**Project Grudge**

**From The Black Vault Encyclopedia Project**

Jump to: [navigation](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Grudge#column-one#column-one), [search](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Grudge#searchInput#searchInput)

**Project Grudge** was a short-lived project by the [U.S. Air Force](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=United_States_Air_Force&action=edit&redlink=1) to investigate [Unidentified flying objects](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Unidentified_flying_objects) that succeeded [Project Sign](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Sign) in February, 1949, and was then followed by [Project Blue Book](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Blue_Book). The project ended in December, 1949.

Project Sign had been active from 1947 to 1949. Robert Sneider, Sign's director, favored the [extraterrestrial hypothesis](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Extraterrestrial_hypothesis) as the best explanation for UFO reports. This theory was ultimately rejected by high-ranking officers, and Sign was dissolved.

Critics charged that Project Grudge was operating under a [debunking](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=Debunk&action=edit&redlink=1) directive: *all* UFO reports were judged to have prosaic explanations, though little research was conducted, and some of Grudge's "explanations" were strained or even logically untenable. In his 1956 book, [Edward J. Ruppelt](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Edward_J._Ruppelt) would describe Grudge as the "Dark Ages" of USAF UFO investigation. Grudge’s personnel were in fact conducting little or no investigation, while simultaneously relating that all UFO reports were being thoroughly reviewed.

Project Grudge issued its only formal report in August 1949. The report concluded:

*A. There is no evidence that objects reported upon are the result of an advanced scientific foreign development; and, therefore they constitute no direct threat to the national security. In view of this, it is recommended that the investigation and study of reports of unidentified flying objects be reduced in scope. Headquarters AMC [Air Materials Command] will continue to investigate reports in which realistic technical applications are clearly indicated.*

*NOTE: It is apparent that further study along present lines would only confirm the findings presented herein. It is further recommended that pertinent collection directives be revised to reflect the contemplated change in policy.*

*B. All evidence and analyses indicate that reports of unidentified flying objects are the result of:*

*1. Misinterpretation of various conventional objects.*

*2. A mild form of mass-hysteria and war nerves.*

*3. Individuals who fabricate such reports to perpetrate a hoax or to seek publicity.*

*4. Psychopathological persons.*

As Dr. [Michael D. Swords](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Michael_D._Swords) writes, "Inside the military, (Maj. Aaron J.) Boggs in the Pentagon and (Col. Harold) Watson at AMC (Air Material Command) were openly giving the impression that the whole flying saucer business was ridiculous. Project Grudge became an exercise of derision and sloppy filing. Boggs was so enthusiastically antisaucer that General Cabell ordered General Moore to create a more proper atmosphere of skeptical respect for the reports and their observers." (Swords, 98)

By early 1951, Grudge had become all but moribund.

There were a series of UFO sightings near [Fort Monmouth](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=Fort_Monmouth&action=edit&redlink=1), [New Jersey](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=New_Jersey&action=edit&redlink=1) in 1951. Pilots and [radar](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=Radar&action=edit&redlink=1) operators reported encounters with a number of fast-moving, highly maneuverable disc-shaped aircraft. A [Life Magazine](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=Life_Magazine&action=edit&redlink=1) reporter was at Monmouth for some of the sightings, and the case received significant publicity.

When General [Charles P. Cabell](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=Charles_P._Cabell&action=edit&redlink=1) asked Grudge for their analysis of this UFO encounter, he learned that Grudge had essentially swept UFO reports under the carpet and was essentially moribund, he became furious. The Fort Monmouth case had highlighted [Air Material Command](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php?title=Air_Material_Command&action=edit&redlink=1)'s sloppy debunking, and at a meeting, a frustrated Cabell was reported to have said, "I want an open mind; in fact, I *order* an open mind! Anyone who doesn't keep an open mind can get out now! ... Why do *I* have to stir up the action? Anyone can see that we do not have a satisfactory answer to the saucer question." (Swords, p. 103) At another meeting--this one of military Colonels--Cabell said, "I've been lied to, and lied to, and lied to. I want it to stop. I want the answer to the saucers and I want a good answer." (Swords, p. 103) Cabell also characterized the 1949 Grudge report as "tripe".

Lt. Col. N.R. Rosegarten asked Ruppelt to take over as the new project’s leader in late 1951, partly because Ruppelt "had a reputation as a good organizer." (Jacobs, 65) While Cabell wanted Grudge reactivated, he did not want the general public to know that the military took UFOs seriously, and ordered the project to keep a low profile. This, he hoped, would protect the military's reputation on both fronts: if the saucer phenomenon was groundless, they could not be accused of sensationalism, but if the phenomenon proved to have some basis in fact, the military could produce serious studies of the subject. Cabell especially did not the military to be perceived as belittling civilians who had reported UFOs.

Grudge became [Project Blue Book](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Blue_Book). Its first era--directed by Ruppelt--is generally seen as its most open-minded and productive era.

**Sources**

* David Michael Jacobs; The UFO Controversy In America; Indiana University Press, 1975; [ISBN 0253190061](http://www.theblackvault.com/wiki/index.php/Special%3ABookSources/0253190061)
* Michael D. Swords, "UFOs, the Military, and the Early Cold War" (pp. 82-122 in *UFOs and Abductions: Challenging the Borders of Knowledge*, David M. Jacobs, editor; University Press of Kansas, 2000; ISBN)

**External links**

* [webpage about Project Grudge](http://members.aol.com/TPrinty/Grudge.html)

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