 hours in the air. "Neither he nor I have ever seen anything even slightly resembling a UFO," Clark said.]

THE MONO LAKE SIGHTING: This is a lake high in the California Sierras near the Nevada border and about two hundred fifty miles east of San Francisco. Arnold said an airliner eastbound from San Francisco and another one westbound to San Francisco would pass each other over the lake about the same time each day. On June 22, 1977, the crews of both planes saw seven UFOs between them. Arnold heard the story from his old friend, Captain E.J. Smith, who had heard it from one of the pilots involved.

THE GORMAN DOGFIGHT: On the night of October 1, 1948, Lieutenant George F. Gorman of the North Dakota National Guard was returning to Fargo in a P-51 fighter plane when he got into a twenty-seven-minute dogfight with what appeared to be a blinking ball of light about the size of a volleyball. Whenever Gorman got near it, the light became steady and swiftly pulled away from him. He chased it all over the sky from 7,000 to 14,000 feet at speeds of up to four hundred miles an hour. The light was faster and could out-maneuver the plane. At the airport, two traffic controllers witnessed part of the dogfight, as did the pilot and a passenger of a small plane that was landing. The light eventually disappeared.

[In 1978, or perhaps in 1979, I tracked Gorman down by phone. He was then a retired lieutenant colonel and living in New Braunfels, Texas, just north of San Antonio. He accepted my phone call but declined to answer any questions about the dogfight. However, he allowed me to read a detailed account that had been published elsewhere, and after each sentence or so, he would acknowledge that "Yes, that's right" or something similar. He confirmed everything.]



Here are excerpts from three phone conversations, each lasting about forty minutes, that I had with Arnold.

INTERVIEW FEBRUARY 6, 1978

PRATT: ... Isn't it true that after (his 1947 sighting) occurred that a lot of people got in touch with you when they had sightings and told you about their own cases?

ARNOLD: Yes. In fact, I was kind of by myself in a way, outside of the airline boys and all the ones that were able to talk at that time. And most people, particularly pilots, would call me and say, "Well, we joined your club... We saw so many and such and such, and it looked like such and such and so on." And it was kind of a basis of where even military personnel here, some of the boys out here at Mountain Home (Air Force Base), fighter pilots have seen them, and they've never said anything to anybody but they'd come and talk to me because they felt at least I was going to be sympathetic—

PRATT: Yeah, right.

ARNOLD: Now we had a very responsible pilot here [Boise, Idaho] who runs the Nampa Flying Service, named Harry Clark, a very respected person who saw seven of these things. They were rather triangular shaped (and they) went under the wing of his plane between Nampa and the mountains between Boise and Mountain Home. They were going from west to east. He wouldn't even give his name, but (the newspaper) wrote up his whole story and finally Harry admitted to me that he was the one. He was quite shocked. The funny (thing) was that one time I landed my plane over there, and we were friends, and he said, "Oh, so you're the guy who sees funny things in the sky." And after he saw (them) he fidgeted around and fidgeted around and I said, "Well, draw me a picture of it, Harry." A lot of incidents like that did happen...

DEVIIOUS INTELLIGENCE AGENTS

ARNOLD: I've been bothered by busybodies, intelligence (people) and this type of thing. They're friendly for three or four years and then apparently they refined their approaches. Most of these people have come to me under various, well I wouldn't call it disguise, I wouldn't exactly say that, but they ask a bunch of stupid questions and then all of a sudden ask a question that I know that they couldn't possibly have asked if they weren't pretty familiar with what the military was trying to do. It's like they all went to the same school...

PRATT: Did you tell me that the military tried to discredit you?

ARNOLD: No. The military that I was associated with, Captain William Davidson, Lieutenant Frank Brown, I later learned after meeting with them, after the accident, that Lieutenant Brown was a counter-espionage agent. And that he actually worked out of Mitchell Field, New York! This wasn't known to me. He was just an A-2, you know, Air Force intelligence. But these were the people who were very gracious and kind to me. But they also said at the time when I was asked to (speak) by the Knife and Fork Club people... he said, "You let us take care of it, Ken, and don't expose this subject... Don't offer yourself for exposure, or we would advise you not. Of course, you can do as you please." But he said, "I think that you will regret it." In other words, they do things like this and all of a sudden when you get this offer and that offer to appear some place, all of a sudden it got canceled. And it happened so frequently in the last thirty years...

Captain Smith was told the same thing. Smith and I had met with Lieutenant Frank Brown, or with (Captain) Davidson, quite a number of times. They kind of briefed us on what they knew because they were intensely curious themselves. And so (many) of their associates in the military and the Air Force had also seen these things. But they didn't want to get involved in any type of publicity. They didn't want us to get involved or be exposed to a lot of publicity until they had a chance to do it. They kept saying, "You let us take care of it and in a couple of weeks we'll let you know just exactly what's going on." Well, they never did let us know. We were set out there and hung up. We didn't know what the hell happened.

...Another thing that puzzled us was that we were familiar with the details of what happened there at Tacoma [Maury Island] and when the news releases came out of the public relations, apparently through the Pentagon, there wasn't any semblance of the truth of the whole thing. (It) was just laughed off as if it

was just some kind of a big hoax, and I have photostat letters and whatnot from people that were involved in the immediate family of at least Lieutenant Brown, just exactly what the flight engineer of that particular flight said as he left the plane at about 11,000 feet, which saved his life. And it was quite fascinating... I don't think Smith or I could figure out why the personnel that we worked with in connection with military intelligence, why their stories got so completely loused up when it came out of their public relations as explanations for various things that happened...

RADAR TRACKS 'GHOST UFOs'

PRATT: Didn't you also investigate a lot of UFO cases that did not involve pilots?

ARNOLD: Oh, yes. I met quite a few people and I recorded a good deal of their sightings. One particular lady, a graduate of the University of Oregon, saw a little person. It was quite an amazing experience that she had. And then I worked for several weeks with Kenneth Ehlers. He was head of the Landing Aides Experiment Station at Arcata, California. This is where they had FIDO ["Fog, Intensive Dispersal Of"] and they landed planes there because of the fog... He was a super expert. I tape-recorded all of our conversations. He was seeing things on the radar screen that he determined to be a thousand to three thousand feet above him and he'd get out and look through glasses and see nothing.

Whatever it was that he was seeing was traveling at about thirty miles an hour. And many times the target would split in two and travel side by side maybe several miles in the sky and then would join back together again. It was a complete puzzle. He even took giant airplanes coming in on blind landings and put them on a direct collision course with these things... Then he'd ask the pilots, "What do you observe?" and "Do you see anything ahead of you or underneath you or above you?" And these things would just politely avoid the plane and they never were able to see anything. I've got photographs of his radar screen... The reason he was so concerned about these things was that the image gave back a return of (one of) your smaller planes. He said that it was more puzzling because of the fact that they didn't seem to go any faster than about twenty-five to thirty miles an hour. And he observed them many times. However, when one of these images was in the area, he did have to steer their experiments with their own aircraft out of the

area because he couldn't positively determine whether this was a real aircraft or what it was. But it was something that gave a good return on his radar.

PRATT: Is (Ehlers) still around?

ARNOLD: I don't know. I first mentioned that on a radio program about him and played an interview with him. Within about a month afterwards they closed down the entire Arcata Landing Aids Experiment Station, much to the surprise of everybody over there, and gave no reason for it and Kenneth Ehlers was then transferred, I think, to the East Coast, and I haven't heard from him since...

PRATT: Are you still active in investigating cases or have you tapered off or what?

ARNOLD: No. I have to earn a living like everyone else. And my living hasn't been made writing books or this type of thing. It's been in the engineering work that I do. However, I still get calls and people who come to meet me and talk with me, which keeps me somewhat involved even though maybe I don't have the time to devote that I would like to have. Follow me?

PRATT: Yes.

TWO AIRLINERS, SEVEN UFOS

ARNOLD: It's like Captain Smith telling me about the two American Airlines and United (airliners and) how they passed within several thousand feet of each other, and they saw seven of these (UFOS) in between them... a group clustered together. It was a senior pilot of American Airlines who related the experience to Captain E. J. Smith when they were both up taking a physical up in New York just recently. This happened the 22nd of June of this year [Actually, 1977].

PRATT: THIS year?

ARNOLD: Yeah.

PRATT: Oh, I thought you were talking about an old case. But you're talking about something that happened very recently then?

ARNOLD: Oh, yes.

PRATT: Would you go back over that, just, what did you say, two or three airlines?

ARNOLD: I know this happened because Captain E. J. Smith called me long distance from Sarasota, Florida, to tell me about it. What happened was that over Mono Lake, as I understand the story from Captain Smith – it could have happened on the 23rd instead of the 22nd but I think it was the 22nd – there was a time of day when both United and American Airlines (flights) would be passing over Mono Lake, which is in the high Sierras near Bishop, California. It's a rather remote area. And I understood that United was flying east at 41,000 feet, a DC-10 I think it was, and American Airlines was flying west to San Francisco. And they passed each other over this area almost within seconds every day. And these seven (objects) were in a cluster between these two aircraft. (The pilots) all saw them. They were just amazed. Anyhow (it was) Captain McCormick, (who) was the senior captain on the United's flight and was the one arriving back in New York, who told Captain Smith. I just thought, "Well, it's just another one of those things." What made it most interesting was that there was a talk program... (and) I happened to mention this sighting and we got this phone call from a forest ranger up at Mono Lake who said he used to set his watch by the time when these planes went over because they were so accurate. He was looking up at the time they went over, and he saw those seven things too, from the ground. He said that several days before this he saw Mono Lake, which is a completely placid, still lake, in the mountains and not very many people live up there. I've flown over it. But he said he saw just like a tidal wave in this lake, and this lake was just spinning and the waves were three or four feet high. He said a round circular type of aircraft lifted out of the lake and stood there about a hundred feet above the lake for a little while, and just turned on edge and went right off into the blue. I thought that was very unusual.

'MYSTERY SUBMARINES'

ARNOLD: I have records of other experiences where people have made the association between water and these things. In fact, if I was anywhere near the coast I would fly out over the Pacific for quite a ways... (This was) when we were seeing all these mysterious submarines. I talked with captains of some of these boats. They said they saw this thing and it surfaced right close to them. It was a little bit bigger than their boat and it wasn't a fish or anything. It was just something that it looked like it had windows in it. But they didn't see anything real close and all of a sudden it would go down into the sea or take off into the air. The funny thing about most of their descriptions was that the thing was either circular or semi-circular.

PRATT: When was all this?

ARNOLD: Well, that happened in '51, '52, probably '53. I occasionally went out there because my work took me that way. It was off Trinidad Head, which is near Arcata (California), where there seemed to be the most sightings of this type of thing...

THIRTY-TWO BODIES MISSING IN CRASH

PRATT: Let me ask you one question. Somebody sent me a letter recently telling me about Kenneth Arnold's sightings, and then talked about the crash of a Marine Corps plane and saying there was never any blood or something very

mysterious about the plane crash itself... Was there something unusual about the wreckage itself?

ARNOLD: Well, all I can tell you is (about) the three men who first reached the wreckage. Now, (the Navy) had a \$5,000 reward on it. That was (why) I was searching for the plane (on the day of his June 24, 1947 sighting). That reward offer said we will pay \$5,000 for the discovery of the wreckage and the recovery of the bodies. Every time I was flying in the area, I'd take a sweep over the southwest side of Mount Rainier. This C-46 transport with thirty-two Marines aboard crashed into the Tacoma Glacier, which is at about the 9,500-foot level of Mount Rainier. Mount Rainier goes a little over 14,000 feet. It was this crash I was looking for that day. Well, a forestry man saw the tail of it. So they first sent the First Search and Rescue (from) McChord Field [near Seattle] up there to check it out. There were three of them that reached there first. And I had a telephone conversation with McChord Search and Rescue – I was with Idaho Search and Rescue at the time – and they said that (when) they reached the fuselage, the fuselage was almost intact and all the luggage of everyone was still aboard, and their parachutes had never been used. But he said there was no blood, no bones and there were no bodies!

PRATT: No blood, no bones, no bodies?

ARNOLD: Right. Now we got that right from the head of rescue at McChord Field. It wasn't through the press and it wasn't through the Marine Corps or anything. And so we published it... I didn't associate (the crash) with flying saucers. It was just a mystery. But, we published it, and pretty soon I got a letter from H.H. Goode (?) of the Fourth Naval District and, oh boy, he was just real (angry), wondering what authority I had to say such (a thing)... I didn't give a damn one way or the other particularly. I just thought it was a very unusual thing and there was no way they could say (the thirty-two Marines) walked off from it. But right after the crash was found and the rescuers got there, (the Navy officer) said it looked like mountain lions carried off the bodies, which was ridiculous of course, and it was typical of the (military's) explanations. A little later, they changed that story and said that the terrain was too treacherous to bring the bodies down from the mountain... This is (ridiculous) because if three men can get up (to) the wreckage, going downhill is a hell of a lot easier than pulling bodies uphill. And they shouldn't have had any trouble whatsoever. But they finally ended up saying the terrain was too treacherous to bring the bodies down

and so they didn't bring them down. And that was the last thing we heard publicly about it.

PRATT: In other words, they left the bodies there?

ARNOLD: That apparently was the official... explanation. However, they had the funerals for the people that perished in that crash. At Round Pass at Mount Rainier National Park. I think it was about a month or two afterwards, and there were thirty-two coffins there and there were no bodies in them... I've never known in my life in the Search and Rescue Squadron for anyone to lie to one another. But the Fourth Naval District had complete control over the public relations. The military got right into it and that was it.

PRATT: Did you know the head of the search and rescue team that went up there?

ARNOLD: No, I didn't know them. It's possible that during various meetings which we (Search and Rescue teams) used to have somewhere around the country that I have met some of them. I recall the particular man's name who was heading the party and he was the spokesman for the three (but) I don't know what I've done with it.

PRATT: Was he the one who told you about the no bones, no bodies, no blood—

ARNOLD: Yes. He told us by telephone. We called up and asked him about it. The three first men got to the crash and came down the mountain and that was it. Then of course the military came in and the Marine Corps or the Navy actually was in charge of it. They never paid the reward to the forestry fellow who (found the crash). They left the bodies there and therefore the reward wouldn't be valid because it was for the discovery of the crash and the recovery of the bodies.

PRATT: This doesn't sound like the military, though, not to recover the bodies.

ARNOLD: Well, it sure doesn't to me either. That's really unusual and I didn't connect it with the flying saucer business. But then I began doing a lot of research and I found that many times there was ships at sea found with dinner sets all ready to be eaten and everything and here the ship would be found and the thirty-five or forty or fifty people completely gone and they

never could figure out what happened to them.

PRATT: Have you ever flown over the area where the wreckage occurred?

ARNOLD: I saw it... from the air the next year, in 1948 on June 24th, the same date (of his sighting of the nine objects in 1947). I made a flight with a 16-mm camera right over this area, and of course I showed the pictures of the mountains. The weather wasn't as good that day as it was in 1947. But I just thought for the heck of it I was up there, I'm just going to fly this route again. Maybe by chance I could see some more of these things. And I didn't go up to the 14,000-foot level and come completely down the canyon as I did in '47 because the wind was so turbulent that day, and you can get trapped in some of those places... But in order to really search an area very thoroughly, you've got to go very slowly, you've got to watch out for your wind change, and you usually want to stay at least twenty-five to fifty, maybe seventy-five feet up to as high as a hundred feet up off the mountain. So, that's the reason I didn't really fly in to take a movie of the crash because it wasn't too important and the winds were getting pretty bad up there. There were some clouds and that sort of thing, so I just photographed the whole area... The first thing the forestry man saw was the tail of the airplane. By the time the rescue crew got up there, a certain amount of melting took place and the fuselage was exposed. And I saw pictures of the fuselage. It looked to me like the fuselage was not torn or bashed in particularly. It just looked like the plane hit real hard, and sheered the wings. But the fuselage itself was fairly intact.

PRATT: Then supposedly the bodies are still there?

ARNOLD: As far as I know that was the last report that the Marine Corps put out, or the Fourth Naval District...

BLUE BOOK MEN PHOTOGRAPHED BALLS OF LIGHT

PRATT: A businessman here in West Palm Beach called me earlier this afternoon and was telling me about a UFO incident that occurred somewhere in that area, he thinks around 1961. He was not involved. He was down at McClellan Air Force Base in California and he was a communications specialist, and what happened is that all of the West Coast communications funneled into McClellan and then relayed out to Wright-Patterson or Washington, D.C., and what happened was that for

four or five Wednesday nights in a row, a large number of balls, different colors. He's not positive of the colors, but like orange, green and white, of different sizes – golf ball size, orange size and grapefruit size, OK? – were seen over these ICBM sites, and the messages would come in to McClellan to be relayed out to Wright-Patterson. And by the second or third Wednesday night this happened, they had a bunch of Blue Book personnel out there and they photographed these things. And the photos would be transmitted by facsimile machine to McClellan and then on back to Wright-Patterson, and there were like twenty or thirty of these things at times, and sometimes the speed would be enormous, like 15,000 miles an hour. And he's curious why he's never seen anything in print about this. And I am just curious if you'd ever heard anything of this nature?

ARNOLD: Yes I have. These military pilots would call me and tell me they had seen such and such and so and so. And they'd say, "Look, I'm not supposed to say anything." Of course, I knew that the joint armed forces all had a \$10,000 fine and ten-year imprisonment penalty on any personnel that was in the military – that's all branches of the military – (who) released information on unidentified flying objects without going through public relations. And, that's a fact. I knew that way back in 1947. That might sound silly to you, but it seems funny because the military that made observations were simply scared off from saying anything about it, and that was it...

ARNOLD FILMS TWO UFOs, BUT...

ARNOLD: There've been some wonderful sightings. I'm sure that the military with the facilities of gun cameras and this type of thing must have thousands and thousands of this stuff. Hell, they've been seeing these things all over the world, and I can't see how they could possibly avoid seeing. And they would certainly try to take pictures of them. I've got some movies of them myself. I have movies of two that went under me at Mount Lassen [in northern California] and this, of course, confirmed my feeling about them maybe being alive because I could see a pine tree through one of them. This film was sent in to Wright-Patterson Field and my publisher at the time, a man named Ray Palmer, sent it in and asked them if they could identify the brown ducks or something that was in it. These things were going over a thousand miles an hour (as they) went under me. I was within half a mile of them. I had a camera (with) a six-power lens on it at sixty-four frames a second and I got probably thirty-five or forty frames of them. Well, they sent the movie film

back, saying, "There's nothing on the film" that they could see, no ducks, no nothing. But (when) they sent it back, forty-two frames had been clipped off. ...

THINKS UFOs MAY BE ALIVE

PRATT: In all your thirty years, have you ever... come to any conclusions about the origin—

ARNOLD: No, I've seen them seven or eight times, and my first impression is this: The ones that that I first reported over Mount Rainier were definitely crescent-shaped type things, with a pulsating thing in the middle of them. I've seen them since, and whatever it is, it has the ability to change its density apparently to accommodate for either its speed or flyability or whatever it is. The impression that I have felt is that these were going somewhere. I've never seen any of them that circled me or got curious. However, you get the feeling that they're aware of you. And, of course, you're aware of them, but my thinking was that they're something alive—

PRATT: Something alive?

ARNOLD: Something that... could come from the surface of this earth, commonplace things that go through a stage of development similar to a tadpole. It would be difficult for you to believe it's going to be a frog. But when you watch the process, it becomes a frog. And it's, well, a density, like I said to "Look" magazine one time. I said, "If you take a jellyfish in the ocean and you're not familiar with jellyfish when it's completely extended, it looks just like the ocean water, or very similar. It looks just a little bit milky, and you stick your finger in it, Oh Boy, it will really shock you. And then it solidifies. Nature has ways of doing this type of thing with these deep fish, or with fish in the deep parts of the oceans, and they go through various stages of development... If it is an aircraft from some place, they haven't advanced much. You know, if you took a picture of, say, a 1915 airplane and then you took a picture of a 1978 aircraft that we have, you'd hardly know that they were related.

PRATT: Right.

ARNOLD: And then you'd think that any civilization that could be making something like this would improve it or something. Nature takes many, many millions of years sometimes to evolve

from one form to another. However, these things have been seen many times before. I'm not a Bible study person in particular, but I've read the first twelve chapters of Ezekiel, and when he talks about this man, he was a farmer or something, and he looks up and he sees a wing upon a wing, and burning coals in the center. If you hadn't seen one of the original pictures of one of these flying saucers as I saw the 24th of June 1947, you'd never know what the guy was talking about... He's trying so hard to explain something to somebody, and mixing it all up with God and this and that. But it would be difficult to reconstruct these things. It's just something that occurred to me and like Ezekiel said, it was God talking to him. Of course, everything is God, if you want to call it that, or the Creator or whatever, but you couldn't criticize the fellow but he had one description in particular of a wing upon a wing, and the burning coals, the fire in the center, and this is identical to the first observation I had.

Now, you take Chip Chiles of Eastern Airlines or some of these other boys that have seen these torpedo things, they seem to be outright mechanical things. They have a (inaudible) and tail on them, and windows and all...

[On the night of July 24, 1948, Captain C. S. Chiles and co-pilot J. B. Whitted were flying an Eastern Airlines DC-3 airliner with twenty passengers aboard from Houston to Atlanta. When they landed in Atlanta, the pilots reported that near Montgomery, Alabama, they had seen a huge plane flash down toward the airliner and then shoot back up into the sky when it was about seven hundred feet from them. They said it was about a hundred feet long, about four times as fat as the fuselage of a B-29 bomber, had two rows of brightly lighted windows, and had no wings. When it veered away from them, flames shot out about fifty feet behind it. It came so close that it left the DC-3 rocking.]

I can only say from my own reasoning, that if we've gone to the moon, it's just the first step. We're gonna go to the other planets, and if anybody else is living in the universe... they might have been able to make the journey here. And so the possibility is there, but then there's also the possibility that SOME of these things may not have anything particularly to do with this, too...

MAURY ISLAND INCIDENT NO HOAX

ARNOLD: How all (these) psychological things happen is just a complete, baffling puzzle to anyone because things happen. On the Maury Island incident, I think both (Captain) Smith and myself just knew there wasn't technical equipment that could read our minds. Or we hoped the hell there wasn't. It was a pretty shocking experience and neither Smith nor I know any more about it. And from our experience with the military in that particular affair, to have it called a complete hoax was ridiculous. Because if it was, somebody went to a hell of a lot of trouble to try to scare the hell out of us, and it would have taken monumental means to not become detected in some way because it had the whole community up there baffled.

(In) my pamphlet – I named it “The Flying Saucer As I saw It” and I published that in 1950 – I have pictures of everybody involved in the crash on Mount Rainier that was given out by the forest search and rescue and I have photostatic letters of (Lieutenant) Frank M. Brown as to what happened their crash, what the flight engineer said about the plane, when he left the plane he saw something lift off the top of it and he said he thought probably it was Lieutenant Brown or Captain Davidson, but he said he found out when he got on the ground – he had dropped 11,000 feet in a chute – he heard the crash and then he discovered the next morning in Kelso that both of the people that were left on the plane were killed. He couldn't understand what this was that came off the top of the plane as he left the plane. They (the flight engineer and the other crewman who survived) were forced out by Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown, and both Davidson and Brown had on their harnesses but they didn't have their chutes on when they were found.

MADE NO MONEY ON HIS BOOK

PRATT: Have you made any attempt to publish your book?

ARNOLD: Oh, yes... There've been a number of people trying to stop me from writing another book, but I haven't quite gotten to it because I've had so many other things to do. But I've got a multitude of unusual things that I could talk about if it would be worthwhile. But the last book that I wrote, “The Coming of the Saucers,” we never made any money on it, and what we did make I insisted that it be donated back to Ray Palmer for any research that could be developed to find an answer to this. So, the whole thing was really fundamentally just a big expense on my part and, I think, on Ray's part. We thought it was important to write it down, and to write it down right, and that's what we

did.

INTERVIEW FEBRUARY 24, 1978

ARNOLD: ...I made recordings of people's experiences, and I've got quite a library of them. I gathered quote a lot of very valuable information. The evidence is just overwhelming. I spent a great amount of money doing this. I figured I spent close to \$30,000 of my own money and almost lost my wife in the process because I was so intensely interested (laughs)...

UFOs ABLE TO READ HIS MIND

I think that this (his June 24, 1947 sighting) was the first indication that... there was some intelligence somewhere that was able to read my mind. I think other pilots have felt the same way about it. We've been very cautious about mentioning such a thing even though we were completely convinced that this has been and is taking place... It was a rather frightening experience due to the fact that when you actually felt inside that somehow your mind was being controlled or being read in some way by some unknown entities that were apparently making use of it. It didn't really make any sense.

God, I don't need publicity. I've had publicity for thirty years and I run away from it because every time I get a lot of publicity I have hundreds and hundreds of people write me letters. I want to be curious and everything but it just got so it was impossible for me to answer them. I was just doing everything without any remuneration, which you might say endangered my own livelihood because I was neglecting my own work, my engineering work...

PHONE LINES TAPPED

This Maury Island incident has never been cleared up... The military intelligence, Air Force intelligence, all of them were just as baffled as any of the rest of us.

... I was pestered by, I think, every conceivable agency of the government, questioning my reliability and goodness knows what. And this has been going on. There was a time (when) you could tell whether someone was tapping your phone because you could lift it up and hear clicks and things that were not normal on your telephone. But these days they just take a little transmitter, put it up there in the telephone office and every time

the receiver is lifted off here, they record everything you've got to say. Well, anything this important... is something that would be most vital... for the government or their agencies to get a hold of. It was something that certainly baffled military intelligence from my association with them.

ARNOLD: I've got letters from the wife of Lieutenant Brown, where she is convinced that the death of her husband was not an accident. I've got many photographs that I received from the Fourth Air Force, that were given to me when I was a guest down at Hamilton Field. I've got all sorts of things, a lot of documentary things here that, like photographs of that entire crash on Mount Rainier... I have here one (photo) that shows one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine people at this crash scene. (On the photo) I said, "Here, this is an official U.S. Navy photograph NA13 Number 1047. Date 25th of July, 1947. This is on the scene photograph of the Marine Corps C-46 disaster on Tacoma Glacier at the 9,500-foot level on Mount Rainier in the State of Washington. Thirty-two Marines were reported to have perished in this crash. The bodies were never recovered from the wreckage, and pictorial proof of the bodies has never been released, leaving unsettled the great controversy as to whether bodies actually were found in the wreckage. The \$5,000 reward offered for the recovery of the bodies was never paid. Being an experienced mountain pilot, Kenneth Arnold participated in the air search for this wreckage. It was while Arnold was engaged in this air search operation that nine strange ray-like aircraft crossed his pathway at speeds exceeding 1,700 miles an hour." Well, I just said that going up a mountain is a lot tougher than coming down. And I couldn't figure out what the hell was going on. The only thing I had was what the Search and Rescue units had. They exchange information because (the) experience of people who have been in rescues (and) search missions is pretty valuable to all of us....

There's something awful fishy about the whole thing. I didn't connect it with flying saucers at the time, at all. I just said, well, they found the crash and these news reports came out about it and they were completely conflicting to mine. It was quite important the first men that got there, the leader said the parachutes were all intact, all the luggage of the personnel, the Marine personnel, was intact. There was no blood, no bones, no bodies... They were completely baffled. They didn't know what could have happened to the bodies. They (the thirty-two Marines) didn't jump out because the parachutes were still

there, unless they did it just for the hell of it, you know, and everybody committed suicide that way, and they'd be strung all over the mountain. I don't know. The thing is still pretty muddy...

MILITARY TOLD HIM TO KEEP QUIET

ARNOLD: I don't give a damn what the Army says or what the Air Force says or what not. I kept my mouth shut. They advised me to. They didn't want me to expose the subject. They were against anything that was written about me... because they didn't want me to partake in it. Because I was associated with them and I knew what the hell they were doing. But they have no control over me. Now, every one of the pilots, I don't give a damn what major airline you talk to, these pilots are shut up. They just say, "Look, if you see anything strange out there, you tell us and let our public relations handle it or you just go look for another job." That's about what it amounts to. And I don't know whether this \$10,000 fine and ten years' imprisonment is inclusive of all airline pilots in public transportation.

INTERVIEW MARCH 7, 1978

DOGFIGHT PILOT THREATENED WITH COURT-MARTIAL

ARNOLD: Among pilots, we're all pretty good friends and we talk with each other, and I think my credibility as far as a pilot goes, I started way back in 1932, isn't too bad. Now, when Lieutenant (George F.) Gorman had his experience over Fargo, North Dakota. I wrote to him and... he wrote me this letter, dated December 18, 1948. He said, "Dear Mr. Arnold, I have been unable to answer your letter. However, I think that you can understand my position better when you know the facts. First of all, I am under the military control of the Tenth Air Force and they have issued direct orders concerning the disks or objects. Second, the Air Material Command has issued orders classifying the information as Secret. And this makes it a general court martial to release any more information. The command has asked that my commanding officer and myself be court-martialed for releasing what information we did. I have General Edwards or some other high officers to thank for the refusal to carry it out. Third, the counterintelligence corps have asked that I turn over all information to them. And I have no doubt the FBI will be getting around to sending me a few letters too. The public relations officer released more than he should

have, and now we are being given a rough time. And they can sure do it, too. I have a normal amount of curiosity and I have a lot of questions to ask but then I had a lot of them unanswered that night. The rest that I have will have to wait until they get ready to answer them. One of these days I will be out in Boise and look you up and we can visit. I think that I can be out there just after the first of the year. I would enjoy hearing from you again and I hope to see you soon. George F. Gorman, 1421 13th Street North, Fargo, North Dakota.” Now, I called him or he called me, I don’t remember which way it went, but he gave me the impression that what he didn’t say, which he knew, is what I put as a bottom line on the photostat letter of his, “This letter received from Lieutenant George F. Gorman of Fargo, North Dakota, will erase any doubts of the importance of Lieutenant Gorman’s experience in the air with the (inaudible) disk-like lighted object that reacted in evasive maneuvers to his thoughts rather than to the physical attitude of his airplane.” You follow that?

PRATT: Right.

ARNOLD: OK, now if that isn’t important, I don’t know what the hell is important. Because the mind-boggling type of thing that went up on Maury Island was the fact that both Smith and I – Captain Smith is probably one of the most respected airline captains that ever flew – and he was puzzled about the whole thing too, that people were reporting things that we were actually thinking, not only what we were saying. And this wasn’t the work of the FBI or the CIA or something else. It is something that was entirely out of their class. Because I don’t think they’ve got that kind of sophisticated equipment. And they were in impossible situations to which nobody in his right mind could have actually tried to do, in a senseless manner, that must have taken a, well, a great deal of work, expenditure, whatnot, to cover up whatever they wanted to cover up and which we never did discover what it was. The whole thing began back there, and we were hesitant because we knew that nobody would believe us, so we just kept quiet. But now it’s coming out over and over again, so much that it’s overwhelming.

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