

UFO FILES

Real UFOs

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In the latest episode of *UFO Files*, we are taken on a tour of man-made flying saucers from World War II to the present day and asked to consider the possibility that all UFO sightings are of top secret, terrestrial aircraft.

As defeat loomed for Hitler's Germany in 1944-45, Nazi scientists were tasked with developing new and exotic weapons that might turn the tide of the war. The most famous of these new super weapons were the V-1 and V-2 rockets developed and launched from Peenemünde on the Baltic Sea.

However other projects were also underway. A man named Viktor Schauberger designed a flying disc-type aircraft. It was hoped that this craft would manoeuvre like a helicopter, using magnetic rotation to create lift, but also be able to travel at supersonic speeds and be undetectable to the enemy. Working with other brilliant engineers and scientists, several disc designs were tested and even flown.

As the war drew to a close, German science worked feverishly to develop these new weapons: flying saucers, rockets, jet aircraft and who knows what else, but time was running out for them. Allied bombing raids were causing great damage and Allied troops were closing in on all fronts.



As Germany surrendered, a frantic scramble between the western powers and the Soviet Union began to capture the brilliant German scientists behind what was at the time the most advanced aviation technology on the planet. The US managed to capture factories that were producing V-2 rockets and men such as Werner Von Braun, while the Soviets got their hands on the latest Nazi jet aircraft and a good number of rocket scientists.

After the war, Schauberger and other flying saucer designers such as Rudolf Schreiver and Walter Meithe ended up working for the Americans, while their former comrade, Andreas Epp, is said to have worked for the Soviet Union. As the struggle for global nuclear dominance intensified, flying disc research continued in secret.

Then in 1947, the UFO sighting of pilot, Kenneth Arnold, made headlines around the world. He described nine, crescent-shaped craft travelling at over twelve-hundred miles per hour, a speed almost unheard of in those days. 'UFO fever' gripped America and thousands of reports began to flood in. Military officials appeared on television, calming public fears, but also declaring that they were not testing or flying saucer-shaped rockets or aircraft.



Then in July of that year, a flying disc was reported to have crashed near Roswell, New Mexico. It was quickly explained away as being a weather balloon. In private, US generals were concerned that these UFO sightings could be secret aircraft from the Soviet Union, designed by their captured German scientists.

Many blueprints and plans for Nazi jet aircraft had been captured at the end of the Second World War and one of these was the Horton 229, a flying wing jet that bore a striking resemblance to Arnold's crescent-shaped UFOs. It was feared that the Soviets had developed a flying, supersonic version of this jet.



As the Cold War evolved in the 1950s, and the Korean conflict brought the world to the brink of nuclear destruction, the public's paranoia was reflected in popular movies such as *Earth Vs The Flying Saucers* and *Invaders from Mars*. The US military used this fear as a smokescreen to hide its top secret projects in places such as Area 51 in Nevada, where tests of all kinds of exotic aircraft, rockets, balloons, high-altitude parachute drops and satellites were performed.

Project Mogul, the use of high-altitude balloons with trains of radar reflectors designed to detect Soviet atomic testing, came out of this era and was the final explanation for what crashed in Roswell.

With the Soviets taking the lead in jet fighter technology in the Korean War, the Americans needed to catch up and radar-invisible, supersonic flying saucers were one avenue of possibility.

In 1952, the US Air Force became aware of a project by the Canadian avionics company, Avro, to build a flying saucer. British designer, John Frost, was the mastermind of the idea, inspired by UFO sightings from all over the world. He learned of Nazi

flying saucer projects and eventually met with Walter Meithe., who said he had worked for ten years on German saucers and also showed Frost plans and photographs of his work.

With a \$10 million grant from the USAF, Frost set up his special projects division at Avro and began work on a supersonic flying saucer.

The first attempt was with 'Project Y', a spade-shaped aircraft that would serve as a tail-less, supersonic, vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) jet interceptor. After several failed tests, Project Y was abandoned.



Frost's next attempt was to create a circular aircraft that utilised rotary engines set along the outside edge of the airframe. This was called 'Project Y-2'. A test of a 50-foot, six-engined design almost ended in disaster for the entire team when the tethered engines spun out of control, almost destroying the hangar. The supersonic Y-2 project was suspended and a smaller, test design was commissioned. This was to become known as the Avrocar.

The Avrocar was designed to fly forwards at 300 mph at thirty-thousand feet and to land and take off vertically. In 1959, the first two

prototypes were rolled out. It was hoped that this design could become a kind of flying Jeep for the US military. Early test flights proved that the craft could fly, although it only moved a few inches above the ground. Problems were also discovered when it flew over grassy areas, with the engine intakes sucking up all sorts of debris. The circular design was also very difficult for the pilot to handle, making the craft unwieldy and problematic to steer. Despite attempts to make the Avrocar more stable, the program was eventually scrapped in 1961.



Forty years ago, Jack Pickett, a publisher of American military magazines, was visiting MacDill AFB in Florida when he saw what appeared to be four flying saucers parked outside in a restricted area. They ranged in size from twenty to a hundred and nineteen feet in diameter and perfectly circular. Pickett was shown photographs of the craft in flight, sometimes with conventional jet escorts. He was told that the craft, which had a large, vertical tail section, were capable of 15,500 mph and had even achieved space flight. Pickett asked why such an amazing project had been discontinued (the craft were in a section for scrapped airplanes) and

was told that better, more stable designs had replaced them.



During the 1960s, UFO reports continued to make the news headlines. Alan Brown was the chief engineer of the US stealth project at the Lockheed Skunkworks. He is convinced that all UFO reports can be attributed to secret US military aircraft. He maintains that the amount of testing that went on at Area 51 made it inevitable that people would see strange-shaped aircraft in the skies from time to time.

In 1978, Warren Botz was attending a flight reunion at Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio, when he saw disc-shaped aircraft parked in a hangar. His description of the craft almost exactly matches that of Jack Pickett's circular aeroplanes.

In 1988, the USAF revealed to the world the F-117 stealth fighter. Alan Brown said that the only reason that this remarkable aircraft was unveiled was because they had to begin flying it in daylight because of several night-flight test accidents that had resulted in the loss of pilots. It was hoped that confirming the existence of this plane to the world would reduce the number of UFO reports.

Not surprisingly, reports of triangular UFOs began to appear in the news.



With the end of the Cold War, it wasn't until the Gulf War in 1991 that the F-117 saw its first action, impressing the world with its stealth capabilities and accurate bombing power. Despite all of its success, though, the stealth fighter still had to be piloted by a human being.

The next phase of aerial combat will be with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Already, we have UAVs designed for reconnaissance, such as the Sikorsky Aerobot, but the future lies with UAVs that can perform in combat. It is likely that such craft are already in existence and have probably already been used in the 'War on Terror'.



If supersonic flying saucer technology has been abandoned in

favour of triangular stealth aircraft and slow-moving, circular drones, how does this explain the continued raft of UFO sightings that contain disc-shaped objects moving at unbelievable speeds and defying the known laws of physics? Are the US military *still* developing flying saucers?

This program offered a brief glimpse into the world of secret aviation development and the craft described are incredible feats of engineering, but to suggest that *all* UFO reports can be explained as test flights of these craft is absurd. What about close-up sightings on the ground where non-human figures are seen? What about sightings in orbit by US astronauts and Russian cosmonauts? If the US military has craft that can achieve orbit so easily, why are we still sending people and equipment up on the top of a gigantic firecracker?

It is clear that the more we try to answer these questions, the more questions we create from the answers.

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